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Fourth Conference
Supplement

The LENINIST

To the working class of Great Britain



Fourth Conference of the Leninists of the Communist Party of Great Britain

THE FOURTH Conference of the Leninists of the CPGB has taken place.

The conference was held at a particularly difficult time for both communists and the working class internationally. Our class enemies are full of smug self-satisfaction. With the rise of Gorbachevism there is a 1914 type general crisis of bureaucratic socialism and the 'official' world communist movement is heading towards the liquidationist abyss. At the same time, though, far from the West's self-declared victory in the Cold War ending capitalism's antagonistic contradictions, they are growing ever more pronounced. Capitalism offers not peace and plenty but mass unemployment, starvation and the threat of nuclear holocaust. Capitalism is a decadent system which long ago outlived its usefulness. Communism represents the future of humanity.

In these challenging but difficult times there is a burning need for a strong, united Communist Party. However, the Euro CPGB leaders have completely embraced open class collaborationism and have wrecked the party.

Only a party steeled in Marxist-Leninist ideology and organised on the basis of iron discipline deserves to be called the Communist Party. The Euro opportunism which dominates the 'official' CPGB completely prevented the struggle for these ends being conducted within the 'normal' channels.

Since the late 1960s the unity of the CPGB broke down due to the effects of cancerous opportunism. While bureaucratic centralism ruled, the CPGB became a collection of right opportunist and centrist groups, each having its own internal discipline and operating hidden from view. However they were united in one thing – their opportunism.

That was why in November 1981 we began an open ideological struggle against all forms of opportunism with the publication of *The Leninist*. *The Leninist* exposed the existence of the factional groupings operating in the party, exposed their political shallowness, exposed their opportunism and strove to unite all genuine communists in Britain around the politics and principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The success of that struggle, the necessity of saving our Party, now demands that we reclaim the name of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The CPGB cannot be abandoned to be liquidated in the hands of the Euros. That is why we, the Leninist forces of the

CPGB, have been fighting and why we have now taken the decision to form a distinct, revolutionary, wing of the CPGB – the CPGB (*The Leninist*). This is not a factional move. It signifies a qualitative development in the struggle between Marxism-Leninism and opportunism. No force which wants revolution in Britain can remain indifferent to this struggle.

Those who call themselves the Executive Committee of the CPGB today do so illegitimately. There is no revolutionary unity of will inside the 'official' CPGB today, it has been destroyed by opportunism. The fact that the bourgeois establishment praises *Marxism Today*, 'the theoretical and discussion journal of the CPGB', will not save them. Their organisation is falling apart at the seams.

The New Communist Party and Communist Party of Britain splits call themselves 'communist parties' but they are neither communist nor parties. They are opportunist groupings, just like the Euro CPGB.

A genuine Communist Party is a class party. It consists of the most class conscious, most dedicated and self-sacrificing section of the working class. It is the general staff of the working class, its vanguard. All the opportunist groups lack any sense of revolutionary dedication or sacrifice. This is the inescapable product of their reformist political perspective. Any organisation that believes that socialism in Britain can be achieved peacefully, via the Labour Party, by definition feels no imperative to build a Marxist-Leninist party. This is not the case with the Leninists.

Convened in order to qualitatively take forward the struggle against opportunism, the Fourth Conference met under the slogan: 'Reforge the CPGB'. The conference charged the National Committee of the CPGB (*The Leninist*) with the task of preparing a draft programme to be presented for discussion in Party organisations and in our working class, and subsequently presented as a proposal to the congress of the reformed CPGB.

Participants showed by their militancy, seriousness and readiness to give their all to the cause of communism that this aim will be achieved.

Long Live Leninism!
National Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*)

December 17, 1989



Central Organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*)

FOR OUR rulers Christmas is, so to speak, heaven sent. With interest rates squeezing retail sales it will be used for all its worth to keep profits up. It also provides an ideal opportunity for peddling the nuclear family, the state, as well as cant: the December 13 IRA action against the military checkpoint at Derryard was condemned by army brass as being an attack on the "spirit of Christmas".

Yet for all the offensive mixture of crude Mammon, tinselled mysticism and wooden messages from Elizabeth Windsor, Christmas definitely provokes a powerful response from the mass of the population. Within Christmas, and its subversive good will, there exists a spirit of genuine human warmth and community. This is something of no little significance in this most alienated of societies. So how should we respond to Christmas? We say communists should learn from the Christians themselves.

Any moderately well informed person will tell you that Jesus Christ was not born in Bethlehem on December 25 or for that matter on the date the Orthodox churches plump for. He was born in Galilee sometime in July and not in the year AD 1 but probably in AD 7.

Jesus was a revolutionary; not the modern sort of course, but an apocalyptic one. He was a man of his time who thought that with divine help Palestine and the rest of the world could be liberated from the Roman heel and a new communistic order, the Kingdom of God, centred on Jerusalem, would miraculously come to replace it.

In passing it is worth noting that Mike Freeman, in the RCP's version of *Marxism Today*, quotes *The Leninist* on this. Typically, without naming his source, he uses us to rubbish the idea that Jesus was a revolutionary (Marx and Engels as well as Kautsky - when he was still a Marxist - held the same position). The class struggle in the ancient world took place in very different material and economic conditions from today, and therefore the political figures produced then and now can have no more in common with one another than the bourgeois revolutionary Cromwell has with the bourgeois reactionary Thatcher. Failing to grasp this, Freeman makes a present of Jesus to the bourgeoisie.

In spite of later crude doctoring of Jesus's words and deeds in the bible, there is plenty of evidence remaining in the four gospels to glean his true aims and methods: "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34), "I come to set the earth on fire" (Luke 12:49), "Whoever does not have a sword must sell his goat and buy one" (Luke 22:36) and "who are now first will be last, and who are now last will be first" (Mark 10:29-31).

Nevertheless, for all his utopian communism, in the hands of later Christians the Jewish apocalyptic revolutionary, who was executed by Roman occupation forces, was transformed into an other-worldly anti-Jewish, pro-Roman creep. Jesus was made acceptable to the Roman ruling class, giving the masters a new mystery cult and the poor freemen the promise of heavenly salvation - the perfect state religion. Having done that the Christians set about ousting competing cults. As a neat marketing idea they located Jesus's birthday during the Roman Saturnalia, which ended on December 25 and had its origins as a communistic winter solstice festival. Saturnalia was Christianised.

The pagan origins of Christmas might not be readily admitted by the church bureaucracy but it is hardly a secret. Oliver Cromwell - 'god's Englishman' - certainly knew of it. Under the Commonwealth, as a good Christian, he banned it! However communists should take a leaf from the Christians who took over the Roman winter festival, not the Christians who tried to suppress the whole thing. The proletarian order in Britain will give the whole Christmas period a new content as well as form.

Our celebrations will echo the distant communist past and provide us with a glimpse of the communist future.

The Editor

LETTERS

Solidarity conference?

Alan Merrick (letters, issue 84) misses my main point in my letter (issue 83, under the name Mark Marston - I was subtly renamed after the editor's favourite brewery).

Since a communist party does not yet exist, only fragments from different traditions claiming to be building the party, no one is in a position to assert authoritative leadership. This creates problems in campaigns such as Hands Off Ireland!, which will only acquire real weight if a series of organisations who are normally in conflict can be persuaded to join. Otherwise momentum is lost and potential allies scatter, muttering about 'domination' by those who are left.

It is not a matter of being 'nice' but of sending out the right signals, ie that there is a place in the campaign for everyone who supports the two demands without fear of being 'used' by any faction. Sheffield Defence Campaign tried to convince Workers Power of the need to join HOI! precisely in order to break the 'domination' syndrome. They declined. A serious mistake, but it's not too late to change.

HOI! still has the potential for becoming such a campaign, unlike, say, the IFM, whose activities are solely determined by the RCP (apparently they have now decided to boycott the Bloody Sunday demonstration, just as they did the Manchester Martyrs). By contrast, we in Sheffield have been able to make a significant impact on HOI! policy.

Finally, SDC proposes (alongside our support for HOI!) a conference of all who support the demands Troops Out Now, Self Determination. We would welcome comment on how this could help build a solidarity movement. Mike Martin Sheffield

Alan Merrick replies:

After re-reading comrade Greene King's initial letter, I don't think I have missed the point. In responding to it I tried to emphasise the difference between the platform of a campaign and the modus operandi of communists within it. We want a communist party. I think the comrade agrees here, if not on all the dotted 'i's and crossed 't's.

'Unity', though, is no precondition for success. I agree that it would be fine and dandy if we could draw Workers Power *et al* into HOI!. Clearly at the moment we cannot. As comrade Martin indicates, the door remains open. What is to be done in the meantime? Comrade Martin states that HOI! can only gain "real weight" with the addition of other organisations. Without for one moment disputing the desirability of broadening HOI!'s base, I must disagree. The *only* way we will gain real weight is through effective, principled and continuous work within the working class around the two demands, 'troops out now' and 'self determination for the Irish nation'. HOI! will not be effective if, for the sake of gaining the support of a couple of small organisations, it watered down these demands which go to the root of the British problem in Ireland. That is why HOI! can, with a lot of hard work, be more effective than 'broader' campaigns, such as TOM, which to preserve its broadness must submerge its demands.

Clarity, principle and determination are our strengths. The real task for HOI! is not to rope in (at present) unwilling left groups, but to draw in class conscious workers to fight for Irish freedom. Unity will arise out of successful practice within the ranks of advanced workers. Thanks to the work of comrades like Mike - and, yes, *The Leninist* - HOI! has begun this.

Labour's own

The behaviour of the Workers Power rep on the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration Committee - in the few meetings at which they turned up - illustrates just how Labourite this particular group has become during their decade long submergence in the swamp.

A dispute arose over the orientation of the committee in building solidarity with the struggle in Ireland. The Workers Power rep raised the criticism that the body did not have a sufficiently clear orientation to "the labour movement".

Now, in formal terms, he has a point. Many comrades on the committee have similar criticisms. So, quite correctly, a model resolution was drafted for Workers Power and others to use. Not much, but a start.

Back to the next meeting comes our WPer with the news that his organisation could not *possibly* use the model resolution until the section calling for organisations to affiliate to the committee was removed! Why? Because, he informed us, the committee did not have a serious orientation to "the labour movement"; therefore, Workers Power could not call on trade union branches and so on to support it.

Confused by this circular reasoning? Wait, it gets better ...

The Hands Off Ireland! representative pointed out that this criticism was similar in tone to those raised by WP at the early meetings of what became HOI!. It was also pointed out that no one would stop WP participating in the committee *and* pursuing its own particular project in the Labour Party, but that the vast majority of those on the committee had no of intention entering the Labour Party. At this point, the WPer interjected with "Yes, but you all *should*!". He later suggested that we invite Clare Short MP to address the rally at the end of the march. Heaven save us!

There really is nothing more daft than a Labour Party sectarian - and they really don't come much more daft or sectarian than the Labour Party's very own Workers Power.

Mark Fischer (Manchester Martyrs Commemoration Committee and HOI!)

Pensioner

Please find enclosed a cheque for £7 for *The Leninist*.

I have been involved with the Pensioners' Rights Campaign of late and in the course of my activities I have been invited to speak about the campaign to both the local Labour Party and the Trades Council. These were both eye-openers as to the state of Labour's support in the District. The Chairman of the ward party is talking of leaving (he is at the moment buying a copy of *The Leninist*) and is completely disillusioned with both the MP and the local councillors.

During the meeting an activist of some 20 years standing signified his dissatisfaction with party policy and walked out, saying he was finished and would not be back. This is a ward party which has just lost a bye election and is close to where two other defeats have just been suffered.

I was attending only as a spokesman for the Pensioners' Rights Campaign, so obviously was unable to enter into any of the internal discussion, but was able to make some telling points in my statement. The meeting I attended at the Trades Council was no better, all delegates expressing bitter antagonism to the Labour Councilors because of their performance in respect of the introduction of contract labour in council services and their general performance. If this is the general state of the Labour Party nationally, I would say, no matter what the reports or the opinion polls on Kinnock's rising fortunes, there's not a cat in hell's chance of it forming a government. Jack Edwards

El Salvador

As you are doubtless aware, the situation in El Salvador is extremely serious. Earlier this year the party of the death squads, ARENA, took power in transparently bogus elections. Since then the spiralling frequency of killings by the regime's forces has not only scuppered the peace process initiated by the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front), but it also briefly broke through the wall of silence which has concealed the war crimes carried out by the regime.

The world reacted with horror when six Jesuit priests were slaughtered by the army during the recent upsurge in the fighting, which was itself sparked off by the death squads bombing the offices of the FENASTRAS trade union federation and the COMRADES offices. The truth is, however, that over 70,000 Salvadorans have died in similar ways during the most recent, 10 year phase of the struggle. It is also the most damning indictment of US and British foreign policy since Vietnam, because the tyrants who have perpetrated these crimes against humanity would have been deposed years ago without the massive financial and military support from the US, with British support.

The Salvadoran regime is dominated by the fascist TANDONA faction of the military high command. Their publicly stated intention is to slaughter 100,000 civilians over a six month period in a hideous repeat of the crushing of the 1932 rebellion, led by Farabundo Marti, where 30,000 were put to death in one massive offensive against the Salvadoran people.

For these reasons ELSSOC has taken the anniversary of that massacre (January 22) for a national demonstration of solidarity.

Nicky Ortiz
El Salvador Solidarity Campaign

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

WRITE OR RING

If you would like to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist* please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Or phone us on 01-431 3135.

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After the Manchester Martyrs...

Take the streets for Irish liberation!

THE ANNUAL Manchester Martyrs Commemoration march on November 26 brought some 600 people onto the streets. Hands Off Ireland! built the largest contingent, organising transport from Sheffield and London, as well as working on the mobilising committee itself in Manchester. On the march, despite the heavy attentions of the police, fully kitted out with dogs, horses and riot gear, we kept up a constant barrage of militant slogans and marched in disciplined formation from beginning to end.

The march organisers have come under tremendous pressure because of their principled position of inviting both Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Socialist Party to address the march. This has led much of the left in Britain to attempt to strangle the march by abandoning it to attack from fascists or the police – both groups take the commemoration more seriously than the likes of the Troops Out Movement and the Irish Freedom Movement, who failed to turn out on the day. TOM's characteristically bureaucratic stance leads it to ignore all demonstrations not deemed kosher by Sinn Fein and selected Labour MPs. An example of this is their refusal each year to mobilise for the IFM August demo. It is paradoxical, then, that the Revolutionary Communist Party's IFM front should be even more boycott-mad than TOM. It seems now to have adopted a position where anyone who doesn't give it centre stage gets the cold shoulder. So the two main solidarity 'movements' in Britain refused to mobilise for a principled anti-imperialist march. This says much about their abilities to construct any kind of real movement which is of any true effect.

Nevertheless, the organisers upheld their position and are to be congratulated for building a successful march on solid and non-sectarian anti-imperialist politics.

The march is not simply a historical jaunt – it is a contemporary march demanding 'Troops Out Now!' and 'Self Determination for the Irish People as a Whole!'. That is not to say that the commemoration has no political problems. It is organised as a local, annual, basis which thus, in the absence of a continuous and national programme, tends to rely on existing forces rather than intervene to create new ones. The politics of the commemoration committee reflects this through parochialism and lack of broad perspective.

The committee tends to make a virtue out of this. For instance, the speech read at the end of the march by the committee representative criticised the British left for their failure to 'unite: "For too long people have argued amongst themselves..." she told us.

Frankly, this is hardly the problem. What prevents the building of a mass, principled Irish solidarity movement in this country is the British left's *opportunism* – both its left and right varieties.

Should we 'stop arguing' and simply unite with the likes of 'Time To Go' as the Socialist Workers Party have done? If that is the case, why did the same speaker rightly criticise those who "prostrate themselves before superstar politicians"?

Should we simply all 'stop arguing' and join the Irish Freedom Movement, a campaign whose increasingly limited activity is characterised by a narrow boycottism: an organisation which, along with its parent, the Revolutionary Communist Party, regards the official working class movement as 'dead' and thus seems to concentrate its attention on students?

The call to the left to 'stop arguing' is a glib, philistine one. Without open polemic it will simply be impossible to build the movement we need. The real point is that these arguments should not prevent *action* to build solidarity with the Irish people. This has always been the position of HOI!. Unfortunately, it is not shared by many on the British left.

For example, the committee was given an object lesson in sectarianism by the Workers Power rep who demanded that everyone join the Labour Party before they could start to fight for trade union affiliation to the committee. At the London meetings which eventually launched HOI!, Workers Power produced a document with the same implicit position and made this a precondition of their participation in the projected campaign to build a united anti-imperialist contingent on the 'Time To Go' demonstration!

We resurrect this example not because of any particular significance we attach to the dozy Labour Party sectarians in Workers Power, but to illustrate that the arguments and divisions that plague the left cannot simply be wished away by calling for everybody to 'stop arguing' as if we were all silly squabbling children. These divisions must be overcome by *practice*.

That has always been the perspective of Hands Off Ireland!, since its inception in late 1988. We argue the only way that a genuine movement for Irish freedom can be built in this country is to wage a consistent struggle within the ranks of the working class for a political platform which challenges workers identification with 'their' state.

Up till now we have organised anti-imperialist meetings nationally on this basis, giving platforms to victimised Irish trade unionists and members of the IRSP. We have organised militant, disciplined and combative contingents on demonstrations such as

'Time To Go' and the Manchester Martyrs. We have taken anti-imperialist politics onto the streets and into the workplaces.

In Easter of 1990, HOI! will be taking a qualitative step forward. We are initiating a unique event in the calendar of Irish solidarity: a commemoration of the Easter Rising of 1916 which places at its core the working class, both in Ireland and in Britain.

Easter 1916 heralded the rise of the working class as an independent force against imperialism in Ireland. In Britain it brought home the need for solidarity with the Irish struggle against 'our' state. Today, Ireland remains a key issue of the British proletarian revolution. Until workers in Britain have taken a position in support of the Irish people, they can never fully differentiate themselves against their enemy class on any issue.

HOI! will be building for its Easter commemoration up and down the country. We will be organising pickets, street sales and meetings, socials, public meetings, workplace meetings staged by our workplace HOI! branches and interventions on demonstrations such as January 1990's Bloody Sunday. The demonstration is based on the two slogans "Troops Out Now" and "Self Determination for the Irish Nation". We are putting anti-imperialists on the offensive against the British state, taking our inspiration from both the working class revolutionary fight of 1916, personified by James Connolly, and the spirit of resistance of Irish republicans today. As in Dublin 1916, in London 1990 we are demanding, "take the streets for Irish liberation!"

Initial sponsors of the demonstration include CPSA, Nalco, NUM officials, as well as John Mitchell, the ex-general secretary of the large Irish union Idatu, who was sacked for his support for militant workers' action and the struggle in the north; Lily Hill, mother of Guildford 4 member Paul; Máire O'Shea, whose own British frame up and show trial were defeated by a militant campaign in 1986, and Chris Reeves, director of the Channel 4 film, *The Cause of Ireland*. The list is growing fast.

We call on all supporters of Irish liberation, all partisans of the working class, to take up the campaign to build this working class demonstration. The movement in solidarity with the Irish people cannot be built without political clarity. Clarity will not be won in smoke filled rooms above seedy pubs. It will be won on the streets and in the workplaces. It will be proven in practice by drawing workers out on the streets of London, on April 21 1990, against British imperialism and for troops out now. Fight with us.

Ian Mahoney

The left in the National Union of Teachers has been given a boost with the election of Mary Hufford to the post of deputy general secretary. She was backed by the two major left groupings in the union and narrowly defeated the official broad left candidate by less than 200 votes. The NUT's general secretary Doug McAvoy hoped that one of the broad left candidates would have won, so strengthening his grip over the union. Splits in the broad left led to two rival candidates, Ken Bore, a member of the CPB (M-L) and Jim Ferguson, ex Euro-CP, fighting for the same votes. What is significant about the election of Hufford is not the balance on the NUT's executive. The election shows the division inside the NUT between those who want to fight, and supporters of the executive who want to bury their heads in the sand. Increasing workloads, staff shortages and cutbacks, and the government promise not to increase teachers' real pay, has forced large numbers of teachers to demand militant action. But all the executive can come up with is a publicity campaign along the lines of the doctor's BMA – to win public support, and hence, it is argued, convince the government of the justice of their demands. It will not work. Teachers are not middle class professionals, they are workers. And that is how the government is treating them. *TC*

On January 25 the Workers Theatre Movement launches The Internationale, a regular social club at The Old Piano Warehouse, 34 Hawley Road, London NW1. This initiative is in response to the WTM's desire to broaden its range of activities. So alongside agit-prop street work we will now be developing cabaret and revue material. The Internationale will also be a means towards drawing other performers and visual artists with a commitment to socialism to appearing under the banner of the WTM. Each event will have a theme based on a specific date in the revolutionary calendar. The first, on the night of January 25, will be a salute to the WTM's founding honorary president, Ewan MacColl on what would have been his seventy-fifth birthday. There will be various performers giving renditions of some of his vast repertoire of songs and the WTM will perform excerpts from his plays on the issue of unemployment, including 'Johnny Noble'. January 25 is, of course, also the date for celebrating the birth of Robert Burns, the great Scottish poet, so the first night of The Internationale will have a particularly Scottish flavour including the famous haggis, both orthodox and vegetarian blends! *GK*

The freeing of the Guildford 4 has not in any way blunted British state terrorism. Much hard fought campaigning still needs to be done, not least to smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the main legislative weapon used to intimidate the Irish community. In early 1990 the Winchester 3 appeal comes up – young Irish people, Martina Shanahan, Finbar Cullen and John McCann, stitched up under spurious 'conspiracy' charges for being arrested in the area of Douglas Hurd's country estate in possession of Irish accents. All three are now facing decades in jail unless a movement is built to expose and defeat these frame-ups. *The Leninist* and Hands Off Ireland! are supporting the campaign for their release. Contact the campaign directly by writing to: The Winchester 3 Campaign, c/o Grass Roots Bookshop, 1 Newton Road, Manchester 1. Another Irishman, Nick Mullen, is being set up for last year's 'South London bomb factory' affair. The show trial starts in April. Nick was illegally deported from Zimbabwe and is now being held in Brixton prison. He, like the Guildford 4 and Winchester 3, has been subject to a press and state campaign which has pronounced him 'guilty' before trial – innocent until proven Irish. Contact the Nick Mullen Defence Campaign, c/o 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 for further details. *The Leninist* takes this opportunity to send solidarity greetings to all political prisoners. *AM*

Season's greetings

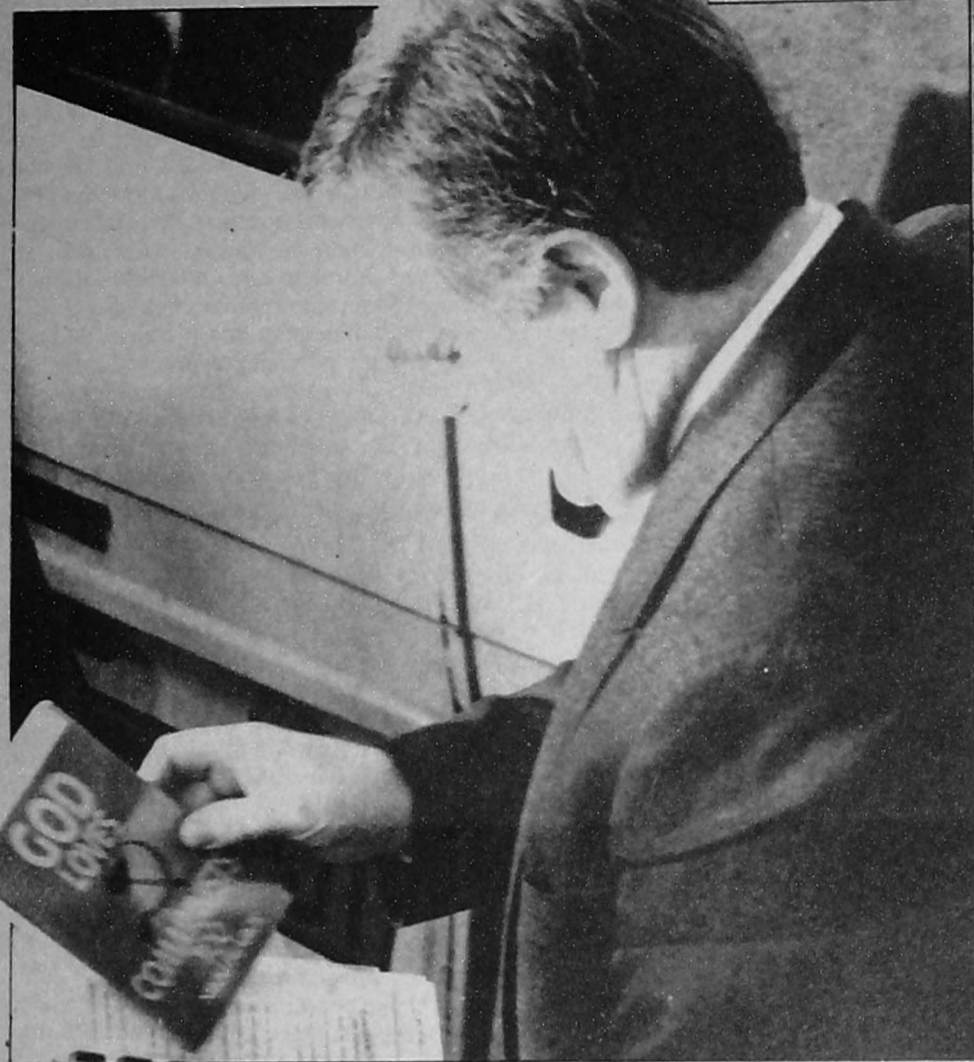


While the bourgeoisie encourages the mass of the population to retreat to the bosom of family values and indulge in individualistic excess it is encouraging to say the least that our readers have not forgotten their communist responsibilities. In the last week we have received a healthy trickle of season's greetings from comrades along with a few not inconsiderable gifts. However generous though these comrades have been we are still well short on December's £600 fighting fund. So far this month we have received just £357. If we are going to enter a new decade in fighting shape it is necessary that this short fall is made up. Many thanks in particular to comrades PP, MK, FG, SE, WD, WR, and AS. And best wishes to all comrades, friends and readers for the 1990s.



After making its mark in the 1980s, the WTM has ambitious plans for the 1990s

Three Doorways to Liquidation



And Mike Hicks might love god. But nothing will save the CPB

Long ago *The Leninist* characterised the various trends of 'official communism' in Britain as so many different opportunist doorways to liquidation of the Communist Party. This process has been rapidly accelerated by the collapse of bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe, which has coincided with the biennial congresses of the three so called 'parties' of 'official communism' in Britain – the pro-'Morning Star' Communist Party of Britain (November 18-19), the Euro Communist Party of Great Britain (November 25-28) and the New Communist Party (December 9-10). Each of these congresses was marked by a loud and militant picket calling on any remaining genuine communists to rebel against their liquidationist misleaders and rally to the banner of *The Leninist*

THE COMMUNIST Party of Great Britain, founded in 1920, was the highest political achievement of the British working class. In its early years it led a substantial section of the trade union movement on an explicitly revolutionary platform through the National Minority Movement, took the initiative in setting up the Councils of Action and Workers Defence Corps of the 1926 General Strike and provided the backbone of the National Unemployed Workers Movement throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

However, because of opportunism, organisationally the CPGB has been in decline since it reached its peak membership of 50,000 in 1945 as a result of the prestige of the Soviet

Red Army in "tearing the guts out of the Nazi war machine," as Churchill put it. There were particularly dramatic drops, for example in 1956, in the aftermath of Khrushchev's attack on Stalin and the crushing of popular counterrevolution by Soviet tanks in Hungary in November. It was, though, 1968 which proved to be a qualitative turning point. In August 1968 troops of the Soviet Union under Brezhnev, together with four other Warsaw Pact countries, brought an end to the 'Prague Spring' and Alexander Dubcek, the Czech party leader, was carted off to Moscow in chains and made to recant. On this occasion a cataclysmic loss of members was prevented by the instant condemnation of the intervention by the party leadership.

However, this produced an opposition trend of so-called 'pro-Soviet tankies' which was soon to divide into three anti-BRS trends: the 1977 split New Communist Party, the Straight Leftist faction and the slower, less defined centrist trend which subsequently entered into an anti-Euro alliance with the section of the right opportunist party bureaucracy around *Morning Star* editor Tony Chater, helping him to transform the paper into his private property. Following widespread bureaucratic expulsions and suspensions by the Euros, this alliance later developed into the Communist Campaign Group and, in April 1988, into the "re-established communist party", the CPB, which is now complete with its own BRS. The combined paper membership of 'official communism' in Britain is now less than 10,000; the number of activists is much, much less.

In the Founding Statement of *The Leninist* (No1, November 1981) we described the state of the Communist Party as "a seething mass of bourgeois and petty bourgeois tendencies – feminism, pacifism, economism, liberalism, anti-Sovietism, nationalism – all the offspring of opportunism. What this leads to if not checked is the dissolving of the party organisationally, for as opportunism has dissolved the party ideologically, it is only one more step, and a 'logical' one, to liquidate the party organisationally."

Let us take a look at the Euros' CPGB 41st Congress to see just how far the process has gone.

Euro Congress

The Euro delegates met against the background of the disintegration of bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe. Although outgoing general secretary Gordon McLennan was proud to announce he would be meeting Solidarnosc's Lech Walesa at the Polish embassy the following week the Euros did not have the courage to follow the lead of the Italian Communist Party, which has already decided to junk its name, along with its hammer and sickle symbol and to "refund" itself as a social democratic party.

All very well for the PCI. It is quite big enough to become the bourgeois workers party in Italy. But for the tiny Euro organisation alongside the established Labour Party, that avenue is closed. It could dissolve itself into the Labour Party, or merge with the greens to form an 'eco-socialist' party, as the Dutch Euros have done. But to retain a separate identity it would need to carry on moving to the right, beyond the space occupied by the Labour Party.

Over the platform hung the banner: "New Times Demands New Thinking", but whereas Gorbachev still claims his 'new thinking' is a development of Marxism-Leninism, Martin Jacques, *Marxism Today* editor and leader of the right-Euro clique is more honest.

In his opening speech on the *Manifesto For New Times* he declared that "Stalinism is dead, and Leninism – its theory of the state, its concept of the party, the absence of civil society, its notion of revolution – has also had its day." How long before Gorbachev, too, renounces Leninism formally, as he has already done in practice?

Jacques went on to describe the "paradox" of the Euro CP, which has become "an impressive cultural force, making waves for every other section of the left" at the same time as leaving "our own organisation, its culture, its habits, its sense of hierarchy, its internal life ... determinedly stuck in history."

Since Jacques took over as editor of *Marxism Today* in 1977, membership of the CPGB has fallen from 25,293 to around 7,500, while the circulation of *Marxism Today* has risen from 3,500 to its present 15,600 (although it should be noted that sales are currently falling). The paradox is explained, of course, by the fact that you don't need any sort of party to propagate bourgeois ideas.

The formula Jacques prescribes to render the organisation a suitable vehicle for the propagation of bourgeois ideas is "the most open discussion, no holds barred, no forbidden territory, no heresies ... From this moment on let's have a continuing all-party public discussion, including the EC, and let's consider all the options, including mergers, a name change, abandoning democratic centra-

lism, modernisation, having different forms of membership, thinking in terms of a looser association rather than a party." (my emphasis – SK) He does not agree with all of these but "we have no future as we are. Whatever we opt to do, it has to be radical."

This proposal for open discussion is given direction by the pointer that "we are also seeing the beginning of the reunification of the socialist movement, which has been divided ever since 1914 into its rival socialist and communist traditions. The international communist movement is now surely at an end."

While leading the party by the nose into liquidation, Jacques was careful to avoid stating exactly what he himself wants of the party, so as not to provide a clear focus around which opposition could be mobilised. After all, who can object to an "open discussion"? This was echoed by Gordon McLennan, in his farewell speech. He appealed to his comrades to "listen to each other", and their apparent Nina Temple called for "open-mindedness". However, these are not appeals to give Leninist ideas a fair hearing. These liquidationists are simply appealing for open minds to bourgeois ideas.

It was left to some others in the *Marxism Today* camp to spell out more specifically what result they would like to see. Jon Bloomfield had set the ball rolling in *7 Days* before congress. Advocating that the party be replaced by a humanist, pluralist, participative, democratic force he offered a choice of forms which this might take: "a radically transformed party, a merging of forces into an organisation with a new name, or the transformation of the Communist Party into an association or movement with a membership open to members of other parties."

This approach was voiced from the congress floor by Mark Perryman: "Let's break with Marxism-Leninism, democratic centralism and the recommended lists" in order to become "a strategic Marxist interventionist force." Tony McNally said the Euro organisation had to be "liberated from its deadly co-con," and called for a special recall conference in six months time to speed the process.

However caution prevailed. Euro ex-industrial organiser Pete Carter declared that "The Communist Party is needed to make the link between the immediate and the longer term," and claimed it was "premature" to rename or redefine the party – implying he would favour liquidation later! The Perryman idea, in the form of Amendment 59 (Midlands), was voted down.

A similar failure to follow the logic of their own position meant that its executive committee sidestepped a vote on whether to delete "Leninism" from the party rules, saying it preferred to do this at the next congress. This was counted as the speaker against deletion, and no other was allowed, depriving the Straight Leftists – more or less invisible in the congress – of a chance to air their views.

Opposition from what might be called the left-Euros, concerned at the downplaying of the CPGB's role but offering no real alternative to liquidation, coalesced around *7 Days*, as the only other available rallying point. This is where Straight Leftist Fergus-Nicholson (Hammersmith and Fulham) threw in his lot, composing with the Scottish District in a pathetic attempt to stop the "falling sales and declining support within the party itself" for *7 Days*, by consulting the membership on "the kind of paper they want".

Resolutions were carried expressing concern about the growing subsidy to *Marxism Today* – £68,562 over a two year period – and instructing the journal to print the words "theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party" more prominently.

The Straight Leftists were not the only faction to be marginalised; so were those pro-*Morning Star* forces which did not go with the CPB. A proposal from Bert Ramelson (West Lewisham) to refer back *MFNT* and implement the original congress decision of two years ago to update the BRS was overwhelmingly defeated, as was a composite calling for "positive steps to further the cause of Communist unity".

Ramelson was not alone in considering *MFNT* confused, jargon-ridden, excessively long and "unamendable". This was proved in the narrowness of the defeat, by 112 votes to 86, of a motion from London, Yorkshire, Wales, Eastern and Northern Districts that only those things specifically debated and voted on be treated as policy – which would have left the bulk of the *Manifesto* as a mere discussion document. Many of the 112 majority shared the same discomfort, but loyalty won the day.

In any case, this was merely a protest vote and did not represent an alternative to the MT strategy for liquidation.

Official optimism

There's none so blind, they say, as those who will not see, and Angela Barnard, writing in the November 1989 issue of the Straight Leftist's *Communist*, flatly denies there is an "historic collapse of the [official] communist movement". The same self-inflicted blindness of official optimism is applied in Straight Leftist's post-congress samizdat, *What Happened at Congress*. This silly little document claims that each *Marxism Today* victory was "pyrrhic" because it provoked and built opposition to itself, overlooking the absence of any viable alternative platform.

The claim that "a new majority is emerging of those who do want to keep the Communist Party and are genuinely seeking the advance to Socialism," is substantiated by clutching at the straw of Resolution 48 (Govanhill, Glasgow), which was "overwhelmingly passed". Far from effectively combatting liquidation, however, the resolution omits Leninism and democratic centralism. It calls for a "strong, independent Socialist Party," not a communist party. It should be a "campaigning party, a party of struggle," and a "think-tank of the left" - the recent role of *Marxism Today* and the *MFNT* being cited as good examples of this. These, of course, are politics for which a Communist Party is inappropriate, and which lead logically to liquidation.

The samizdat also claims the defeat of liquidationism (although "it will appear again") in the rejection by congress of Midlands Amendment 536 and Kelvin (Glasgow) Resolution 47, the latter proposing a commission on organisation and structure. Both of these, however, represent merely alternative tactics to the liquidationist "no holds barred discussion" favoured by the *Marxism Today* leadership faction and voted through with Resolution 59 (Leeds City). Their rejection does not present an obstacle to liquidation.

Wishful thinking will not save the day.

Part timers

Typically, for a paper which will last as long as Gorbachev's USSR continues to purchase more than half its copies, the *Morning Star* has to bend the truth, not just a little, but a lot. While it may claim that, with the "re-established" CPB, "Britain has a communist party again," the CPB's leaders prove otherwise.

They all have a (safe) part time attitude to politics, not least because they have a part time general secretary (Mike Hicks), setting the example for the rest of the 'party' to follow. Following his leader, industrial organiser Kevin Halpin told the congress how little 'party' work he could get done, being "on the tools", and likewise CPB national women's organiser, Mary Davis, has refused to relinquish her TUC salary for the life of any sort of serious politician.

The result is the failure of the CPB to do anything. This can be seen all too well in the 19 months since its 're-establishment congress' in April 1988; embarrassingly obvious from the large print, spacious layout and pompous padding of the 12 page *Report of work* of the outgoing executive committee. A complaint from the floor about the sparseness of the National Peace Advisory report (which gave absolutely no information about work done) elucidated little news from Tom Durkin except that there had been "joint meetings with members of other communist organisations in Manchester, Birmingham and London".

Equally revealing was the list of publicity materials produced. It is a useful indicator, showing that leaflets for mass distribution were produced in quantities more appropriate to a local than a national organisation: Poll Tax broadsheet 20,000; South Africa leaflet 15,000; peace leaflet 15,000; equal pay leaflet 10,000; recruiting leaflet 5,000; total 65,000 ie, an average of 43 leaflets per member. Note that these are quantities produced, not distributed; one speaker complained of piles of Poll Tax broadsheets lying unused in the CPB's offices.

No report is given of the payment of membership dues, but under "finance" we learn that £77,000 was "raised for party funds" in the financial year 1988-9, an average of less than £30 per member - less than an unem-

ployed member of *The Leninist* raises every month for our organisation, not to speak of our Summer Offensives.

A challenge that the "serious problems afflicting the party's industrial work" were not indicated in the *Report* was quickly thrust from public view into the closed session. This is a devastating weakness for the CPB to face, since it prided itself on taking most of what was left of the industrial muscle out of the CPGB when it split. Two "national industrial aggregates" had been held. "The first was attended by 40 comrades and the second was held on July 22," so the second meeting must have been unreportably small!

The congress was characterised by frustration, as delegates believing the adoption of its programme warranted serious discussion found no time allowed for it. Ever since the foundation of the CPB's forerunner, the Communist Campaign Group, in the autumn of 1985, criticism of the *BRS* had been taboo,

was their only chance to vote against the programme as a whole, had they wanted to.

Mary Davis, on the contrary, declared that she does not fully support the *BRS*, "especially the formulation on state power". Chris Ward (Govan) went further: the working class, he said, "cannot simply take over the state". He insisted on moving Amendment 37 on the floor of congress, arguing that "existing organs of working class democracy such as trade unions, trades councils, tenants associations, shop stewards committees and unemployed workers organisations ... would form the embryo of the socialist state."

Tony Chater, instead of confronting this half baked attempt at a Leninist formulation on the grounds that it contradicted his parliamentary road of "transforming" bourgeois state institutions, knocked it down on a technicality. Trade unions, he quite rightly said, must not be part of the socialist state - leaving the implication that he favoured trans-

Congress facts

•CPGB

Approximately 350 delegates, representing some 7,500 members. Launched a "no holds barred debate" on the party's future aims, structure, role and name. Postponed the deletion of "Leninism" from the party's rules until the next (42nd) congress. Ditched the "outdated" *BRS* programme for socialism and adopted the *Manifesto for New Times* as a strategy to "open up new possibilities for change". Rejected by 182 to 86 votes a motion that only those elements of the *Manifesto* debated and voted on in congress should become policy. Rejected by a large majority a motion to refer back the *MFNT* and re-draft the *BRS*.

Overwhelmingly rejected a call for unity "with those who are still comrades and still communists".

Instructed *Marxism Today* to print "communist party" more prominently. Decided to campaign for sales of its weekly *7 Days* with a "clear identity as a communist newspaper". Voted to "critically examine the changing political scenario" in Ireland, and narrowly rejected a call to support 'Time To Go', British withdrawal and a constitutional conference. Sees the Labour Party as "the central force in defeating Thatcherism", but wants Labour to enter into electoral alliances in order to win.

•CPB

162 delegates representing a membership of 1,681 (1,570 in April 1988). Endorsed the so-called Alternative Economic and Political Strategy and adopted a revised *BRS* programme, despite doubts expressed in debates on 'state power' and 'the Labour Party'. Rejected a proposal to change the name of the programme by 107 votes to 50 (with 2 abstentions). Some delegates 'bemused' by lack of debate, and no opportunity to vote for or against the programme as a whole.

Launched party-wide discussions on 'the environment and energy' and 'the socialist countries'.

Instructed a reluctant Executive Committee by 99 votes to 59 (with 4 abstentions) to organise a "consultative conference on communist unity".

Made the *Morning Star* (again) No1 priority.

Renewed its commitment to 'the next Labour government'.

•NCP

Some 40 delegates representing at most 200 members. The NCP's Seventh Congress condemned Gorbachev's "non-class concepts" such as glasnost, new thinking, common European home and universal human rights but, as congenial centrists, gave "critical support" for perestroika. Condemned the Euro CPGB for advocating an anti-Tory electoral pact but called for an ad hoc "national communist committee" of all 'official communists'. Committed to the 'next Labour government'.

since it was declared to be the basis of communist unity until such time as the party could be re-established. Now the time for discussion has come, and what do they get?

No discussion of the programme in the issue of *Communist Review*, "theoretical and discussion journal of the CPB", immediately before congress. Two very thin pre-congress discussion documents containing a selection of shabby last minute thoughts; no one had done serious work on the question. Then the congress itself was confined to two days, instead of the four days customary in the CPGB and still practised by the Euros. No time was allowed for the discussion of the programme as a whole, only debates on certain aspects; and no vote was taken for or against the programme, only a vote to accept a committee report on the fate of a myriad of resolutions and amendments.

At 1.15pm on the Sunday, with the Scottish coach due to depart at 4.30pm "because the comrades have to go to work tomorrow," Perry Miles (Harrow) interrupted proceedings with a point of order, saying many comrades were "bemused" because they could not see at which part of the agenda the discussion on the *BRS* was to take place. A procedural motion from Birmingham to refer discussion of the programme to a Special Congress because of lack of time was rejected, and the tired old *BRS* was railroaded through.

Judy Cotter, for the Resolutions Committee, claimed that all the "concerns some of us had" about the denial of class struggle, dialectics, alliances and the state had been met in the revised *BRS*, and her report was voted through with delegates hardly aware that this

referring state power to workers councils, which of course he doesn't! The motion was lost.

CPB delegates voted 99 to 59 - despite leadership resistance - for a consultative conference with "communists outside the CPB" on the question of communist unity, treating their newly adopted programme as a mere "tactical" difference with the NCP, which has no programme but was founded as an anti-*BRS* split, and the Euro CPGB, which had already announced in *7 Days* its dropping of the *BRS*.

Implicitly recognising that the CPGB has not been "re-established", that Britain does not have "a communist party again", that the CPB is not it, Mary Davis said: "Without communist unity the working class cannot be united. Our own party is still small ... Tactical differences are being elevated to the level of principle ... We must unite with all who call themselves Marxist-Leninist", for example the NCP.

NCP Congress

The NCP's demise is likely to be even more swift than the CPB's. Its chief paymaster, the corrupt Czechoslovak bureaucracy, has just crumbled, and its multitude of fulltimers can soon be expected to swell the reserve army of labour. This fact evidently escaped the bulk of the 40 or so tired 'delegates' (do they represent anyone?) who in the course of a congress even shorter than the CPB's voted - against its leadership's recommendation - to appoint a full time national youth organiser -

a career which promises to be even shorter than that of Egon Krens!

A number of bourgeois newspapers recently reported the NCP as having 'under 1,000 members', which is what Eric Trevett has always told them; but they had only 500 members in 1979 and have lost hundreds since then. Our 'guesstimate' today is 200 and shrinking. What motivates the NCP's overtures for "communist unity" is the desire to postpone death by cuddling together with the other dying bodies of 'official communism'.

Real, lasting communist organisational unity can only be built on the basis of ideological unity, achieved through protracted open ideological struggle. The 1977 NCP split from the CPGB, however, was an opting out of ideological struggle and, as we said in the Founding Statement of *The Leninist* in November 1981, provides "an excellent example for us to use to illustrate the futility of organisational methods of struggle alone when fighting for the regeneration of communism..."

The NCP congress carried a resolution for the formation of "an ad hoc national communist committee with representatives from each communist party". While it seems to us unlikely, it is not impossible for the leaderships of the CPB and NCP - and perhaps some centrists from the Straight Leftist faction and Bert Ramelson's pro-*Morning Star* tendency in the CPGB - to overcome their 'tactical' differences on Ireland (NCP for and CPB against the armed struggle), the *BRS* programme (the NCP was formed against it), and the AEPS (again opposed by the NCP). 'Principle' is cheap for opportunists.

What is possible by this method is opportunist unity, not communist unity. Trevett's proposal, although he welcomed the CPB's congress decision to convene a consultative conference on communist unity, is for "leadership meetings" leading to "fusion". Today, however, much more powerful centrifugal forces are at work. More splits are much more likely than "fusion". The collapse of corrupt bureaucratic socialism is bringing the disintegration of all forms of opportunism to boiling point, and the ability of bureaucratic centralist methods to organisationally suppress differences of opinion is weakening day by day.

While the NCP has survived thus far by shielding its faithful believers from open polemic, the recent condemnation of the 1968 Warsaw Pact military intervention against the Prague Spring by both the Czechoslovak and Soviet communist parties has finally brought an end to the NCP's most abject tailing of Soviet revisionism.

Trevett, in his main speech, came out with this little gem: "Frankly, we no longer can be mealy-mouthed." (*New Worker, December 11*). A revealing piece of self criticism. Confessing to "increasing misgivings" about perestroika, he concludes that the Soviet "line on a number of questions is a revisionist one." Without actually naming Gorbachev (that's mealy-mouthed, Eric), he states: "There is in fact a mish-mash of anti-Leninist ideological positions being projected ... the world communist movement has been assailed with a barrage of non-class concepts: Glasnost, New Thinking, Common European Home, Universal Human Values, Our Partners." We know exactly who is projecting those ideas, don't we Eric!

Surely the appropriate Leninist response to revisionism and anti-Leninism is to fight it to the death. The NCP's response is typically centrist. Unable to stand on the strength of its own politics, it must, despite the criticisms which it has been forced to make, follow Soviet opportunism all the way to the counterrevolutionary grave, albeit reluctantly.

The NCP will "continue to give critical support to perestroika" (my emphasis - SK), in other words, support to revisionism, to anti-Leninism. All who continue to sail in the anti-Leninist NCP craft, indeed all who cannot break with centrism and move towards the CPGB (*The Leninist*), will be lost to communism as the disintegration of 'official communism' is completed.

As we said in the Founding Statement of *The Leninist*: "To attempt to build the party around the principles of democratic centralism without ideological unity can only lead to total instability, a house built on sand." It can only produce "a false, bureaucratic unity ... which is bound to shatter at the first serious test." Real ideological unity can only be built through open ideological struggle against all opportunist tendencies in the workers' movement, not least Gorbachevism, the most dangerous form of opportunism in the world today.

Stan Kelsey



The chickens come home to roost

The welcome release of the Guildford 4 has shown once again the soft underbelly of the British left. While *The Leninist and Hands Off Ireland!* raised the demand, "Free all political prisoners", including Volunteers of the IRA and Inla, others, such as Workers Press and Fight Racism, Fight Imperialism sought to ride the tide of liberal guilt by only demanding the freedom of the framed prisoners. Typical. When events cause the question of Britain's war in Ireland to be posed point blank, the British left furiously tries to fudge it again.

We were a little surprised to read in the November/December issue of *Workers Hammer*, paper of the rather odd Spartacist League sectlet, the statement that they "fight for full citizenship rights for all foreign workers and full immigration rights for their close family members." Only for "close family members"? It seems that our cultish 'r-r-revolutionaries' have more in common with the *Morning Star's* call for "non racist immigration laws" than the basic anti-racist, Leninist demand for the smashing of all immigration laws.

The Revolutionary Communist Party has put its paper, the next step, on to the back burner now that our favourite band of student hipsters has the glossy *Living Marxism* to flog around the refectory. Its poor old weekly has recently lost its colour banner and took a month long break over the 'festive period'. Only 37 issues have been published this year. Add this to the independently minded typesetting equipment that its editor, Joan Phillips, is cursed with (as reported in the last issue it miraculously comes out with a different political line than the one its editor feeds in) and it looks like trouble.

The dinosaurs of the New Communist Party cannot be long for this world. Gorbachev has declared that god is dead. And to prove it all the little demi-gods are busy keeling over in Eastern Europe. Listen for the snap of Eastern purses snapping shut. Even the ossified fossils in the NCP seem to be grasping that all is not well. The editorial of the *New Worker*, December 8 1989, notes the condemnation of the 1968 Czech intervention, by the Soviet and Czech parties. But, it says, we weren't wrong to support the intervention. So what does the rag think of the Soviet's new line? It doesn't say.



The end of the Thatcher decade?

ARE WE seeing the Thatcherite decade draw to an ignominious close? In the past few short months Britain's what seemed previously invulnerable PM has come in for more flak than at any other time, whether it be the during the Falklands or Westlands. While Thatcher won convincingly against the ageing upstart Meyer, she was cut to the quick by the disloyalty of 60 of her parliamentary flock, something which, during the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Tories, seemed hardly possible. It's all reminiscent of a tacky re-write of the end of *Morte D'Arthur*, really: centre stage, Thatcher; Meyer, an ineffectual Mordred; Lawson, a bloated Lancelot. Dennis as Guinevere spoils it a little, but no analogy's perfect. Stick with Malory.

Many are now predicting the demise of 'the Iron Lady': The Revolutionary Communist Party's *Living Marxism* led on "the end of the decayed"; Martin Jacques' *Marxism Today* forecast "the end of Thatcherism" back in October, before the full force of the storm hit, with all the conviction with which it proclaimed it's invincibility such a short time ago. After *MT* had spent long years cowering before Thatcher, wheeling out bourgeois journalists such as the *Financial Times'* Charlie Leadbetter or radical commentators such as Andrew Gamble to paint the picture of the granite facade of eighties Toryism.

MT's May '89 cover had a 'Britannia' Thatcher pulled across foamy blue seas by a majestic lion. Now the boat seems to be sinking. But the journal's editor, Martin Jacques, needed someone to tear down the aforementioned granite facade and paper over the cracks in *MT's* political constructions.

Eric Hobsbawm proved just the man for the job. Thatcher's 'radicalism', so overplayed by *Marxism Today* and like minded radicals, was in the past alleged to have galvanised broad social forces around its platform, yielding it victory upon victory. Now this 'radicalism' is supposed to have brought the Tories low through putting too many noses out of joint. But why now? I read and re-read Hobs-

bawm and could not find an answer.

It's certainly seasonally appropriate that we should celebrate the death of the Wicked Witch of the North. Are our leftist munchkins right, though?

Let us state in the first place that there never was anything particularly new in anything on the Thatcherite agenda. Enoch Powell had won a considerable following, not least within the working class, well before Thatcher's Tory leadership, with similar populist racist demagoguery. The economic policies of the last decade are not peculiar to Thatcher either; they date from the mid-seventies, introduced by Labour Chancellor Dennis Healey in the face of mounting economic stagnation. Eighties wide-ranging privatisation is a perfectly logical extension of this.

The government's problems arise not, as some have suggested, through an exhausted ideological agenda. They are deeply entrenched in the uncertain and stormy future of the British economy in the nineties. The mini 'recovery' which the British economy went through in the mid-eighties was, as all commentators acknowledged, a temporary affair. The boosted profit rates in domestic industry during this period were due to the 'shaking out' of unprofitable capital and "the tendency to rely on acquisitions at the expense of organic growth" (*Financial Times* survey, 'Industrial Prospects', January 5 1987).

Profitability was not due to new investment but to more efficient use of existing capital. All this is open to other countries, many of which can also substitute it with a level of investment unattainable for Britain now. The eighties Thatcherite 'solution' could only be temporary, and insufficient to put Britain back in the first division. Manufacturing output is below 1979 levels and Britain's relative decline continues apace.

Much British capital has migrated overseas. From the late eighties direct investment overseas shot up. Again, this maintains the profitability of British capitalism far more effectively and easily than investment in ailing British industry. The consequent balance of

payments deficit is an unavoidable burden.

The Lawson versus Thatcher faction fight is in part an expression of this. Each blames the other's monetary policies for the current difficulties. These 'difficulties', though, flow not from monetary policy but from the structure of Britain's moribund economy. Thatcher and Lawson are busily engaged in a bout of Pontius Pilate-like hand washing to disassociate themselves from this mess. Pity them both, as there is nothing fundamentally either could or can do about it.

Things look grim for the future. Come 1992, Britain can neither afford to stay out nor hope for any gains within the EC. Outside, it would be sandwiched between major imperialist power blocs, with no chance of holding its own against an integrated European economy. But if it goes in, it will have its economic defences lowered to other more dynamic economies in the bloc, specifically Federal Germany, which cannot but become stronger still in the coming period, as a result of the counterrevolutionary developments in Eastern Europe, which the FGR is uniquely equipped to exploit. The relatively weak British economy will be hit hard and harder still by this.

As Thatcher once said, though, there is no alternative. The old order cannot be maintained. Despite her hectoring, Britain does not have the clout to slam the brakes on. In fact, the other west European imperialists have told her most resolutely where to get off. The USA is very unlikely to act as a crutch. The much vaunted 'special relationship' does not seem to extend to a long term economic piggyback. Britain is at the moment trying to make the best of a bad job out of 1992, and the Tories are squabbling among themselves as to which evil, exactly, is the lesser.

What are the political implications of this? Burgeoning economic crisis, specifically rising mortgage rates, has caused a haemorrhaging of support from the government. The middle class and upper sections of the working class, who had previously done so well out of the last ten years, now in many cases find themselves in deep trouble. Having become used to rising living standards and their own home, whose value appreciates daily, it is a nasty shock to now have it snatched back though rocketing mortgages. Bourgeois commentators look gloomily on and warn that more will follow. Yesterday's ardent Tories are having second thoughts today.

It is possible that the government will rein things in by the time of the next election. If this is done then full fire will be directed against the Labour Party, which in the cold light of day is still as limp as ever. It is strong now because the Tories are weak. Even on its natural terrain of bourgeois politics it has no convincing programme, merely the cast offs of the Tories. It has no distinct alternative and promises nothing for workers.

Labour could get in at the next election, supposing things get

further out of hand for the Tories around that time. We have long argued that Labour through the eighties has gone from its post war position of alternative party of government and reverted to a party of crisis, its role in the inter-war period.

It would be placed in if the Tories internal wrangles made them no longer a realistic option for the bourgeoisie, or if rising workers' militancy forced capitalism to place in Labour to head this off. Given its Thatchnockite policies, the latter would not be particularly convincing at the moment. Certainly, much of the left's combinations of revolutionary rhetoric with calls to vote Labour and pious hopes in 'the next Labour government' become more and more bizarre.

One thing we can be sure of is that talk of 'the exhaustion of Tory strategy', purveyed by *Marxism Today* and its leftist doppelganger, *Living Marxism*, is wishful thinking. Reports of its death are, sadly, greatly exaggerated.

Britain's continuing decline will demand further attacks on the working class. Workers will be forced to fight, as the bosses try and offload their crisis on us. This must inevitably be backed up by the force of the state. Thatcher, and the Tories in general, have always proved to be the most reliable tools for the bourgeoisie in this, whether against striking miners, printers or the black or homosexual communities. Ideologically, the hard nosed class war approach of the preferred party of the bourgeoisie is far more effective than the old 'beer and sandwiches at Number 10' of the seventies or the vacuous Thatcherite tail-ending of Kinnock's party.

The strategies of divide and rule, of resolute assaults on our class, are far from exhausted as far as the ruling class is concerned. Thatcher has proven herself a worthy practitioner of such strategies throughout the eighties. Whether she can maintain this into the nineties is another thing altogether. There is a possibility that she might be thrown to the wolves, scapegoated in the interests of short term stability. But any compromise can only be precisely that - short lived. In the face of further stagnation and decay, with crisis looming, the ruling class will be forced to up the ante. It will need trenchant fighters in its class war. And so do we.

The current altercations within the Tory party are encouraging. They give communists greater room for manoeuvre as the repercussions are felt through society. But however 'bad' things get, even to the point of dumping Thatcher or the government, this can only be an interlude before renewed assaults on our class. Illusions in the Labour Party will not rebuff that assault but disarm us in the face of it. Militancy, as the strikes over the past decade have proven, is not enough. We need a genuine Communist Party to meet the cutting edge of the state's attacks with our own.

Only *The Leninist* fights for that Party.

Alan Merrik

REVIEWS

Whose Unity?

Unity Theatre Conference, London, Sunday November 19, 1989

WHILE the original Workers Theatre Movement reflected the revolutionary line of the CPGB in the late twenties and early thirties, Unity Theatre, founded in 1936, reflected its shift towards reformism and respectability.

Although there was continuity — some of the positive elements of the WTM survived — Unity Theatre was a retreat from revolutionary theatre in both form and content. Instead of agit-prop street theatre, it turned to naturalistic presentation of full-length plays in theatres, with no emphasis on serving the working class in struggle.

After collapsing in the mid-seventies, there are now moves to set up a new Unity Theatre. Naturally a conference to 'present the case for a new Unity' was of interest to those of us in the new Workers Theatre Movement. The WTM welcomed the initiative. It could provide a valuable opportunity to raise the issue of revolutionary theatre both in terms of lessons from the past and how to launch it into the 1990s.

Therefore, we threw ourselves into preparations for the conference, giving practical assistance in terms of mobilising, distribution of publicity material; three comrades volunteered to serve on Unity's steering committee.

We also organised discussions with all WTM comrades about how a new Unity Theatre could serve the cause of socialism. In organisational terms this led us to the conclusion that Unity should operate as an umbrella organisation for groups like ourselves and initiate regular social events to develop performers committed to socialism, along with a writers workshop and a youth club.

Now, those who still depend upon the *Morning Star* for their news will have a rather misinformed view of the conference, to say the least. In its own inimitable style, it told its readers that the conference "tragically ... fell victim to political bickering".

It is obvious to anyone who was present that this refers to the WTM, but the *Morning Star* lacks the political honesty to mention us by name; instead it darkly referred to "the disruptive minority". Incidentally, the majority of the "useful points" which the *Star* article praises were originated with WTM comrades.

In the 'amateur or professional workshop', the WTM comrades successfully argued against the attempt to railroad Unity into establishing a professional company by the appointed leader of the workshop, Euro actor and member of the Unity Trust, Harry Landis. The majority in the workshop would have none of this, and Landis' scheme was scuppered.

In fact, if there was a "disruptive minority," it was the Euros. This anti-party faction attempted to win the conference to its own liberalistic political view. In a last minute amendment — seconded by Landis — to Unity's steering committee's declaration, Euro and capitalist 'entrepreneur' Bernard Rubin attempted to remove all reference to fighting against capitalism and for socialism, because it might put off Christian Aid!

After hearing two WTM speakers arguing against this, the whole thing was put to the vote (the only vote, and hence the only opportunity to judge who was the "disruptive minority"). The conference rejected the Euro amend-

ment, and the declaration was overwhelmingly carried.

Unfortunately some 'progressives' did not want to be seen to oppose the Euros. Some even actually condemned us from the floor. Yet not a few approached our comrades afterwards and said privately that they supported us but that we should 'soften' our approach.

One of these was a leading Unity figure who stated that we were the true heirs to Unity and that we could have played a significant role in the development of Unity if only we'd kept quiet and made 'modest contributions'.

Rather than apologise for "any offence and disruption caused", the WTM has every right to the thanks of the Unity Theatre Society for all the work we did to make the conference a success. If the conference did represent a step towards a new socialist Unity Theatre, it was in no small measure due to us. And far from keeping "quiet" and "making modest contributions", the WTM will continue to do all that is necessary to forge a socialist theatre.

Tom Cormack

Oil and water

Irish Republican Socialist Party, *The Starry Plough* No7 (no date), 40p from 392 Falls Road, Belfast 12.

IN OUR review of the previous edition of the *Starry Plough* in September I warned against the continuing, seemingly entrenched, eclecticism of the IRSP's paper. Unfortunately this is still the case. The contradiction and confusion of issue six is carried over into seven.

A prime example of this is the paper's position on the socialist countries — something whose importance, especially at this time, needs no explanation. In past issues of the *Plough* contributors have approached the question with positions varying from the 'state capitalist' line, through what seem to be variants on 'orthodox' Trotskyism to a position not dissimilar to our own, a position which seems to be defended in the main by comrade Francis Glenn in the paper's pages.

In the current issue this continues. The back page 'Debate on USSR' has an article by Robert Lake, who promotes the Cliffite-SWP variant of 'state cap'. We are presented with Cliff's predictable fare of neo-Keynesianism dressed up as Marxism: "The 'cold war' and the arms races are clearly examples of competition financed by the exploitation of Soviet workers". There is no room to counter comrade Lake's extreme confusion here; see 'National Chauvinism or International Socialism' in *The Leninist*, July 15 1988 for a brief critique of the 'state cap' position.

This is coupled with a puerile dismissal of other characterisations of the Soviet Union: comrade Glenn's defence of the Soviet Union is "banal, crude and dangerous". What is more, it is tainted because of "bedfellows" like the CPI who "perceive gains from cuddling up to the Soviets". He goes on to visit schoolboy humour on us by asking whether the Trotskyist 'degenerated workers' state' thesis "is suggesting that Russia is populated by 'degenerated workers'." Yuk!

I do not agree with Trotsky's analysis, nor with the entirety of

comrade Glenn's, but really, Robert, I do think it takes a little more to demolish them than a combination of flat dismissal and strained attempts at wit.

Adding to the confusion, inside the paper we find an unsigned article commemorating the 72nd anniversary of the October revolution, which absolutely correctly states: "The threat of capitalist restoration is very real. The task is posed now for Marxists to understand how these difficulties arose and to affix political responsibility for them. The gains of 1917 have not yet been lost. Their continued existence, let alone their expansion, depends on the world communist movement."

Which, if any, of these positions is the IRSP's? I posed this in the last review of the *Plough*. Three months later I'm none the wiser. What can its readers make of it all? On the basis of what world view is the IRSP recruiting and winning support? At the moment it seems to be keeping its options open, which can only exacerbate the eclecticism of the party, as new comrades will be drawn to it on the basis of widely differing views only to have their confusion compounded or their prejudices confirmed. Discussion is a good thing. It is not an excuse for de facto political agnosticism. The IRSP must come out with a clear position, rather than seeking to accommodate all comers.

The above quote from the unsigned article poses other questions. For instance, what is the world communist movement that they refer to, how is it characterised politically, what are the revolutionary forces within it and what are their tasks in this period?

Despite occasional references to this movement in the pages of the *Plough*, we are left guessing. Why are such questions not tackled? Again, it seems that the IRSP is trying to get the best of all worlds: adopting formal commitments to positions without carrying through the logic of them in polemic.

Defining oneself in relation to the world communist movement in a revolutionary way will inevitably involve a sharp break with left nationalist forces, along with those who adhere to the petty bourgeois ideologies of 'state capitalism', Trotskyism and the like. A similar process of definition and delineation is demanded on the international level. As an example, a clear line on Hands Off Ireland! is needed.

The comrades state they will answer our reply to their letter of withdrawal and our criticisms in their next issue. Yet it seems they object to the publication of their withdrawal. Ideological struggle only has any relevance as open and honest ideological struggle.

The party must be built from the top down with the utmost ideological clarity. Fear of opening wounds and creating new ones is no excuse for not pushing such issues to their final conclusion. As Lenin said — and practiced — better a good ideological fight than a bad peace.

The lack of clarity within the Republican Socialist Movement brought about the 'feud' of 1987. The comrades of the IRSP know this all too well. Yet much unclarity still persists. The oil and water mixture of a petty bourgeois mish-mash and communism must be resolved in the sharpest, most resolute terms.

Lenin stated that publicity is the sword that heals the wound it itself makes. A sharp and coherent perspective can only strengthen communists, even if it loses us friends in the short run. But the IRSP's polemical sword remains blunt and is wielded with reluctance.

Alan Merrik

ACTION

The Leninist

London Seminars: 5pm, Sundays. Details: 01-431 3135

January 7: What is feminism?

January 14: What should our attitude be to positive discrimination?

January 21: Do communists believe in separate organisation of women? Should communists build a working class women's movement?

Hands Off Ireland!

Join the HOI! contingent on the Bloody Sunday demonstration, Saturday January 27, Hyde Park, London at 12 noon. Transport from Manchester and Sheffield. Ring 01-431 3135 for details.



Sell Hands Off Ireland! Current issue contains articles on the Guildford 4 and prisoners of war; the movement we need; Marx and the Fenians; and HOI's 1990 Easter commemoration. Single orders 40p; bulk (5 and over) 20p each, inc. p&p from our address.

From the new year, London HOI! will be organising weekly activists meetings in central London. Come along and join the resistance! Write or ring for details.

Workers Theatre Movement

Burns Night and Ewan McColl commemoration at the WTM club, *The Internationale*, at the Old Piano Warehouse, 33 Hawley Road, Camden Town, NW1. Thursday January 25, 7.30pm.

Rehearsals: Every Sunday in London. Next rehearsal January 7.

Phone Paul Harrington on 01-431 3135 or write to WTM, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX for details of WTM activities.

Unemployed Workers Charter

Central London Meetings: Every Monday, 8pm, at the Diorama Arts Centre, 18 Park Square East, NW1. (tube: Regents Park or Great Portland Street)

January 8: The NUWM and the 1926 General Strike.

January 15: Trade Union opposition to ET and the 'actively seeking work' clause.

January 22: Unemployed mineworkers in the 1920s.

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They can win!

Apart from the anger and determination of the ambulance workers themselves, there are good reasons to believe that this dispute can be victorious

FOLLOWING the pattern of many struggles in the 1980s the ambulance workers' dispute is proving long and bitter. Because of this there are many lessons which can and must be learned from the miners, printers, seafarers, dockers and, of course, the healthworkers dispute last year. We don't want another heroic defeat!

Apart from the anger and determination of the ambulance workers themselves, there are good reasons to believe that this dispute can be victorious. As much as organisations like the RCP might put it down to "press hype" and the SWP insists that there is a "downturn in the class struggle", the working class is starting to flex its muscles again and fight back against the onslaught we have suffered during the last decade.

What is more, crucially, the Tories are in deep trouble. Every day seems to bring fresh problems for them. The extent of their difficulties is shown by the challenge to Thatcher's leadership, the first such challenge in her fourteen year 'reign' and unthinkable only a matter of months ago. And now the scab Association of Professional Ambulance Personnel has all but collapsed.

This is very good news for the working class. Not, we must emphasise, in that it brings the day closer when Neil goes to meet Elizabeth and promises to serve her as a loyal prime minister. No, the good news for us is that these divisions and difficulties create possibilities for us to go on to the offensive.

To do that those involved in struggle need to fight for more than public sympathy. The ambulance workers are, of course, *workers*. That, unfortunately, is something that needs saying. The reason this needs to be stressed is that so much of the left have jumped onto the sympathy bandwagon. *Socialist Worker* has overtaken even the *Morning Star* in the cringe stakes with its campaign of urging support for "those who care". Given this trajectory it will soon be calling nurses 'angels' along with *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*.

It is essential that ambulance workers reject this soft, pull the heart strings approach, in the same way the nurses did, and fight as workers demanding other workers give not only sympathy but solidarity ... that would be worth far more than any petition, even a 4.5 million record breaking one.

What about the TUC? Should we wait around for it to give "the call" for solidarity strikes, as the SWP argues? Definitely not! Another obvious lesson from re-

cent disputes is not to place any trust in the TUC.

The TUC has proved itself more interested in coming up with guidelines so loved by management and promoting Lech 'loadsacheaplabour' Walesa. It was the TUC which sponsored him to come to Britain to meet with Tory ministers and tell bosses how to make fat profits at the expense of the already beleaguered Polish working class.

The healthworkers, just like the printers, the miners and the steelworkers before them, learned from bitter experience last year all about the treacherous role of the TUC. All it was capable of delivering was hot air rallies and a knife in the back. Indeed, so incensed were healthworkers over the TUC's role that they chased Norman Willis off the platform of his NHS Day Hyde Park jamboree. We wouldn't blame ambulance workers if they did the same at the TUC's national demonstration in London on January 13.

The ambulance workers have tremendous respect from other workers. They could become the focal point for the class as a whole to move into action with a generalised strike wave, not only to bust through Clarke's miserable wage cut pay offer but the Tories' anti-trade union laws.

The more (illegal) solidarity strike action the better. We must stop playing by their rules. If there is any proof necessary of the need to smash the Tories' anti-trade union laws then just look at the dockers' dispute earlier this year. Fighting in the bosses' courts or waiting for the TUC - or the Labour Party - only leads to demoralisation and defeat.

Where we look to mass action from below, the SWP puts its faith in not only the TUC, but Kinnock. The Labour Party, it says, should be the decisive cutting edge of the ambulance workers' fight. Predictably though, 'those who should be delivering the killer blows by our side are silent' (*Socialist Worker*, November 25).

Of course, the only "killer blows" the thoroughly respectable, pro-capitalist, Thatchnockite Labour Party will deliver are those *against* the ambulance workers themselves. The fact that the Labour Party leadership has been able to appear to give support to the ambulance workers is a result of the *ineffective* way Roger Poole and the Nupe bureaucracy have run the dispute so far, not least the absence of any calls for militant solidarity. As soon as the action is escalated, begins to bite, involves other workers, goes beyond the limits of Tory legality, the Labour leaders will scurry for cover.

Nupe's strategy of relying on public sympathy combined with pleas to the bosses courts, professional lobbyists and targeting Tory constituencies, is doomed to defeat. Ambulance workers know this but cannot see any other way forward.

The only way to get to victory is through rank and file ambulance workers seizing this dispute by the throat, taking on the Labourite misleaders, organising themselves and demanding solidarity and strike action from other workers.

There is no doubt - as the size of the December 15 shop stewards meeting in Birmingham proves - that this will be difficult. But there must be rank and file coordination. In London there are 72 stations with many different shifts. What this cries out for is an all-London strike committee which links up with other strike committees in the towns and cities across the country in a National Strike Committee.

But more is needed:

- Other healthworkers must be actively involved. Cross union action committees must be set up in which healthworker activists can hammer out a joint strategy to take on the Tories. This is the way to overcome the dead hand of the trade union bureaucracy.

- Ambulance workers Support Groups must be established in every town and city. They must organise street collections and workplace levies, and mobilise speaking teams of ambulance workers to argue the case for generalised solidarity strike action.

- All ambulance stations must be occupied. The question of who controls emergency cover is vital. Emergency cover must be organised under workers control. Otherwise, as we have seen, the bosses will use their control of this crucial area as a strike breaking weapon.

- The use of troops, police and voluntary organisations as scabs must be confronted. They are more aware than anyone that they cannot provide the level of cover necessary. The ambulance workers must produce an offensive strategy to deal with this problem. They must make every effort to get in among these scabs and cause divisions in their ranks.

If the ruling class is faced with militant occupations, workers control, solidarity strikes and divisions opening up in its own state machine, then we won't hear any more remarks from Clarke about second rate taxi drivers or pathetic 6.5% offers. We would see a great victory for all our class and a mighty step forward along the road to the society where the income and health of our class is decided not by profit but by need.

Gavin Kyle





The old and the new

This is an edited version of the speech given by comrade John Bridge, National Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain ('The Leninist') on December 17 1989 at a specially convened meeting in Central London to report the Fourth Conference of the Leninists and its results

DEAR COMRADES, I am delighted to announce that the Fourth Conference of the Leninists of the Communist Party of Great Britain has taken place. The conference took place at a particularly difficult time for both communists and the working class internationally. With the rise of Gorbachevism there is a 1914 type general crisis of bureaucratic socialism, and the 'official' world communist movement is heading towards the liquidationist abyss.

True to form, bureaucratic socialism and its 'official communist' leadership is not going down with honour, rather the pathetic ignominy of mediocrity. Modrow is reduced to quoting the fears British and French imperialism have of a united German nation state in order to justify the continued existence of the GDR. Equally sickening is Jaruzelski. He fawns before Thatcher like a true convert and faithfully promises to apply her teachings, which in Britain have destroyed whole industries and made millions unemployed. They will not do the same in Poland. They will do worse. Not to be outdone, Imre Pozsgay in Hungary and those at the top of the ruling Socialist Party, have put the country and its industry up for auction to the highest imperialist bidders.

Nineteen eighty-nine has been a decisive turning point. What was once perceived as the monolithic socialist bloc has shattered within the space of twelve months. Some of the old rhetoric remains for the moment, in order though, no doubt, that with its last breath, before the eyes of all the world, 'official communism' may declare that the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin have failed. Even now, both in the west and in the east, 'official communists' are "rediscovering" the social democratic "heritage in their past": a cynical formula for going over to the camp of capitalism in the west and reintroducing it through the back door in the east.

Faced with the prospect of capitalist restoration, the British left's attitude towards the crisis of bureaucratic socialism is dangerously wrong. Instead of unconditionally defending the gains of the world revolution that still survive, the demise of bureaucratic socialism

is being celebrated. True, it is going to Abraham's bosom peacefully and democratically; at the top the bureaucracy no longer has the will to defend the existing order and from below with strikes, votes, migrations, million strong demonstrations and blazing car horns, the people have signalled their rebellion. Nevertheless, however peaceful and democratic, this is a Kronstadt-type counterrevolution backed by the forces of international imperialism.

The "mass mobilisation of the working class against Stalinist rule in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union" is equivalent to workers breaking a strike because they are fed up with the way their thoroughly bureaucratic and corrupt trade union has run it. And the return to work has been organised by bosses' agents: the political physiognomy of Walesa's "property, family, religion, order" Solidarnosc, Civic and New Forum in Czechoslovakia and the GDR, proves it.

Because of the lack of a vanguard party, the proletariat seems unable for the moment to assert itself through fighting for a political revolution (which, given the extent of capitalist restoration, takes on social tasks). It is dissolved in a popular sea which sees democracy as being western liberties along with Hitachi videos, Merces, Levy jeans and all the other consumer goodies of Paris, Frankfurt, London and Rome.

However, in an echo of the bourgeoisie, *Militant*, *Socialist Outlook*, *News Line* and *Workers Power* Trotskyites, SWP and RCP ex-Trotskyites, *Morning Star* 'hard line' 'official communists' and *7 Days* ultra-revisionist 'official communists' welcome the "revolution" (read counterrevolution).

It's worth touching on the RCP here. It began by declaring that it did not see what all the "fuss was about"; now it has joined the others. And strangely, for an organisation which made a great hooah about its support for Argentina's Galtieri and Iran's Khomeini in the name of 'anti-imperialism', it refuses to defend the GDR against being incorporated by Federal German imperialism. Instead of siding with those *leftists* on the streets of Leip-

zig who chant "DDR, DDR", it joins the *rightists* who chant *Deutschland einzig Vaterland*. Yes, the RCP actually calls for a united capitalist German fatherland, using the rotten pretext of 'first them, then us'.

Their is a rich variety of excuses to cover capitulation before bourgeoisdom (just as when, with a couple of honourable exceptions, the whole spectrum of the left in Britain lined up behind the murdering Mujahedin in Afghanistan and the counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc in Poland). But typical is the claim that the "restoration of capitalism" would require "the wholesale demolition of collectivised property relations, the destruction of the workers' movement and the creation of a new repressive state apparatus based upon the defence of private property." (*Socialist Outlook* No20 December 1989)

What head-in-the-sand nonsense! 'Market socialism' aside, capitalism has operated and can operate on the basis of widespread state ownership of industry; there is nothing inherently socialist about nationalised property. As to the state, it should be understood that the proletarian state is carried over from the old order. The proletarian state may arise on the shattered remains of the bourgeois state, but in essence it is a bourgeois institution used by the proletariat (which has a historic interest and mission to do away with all states, including its own). This elementary Marxist position is confirmed today when we see the socialist state apparatus laid hold of and used for its own purposes by the neo-bourgeoisie - with the aid of "workers' organisations" like Solidarnosc.

We will not join the anti-socialist cross class chorus. The collapse of bureaucratic socialism will be the midwife of despair, a period of reaction will result, which - however transient - is dismissed at our peril. The attempt to transform society will be seen as a historic failure. Right wing and pro-capitalist ideas from chaos theory to religious fundamentalism will undoubtedly gain a wider demoralising influence. Already its effect on anti-imperialist movements is noticeable: the ANC and PLO are, for example, now decidedly more 'moderate' than in the recent past. But all left and revolutionary organisations will be affected. Those which have weak ideology (eg the Euro CPGB) will most likely crumble, others will move to the right.

We too will be affected by the reactionary shock wave; yet, where others will drown, we are confident of our ability to swim against the tide, keep our political line firm and combat manifestations of liberalism or unconscious attempts to divert us.

The ability to do that lies in our determination to fearlessly face up to our tasks and, crucially, draw up a balance sheet of our October Revolution. For what we are witnessing

today is more than the terminal crisis of bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe; in essence it is the end of the October Revolution, which although suffering from the most monstrous bureaucratic deformations, spread itself from above into Eastern Europe in the wake of the retreating Wehrmacht.

That this coincided with the pacifying post-World War II boom in the west allowed bureaucratic centrism to usurp the mantle of communism. Living socialism, as a result, was considered by the majority in the west as anti-democratic, totalitarian and something to be positively avoided. Against the albeit uneven dynamism and relative, if formal, freedom of the advanced capitalist countries, bureaucratic socialism seemed to be a return to the autocratic state presided over by the secret policeman and the censor. However, everything considered, the USSR and the post-World War II spread of socialism was overwhelmingly progressive.

The failure of bureaucratic socialism was more than its unattractiveness and its alienation of the masses. Because of its inability to introduce the necessary far reaching democratisation in society, bureaucratic socialism could not produce a rational plan. Its bureaucratic dream of communism in one country, and the reactionary go-it-alone second rate steel, car, and ever other prestige industrial plant that went with it, became a complete anachronism as imperialism integrated the world market through world commodities and world production. As the growing queues of Gorbachev's perestroika and the GDR's admission of cooking the books goes to prove, from being a relative fetter on the development of the productive forces, bureaucratic socialism has become an absolute one.

Due to its narrow sectional interests, because it does not want to go from master to servant of the proletariat, the bureaucracy looks to capitalism for salvation. This is what its 'renewal of socialism' is all about. Because it can no longer rule in the old way the bureaucracy wants to hide its authoritarian past, its corruption, its association with all sorts of vile crimes by metamorphosing into social democracy - an ideological trend in the workers' movement the bourgeoisie has long ago domesticated and trusted as a guard dog of capitalism.

In this way the Gorbachevite bureaucracy and its ilk has a striking parallel in the battered remnants of the feudal aristocracy in Britain during the 19th century. Knowing full well that it can no longer hold down society, it seeks to preserve its privileges by doing a deal with those that can. Like the landed aristocracy, the bureaucratic labour aristocracy wants to become part of the capitalist class, or its loyal figurehead.

Unless we confront the growing counterre-

volutionary role of the bureaucracy and how it has disorientated, at least for the moment, whole swathes of the working class in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, then we fall into wishful thinking or under the sway of bourgeois ideology, which is growing louder and more confident by the day.

Not surprisingly, the propagandists of capital are falling over themselves with hyperbole: Democracy has triumphed! Communism is dead! History has ended! I even heard on the 10.45am religious broadcast on BBC Radio 4 that it's all Christ's work! Let the bourgeoisie fool themselves. It is their days that are numbered. True, we are suffering a string of reversals, but ebb and flow is in the nature of the proletarian revolution.

Marx was well aware that this would be the case. In his own words, they "criticise themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltriness of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible."

So for genuine communists defeat is no time for despair, no time to slink off into the 'joys of domestic bliss', nor time for lack of courage. It is a time for preparation. Momentous events are unfolding. Greater victories await us.

The aftermath of World War II saw the USA emerge as a 'super' imperialist power, to which both, victorious as well as defeated, imperialist rivals, prostrated themselves. Only the Soviet Union was able to resist. The resultant stalemate, otherwise known as the Cold War, spanned four decades and more or less froze the class struggle.

Now all is fluid again! Instead of the US emerging in undisputed splendence, it looks as if Germany - dismembered at the hands of the US and the USSR following its defeat in World War II - is about to place the victor's laurels on its head. That is why the imperialists' renewed belief that god in heaven is a true capitalist who looks after his own is giving way to fears over exactly who his own are.

The end of the Cold War will not usher in a golden age of peace and prosperity. Mammon is a self destructive god. Already in this century capitalism has been responsible for causing two world and countless smaller wars, in which some 100 million have horribly perished, and an unprecedented general crisis which reached its depth in 1929 and lasted from 1914 till 1948.

The imperialists will not openly admit that their system is a system of war, economic crisis and pauperisation. Nevertheless, Thatcher and other Cold War warriors have tempered their triumphalism with caution now that socialism is actually disintegrating. Who can blame them! With the 'evil empire' out of the way, inter-imperialist contradictions will heighten and move to centre stage in world politics. Federal Germany is in no position to launch a direct challenge to US world leadership, to refashion the world in its image, as its capital will require. But a united Germany, a *Gross Deutschland*, is another matter entirely.

Some bourgeois pundits have made soothing noises. They assure themselves that even if the GDR were to be joined with Federal Germany, and its per capita production hauled up to western levels, it would still produce a Germany which would only be first among equals in Europe, not a superpower. What this forgets is the little matter of uneven development. Federal Germany is already growing at a faster rate than its rivals. Absorbing the GDR can only increase its speed of development. Hence, where it is ahead by a nose today, it will be showing its heels tomorrow. And German capitalism will do more than just add 17 million new people to its home market.

A united Germany will in all likelihood become the leader of a united (Deutschmark dominated) post-1992 Western Europe and a post-bureaucratic socialist (Deutschmark dominated) Eastern Europe; a continental economic bloc that has the potential to match US power and leave Japan in the shade. The effect will be shattering. The US orchestrated inter-imperialist cooperation that has endured since 1945 will be ended and the danger of the open world market giving way in turn to trade war, and then a shooting war, becomes all too

real. But as well as the world becoming a more dangerous place in the 1990s, the next decade will pose ever more sharply the task of making socialist revolution in advanced capitalist countries. It really is a choice between socialism or capitalist barbarism and world war. We are at one of history's great turning points, where history itself is speeding up.

The conditions are being prepared for the proletariat to come back strengthened tenfold. With what remains of the October Revolution on its death bed, a dynamic world is about to fall back behind its political point of departure, "the situation, the relations, the conditions under which alone modern revolution becomes serious" (Marx). The break up of inter-imperialist unity and its drift towards a new general crisis will create the basis for a dramatic escalation of the class struggle and necessitate the reorganisation of the world proletarian vanguard.

The collapse of 'official communism' has cleared the ground for the new to rise. Comrades, the genuine communists must prepare. That is why the Fourth Conference of the Leninists was convened.

Before dealing directly with our conference it is instructive to examine the congresses of the three 'official communist' organisations which have just taken place. As comrades will know, each of these congresses was subjected to a militant picket by supporters of *The Leninist*. Comrades have therefore seen in the flesh the best activists 'official communism' in Britain is able to muster. What a sorry sight they made. Their demoralisation, lack of politics, despondency, tiredness and defeatism spoke volumes about the state of 'official communism'.

As there is nothing that particularly distinguishes one from the other, we might just as well look at the congresses of 'official communism' chronologically. So let's begin with the *Morning Star's* split, the Communist Party of Britain.

For all its claims since it was formed in April 1988, it must be said that the CPB has not had a proud record of work. Indeed, if they were honest they would admit that they've done little or nothing. Bugger all, to coin a phrase. And not surprisingly, either. It has a part time general secretary and a part time approach to politics. Where we bank on the future and the proletarian revolution, the CPB 'cadres' have a typically petty bourgeois mentality. Ray Colvin - an editor of its only journal *Communist Review* - only agreed to work full time after a pension plan had been negotiated. The result was predictable: the CPB has only managed to produce some half a dozen issues in one and a half years.

All this flows from the thoroughly opportunist politics of the CPB. Indeed, while the Euros are debating whether or not to drop the term communism, the CPB leadership nearly found themselves one step ahead of them.

Its drafting commission for its new version of the *British Road to Socialism* programme deleted all mention of communism - "deleted" because the 1978 BRS, which both they and the Euros claim as their own, has a whole concluding section on communist society. Revealingly, after being presented with a new draft, its national leadership did not notice the omission!

Only at its congress was this 'oversight' rectified. Three branches - yes, that's all - submitted amendments on communism to the congress. And showing that the deletion of communism was the result of forgetfulness rather than some deft attempt to pre-empt the Euros, its leadership accepted them. Nonetheless, that it was such a near run thing shows that the CPB leadership accepts in practice that famous dictum of revisionism, that the movement is everything, the aim nothing (Edward Bernstein).

The logic of revisionism could be seen most clearly at the congress of the Euros, which opened one week after that of the CPB. Many of the delegates made great show in not taking leaflets from our comrades because "ordinary people don't take leaflets". Of course, it is not true that 'ordinary people' do not take leaflets. They do. But so right wing have the Euros become that they like to make a show of their apolitical attitudes. "They used to be interested in politics until they joined the Euro organisation," our comrades quipped.

The Euro 'party' is collapsing organisationally and, because of its neo-Fabian politics, sees no reason to exist. As far as we are concerned, the quicker they drop all pretence of having anything to do with communism, the better. Not only should they be honest about

their true politics, but they give communism a bad name.

The New Communist Party makes a sorry sight. The average age of the 70 congress delegates, consultative delegates and visitors showed that this organisation has nothing to do with the new. It is like a Derby and Joan club ... with only an exit sign.

Its general secretary, Eric Trevett, tells the bourgeois press - on the rare occasions it asks him - that membership of the NCP is "under 1,000". Comrades, I'll make no secret about it, our membership is "under 1,000" too. But if one wants to play the numbers game - and we don't - one should be honest. And if Eric Trevett won't be honest about the NCP's membership, then we at least can be.

In 1979 its membership was counted for the first time: it stood at 513. In the ten years that have followed the NCP has steadily and relentlessly declined. Death from old age, disillusionment and bureaucratic expulsion have all taken their toll. NCP membership is now lucky to be 200, and that's on paper.

Of course, collapse in numbers is not unique to the NCP; all 'official communists' have suffered precipitous losses. The NCP does, though, have a unique political problem - in a word, the Soviet Union. It's as if god announced to a packed Christmas congregation at St Paul's that, as an honest Jew, he had decided at last to admit that the whole Jesus thing was a hoax, which he had never expected to be taken seriously.

The NCP world has been turned upside down. It was formed on the basis of religiously following every twist and turn in the political and diplomatic line of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Those that didn't were 'anti-Soviet'. That Gorbachev is now doing and saying the same sort of things as the Euros did in the 1970s, when the NCP split from them because of their 'anti-Sovietism', must mean, according to the quickwitted NCP leadership, that not all is well in the Soviet Union.

In a startling admission of past practices, Eric Trevett announced to his congress that: "Frankly, we no longer can be mealy mouthed". Genuine communists speak the truth always, they are never "mealy mouthed". But this is no conversion on the road to Damascus. Trevett, in spite of his claims to the contrary, continues to be mealy mouthed ... or, more scientifically, *centrist!*

Trevett damns glasnost, universal human values, the claim that relations between socialist and capitalist states are non-antagonistic, as "revisionist" and "anti-Leninist", which they are. Yet he gives "critical support" for perestroika, which is part and parcel of the same pro-capitalist programme.

How, then, did our Leninist conference and its decisions compare with the congresses of 'official communism'? 'Official communism' is rent with profound divisions, which nonetheless, however deep, all lead to the same liquidationist conclusion. What a contrast to our conference's firm commitment to Marxism-Leninism and iron unity; every resolution put to our conference was passed *unanimously*. This was not the result of manipulation from the platform, neither was it artificial. It was because Leninist forces are firmly united as a result of a process of extensive debate and discussion.

Our conference was not called in order to come to a definitive conclusion about the rapidly unfolding process of democratic peaceful counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This task will be dealt with elsewhere. It was brought together to counter the treachery of 'official communism' and to organise Leninist forces on a higher, more disciplined and coherent level. This was achieved through the formation of a distinct revolutionary wing of the CPGB, the CPGB (*The Leninist*), and through the election of a National Committee. Comrades, it must be emphasised that the CPGB (*The Leninist*) is not the Communist Party nor is the National Committee the Central Committee. The single aim of our conference, of our revolutionary wing of the CPGB and its National Committee, is the struggle to reforge our CPGB.

This was reflected in the resolutions of our conference, not least in the resolution on the programme. We have already dissected the 1978 BRS in a series of supplements in *The Leninist*. In the process we have also done a great deal in the way of outlining what we think on a whole range of different issues. Along with our increasingly successful practice, what this amounts to is the raw material for a genuine communist programme.

Our conference voted to instruct the

National Committee of the CPGB (*The Leninist*) to appoint a commission charged with the task of producing a draft programme open for debate among all communists and all workers. It will provide the focal point around which the Leninist wing of the CPGB will be built and then the Party reformed. The draft programme will be presented to the congress of the reformed CPGB.

Comrades I can promise you that neither our draft programme, nor the programme that will come from it, will instantly go out of date like every programme the opportunists have ever come out with. It will not need rewriting straight away even as the ink dries - unless, that is, the proletariat in Britain succeeds in the next couple of months or so in conquering state power. Only in the event of such a happy occurrence would our programme need rewriting.

Marxism Today is praised by the bourgeoisie because it is a fifth column agent of the bourgeoisie in the communist movement. As to *7 Days*, it is a mish-mash of yesterday's petty bourgeois fads and the most pathetic liquidationist bleatings. It is anti-Marxist-Leninist, even though the Euro CPGB is formally committed by rule to Marxism-Leninism. That is why neither of these publications can legitimately operate as the central organ of the Communist Party. On the other hand *The Leninist* has set an unparalleled standard of openness, firm commitment to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Our conference therefore decided that it, not *7 Days*, is the true central organ of our CPGB.

Conference also decided on a set of basic principles around which our wing of the Party will be organised. They will, of course, be published in full. However, it is worthwhile commenting on them briefly, not least in the light of Euro plans to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the CPGB.

Our "central aim is reorganising the CPGB" through the victory of Leninist forces. We will not water down our Marxism-Leninism nor our commitment to proletarian internationalism. Given objective conditions, there should only be one Communist Party in Britain; there is no basis for separate parties organised around colour or nationality. Socialism is the dictatorship of the proletariat; it will not come peacefully via the Labour Party, but through revolution. We recognise the right of self determination of nations - in Britain today the acid test of this is Ireland - and we oppose all forms of sexism and racism and consider the overcoming of chauvinism, war and pollution and the environment rests on the communist-led working class. Humanity's future, in other words, depends on the triumph of communism! In broad terms who can doubt that these principles are those of July 1920, proclaimed by our CPGB when it was founded?

The Euros say they are going to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the foundation of our Party. Frankly, this is sick. They are intent on ditching the title CPGB - and not a minute too soon - and debating at the same time whether or not to drop their formal commitment to Leninism. What they 'celebrate' is their treachery. We are the only organisation which has a right to celebrate the foundation of our Party.

Let the opportunists openly debate with us who is the political continuation of the 1920 CPGB and stands by its principles. We only need to pose the question to know the answer. We will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the formation of our CPGB, not 70 years culminating in today's 'official communist' liquidationist dead end. We will celebrate legitimately in the full realisation that the CPGB that was formed in July 1920 lives on in the form of the CPGB (*The Leninist*).

The resolutions on organisational questions show that, in contrast to the miserable do-your-own-thing approach that reigns in the Euro organisation, and the manipulation and bureaucratic centralism that crushes all thought and debate in the CPB and NCP, in our wing of the CPGB there is real democracy combined with real centralism. This, combined with our commitment to Marxism-Leninism, is the key to our confidence, the key to our success, the key to our future.

Comrades, our conference allows us to look to the future with Marxist-Leninist optimism. History continues and the future is communism. Neither communism nor Leninism is dead, communism and Leninism live in the CPGB (*The Leninist*).

- Long live communism!
- Long live Leninism!
- Long live the CPGB (*The Leninist*)!



Fourth Conference of the Leninists of the CPGB

OUR CONFERENCE came together to find solutions to the profound crisis that affects our Party and working class. Our conference concluded that the 'official' Party rules, which are anyway profoundly flawed, have long ago been rendered completely obsolete by the gross infringements against them by the Euros.

In order that the CPGB's Leninist forces may wage a more coherent and more disciplined struggle against the Euros, liquidators and centrists, our conference unanimously agreed to form a distinct, revolutionary, wing of the CPGB – the CPGB (*The Leninist*) – and established a National Committee. The NC is the binding central authority over all Leninist forces.

Our conference also unanimously agreed a set of basic political and organisational principles which were debated in a spirit of openness and comradeship. There was no unity for unity's sake, but frank serious discussion conducted in the spirit of criticism and self criticism with the aim of cementing the iron unity of Leninist forces.

We call upon all communists to study our resolutions carefully. Compare them with the ultra revisionism coming from the Euro's congress and the head-in-the-sand platitudes voted through the NCP and CPB congresses. Genuine communists, accept the lead and the discipline of the only revolutionary wing of our movement, the CPGB (*The Leninist*).

Conference of the CPGB (*The Leninist*)
December 16, 1989

Conference Agenda

1. Opening ceremony
2. Election of session chairpersons
3. Adoption of conference agenda
4. Adoption of conference standing orders
5. Resolutions
6. Election of National Committee
7. *The Internationale*; (Close)

Conference standing orders

1. The conference will be conducted in two sessions from 10.00am to 1.00pm and from 2.00pm to 7.00pm.
2. The names of all comrades will be changed in conference reports for security reasons.
3. All proposals and motions, apart from those relating to procedure, shall be submitted to the chair in writing.
4. Each speaker, except those introducing motions and reports, will be limited to ten minutes. No speaker is entitled to speak more than three times on the same subject. Extensions and extra interventions can be granted with the consent of the conference.
5. On procedural motions there shall be no more than two speakers 'for' and two 'against'.
6. All decisions shall be by simple majority vote.
7. Participants have the right to submit (in writing) amendments to motions during conference.

Resolutions

The Resolutions were all carried unanimously, after discussion and amendment. Of the 29 amendments submitted, five were withdrawn, one was lost by 4 votes to 6, one was carried by 6 votes to 3 with 1 abstention and 22 were carried unanimously.

1. Appeal to communists
2. *The British Road to Socialism*
3. The central organ
4. On our principles
5. Organisational questions
 - 5.1. Democratic centralism
 - 5.2. Criticism and self criticism
 - 5.3. Structure
 - 5.4. Cell meetings
 - 5.5. Cell secretary
 - 5.6. Carrying out decisions
 - 5.7. *The Leninist*
 - 5.8. Initiative
 - 5.9. Recruitment and membership
 - 5.10. Discipline

6. Publication of proceedings

1. Appeal to communists

After experiencing ten years of defeats at the hand of Thatcherite reaction our class is beginning to successfully fight back. The class struggle is rising and becoming more sharp and open. Thatcher and the Tories look vulnerable. The task of taking advantage of this situation and ensuring that Thatcher is defeated in a revolutionary, not a reformist manner rests first and foremost with the Communist Party.

In the hands of the Euros, the CPGB is no longer a united party. The Euros have turned their wing of the party into a neo-Fabian rump. They have betrayed the working class and willingly operate as a bourgeois fifth column in the communist movement. The NCP and CPB splits are dominated by centrist and opportunist ideas. They both look to the Labour Party as a vehicle for socialism. Both of these splits survive through political prostitution and avoiding open ideological struggle. In short, the working class in Britain does not have a vanguard party.

This conference therefore resolves, in order to overcome this situation, to form a distinct, revolutionary, wing of the CPGB – the CPGB (*The Leninist*) – and to elect a National Committee and instruct the rump Euro organisation to hand over all Party files and records. The CPGB (*The Leninist*) is not a Party, nor is its National Committee a Central Committee. The prime task of the CPGB (*The Leninist*) and its National Committee is to defeat opportunism and to reforge the Party our class so desperately needs. All genuine communists have a duty to join the ranks of the CPGB (*The Leninist*). This conference urges all genuine communists to enter into discussions with the CPGB (*The Leninist*).

2. *The British Road to Socialism*

Neither the 1978 edition of the *British Road to Socialism*, nor the CPB's updated version, nor

the Euros' *Manifesto For New Times* represent any sort of communist programme. All are thoroughly imbued with opportunism and revisionism. Hence none of them can serve as any sort of guide to revolutionary practice.

The essence of the struggle being conducted by the CPGB (*The Leninist*) is to equip our Party with a Marxist-Leninist programme. The provision of the CPGB with a Marxist-Leninist programme depends on reforging the Party and then convening a congress.

Taking this into consideration our conference resolves that the Leninist wing of the Party must:

- a) Prepare a draft programme.
- b) Establish a commission for this purpose.
- c) Present the draft programme for discussion in Party organisations and in our working class.
- d) Present the draft programme in the form of a proposal to the congress of the reformed CPGB.

3. The central organ

7 Days is an eclectic mish-mash of petty bourgeois fads and dull reformism. It has won no respect in the ranks of the Euro CPGB, let alone with working class militants. It provides neither theoretical clarity nor a means of organising the masses for revolutionary action. However, *7 Days* does provide a platform for attacks on the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. It is a factional weapon in the hands of the Euros and hence it constitutes an obstacle in the way of the struggle for communism.

Since *The Leninist* was launched in November 1981 it has established a well earned reputation for ideological clarity, defence of Marxism-Leninism, openness and the ability to organise genuine communists.

The conference of the CPGB (*The Leninist*) declares that *The Leninist* is the true central organ of our Party.

4. On our principles

The Leninists of the CPGB stand on the following main principles:

a/ Our central overriding aim is reforging the Communist Party of Great Britain. Without this Party the working class is nothing; with it, it is everything. The CPGB will not be re-forged through the unity of revolutionaries and opportunists but through the victory of the revolutionary wing of the CPGB, the Leninist wing.

b/ Marxism-Leninism is powerful because it is true. We oppose all forms of opportunism and revisionism in the workers' movement. This is best done through open ideological struggle. Theory must be related to practice.

c/ Communists are internationalists. Hence we favour the highest level of coordination and unity of workers. The struggle in Britain must be subordinated to the world revolution. The liberation of the working class can only be achieved through world communism, following the worldwide victory of socialism by adding new socialist states to the existing ones.

d/ Objective conditions demand the organisation of communists in Britain into a single party. We oppose separatism. Communists support the unity of workers in the largest and most centralised units.

e/ Socialism will not come peacefully via a Labour government. Socialism will only triumph through working class revolution and the replacement of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by a dictatorship of the proletariat.

f/ We support the right of nations to self determination. In Britain this concretely demands support for the struggle for Irish freedom. This is an acid test of internationalism.

g/ The liberation of women, the ending of racism and all other forms of chauvinism are bound up with and dependent on the workers' struggle for communism. We oppose all forms of racism and sexism. Chauvinism undermines the unity of the working class.

h/ War and peace, pollution and the environment are class questions. Mankind's future depends on the triumph of communism. Pacifist and green politics are a diversion and objectively play a reactionary role.

5. Organisational questions

The struggle to reforge the CPGB took open form in November 1981, when *The Leninist* was first published. It has given both theoretical and organisational coherence to those fighting against opportunism in all its forms. *The Leninist* was and remains committed to the principle of open ideological struggle. Opportunism cannot be fought in the dark.

The key to success in the struggle to reforge the CPGB is the creation of a powerful all-Britain network of Leninists based on the advanced (politically thinking, class conscious) section of the working class. This section will in the main be won by propaganda which is increasingly linked to political practice.

To carry out this task it is vital that Leninists are organised.

5.1. Democratic centralism

Communist parties are organised in such a way as to facilitate first, complete inner unity of outlook, and second, a combination of the highest level of discipline with the widest initiative and independent activity of comrades. This form of organisation is democratic centralism.

Democratic centralism means that all leading bodies are elected and there is full freedom of discussion. It also means the subordination of the whole organisation to a single centre. With us the two sides of democratic centralism will only be fully realised when the Communist Party is reformed. Till then the Leninists of the CPGB operate democratic centralism emphasising centralism based on consent. A Communist Party is built top down and in the struggle to reforge our Party the same approach applies.

What this means is that all members must carry out the decisions of the organisation and that lower bodies subordinate themselves to higher ones and that the higher bodies may appoint the secretaries of lower bodies.

This does not mean that there are no elections, discussions or debates. Far from it. The Leninists have now had four conferences which have not only elected comrades to positions of leadership but have been characterised by the widest ranging debate. What is more our paper, *The Leninist*, has a record second to none of openness.

The free discussion of questions of policy in our organisation and in front of the whole working class is a fundamental right of every member. Only on this basis is it possible to

develop communist self criticism and strengthen discipline, which must be conscious, not mechanical.

Discussion must, of course, be carried out seriously; members must be won to put the interests of the struggle for socialism above everything. This is the essence of communist discipline. The extent that this happens depends on our collective consciousness.

5.2. Criticism and self criticism

Communist discipline is founded on the class consciousness of comrades: upon the conviction that without the minority accepting and carrying out the decisions of the majority, without the subordination of lower bodies to higher ones, there can be no unity of will and unity of action. An army that does not act as one will be a defeated army. Our unity is precious and has to be fought for.

Criticism and self criticism are the most important methods of developing comrades' consciousness and hence communist discipline. Self criticism enables us to correct mistakes and overcome shortcomings. Marx said that the proletarian revolution differs from other revolutions in that it criticises itself and through this is able to carry on until all its tasks are completed. In other words, for communists there is no room for self satisfaction. Criticism and self criticism should be constantly applied at all levels of our organisation.

5.3. Structure

Our basic form of organisation is the cell. Cells are established on the basis of locality, workplace or task. Normally consisting of between three and five comrades, cells carry out the work assigned to them by the National Committee and work to train professional revolutionaries who dedicate their lives to the struggle for communism.

Cells are led by an appointed secretary who is responsible for any changes in date and time of meetings and will act as the chair. Any other officers should be elected.

The National Committee of the Leninists of the CPGB consists of the organisation's most authoritative comrades. It elects the secretary of the organisation. The secretary chairs the meetings of the NC and is responsible for selecting all other officers and for every sphere of work. The NC establishes and can dissolve all Leninist organisations and organs. The NC may establish special commissions and regional committees. New members may be co-opted onto full membership of the Committee or given the status of candidate member (with speaking but not voting rights) by a three-fifths majority of those present.

At particularly important turning points either the NC or the Secretary may convene a conference and determine its subject matter. The NC determines which comrades are appointed as delegates, taking into consideration the subject matter of the conference. The NC may decide to give a conference the right to elect a new National Committee or to elect additional members to the NC or to remove individual members.

At conferences all voting and non-voting comrades have the right to speak and submit motions and amendments. All votes are by a simple majority.

5.4. Cell meetings

Cells should meet at least weekly and should start on time (even if members are late). The first item on the agenda should always be a well prepared opening on, for example, a key article in *The Leninist* and using other publications. The reporter should present concrete proposals for action.

A well organised and prepared opening and discussion should not last more than one and a half hours.

The next point on the agenda should be to check up on the assignments of individual members. The cell collectively should always know not only whether a comrade has fully carried out a task but also discuss the experiences of the comrade in carrying it out.

The next point should be the plan of activity for the next week with full consideration of the work of the previous week. This includes problems with the mass organisations or campaigns for which the cell is responsible. At this point comrades' individual assignments will be decided. Related to this the question of recruitment should be raised. Who can be recruited, who should be worked on.

The next point is *The Leninist*: sales, distribution, correspondence and fund.

The last item after any other business should be the time and date of the next meet-

ing.

Dues payments should take place before the meeting opens as comrades come to the meeting. Any problems here should be raised in the meeting.

Where appropriate every effort should be made to involve sympathisers in the tasks of the cell, not least selling the Party's central organ, *The Leninist*. It is also important that all comrades are given tasks. In these ways members are not overburdened with work and the work itself becomes more effective.

5.5. Cell secretary

The cell secretary's task consists of keeping the cell in contact with the NC and ensuring the cell functions properly. The secretary collects dues and sees to it that every member attends the meeting and takes part in its and the organisations activities.

5.6. Carrying out decisions

All important decisions should only be arrived at after a thorough discussion in the cell. If comrades understand why certain steps are being taken, what changes demand a shift in line, what the perspectives are, then the carrying out of decisions will be much easier.

In assigning members to certain work, due account should be taken of the comrades' strengths and weaknesses. The member has the right to express an opinion about their ability to carry out a particular task. But after the meeting has decided on an assignment it must be fully carried out.

The decisions and assignments should be noted. At every meeting their fulfilment should be discussed. If there are problems, open criticism should be made of members who have shirked responsibility. This will help the member take tasks more seriously. The cell must learn that it is collectively responsible for all its members.

5.7. 'The Leninist'

The most important weapon in the hands of the cell is *The Leninist*, the central organ of our Party. It is our collective propagandist and agitator. It is also our collective organiser. Organisation around the distribution of *The Leninist* and education on the basis of its articles constitutes the basis for the continuous joint action of our organisation.

The best leaders of our organisation speak to the working class through the columns of the paper. It has set an unparalleled standard of clarity, militancy and firm commitment to Marxism-Leninism. Selling *The Leninist* and getting subscribers is one of the central tasks of cells.

Cells should be responsible for: 1. Organising regular pitches. 2. Looking out for strikes and demonstrations in order to distribute the paper. 3. Canvassing selected individuals to take out a sub. 4. Regularly collating and submitting information for the paper. 5. Supporting the Fighting Fund.

5.8. Initiative

The basic link between our NC and the working class is the cell. Cells are the organisations through which we interact with the masses. On the efficiency, independence and initiative of the cells depends the ability of the CPGB (*The Leninist*) to lay the basis for reforging our Communist Party and providing a lead to the working class.

Insofar as their decisions do not conflict with those of higher bodies, cells must decide on questions that fall within their sphere of work. This is very important. Decisive moments are lost through lack of initiative. Cells must not simply wait round to be told what to do - that is a recipe for inaction.

Cells are in contact with the workplaces, the locality or mass organisations. Because of this they must strive to give leadership and take the initiative.

In cells where there is real initiative there will be constant development of individual comrades. They will continually discuss problems and study the line of the organisation in order to apply it in a given situation.

The independence and initiative of the cells must not be taken to mean that they have no relationship to the NC or a regional committee. Centralism must not be violated. The NC has the right to veto initiatives if it thinks this is necessary.

The initiatives of cells develops precisely because of the proper leadership given by the NC. This is done first and foremost through publications but also through the assignment of representatives from the NC or the regional committee, who participate in discussions and actions. This hastens the process of develop-

ing initiative and independence.

5.9. Recruitment and membership

In their day-to-day work cell members will come into regular contact with the best fighters of our class. Recruiting these fighters is the basic task of every cell.

The best method of getting new members is to place individual responsibility for recruiting. There must be a one-to-one approach which draws contacts into activity and enables them to grasp our basic theoretical positions and world outlook. This cannot be over emphasised.

Membership of the CPGB (*The Leninist*) is open to anyone who accepts its principles and discipline. This means being active in a cell, regular payment of dues and adherence to all the decisions of the organisation.

Application for membership is submitted to the NC with the proposal of one member and the view of the cell submitting the application. Acceptance of applications will be decided by the NC. New members will be assigned to an area of work by the NC. Dues consist of a minimum of 10% of a member's income. Members have a duty to do their utmost to raise funds for the organisation and use its resources responsibly and carefully.

No member has the right to move job or district without permission. Members can secure leave of absence in case of sickness or necessary travel because of job or other commitments.

One of the main conditions for developing the initiative and independence of cells is the systematic development of cadres. These comrades are the backbone of our organisation.

These comrades are trained over a long period. They are our future. We must do our utmost to help them develop, steel them in action and get them to study the classics of Marxism-Leninism.

This can be facilitated through seminars, weekend and national schools. In parallel to this, promising individuals should be assigned to more developed comrades in order to help and encourage study.

The aim of this is to develop professional revolutionaries. These comrades are highly developed, trained in revolutionary theory and practice, tested in struggle and give their all to the interests of the working class. A professional revolutionary is ready to go wherever the organisation sends them, do whatever the organisation asks - family considerations are taken into account but are not decisive.

5.10. Discipline

The organisation's discipline would remain an empty phrase if we did not provide for measures against those who break it. Breaches of discipline by individual members such as financial irregularities, actions harmful to the prestige and influence of the organisation, failure to carry out decisions, revealing organisational secrets, rubbishing comrades, may be punished by:

- censure.
- public censure.
- removal from position or transfer to other work.
- suspension.
- expulsion.

Charges against an individual may be made either in the cells or by a higher body. Only a cell, a regional committee or the National Committee has the right to decide on disciplinary action. This should be done taking into account a member's consciousness and motives. All disciplinary action, except censure, must be confirmed by the NC before implementation.

A member who is suspended has no rights, but continues to be bound by the organisation's discipline and requirements.

In the case of suspension or expulsion, if a member disputes the charges laid against them the NC is bound to convene a disciplinary committee to investigate the matter, collate evidence and call witnesses. The disciplinary committee reports back to the NC. After each case the committee is dissolved.

6. Publication of proceedings

We Leninists have always placed great emphasis on the need for openness; this applies in particular to our own organisation. In light of this principled and correct position the Fourth Conference of the CPGB (*The Leninist*) resolves that a full account of its proceedings and resolutions be published as soon as possible in the central organ.