

The LENINIST

Soviet nationalism p2

Foundation of CPGB pp4-5

Fighting for communism p6

Ireland p8

It's counterrevolution

Eastern Europe: not shades of 1917, nor Trotsky's political revolution but pro-capitalist reaction

WHAT is going on in Eastern Europe? Well, according to just about everyone from *The Sun* to the SWP, Eastern Europe has been swept by a series of awe inspiring revolutions which, in Romania, apparently had "shades of 1917" (*Financial Times*, December 28 1989). If that were the case we too would join in the jubilation. But nothing could be further from the truth.

There has not been a revolutionary wave. Yes, we have seen the obscene Berlin Wall breached, millions take to the streets and corrupt governments fall. Yet, whatever the subjective intentions of the masses, objectively what is taking place is a *process of counterrevolution* through which the rule of capitalism is being *restored* ie, the film is being run *backwards*.

We do not need to use up much space in order to prove our point. Poland can no longer be considered a socialist state in any sense of the word; nor for that matter can Czechoslovakia, Romania or Hungary... and the GDR looks set to follow suit as this article is written. Even in the USSR itself Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are openly and unashamedly determined on the restorationist course, as is Yeltsin and the 'radical' Inter-regional group.

What leads us to this conclusion is not the dwindling percentage of industry in state hands, seen as key by reformists and 'official communists', but the political programme and perspectives of those at the head of the state. It is ABC that nationalisation does not *per se* equal socialism. Likewise suggestions from the likes of the Trotskyites, Spartacists and 'hard line' 'official communists' that because the army, the police, the civil service etc have remained largely intact they are therefore socialist, are sheer nonsense.

Given the reality of bureaucratic socialism and the purely formal nature of the rule of the proletariat, it is quite possible for a new bourgeoisie to peacefully take hold of the bureaucratic socialist state machine - which is anyway a carry over from bourgeois society - and use it for its own purposes. Not only has this proved to be the case, but top state apparatchiks have set their sights on constituting themselves as part of the emerging capitalist class by transforming managers, bureaucrats and all sorts of other fat cat officials into owners of newly formed joint stock companies.

Some say that the 'official communist' parties in Eastern Europe are engaging in deft manoeuvring. Rubbish! They have lost all belief in themselves and, in the main, no longer even have the will to rule. Where they have not disintegrated, as in Romania, they are going over, 1914 fashion, to the politics of the bourgeoisie within the working class movement, ie social democracy.

Even before it became social democratised, the former 'official communist' party in Poland, the PUWP, supported the Solidarnosc

government, a government of the proto bourgeoisie. It has now split into two *social democratic* parties, equally committed to Solidarnosc's marketisation programme - 80% of industry is up for sale to home grown or foreign capitalists.

Hungary is different only in detail. Its social democratised former 'official communist' party is still in government but its leaders are, like their comrades in Poland, determined to sell off state industry, including to themselves. To facilitate the turn back towards capitalism it has dumped the old bureaucratic socialist constitution in favour of a bourgeois democratic one, banned political organisations from the workplaces and proposes to join the EC. The other former ruling parties in Eastern Europe are not far behind.

Surprisingly enough the concrete process of social democratisation and counterrevolution explains why the capitalists and their press have been so enthusiastic, ecstatic indeed, about developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. If there were real revolutions taking place it would be a different matter. Did they support the October 1917 revolution? Hardly. Would they support a new one? Of course not. In fact they would do everything in their power to crush genuine revolutions, just as they did after October 1917, when the armies of 13 capitalist powers intervened in an attempt to kill off the fledgling Soviet Republic.

What form, then, would a genuine revolution take? It would take the form of a *communist led* political revolution which would:

1. Remove the bureaucratic deformations which first held back and now cripple the development of the productive forces; open the door for a rational democratic plan, not the renewed domination of the anarchy of the market.
2. Usher in direct soviet democracy, not the sham of parliamentary democracy. State positions would not be divided and redivided, like the spoils of war, among the proto bourgeois bureaucratic establishment and the proto bourgeois 'opposition', but staffed from below and subject to recall. No elected official would receive more than the pay of the average skilled worker.
3. See the working class become fully the ruling class and conscious of its historical mission. The working class would see itself as an integral part of the world's proletariat. It would not split into rival ethnic groups, line up behind nationalistic petty bourgeois democrats of the New and Civic Forum types, let alone vote *en masse* for the openly pro-church, pro-imperialist, pro-restorationist Solidarnosc.
4. A genuine revolution in Eastern Europe would inspire the world's workers. It would be an act of proletarian internationalism and would have the capitalist class con-

templating its mortality.

Obviously none of this has been the case. In spite of the instability which a united Germany and a German dominated Europe will cause in the relations between the imperialist powers, the joy of the bourgeoisie is real, not feigned. They have won the Cold War, and as a result their belief in their own *immortality* has been reinforced. This unfortunate truth has to be faced, as does the tremendous ideological boost which capitalism has been given in the minds of ordinary workers.

Naturally, in order to bamboozle the population and further weaken the forces of communism, media pundits and establishment politicians alike find it useful to talk of revolution rather than counterrevolution. But the truth cannot be hidden. What we are seeing are democratic, largely peaceful *counter-revolutions* against bureaucratic socialism, which offer the imperialists the prospect of new markets and cheap labour. That is what makes the bourgeois mouths water and the gutter press hacks chatter on about the 'marvels' of revolution and the 'heroism' of the masses.

The 'heroic' masses in Eastern Europe have been fooled into thinking that, with the end of bureaucratic socialism, they will get Western European bourgeois democracy. They won't, and their resulting discontent will grow and will be met with terror, not Swedish style social democracy and social welfare, nor Federal German wage levels.

The existing coalitions, fronts and forums are inherently unstable and are bound to fissure along class lines in the not too distant future. If present trends continue (and they will, unless the working class is organised behind a genuine communist vanguard) Eastern Europe will fall under the domination of German imperialism.

The result will be a neo-colonial capitalism and a neo-colonial state of the South American sort, along with child labour, concentration camps, death squads, red light areas, shanty towns, torture chambers and other wonders of western civilization.

It is not our intention here in this article to provide any sort of comprehensive analysis of the crisis and collapse of bureaucratic socialism - we intend to produce a series of supplements soon. What we want to do is yet again ram home to our readers that we are seeing a counterrevolutionary process in the socialist countries and ask why we are almost alone on the left in our ability to see the truth.

One would have thought that when the bourgeoisie supports mass demonstrations and uprisings, fetes new popular leaders and offers massive financial aid, it would be universally recognised by those who consider themselves partisans of the working class that

something untoward was going on - a Kronstadt on a giant scale, perhaps. But no. Instead, across the whole spectrum of the left, there is a desperate clutching at straws. In both the revolutionary and reformist left, seeing things as one would want them to be, rather than as they are, reigns.

Revolutionary left. In the manner of 'official communism' in the wake of Hitler's assumption of power in 1933, the revolutionary left imagines its day is just about to come through tiny, ideologically amorphous groups like the Polish Socialist Party - Democratic Revolution, and the United Left in the GDR, which are officially committed to "the parliamentary system" and Yugoslav type "self management" (see January's *Socialist Worker Review* on these and other Eastern European petty bourgeois left groups).

Flying in the face of the counterrevolutionary reality we are told that "Gorbachev's coming to power signified the beginning of the political revolution" and that we are entering the "Red 90s" (*Militant*, January 19 1990); that the Eastern European mass actions in support of pro-marketeters represented in some way a "clash with capital", and that the rising against Ceausescu - which was given the nod by the traitor Gorbachev, and in which the army generals emerged as key figures - was a "classic example of how determined fighting by workers can break an army" (*Socialist Worker Review*, January 1990); that the "political revolution Trotsky struggled for until his death has begun" and "Romania's revolution" has the imperialist leaders "worried" (*Workers Power*, January 1990).

The RCP is less certain, in fact it is all at sixes and sevens. On the one hand it insists that there are only cosmetic changes taking place in Eastern Europe and pooh-poohs fancies that Trotsky has at last been avenged. On the other hand it is "very pleased" with the "collapse" of bureaucratic socialism because people will stop telling its members to "get back to Russia" (*Living Marxism*, January 1990). Apart from not daring to ask whether or not capitalism is being restored, it is plain as a pike staff that instead of people saying 'get back to Russia' they will say "look what happened in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe". That is something the bourgeoisie will ensure.

Reformist left. It basically sounds the same as the revolutionary left, even though it is loyal, in the last analysis, to the bourgeois state. "What is happening in Eastern Europe is not the end of socialism or communism. It is the political revolution long predicted by Trotsky and others" (Eric Heffer in *Socialist Organiser*, January 4 1990); Tony Chater, editor of the falling *Morning Star*, welcomed

developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in three turgid January double page articles, in the naive hope that all that is taking place is a "restructuring" of socialism, offering a third way in between capitalism and bureaucratic socialism; another 'official communist' editor, Roger Foss, is also delighted by events.

Frothing with anti-communist rhetoric worthy of the late and not lamented Senator Joseph McCarthy, he admits he "never felt much solidarity with any of the former European socialist regimes" and wonders if "redefining" communism has "come too late for all of us"; ie, he wants to embrace social democracy along with other traitors, including his former ruling 'official communist' colleagues in Eastern Europe (*7 Days*, January 13 1990).

The triumph of reaction in Eastern Europe has clearly exposed the theoretical poverty of the left in Britain. Not so long ago *Militant's* editor was assuring his readers that the idea of "capitalist restoration" was a "chimera" (July 21 1989). Now, although the left's euphoria is giving way to foreboding, it still, as we have seen, indulges in all sorts of wishful thinking.

Hatred of the corruption and crimes of bureaucratic socialism has produced a farcical situation where the majority of left groups formally committed to the unconditional defence of the socialist state automatically bow before anti-Stalinist spontaneity, support any opposition, no matter what its explicit or implicit programme.

This was the case over Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia 1968. We were told that if the Soviet armed forces had not intervened a healthy socialist democracy would have resulted. The notion that a spontaneous rebellion can lead to communism has now been answered by life itself in the bourgeoisie of Eastern Europe.

We say the failure of the bureaucratic 'official communist' project of building communism in one country is also the failure of revolutionaries in the advanced capitalist countries to defend these deformed gains of the working class and, above all, to make revolution in their own countries.

There was nothing inevitable, ie historically progressive, about the counterrevolutions in Eastern Europe, nor is it mere foolishness to think that a Marxist movement could develop against a bureaucracy formally committed to Marxism. If communists had been able to make a revolution in any of the significant capitalist countries, the picture today would be very, very different.

However our task is not to engage in 'if only's. We must thoroughly analyse the demise of bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe and prepare to come back strengthened tenfold when reaction inevitably gives way to a new period of revolution. We will wipe the smirk off the smug collective bourgeois face. As it will discover to its cost, Leninism lives!

Jack Conrad



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

AFTER LOSING Eastern Europe, the bumbling Gorbachev, lionised by bourgeois politicians and 'official communists' as a brilliant politician (the *Morning Star's* Tony Chater even stupidly called him "today's Lenin" on the BBC), is now presiding over another 'master stroke', the break up of the USSR.

Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are firmly set on independence. Nationalist movements are rapidly gaining strength in the Ukraine and Byelorussia and are already dominant in Moldavia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, where the intervention of the Soviet armed forces will only give an anti-Soviet twist to its virtual civil war with equally nationalist dominated Armenia.

With the USSR dismembered, antagonistic inter-imperialist rivalries, which have already cost 75 million lives this century, will come to fore. The possibility of a World War III greatly increases as rival imperialist blocs begin their scramble for the east.

But as well as opening the door to clashes between a German dominated Europe, a Japanese dominated Eastern Asia and the USA, there is a great danger that the disintegration of the Soviet Union will not only produce a checkerboard of rival states, but a checkerboard of rival Lebanons with internal ethnic conflicts that will put the recent Azerbaijani anti-Armenian pogrom into the shade.

Each of the present fifteen Soviet Republics is made up of a kaleidoscopic mixture of peoples; 33% of Latvia's population is Russian, 30% of Tadzhikistan's Uzbeki, 14% of Moldavia's Ukrainian etc, etc. In fact, according to Soviet sources, there are 118 different nationalities in the USSR. The proto-bourgeois popular fronts will come to power by fuelling nationalist sentiments and nationalistic hatreds between these peoples. The result will be slaughter on a massive scale.

The main responsibility for this lies firmly and squarely with the parasitic Soviet bureaucracy. Whatever the undoubted advantages membership of the USSR has meant for small nations in terms of economic advancement, language rights, top positions in the state, etc, the bureaucracy has, in spite of itself, fuelled nationalism.

Through an inability to win the moral argument, it has time and time again resorted to crude administrative measures. Like a Great Russian bully it has ignored and crushed national rights; whole peoples have been branded traitors and moved thousands of miles from their natural homelands; others were forcibly incorporated into the USSR and told to be grateful.

And in a utopian effort to create a homogeneous USSR and a new Soviet 'man' (sic), with no contradictions resulting from social position, nationality or gender, the bureaucracy pretended that class politics, which made the formation of the USSR in 1923 possible, were outdated. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was no longer described as a working class vanguard organisation in its statutes, but a "party of the whole people"

Nationalism was bound to fill the vacuum. In conditions of an authoritarian one party state, where even the formal class politics of 'official communism' were denied, the working class could not even operate as a class in itself, let alone as a class for itself. As a result, especially with the abysmal failure of perestroika, the working class, along with a bureaucracy desperate for some sort of popular base, has increasingly divided along national lines.

We Leninists oppose the break up of the USSR. Its disintegration would strengthen imperialism and make it much harder to re-cement working class unity. It would do nothing to further the struggle for communism.

However, preserving the unity of the USSR will not be achieved through supporting the ever more panicky Gorbachev. It can only be achieved through the struggle against him and his bureaucratic ilk; through the struggle for a genuine political revolution and a USSR based on the voluntary, not forced, union of peoples.

The Editor

LETTERS

International Solidarity

We send you our deepest congratulations on the Fourth Conference of the Leninists of the CPGB. The Conference was held at a time when the world communist movement faces a crisis, which in its main dimensions can be described as a crisis of growth; when the broadening and deepening of socialist democracy is the main task facing communists in the socialist countries; when various deviant currents question the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and thus the need for a vanguard party of the working class united in its will and organisation on the basis of genuine democratic centralism.

At such times it is important for those communists committed to a Leninist tradition to regroup and to find answers for the problems and questions facing the class struggle today by turning to the revolutionary methodology and tradition developed by the great teachers of Marxism-Leninism, and to prepare organisationally along truly revolutionary lines for the difficult tasks ahead.

When we Iranian communists look at the situation in our own country and also at the progressive and popular struggles on a global scale we can see much cause for optimism. Certainly, where there has been struggle and resistance, coupled with political wisdom, the enemy has wavered and the revolution has been consolidated.

Like all true Marxist-Leninists we believe that, while up to now revolutions have taken place in countries on the margins of capitalist production, we cannot conceive of the final victory of socialism except on a global scale. This makes the condition of the struggle of the working class and democratic layers of the population in advanced capitalist countries of profound importance to us.

We look with optimism at the steps taken at your Fourth Conference. We wish you the very best success in your task of shedding light on the path of struggle of the communist militants and working class of Great Britain. We hope that you and all progressive peoples in Great Britain not only fulfil your vital tasks in this country and Europe in the shortest time but continue your solidarity with the people of other countries.

Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rahe Kargar), Committee Abroad

Red Flag

While cowards are flinching and traitors sneering, the Fourth Conference of the Leninists of the Communist Party of Great Britain has brought us an inspiring flash of reality. It shows determination to keep the red flag of communism and proletarian internationalism flying here.

As against the pinko jelly of the decaying 'official communists', the Leninist wing says clearly: "Communism represents the future of humanity." Is that not why socialists and militant workers have, through the years since 1920, been attracted to and joined our Party?

Now we have the newly 'elected' Euro secretary saying in an interview with the capitalist press, "we are discussing whether we are a party or not", and saying *Quar-*

kism Today (the magazine that leads into the dark hole of capitalist reaction) is aimed at "thinkers rather than doers". I thought *practice* was one of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism (still the guide of the Euro CPGB, according to its aims and constitution). "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it". And to change it in these times needs a political party of the working class, clear in its objectives. That is certainly not the present waffle-waffling 'official' Euro CPGB.

What a contrast the revolutionary wing of the CPGB makes. The Leninists show true communist mettle. They declare that 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 with the dictatorship of the proletariat. They also say that without the Party the working class is nothing. With it, it is everything.

Those were the principles upon which, after months of discussion, I, together with my comrades supporting the Affiliation Committee of the Independent Labour Party, joined the CPGB in 1934.

Here in Kent we have in recent years seen some fierce class struggles; the miners Great Strike, the seafarers in Dover, the Thames and Medway dockers, the railwaymen etc, have all been in action. What have the Euros done? Just contemplated their navels and allowed some of the best militants to stagger away into the swamp of the CPB or to drown in private griefs. The Leninist wing shows the way forward. That is why my support for *The Leninist* not only continues but is strengthened by the decisions of the Fourth Conference. The future is ours, if we make it so.

Reg Weston
Member of Kent District Committee, Euro CPGB

Irish Marxist

The *University Marxist*, monthly paper of the University of Ulster Labour Club (Marxist-Leninist), welcomes the decision of the the Fourth Conference of *The Leninist* to form a distinct revolutionary wing of the CPGB and reclaim the heritage of your Party from those who would sell the future of the British working class for less than thirty pieces of silver. For too long the communist movement has been dominated by opportunism in its several guises, all of which, through ideological poverty, lead to the abdication of the leading role of the Communist Party.

In Britain this means the legitimisation of the Labour Party, a bourgeois workers party distinctly hostile to proletarian interests. The nationalist working class here in the Six Counties has first hand experience of the 'socialism' of the British Labour Party, complete with army, PTA and internment. We salute the principled stand of the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*) in taking for the working class what is theirs, the CPGB, from the opportunists of official communism on their inevitable road to liquidationism.

The student circle based around our paper, though in embryonic form, recognises the qualitative nature of the development presented by *The Leninist* and draws inspiration from this in our own objective of assisting in the forging of a communist party in Ireland true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism.
Sue Fischer
University Marxist

Interest

I read with interest the report in *The Leninist* on the decision to set up the CPGB (*The Leninist*) wing.

This I believe is none too soon. The group purporting to be the CPGB have besmirched the name of our party for far too long. Never did I imagine in 1934, when I joined the CPGB, it would ever fall foul of social democratic ideas, but with the lack of vigilance in recruitment etc, over the years it has become so riddled with opportunism the decline was inevitable.

I am convinced the Leninist group will eventually succeed in the reforging of the Party and it will once again become the vanguard of the British working class. We will surely take heed of the lessons of the past 70 years and ascertain that the mistakes of that period are never again repeated.

Ted Rowlands
Co Durham

Major Step

I was very pleased to receive *The Leninist* No85 and to read of the Fourth Conference decision to form a National Committee of the CPGB (*The Leninist*).

In my opinion this is a great move forward. Not only will this decision consolidate the position of those within the Party who wish to see a genuine Communist Party in Britain, but it will also act as a beacon to all those elements outside the Party that remain bogged down in the mire of disaffection.

Recent events in the European socialist lands have once again accentuated the necessity of building genuine Leninist parties - and not just in Europe, but world-wide. Only Leninism can defeat the forces of reaction and counterrevolution on the one hand, and the cancer of opportunism that exists within our own ranks on the other. A thousand Gorbachevs may come and go, but Leninism is here to stay!

Jim Wright
Devon

No 'TL'...

I look forward to receiving my copies of *The Leninist*, as do the contacts I have made. The problems caused by irregular publication can however create havoc in maintaining contact with them.

It is my firm belief that we should practice what we preach. Criticism has been made in *The Leninist* of other organisations in not being able to maintain three times of issue, yet here is *TL* itself, a fortnightly publication, which comes out monthly or even less regularly.

Our movement certainly needs a weekly, or even a daily, but we will never attain this by kidding ourselves; we will only bring derision and discredit to the movement.

James Robson
Bradford

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.

Six month subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £8; Europe 11; Rest of World £13 (airmail £20.50). Annual subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £16 (Institutions £26); Europe £22 (Institutions £32); Rest of World £26, airmail £41 (Institutions £36, airmail £46). Back issues: Issues 1-6(theoretical journal) £1 each plus 25p p&p. Other papers, 50p. All cheques payable to November Publications Ltd. Printed by: Multi-Line Systems Ltd, 20 Powell Road, E5. Published by: November Publications, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX copyright November 1989 ISSN 0262-1649

Withstanding reaction: preparing for action

The National Committee of the CPGB (TL) met in early January and planned our work for 1990

THE FIRST meeting of the National Committee in 1990 expressed confident determination to advance our struggle to reforge the CPGB this year. This is significant, given that it agreed that the collapse of bureaucratic socialism and the social democratisation of 'official communism' will produce a powerful wave of reaction. Things will be very tough for all progressives. We consider it inevitable that those organisations which today are falling over themselves in putting a socialistic gloss on the counter-revolutions in Eastern Europe will tomorrow suffer from the most profound difficulties. What we are witnessing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union cannot but in the short term strengthen bourgeois ideas and weaken socialist ideas in a country like Britain.

Even principled communist organisations will be affected. Opportunist tendencies and notions will become more pronounced and harder to combat. Those groups that are weak ideologically could face collapse or simply dissolve themselves entirely into bourgeois reformist politics.

We expect therefore that, far from our organisation gaining recruits as a result of it having proven correct in its assessment of the depth of the crisis of bureaucratic socialism, we will find it difficult in the short term to maintain our present structures.

It was felt that within our ranks the strengthening of reaction in society would not take the form of open opposition. Rather it would manifest itself in individualism, bucking at discipline and general pessimism. The 'joys' of private life will exert a strong pull. There will be excuses aplenty. We will not give an inch to any backsliding. In fact we will fight to stamp it out even though we know full well that this will lead to a lot of petty self justifying arguments and perhaps not a few resignations and expulsions. No matter: better fewer but better.

Understanding that the forces of reaction are being strengthened at the moment the National Committee concluded that there must be a general raising of ideological level as well as commitment and discipline. Only if this is done can we hope to emerge intact as a fighting organisation when the reactionary wave exhausts itself. So, although we will be doing everything we can to maintain the level of campaigning work we achieved in 1989, and even to raise it in certain areas, the main emphasis will be on steeling our comrades ideologically and as communist militants.

Related to this will be our school (dealt with in page six) and our weekly seminars (regular attendance must be first priority for all sympathisers within travelling distance).

While the sorry strands of 'official communism' in Britain are hypocritically preparing to mark the 70th anniversary of our great Party we will be making it the main

area dealt with in our seminars in the first half of 1990. As the liquidators fondly remember the opportunist degeneration they inflicted on our Party - from the class collaboration of the 1930s to the moves today towards abandoning even a formal commitment to communism - our wing will be staking its claim as the true inheritor and continuer of the revolutionary positions on which our Party was founded.

The first series of 18 openings (and discussion) aims to give an all round appreciation of the formation and history of our CPGB. This will be followed by a series of 14 openings on "Trotsky and the Trotskyites". The established practice of collective study and preparation of seminar openings will be continued, striving to significantly raise the quality of the openings.

The National Committee recognised that we face serious financial problems. The subsidising of campaigning work, as well as the considerable running costs of our head office, have already used up surplus funds gained in the 1989 Summer Offensive which would otherwise have been used for expansion. This situation must not be allowed to recur. The National Committee therefore reiterated the principle that all parts of our organisation must be strictly self financing, money being raised before it is spent.

Regular running costs must be met month by month, firstly by extending the number of supporters contributing 10% of their income to the organisation in dues, and utilising new as well as tried and tested methods of fundraising.

During the course of 1990 we intend to steal the thunder of the Euros' 70th anniversary celebrations, showing that the 'emperor has no clothes', that the Euros have no legitimate claim to the name 'communist'. What applies to the Euros also applies to the other 'official communists'. Neither the Straight Leftists, the NCP nor the *Morning Star's* CPB, with their congenial Labourism, have any legitimate right to claim the heritage of 70 years ago. None of these groupings stand on the revolutionary ideology and politics of Lenin's Bolshevism; none of them, given their present politics, would come within a mile of meeting the conditions set for membership of the Third (Communist) International.

By contrast, our organisation will publish with confidence records and documents concerning the formation and early years of the Party, knowing full well that the politics we uphold today reflect and develop the positions put forward then. The peak of this campaign will be at the end of July when we will fittingly combine celebrations of the 70th anniversary of our Party with the conclusion of our Summer Offensive, which has this year a target of £25,000 - £5,000 more than last year.

One key task set by the National

Committee of the CPGB's Leninist wing in its 1990 year plan is the doubling of the sales of *The Leninist*. This, and a dramatic increase in subscriptions, will be achieved by systematic streetwork and contacting with the help of a publicity campaign including posters and stickers.

Through such work we will come to be seen as the real communists, as the true inheritors of July 1920. Certainly, through study of the foundation and history of the CPGB, our members will come to a fuller understanding of its opportunist degeneration. They will also strengthen their determination to lift the honoured name of our Party from the gutter into which opportunism has let it fall, thus reclaiming it from the liquidators of all varieties.

Our National Committee wishes to make it clear that although the CPGB can never be reformed through attempts to win control within the Euro organisation or any other of the 'official communist' rumps, this does not mean that any genuine communists who remain within them should simply walk out. Our National Committee urges such comrades to accept the discipline of the CPGB (TL) and, under its discipline, fight where you are. Raise the banner of Leninist rebellion and rally all healthy forces to it.

The need for such a battle now cannot be over emphasised. Let them expel you! The important thing is Leninist discipline! There cannot be any time wasted. The task of reorganising the CPGB will only be achieved by building the Leninist wing as a democratic centralist communist organisation until it fulfils the objective requirements of a genuine Communist Party, a Party which can unite the vanguard workers from key sections of the working class in Britain in one organisation on the basis of the most advanced revolutionary theory.

We will not cheapen the word 'Party' by using it lightly, as so many opportunist groupings on the British left do, thereby belittling the quality of the class party which British workers need. Building the Party is going to be a long and hard job. Nonetheless we must and are going to lay the basis for it now ... and not only organisationally.

In line with the decision of the Fourth Conference of the CPGB (TL), the National Committee established a commission to prepare the draft Party programme for public discussion prior to presentation to a congress of the reformed CPGB. Without a Leninist programme there can be no Leninist party.

Finally, the National Committee elected comrade John Bridge as national secretary, and appointments were approved for editor of *The Leninist*, deputy editor of *The Leninist*, national organiser and Manchester organiser.

Ian Farrell

Militants suffered a serious setback when London ambulance workers' shop stewards voted overwhelmingly against calling for either a national or London ballot on all out strike action. The vote against holding a national ballot was 57 to 12. London crews have played a leading role in the five month long dispute. So, with the vote of their shop stewards, the temperature in the dispute has been lowered when everything called out for it to be raised. The failure of militants to get a ballot has given Poole a much needed boost. He and the trade union bureaucracy are determined to keep their grip on the dispute, even making threatening noises about cutting out those taking unofficial strike action from the hardship fund. He is obviously concerned about his well nurtured image as a sensible moderate with the bourgeois media. As a result the whole dispute has been dragged out. Public sympathy is seen as more important than workers' solidarity. Fully in line with this approach was the 50,000 strong Trafalgar Square rally on January 13. Norman Willis - who knifed the miners in the back in the Great Strike - was given full range to prattle on. What is needed is not the platitudes of Norman Willis or 15 minutes of inaction, but action. In fact what is needed is generalised strike action by as many other sections of the class as possible, organised through transformed Ambulance Workers' Support Groups, as a step to a class wide offensive against the Tories.

The first night of the Internationale, the political cabaret club sponsored by the Workers Theatre Movement, was a resounding success. Despite taking place on the night of January's big winds, it was packed. Undoubtedly the Workers Theatre Movement has taken a major step forward in its ability to both win an audience to its new venture and draw others working in the arts to appear under its banner. Given the nature of the first night, a salute to Ewan MacColl, the WTM's Founding Honorary President, it was inevitable that there would be an emphasis on folk music. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but there is a tendency in that idiom today towards a rather soft sentimental approach to the problems of class struggle and this was seen to some extent on the night. But it is hard class politics that the WTM seeks to promote. The next Internationale, on International Women's Day, offers great possibilities for this to happen.

International Women's Day Internationale, 7.30pm March 8, Old Piano Warehouse, Hawley Road, Camden Town, London NW1. GK

Although only three out of 21 Ford plants voted for strike action, there can be no doubt that there exists a sizable TGWU militant minority. About half the workforce staged unofficial strike action in the run up to the ballot, and even after the 59% vote to accept Ford's offer, many refused to go back to work. Pressure is rapidly mounting against the 10.2% increase at grass roots level in other Ford plants. Also, the engineers and electricians have indicated that such an offer is unacceptable. This has led to the threat of strike action, which even Eric Hammond has backed. However, this is done on the basis of defending pay differentials, which may pose a sectional danger. The government rightly fears that this struggle around wages with Ford's 31,800 workers will become a benchmark. Even the standing Ford agreement flies in the face of the tough message delivered by the Chancellor at a recent meeting of the National Economic Development Council, where he said industry should not tolerate high pay claims. But Ford made over £700 million last year and it is determined that the workforce will itself more than cover its higher wages in 1990. The agreement will be easily offset by increased rates of exploitation, achieved through 'Japanese style' work methods. Despite this, Ford's offer, and the resistance to break through it by the workers, will set a combative agenda on the struggle around wages within the motor industry and quite possibly throughout the working class. IM



Packing them in: a great start to the Internationale.

Voice of communism



If ever there was a time for the voice of genuine communism to be supported, it is now. With the encouragement of the bourgeoisie 'official communism' is going over to social democracy east and west, bureaucratic socialism is in the last stages of disintegration and internationally there is a growing wave of reaction. Only *The Leninist* has been able to face up to these events. Frankly, other left publications have abysmally failed the working class, either welcoming the counter-revolutions in Eastern Europe or pretending that nothing has happened. That is why our fighting fund is so vital. However, although we received generous donations, not least from comrades AS, RW and MJ, January's £600 fighting fund was disappointingly low, all in all £457.

NATURALLY THERE are those who belittle the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain over the weekend of July 31-August 1 1920, seventy years ago. However, apart from the expected rag bag of anti-communists, clever-clever academics and the scribes of the bosses' press, to their shame not an inconsiderable number of leftist groups and individuals feel they have to do this as well. It's not only that they have no real understanding of working class history or politics. They are compelled to pooh-pooh the CPGB because of almost frantic attempts to market their bourgeois Labour Party or marginal student dominated sect as vehicles that will bring socialism to Britain.

Those who, for whatever reason, are unwilling to appreciate the riches of the past are doomed to their political poverty of the present. Our aim here, though, is not to save them. Instead we want to concentrate our readers' attention on the early CPGB and its formation. Over the following months we will be reprinting many contemporary documents concerning this, along with commentaries. The reason is simple.

Scientifically speaking (ie, using the method of Marxism-Leninism) the CPGB was the highest form of organisation the working class movement in Britain ever produced, a pinnacle of achievement which towers above even the splendid Chartists and the united mass trade union and cooperative movement. To date, for all the bogus claims of 'parties' like the SWP, WRP, RCP, etc, it has never been surpassed.

For all its early amateurish limitations and its later domination by opportunism, it should never be forgotten that without it there would, in all likelihood, have been no National Minority Movement, no 1926 General Strike, no National Unemployed Workers Movement, not even a Liaison Committee which led the fight in the late 1960s and early '70s to defeat first Wilson's, then Heath's anti-union legislation, and successfully campaigned – not through the courts but through mass political strikes – for the release of the Pentonville Five.

Key lessons

Today the CPGB, as we have pointed out on countless occasions, needs re-forging. As a party it exists only in name. Workers in Britain no longer have a revolutionary party. The 'official communist' movement is in the last stages of liquidationist crisis and is irredeemably lost to the cause of communism. If by some strange quirk of fate anything in the 'official' camp survives, it will, if present trends continue, be on the other side of the barricades come a revolutionary situation.

Of course, the picture is far from bleak. Genuine communism lives and has not been idle. In December of last year we announced the formation of the CPGB (*The Leninist*). Correctly we do not treat the title 'party' lightly. The CPGB (*The Leninist*) is not and does not claim to be *the party*. As our report

ery of the Labour Party – which, like the 'official' parties of social democracy on the continent, joined the imperialist war cabinet and acted as a recruiting sergeant for its own ruling class, the outbreak of revolution in Germany and above all the triumph of the Bolsheviks pointed to the need for a Russian type Communist Party, not the transformation of the Labour Party or a middle way socialist party.

Of course, communist parties, like leaders, are not born, they are forged. Those who came to recognise the need for a Communist Party in Britain were small in number and came from a wide variety of different organisations: the British Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party, the Workers Socialist Federation etc, etc – organisations which, it must be said, were often bitterly opposed to each other. Yet it was out of this raw material that the Communist Party was made.

To the philistine the formation of the CPGB could therefore be seen as proof of the correctness of the tired call for all the groups of the left, as a matter of 'principle', to drop their differences and unite. What this approach amounts to today, in the last analysis, is a demand on organisations such as ours to abandon their commitment to socialist revolution and the smashing of the bourgeois state and to back Neil Kinnock's efforts to become prime minister. Because we will not follow this 'advice' we are branded sectarian. Funnily, though, it is never suggested to Neil Kinnock that he is sectarian because he refuses to join us and break from his commitment to run capitalism and defend the interests of British imperialism.

In our view, along with those who formed the CPGB, it is essential for communists to undeviatingly stand on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Unlike with tactics, there can be no compromise on this. Unless the advanced section is won through ruthless ideological struggle against all attempts to water down the revolutionary programme there is no hope of building the genuine Communist Party the working class needs in order to realise socialism. A drop-your-differences unity is easy to achieve but fragile and doomed to shatter at the first serious test. Unity around Marxism-Leninism is slow and difficult but, against the ideological onslaught and state terrorism of the class enemy, rock hard.

The reason most opportunists are so concerned with unity is numbers. Being in a minority is an uncomfortable experience. So, for them, to be small is to be sectarian. Self serving, they equate large numbers with correctness, forgetting that in 1543 all educated people except Copernicus thought that the world was the centre of the universe. Indeed they forget that the history of science has been one of individuals and then small minorities turning out to be right against the perceived wisdom of the majority. And what applies to science also applies to politics.

Learning Russian

We have no fear of being in a minority. On this side of the revolution we expect it. That does not mean we deny that numbers are important; indeed, to carry out a successful revolution we need the mass of the workers on our side. But before we arrive at that stage it is necessary to win the small vanguard to the tiny communist nucleus.

Yes, our numbers are small. But then in relative terms so were those who came together in July 1920 to form *the party*. Quite rightly they recognised that, no matter how few they may be, communists must organise themselves and fight to lay the basis for a mass vanguard party. As Lenin said: "In order that the mass of a definite class may learn how to understand its own interests, its situation, may learn how to carry on its own policy, precisely for this an organisation of the advanced elements of the class is immediately necessary at any cost though at the beginning these elements may form a negligible section of the class."

Communist parties are, in other words, built through uniting the advanced section of the working class around Marxism-Leninism, not worrying about popularity. Hence they are also, we insist, built top down and in struggle against all opportunist and reformist trends in the *working class movement*.

Nonetheless the fact of the matter is that the formation of the CPGB did bring together BSPers like Willie Gallagher and Harry Pollitt, SLPers Tom Bell, William Paul and Arthur MacManus, Guild Socialists such as Robin Page Arnot, Socialist Prohibition Fellowship leader Bob Stewart and left wing



The first Communist Party Central Committee

Seventy years ago

The Communist Party of Great Britain was founded 70 years ago as a party of class war. It was the greatest achievement of our working class. That is what we will be celebrating this year, not its subsequent centrist degeneration and liquidation by Euro revisionism

Unlike the Labour Party, which was founded as a party of class peace, the CPGB was founded as a party of class war. And although Britain, this most bourgeois of nations, has never experienced a revolutionary situation during the twentieth century, the mere fact that the CPGB existed points to the certainty of socialism being the future.

There can be no doubt that without a *class war* party there is no possibility of overthrowing capitalism or establishing and maintaining the dictatorship of the proletariat. The foundation of the CPGB showed that a key layer of workers in Britain, its advanced detachment, wanted to do more than operate within capitalism; it was prepared to organise to make revolution. Neither bourgeois lies, r-r-revolutionary detractors, nor the sickening reformism of today's 'official communists' can take away from the significance of their creation.

Over two generations the CPGB brought together the best, most militant workers in Britain. In their history, good, bad and indifferent, we see the history of the working class struggle for socialism in Britain. But the CPGB was more than a collection of dedicated individuals. The whole was far greater than the sum of its parts. Because it was a disciplined organisation with the widest international contacts and roots deep in the class it was able to weld its members into a *vanguard force* that, in spite of relatively tiny numbers, acted as the proletarian general staff in all the crucial class battles from 1920 till well into the 1970s.

of the Fourth Conference of the Leninists made clear, the central purpose of CPGB (*The Leninist*) is re-forging the CPGB.

Because we have that singleminded perspective we can and will be celebrating the anniversary of the formation of the CPGB this year with admiration, pride and full legitimacy. None of the 'official communist' organisations, nor the Trotskyites, have any right to claim the heritage of the CPGB when it was formed; only the CPGB (*The Leninist*) does.

This brings me to the main purpose of this short article. As well as being an introduction to our celebration of the formation of our Party, what we will do here is not so much draw up a comprehensive balance sheet on the formation of the CPGB, let alone its subsequent history; rather we intend to deal with two key lessons of its formation. They are:

1. International links were not a luxury but a necessity.
2. The CPGB was formed top down.

Let us expand on these – as will be seen – closely intertwined lessons. In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, for the best militants in Britain one question dominated – the party. And not just any party: what they wanted was a Communist Party of the type that Lenin had forged in Russia, which had succeeded in establishing the world's first socialist state in November (October in the contemporary Russian calendar) 1917.

The advances, but more importantly the ineffectiveness, of revolutionaries in Britain during the course of World War I, the treach-

members of the ILP among whom Emile Burns, R Palme Dutt and Shapurji Saklatvala are of particular note.

Does this mean that the essence of the formation of the CPGB was a socialist movement get together around some sort of revolutionary lowest common denominator? In a word, no! The CPGB was founded on the basis of unity around the most advanced Marxist theory in the world; ie, the theory of Bolshevism, which had been forged under the leadership of Lenin in the years from 1903 against all opportunist trends in Russia and the world. That the CPGB did its best to take on board this theory explains its ability in its early years to exert an influence over many millions, even though its membership was only a couple of thousand, ie less than today's SWP. 'Learning Russian' was to learn the language of world revolution.

From the 1890s or thereabouts, certainly from 1905, the world's revolutionary centre (the country where the class struggle is at the highest point) shifted from Germany to Russia, a development which was commented upon by, among others, Kautsky - then the 'pope of Marxism' - as well as Lenin.

Consequently the social and class contradictions in Russia were extremely acute and demanding. The rapidly changing conditions that resulted, the existence of revolution just below the surface of society, the revolutionary movement's experience of illegality and legality, isolation and mass influence, parliamentary agitation and street barricade fighting, all acted like a hothouse for theory and practice.

Under these hard but very fertile conditions all that was mechanical, half baked or suffered legalistic or doctrinaire illusions could, through a combination of practice and ruthless polemic, be exposed as such.

Where many brave and even heroic groups had failed and gone under, Lenin and the

Bolsheviks learned. And they learned lessons relevant to the whole world. Of course, Russia had its unique features; but as the world's revolutionary centre it also had its general features, not least soviets, violent revolution, the smashing of the old state, and above all the necessity for revolutionaries to forge a vanguard party based on the highest theory and strictest discipline.

The influence of the Bolsheviks in Russia was obviously dramatically enhanced by the success of the October Revolution. They used it to good effect. Against moves to resuscitate the collapsed Second International they proposed the formation of a Third International composed of workers' parties based on the Bolshevik model.

Tactics and principles

On May 13 1919 the first meeting was held between the BSP, SLP, the Workers Socialist Federation and the South Wales Socialist Society to discuss the creation of a Bolshevik type party in Britain. There were no real disagreements on what are basic questions for genuine communists. All agreed on affiliation to the Third (Communist) International, formed that March. All rejected reformism in both its right and left guises. All were committed to violent revolution, the smashing of the bourgeois state and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. All stood against the sham of parliamentary democracy and for workers' councils (soviets), which would go from being organs of class struggle to organs of class power.

In spite of this the understanding some of these revolutionaries had of Leninism was still superficial. There were big differences when it came to tactics, not least what attitude to take

towards parliament and the Labour Party.

Both the BSP and SLP were in favour of using parliament and parliamentary elections as a revolutionary platform. This did not mean that either of them suffered from the reformist illusion peddled by the 'official communists' in the *British Road to Socialism*, the *Manifesto for New Times*, and the likes of *Tribune* and *Militant* that socialism will come via a vote in the House of Commons. However, the WSF and the SWSS considered any participation in parliament impermissible as a matter of principle. It would either befuddle ordinary working class minds about parliament or corrupt those workers who found themselves in that den of thieves and knaves as MPs.

A similar leftist problem arose over affiliation to the Labour Party. The BSP was affiliated to the Labour Party and considered that a Communist Party should seek to do likewise. The other three organisations were adamantly opposed.

In essence, Lenin intervened top down on the side of the BSP. He pointed out that the Bolsheviks had participated in and brilliantly used the Tsarist parliament, the Duma. He also outlined how the Bolsheviks had operated for many years within the same party as the Mensheviks. Communist parties, he said, had to take full account of what level mass consciousness was at and work where the masses were. He therefore insisted in his *Letter to Sylvia Pankhurst*, his *Left Wing Communism*, his *Message to the Unity Convention* and in his *Speeches at the Second Congress of the Communist International* that participation in parliamentary contests was, except in the most extreme circumstances, obligatory and that, as long as communists could exercise full freedom of criticism within the Labour Party, affiliation would be perfectly permissible, indeed positively advantageous. Here was pro-

letarian internationalism in practice.

After drawn out negotiations and some sharp arguments it was the Leninist line that eventually won the day. At the Communist Unity Convention over July 31-August 1 1920 (which later was known as the CPGB's 1st Congress) and at the Leeds Convention (again, later known as the 2nd Congress) there were majorities for parliamentary action and for affiliation. The CPGB had been made.

What we have said about the top down approach and role of the International in the formation of the CPGB does not mean that it was an "artificial creation", as Little England reformists like Eric Heffer would have us believe. Winning socialism is in essence a world process. The revolution starts out on the national stage but its driving force is the existence of a world economy which necessitates a world party because, for its own self liberation, the working class needs a world revolution which ends only with the world order of communism.

Not to have formed the CPGB along the lines of Russian experience would be like expecting each nation to reinvent the car, the telephone, the airplane. Only when it comes to politics would anyone dare suggest anything so ludicrous; but in this sphere we must take into account opportunist self interest.

The Bolshevik type party may have been 'invented' in Russia, but once 'invented' it was available to all those who wanted, indeed dared, to fight for socialist revolution. There is nothing "artificial" in that. Everything we know about developments in the world and the world economy today makes the task of once again taking up that 'invention' ever more relevant, ever more urgent. Hail the formation of the CPGB! Forward to the re-forged CPGB!

Jack Conrad

Open letter to 'official communists' from John Bridge, National Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain (The Leninist)

Which side are you on?

DEAR COMRADES, I know that all honest members of the CPGB (*Marxism Today*), the CPB and the NCP - ie, members of Britain's three 'official communist' organisations - will have been shaken by the democratic and mainly peaceful counterrevolutions in Eastern Europe and the social democratisation of the 'official' world communist movement, west and east. Showing their true worth, all your old certainties have come crashing down. Now's the time to rethink, and rethink fast.

Who can doubt that we are at one of history's great turning points. Apart from the heightening and coming to the fore in world politics of World War III making inter-imperialist contradictions, what we are witnessing in the 'official' world communist movement is another 1914 - when the opportunist parties of the Second International went over to their own ruling classes - but on a higher level today, involving as it does states as well as parties.

Communists must take sides. It's Leninism or the opportunist mire of Gorbachevism. What is needed is a ruthless scientific evaluation and self criticism of the past, a rallying of healthy forces and a fearless facing up to the tasks of the future. This is what Lenin and his comrades did 76 years ago and it is exactly what we Leninists are doing today.

But what do the leaders of Britain's 'official communists' say and do? The *Morning Star* reports the fading out of 'official communist' governments and the dissolution of 'official communist' parties as if this were an everyday event. And it actually toasted those who plotted the violent popular counterrevolution in Romania!

Where the *Morning Star* and its CPB refuse to think in case they see the reality of counterrevolution, in the name of 'original thinking' other 'official communists' rejoice at the counterrevolutionary developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Of course, there is nothing original in Fabianism, even when dressed up in last year's yuppie gear.

In the January edition of *Marxism Today*, Martin Jacques declares that "communism is dead" and that the future of the left lies in merging with social democracy. In light of this he fetes Gorbachevism, the Eastern European counterrevolutions and the social democratisation of 'official communism', not least the decision of the Italian Communist Party to

change its name and join the Socialist International. Surely it's only a matter of time before the Euro CPGB follows suit.

The NCP is different. But only marginally. It now reluctantly criticises some aspects of Gorbachevism, true, but gives typically centrist, hedge your bets "critical support" to his perestroika 'market socialism' and proposes 'communist' unity with opportunists like Martin Jacques and Tony Chater. But perhaps that's not so strange after all. Unitedly they welcomed the Romanian counterrevolution, the NCP washing its hands of socialism in Romania because Ceausescu refused to back the Soviet led intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 (which is now denounced by all who participated in it) and because he pursued a foreign policy independent of the Soviet Union. So much for the NCP's defence of socialism!

In an effort to maintain some sort of organisational cohesion, both the CPB and the NCP leadership try to keep their members' heads well and truly in the sand and explain away fear about a general crisis of bureaucratic socialism with the blandest of truisms. Chater claims that whatever the "fear and apprehension" about perestroika, "cautious optimism is the sensible approach". (*Morning Star* January 19 1990)

The NCP is equally 'sensible': "Socialism in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries", we are told in all seriousness, "was made by human beings, primarily the working class, with all their faults and weaknesses [sic], not by gods or supermen". (*The New Worker* editorial, January 5 1990)

In this fashion the NCP not only insults the working class, blaming it, not the bureaucracy, for the deformations and crisis of socialism, but it descends into profoundly reactionary pessimism: implying that careerism, opportunism and bureaucratic rule are somehow inevitable. This is hardly surprising.

Since the NCP's formation Trevett and Co have, like the political prostitutes they are, loyally echoed every halftruth, platitude and downright lie that has come from those who have (mis)led the 'official communist' parties in the socialist world to the present liquidationist impasse. Those, such as we Leninists, who dared criticise them were branded 'anti-Soviet', agents of imperialism, etc.

After the bloodshed in Tiananmen Square, the Soviet miners' strike, the emergence of

centrifugal nationalist forces and the counterrevolutionary role of Gorbachevism around the world, the fall of the 'official communist' governments in the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania in 1989, these slanders no longer wash.

Certainly when Eric Trevett admits that glasnost, so-called New Political Thinking, the claim that universal human values are superior to those of the working class, are all revisionist and anti-Leninist, it means that the world view of the NCP has ignominiously collapsed like a house of cards.

Yet its leadership has done nothing to explain how and why Gorbachevite revisionism and anti-Leninism has come about. It does say that in a socialist Britain the "risks of abuse of power and corruption" would have to be fought "again and again". But its silence on the *how* - just like the CPB's, which now also belatedly admits the endemic corruption of the socialist world's bureaucracy - speaks volumes.

Such theoretical emptyheadedness has nothing to do with communism. The Paris Commune, and after it the young Soviet state, fought "abuse of power and corruption" with far reaching measures of socialist democracy; for example, the freedom to form workers' parties, the instant recallability of all representatives and the pay of all officials pegged to that of the average skilled worker - all basic principles of Marxism-Leninism surely known to the leaders of 'official communism'. Yet nowhere do any of the organisations of 'official communism' advocate such measures for a socialist Britain, or for anywhere else for that matter.

'Official communism' is inextricably linked, not to the defence of the socialist countries, but to the bureaucracy in the socialist countries; a bureaucracy which from the mid-1920s did everything it could to undermine the theory and practice of socialist democracy. This was necessary for a parasitic social caste whose interests increasingly diverged from the mass of the population, not least the working class.

There are those 'official communists' who claim that Gorbachev represents a break with past bureaucratic practices. In reality, however, he is the logical outcome. Bureaucratic socialism has gone from being a relative to being an absolute fetter on the productive forces. The truth of that can be seen in the

queues and the empty shops from Leipzig to Leningrad and in the turn to market socialism.

If we want to see socialism resume its forward march we must support the demand for a political revolution in Eastern Europe and the USSR, led by the forces of genuine communism, a revolution which must increasingly take on a social dimension, to the extent that capitalism has been restored. Those communists who refuse to support this call have no right to call themselves communists.

Of course, not so long ago most 'official communists' would insist that such a demand aided the forces of capitalist restoration. How wrong can you be. Gorbachev represents the technocratic wing of the bureaucracy, which favours measures that will transform the socialist countries into capitalist neo-colonies of world imperialism.

He and his ilk in Eastern Europe are doing everything they can to preserve their obscene privileges through transforming themselves into a new capitalist class, which will operate as a junior partner in the exploitation of the working class; already, with the nodding approval of what were Poland's 'communist' leaders, Lech Welesa has hawked himself around various western capitals promising the imperialist transnationals cheap labour and bargain basement prices for his country's nationalised industries.

Foreign policy is a reflection of domestic policy. The truth about the nature of Gorbachev's domestic policy can be seen in his support for counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and in his attempts to sell out the world's 'hot spots'; ie, countries with revolutionary situations, in an effort to appease US imperialism.

Most who joined the organisations of 'official communism' did so undoubtedly in order to advance the cause of socialism. Now you comrades are faced with a fateful choice. Either you can continue to follow the path of revisionism and mealy mouthed opportunism or you take the path towards Leninism. 'Official communism', as you can now see in the organisational and political collapse faced by your organisations, brings only impotence, demoralisation and disappointment.

Comrades, enter into discussions with the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*). From its earliest origins it has unconditionally defended the gains of the world revolution and sought to extend them through building a genuine Bolshevik party in Britain. It is the only worthy inheritor of the CPGB when it was founded 70 years ago. Comrades, we are eager to hear from you. The critical situation faced by the world communist movement brooks no delay. Comrades, take sides - take the side of communism.



Against the stream

Those 'official communists' who wish to ingratiate themselves with the bourgeoisie first denounce their own past. Nowhere has this gone as far as in Poland. The Solidarnosc government has decided to confiscate 160 buildings previously owned by the Polish United Workers Party and then allocate premises to it on the same basis as other parties. Trybuna Ludu, the paper of the PUWP, naturally does not think much of this "brutal act of nationalisation", which it condemns as "Bolshevik in its spirit and method". Which is being no more than being honest, as the PUWP has clearly set itself on the opposite side of the class lines drawn by Lenin now that it has - with Soviet support - liquidated itself and taken the much more appropriate name of Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland.

Don't women always get the worst jobs? It seems so. Nina Temple is now the Euro CPGB's new secretary. Martin Jacques wisely decided not to stand and the other frontrunner, Dave Cook, is now busily peddling his way to Australia (honest!). Nina, as those acquainted with her will already know, only opens her mouth to put her foot in it. In a recent interview with the Observer she commented that, in filling her new post, she has found the Euro organisation in much the same state as the Young Communist League when she took over its helm. 'Auntie Nina', as she was known in her YCL days, presided over such a running down of that organisation that within three years of her leaving for pastures new in the Euro bureaucracy, the YCL had ceased to exist. Given her record, she has obviously been given her new job on a short term contract.

Yet another Morning Star survival plan has been launched to try and yank the geriatric rag from the jaws of death. Editor Tony 'interesting' Chater has roped in various dignitaries to give the thumbs up to 'Britain's Iskra' (please note ironic quote marks), including Norman Willis, SLD MP David Steel and even an obscure Tory back bencher.

Once more on the falling Morning Star. After its sickening fawning to Gorbachev, its tailing of every opportunist zig and rightist zag, has it not surprised the Star and its Communist Party of Britain followers that the Soviet bureaucracy turns round and, as a mark of appreciation, halves its 12,000 daily sub? Hasn't it occurred to Chater, Hicks and Co to ask why?



How do communists respond to the crisis in eastern Europe?

The collapse of bureaucratic socialism and the crisis of 'official communism' demands the development of communist cadres steeled in Leninist theory and practice, nationally and internationally

EVERY DAY that goes by sees the 'official communists' internationally sink deeper into crisis. In the socialist countries (or, as Fidel Castro rightly points out, what were the socialist countries) the 'official communist' bureaucracies are either restoring capitalism themselves or are cooperating with those that are committed to "all the old crap".

Here in Britain, as in many other countries, the rosy official optimism produced in the early days of Gorbachevism is wearing thin: all the certainties, all the easy answers, are evaporating as history unfreezes. The Morning Star looks as if it will be the first to fall through the cracks in the ice. The rest are sure to follow.

These opportunists are finding it harder and harder to justify their parasitic existence. The Nina Temple Euro organisation is moving towards dropping the pretence of being a 'Communist Party'; becoming a New Forum is more to her counterrevolutionary taste. The future for the New Communist Party and Communist Party of Britain, if that is possible, looks bleaker still. For them the corrupt bureaucracies of the socialist countries were both god and banker. Now the deity has fallen from the heavens with a sickening thud and lies bleeding before them.

The myriad petty bourgeois left groups join with the majority of the 'official communists' and the bourgeoisie in hailing the accelerating counterrevolutionary process in the socialist world as 'revolutions'. Those who, for over half a century, have been hanging onto the edges of their seats waiting for the predictions of Trotsky's *Transitional Programme* to come to pass are so blinded by the dogma they pass off as Marxism that they are now fighting to paint counterrevolutionary forces in the colours of ardent revolutionaries.

Their support for Polish Solidarnosc a decade ago, in what has proven to be the dress rehearsal for today's counterrevolution in east-

ern Europe, is being taken to its reactionary conclusion today. Parodying the slogan of the Communist Party of Germany in 1933, the petty bourgeois left, from the Revolutionary Communist Party to Militant, are announcing 'after Walesa, after Mazowiecki, Havel and Iliescu, us!'

Such delusions must lead to disillusion when leftist euphoria slips into despair as the 'revolutions' in the east show their true counterrevolutionary reality. In the case of 'official communism' we can already see the results.

The old opportunist world communist movement has, to all intents and purposes, collapsed. In this, it is possible to draw an analogy with the collapse of the Second International in 1914, though given that it involves states as well as parties, the route back to the bourgeoisie has been far more complex and protracted for the remnants of the Third International.

What this demands is the sharpest clarity. Vagaries, compromise and the seeking of soft options, as with the 'Marxist centre' of Kautsky early in the century, will lead down the direction being taken by the counterrevolutionary Gorbachev. On a national and international level communists must unequivocally address the revolutionary solutions demanded by the world situation.

The crisis and collapse of the old always places demands on the new. In 1914, this led to the formation by the Bolsheviks of a revolutionary trend on an international scale, the Zimmerwald left. Its forces were initially virtually nonexistent outside Russia - even the German Spartacists refused to join it - but the ideological struggle fought through it established the basis for the Communist International. Today, the pace of history is accelerating. Even in this period of reaction, with weak forces nationally and internationally, the same tasks are coming into focus today.

As everyone, from Tories to

Trotskyists, jumps on the restorationist bandwagon in the east, Leninists must fight against the stream. We must not only keep from being swept away, but must fight to make headway against the current.

Our organisation must be steeled, both in its theory and practice. Organisation is the mediation between theory and practice. The current situation throws up new and complex theoretical problems which themselves demand of us harder, more rigorous practice. In recognition of this the Fourth Congress of the Leninists of the CPGB advanced to the formation of a fighting, communist wing; the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*). That advance must now be consolidated and developed.

In this period cadres are worth more than their weight in gold. The CPGB (TL) is not another organisation of left paper sellers flogging the pearls of wisdom of petty bourgeois left academics. We are fighting for a genuine Communist Party, the general staff of our class. All comrades must therefore equip themselves with the ability to act as leaders of that class. Because we are communists, active participants in the struggle for revolution, every step taken towards true knowledge is a step towards transforming that knowledge into practical reality.

Every theoretical tendency has practical implications. It is therefore vital that our theories are fought through in the most rigorous way possible. One form of this is our paper, *The Leninist*. Another is the development of a healthy attitude towards debate in our organisation, of comrades able to fight through political positions both internally and within the class.

To that end, the CPGB (TL) is organising what is probably the most important event in our history. From May 5 to 12 we are organising a week long school for communists; a week of intense debate between communists, not

only from our own organisation and supporters, but from comrades with whom we have been involved in debate in Britain and, most importantly, comrades with similar perspectives on the international level.

Comrades of the Communist Party of Turkey, the Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (*Rahe Kargar*), the Communist Labour Party of the United States, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, along with other comrades from Ireland, have already accepted invitations to participate in the school. We are also hoping that comrades from other countries will attend.

There will be discussion on the tasks of communists in all our countries, debates on the question of solidarity, with particular reference to Ireland, on Gorbachevism and on the question of internationalism, along with group work on subjects such as women's oppression and the state, revolution and counterrevolution ... and debate, as always between communists, will no doubt spill over outside the allocated times into all sorts of other areas.

This will be no cosy week of mutual appreciation and backslapping. It will test all comrades and develop communist cadres. We are meeting to reestablish the principles and fight through the strategy to take communists through this period on a higher, more effective level. There will be no pulling ideological punches. We are sharpening our ideology for the class war.

In Britain - not least within our own organisation - we are fighting through a battle as to what exactly it means to be a communist. It is not something one fits in between going to work and propping up a bar, no nice intellectual toy to flourish in front of one's acquaintances. As Lenin stated, the aim of a communist is not to fulfil the role of a trade union official, but to be a tribune of the people.

We are developing full time revolutionaries, and comrades must approach the tasks of our organisation, the tasks of revolution, with the ability to transform that concept into reality: "Every Communist Party represents a higher type of organisation than every bourgeois party or opportunist workers' party, and this shows itself in the greater demands made by the party on its individual members." (Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, p316).

Engels talked of the British contempt for theory, and the treacherous effects this had on practice. We see the products of this all around us. Today, it has given the bourgeoisie the pretext once more to 'bury' Leninism. We will prove to them, to their cost, that Leninism lives. To paraphrase Lenin, the development of our revolutionary theory in this period will lay the basis for a new revolutionary movement, one able to stand on the shoulders of the past theoretical and practical conquests of our class.

We are out to complete the task started in October 1917. Our May school is about equipping us with the theoretical basis for this.

Alan Merrick

REVIEWS

Peace woman

Jill Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham - feminism and anti-militarism in Britain since 1820*, Virago 1989, pp341, £9.99

WHILE THE writer admits her book "cannot be a definitive history of a women's peace movement in Britain", it does nonetheless go into some detail about the different women's peace campaigns from the 1820s up to the present day.

Liddington tries to identify two main strands that have predominated at various times: 'maternalist feminism' and 'equal rights feminism'.

From its roots in the Quaker-led Olive Leaf circles of the mid nineteenth century, 'maternalist feminism' developed on the basis of a philosophy which emphasised the 'separate spheres' view of a woman's position within the family and the home, and argued for what they saw as being a woman's duty rather than her rights.

By World War I followers of this strand had come to a very contradictory position. They were against the war, but for the most dubious reasons.

In the name of "realising our responsibilities as the mothers of the race", Ellen Key, one of its prominent leaders, insisted that the needs of the race must determine women's lives. Women's worth, for Key, depended upon "their value for the propagation of mankind".

Thus the "motherliness of women" would end war for eugenic reasons because "war spills the best blood, it lowers the national standard" (p93), and consequently war and conscription are not about the survival of the fittest but "survival of the defective" (p93).

Not surprisingly Key's ideas were used to support the very warlike fascist maternalism that later arose in Germany. Other followers in more recent times have used a similar maternalist feminism in defence of the separatism symbolised by the Greenham Peace Camp. For Susan Griffin, "bad is male, science, high technology, centralisation, power, violence, oppression; good is female, nature, low technology, nurturing, spirituality, ancient mythologies, the oppressed." (p215).

This eco-feminism sees men as destructive and wants nothing to do with them. There has been some fierce debate about this within the feminist peace movement, concretely around Greenham.

'Equal-rights' feminists argued that the symbols used by the Greenham women, eg, pinning nappies, tampons and recipes on the fence, were not 'symbols of life' but represented women's oppression and highlighted Greenham's reactionary nature. "The elevation of the feminine - mothering, nurturing, family orientated - into a natural force for peace" *Spare Rib* argued, "appears neither historically correct nor particularly feminist" (p259).

This strand owes much to the women's suffrage campaign and found new life in the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s, which made demands for equal educational and job opportunity and for equal pay. Where the suffrage movement ended up supporting the war effort in 1914 in an attempt to prove to Lloyd George that women would, if given the chance, be just as good imperialists as men, the WLM more or less dissolved itself into municipal Lab-

ourism, the logic of which has led many to accept its support for Britain's 'defence' spending, Trident and all.

There were, of course, some women's organisations campaigning for peace which have been drawn to the revolutionary proletariat. Sylvia Pankhurst, for all her faults, broke from the feminist movement and embraced communism. Her Women's Suffrage Federation became the Workers Socialist Federation and many of its members took part in the formation of the CPGB. Another organisation worth noting is the Women's Peace Crusade. For it, peace was not just a gender issue. Sociologically it was primarily a movement of working class women, and it made a connection between socialism and peace.

Nevertheless most could not, at least in practice. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which had originally welcomed the February Revolution in Russia, could not do the same with the October Revolution, which actually took Russia out of the war. By just one vote it condemned "violent revolution even as an agent of social change" (p139) - and, it might as well be said, even if this is the only way to bring a lasting peace.

In taking such a stand, when millions were actually being slaughtered, the WILPF showed that its anti-militarism was fundamentally flawed. Frankly, it's typical of the other feminist anti-war movements dealt with in Jill Liddington's book. Hence, whatever her intentions, she's done us all a service.

Nick Ellis

Taking sides

Lisa Goldman and Sarah Tuck (joint authors and directors), *On the Bridge*, The Oval House, tickets £4

THIS play brings back to 'life' three famous female characters 'fathered' by the nineteenth century Norwegian dramatist, Henrik Ibsen; Nora Helmer from 'A Doll's House', Rebecca West from 'Rosmersholm' and, perhaps best known of all, Hedda Gabler from 'Hedda Gabler'.

Situated in an undefined space which is reminiscent of Sartre's creation of hell in 'Huit Clos', the three characters have seemingly already spent a century in each others company. Here though, hell is not simply 'other people' but the perpetual playing out of their tragic lives, as 'programmed' by Ibsen. However as much as they may argue or deny him, they still delight in the big moments given to them courtesy of his pen, even when this includes suicide ... until, that is, their new authors introduce free will. The refusal of Rebecca, Ibsen's radical, to die in the mill stream yet again sparks a process of development between the three 'sisters' and an eventual dialectical break.

This is an interesting way to approach Ibsen's raw material. His work cries out for such development. Because they were in many ways contradictory, Ibsen's plays have a quality which makes it perfectly feasible for them to be embraced by both hostile classes in modern society. True, Ibsen relentlessly exposed the corruption of bourgeois and petit bourgeois life but invariably his plays lack any solutions to the problems he has shown - "huge mountains produce tiny mice" (Plekhanov).

'On the Bridge' sets out to produce mountains. Unfortunately it only succeeds in part. Its first half, although it makes interesting

theatre, shows many of the faults of feminism, with its idealist content and overdeveloped symbolic form. This manifests itself in what could be interpreted as a wilful obscurantism - language which, although often interesting and inventive, tends to be more concerned with itself than what it is there to say. The first half is therefore essentially static.

That is a theatrical difficulty which flows from the politics of feminism. Although men are a problem for women, they are also part of the answer. Without the unity of working class men and women there can be no socialist revolution, no communism, no liberation of the working class, no female liberation. In 'On the Bridge' men are only spoken of as a problem. For example Ibsen is attacked as a male manipulator/oppressor of women. In part this is justified. His support for women's emancipation was marred by his nineteenth century liberalism. Nevertheless he did support women's emancipation. More important than that, though, is the lack of any positive role given to men, even in the abstract.

That does not mean to say that 'On the Bridge' is fully committed to feminism. Far from it. The play actually develops into a critique of feminist myths from pacifism to freedom through language.

The three women develop in contradiction with each other, at least in part on the basis of their class experience and class positions. The Hedda Gabler *femme fatale* is played with wonderful conviction by Alex Pavlidou as a member of the ruling class and mercilessly exposes her grasping self and her contempt for other (that is non-ruling class) women, ie Nora Helmer, who becomes the naive middle class advocate of sisterhood and tries to reconcile the Thatcherite Hedda Gabler and an increasingly Bolshie Rebecca West.

What makes this play really interesting is the great rupture which happens between the two acts. It almost appears as if Marx has given a pep talk at the interval and the team comes out for the second half transformed. What was static now becomes, for all its textual faults, dynamic.

It is in the second half that we see a conscious critique of the shibboleths of feminism and an attempt to tackle the question of class. 'On the Bridge' is quite clear that what unites women through the mutual experience of male oppression pales into insignificance compared to how class divides them.

In dealing with this the writing is both hard hitting and witty. At times there is an uneasy mix between this and what is basically a feminist piece. But it is clear that what is being attempted is not some half way house marriage of feminism and Marxism, but a break from feminism in the direction of Marxism.

That is significant. There is a more or less complete absence of communist playwrights working in Britain today; in fact there is a distinct lack of communists working in any art form. So when we see anyone in the arts, let alone a playwright or director moving towards communism, we are duty bound to cherish and encourage.

A great advantage in this particular case is that there is not just conviction but an obvious artistic talent at work which will be put to full use when fully combined with the communist world outlook. We are witnessing, at last, the combination of art and communism which has proved such a potent force in the past ... and must again be for the future.

Gavin Kyle

ACTION

The Leninist

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

Series on the Communist Party of Great Britain now starting. First section, 'From Liberalism to Communism':

February 4: From Liberalism to Labourism - why the working class movement in Britain broke from Liberalism and what was the character of Labourism.

February 11: The formation and development of the Social Democratic Federation; its importance, limitations and splits.

February 18: Labourite and revolutionary reaction to the outbreak of World War I.

February 25: The impact of the October Revolution: Clause 4 and *The Call*.

The Leninist school: May 4 to 12. See page seven article for format. Closing date for applicants, February 14.

Hands Off Ireland!



March! Leaflets for HOI's Easter commemoration on Saturday April 21 are now available. Five pounds per thousand from the box address.

London HOI! activists' meetings: Central London, 7.30pm, every Thursday. Write or ring 01-431 3135 for details.

February 8: The Easter Rising today.

February 15: The Guildford Four and after - the fight for the rights of Irish political prisoners.

February 22: What is the IRA?

March 1: After Britain's out: debunking the 'bloodbath' myth.

Trade unionists and the Irish war: Westminster DoE CPSA branch public meeting with HOI! speakers. Friday February 9, 12.15pm, central London. Phone for details.

Workers Theatre Movement

International Women's Day celebration: *The Internationale*, at the Old Piano Warehouse, Hawley Road, Camden Town, NW1. Thursday January 25, 7.30pm (see 'In Struggle' column, page three).

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

Unemployed Organiser 6: Out soon! Articles include: fighting the 'actively seeking work' clause; Employment Training; CPSA fightback; marching on the TUC; 'blast from the past', fighting back in the '30s - and more.

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

February 12: The 1929 National Hunger March.

February 19: Does the Labour Party fight unemployment?

February 26: The second Labour government (1929) and unemployment.

	6 months	1 year
Britain & Ireland	£8 <input type="checkbox"/>	£16 <input type="checkbox"/>
Europe	£11 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22 <input type="checkbox"/>
Rest of World	£13 <input type="checkbox"/>	£26 <input type="checkbox"/>

For more detailed rates see page two

I enclose a cheque/PO for £.... made out to November Publications

Please start my subscription with issue no.....

I enclose a donation for £.... made out to November Publications

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Return to: Subscriptions, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX

Don't boycott ...

Below we reprint a leaflet issued by Hands Off Ireland! denouncing the decision of the Irish Freedom Movement to boycott this year's Bloody Sunday commemoration

THERE CAN be no doubt that solidarity work with the struggle for Irish freedom is woefully inadequate in Britain today. This fact alone places heavy responsibilities on those organisations which adhere in practice to a principled position on the Irish war; ie, campaigning around the demand 'Troops Out Now!'

Judged from this point of view, the Irish Freedom Movement and its parent body, the Revolutionary Communist Party, are failing the struggle of the Irish people. The activity of the IFM is coming to be characterised by a narrow boycottism. While this may create a cosy, though extremely temporary, impression within the ranks of this organisation that it has no rivals, it does little to advance the struggle to build a principled mass Irish solidarity movement in this country. Indeed, it opts out of that key task.

The growing insularity of the IFM has found expression in a number of recent actions, or rather non-actions.

• **'Time To Go' demonstration, August 12 1989.** Jolted into action of sorts by the twentieth anniversary of the reintroduction of troops into the north of Ireland by their party, a section of the Labour left launched 'Time To Go': a typically reformist 'bring-our-boys-back-home' initiative on the Irish war. Characteristically, important sections of the revolutionary left like the SWP rushed to provide the likes of Peter Hain and Clare Short the activist base they lacked.

'Time To Go' thus expressed in a concrete, organised way the ideological crisis that affects the British left. For this reason alone, it was vital that it was challenged with principled anti-imperialist politics. That was why we launched Hands Off Ireland! - in order to build a militant, visible anti-imperialist contingent on this demonstration, demanding 'Troops Out Now!' and 'Self Determination for the Irish Nation!'

In contrast, the IFM tried to simply wish 'TTG' away. Alan Merrick challenged this stupidly narrow approach for HOI! in his 'Open Letter to the IFM' (see *The Leninist* April 10, 1989). Phil Murphy replied for IFM informing us that 'TTG' was a "corpse".

On August 12 of last year, this 'corpse' mobilised the largest demonstration on Ireland in the last ten years. The IFM had thrown away an important chance to challenge the implicit pro-imperialism of the British left.

What explains this crass sectarianism? Simply the outlook of the RCP, which in December 1982 had announced: "**RIP the official labour movement**". Prior to that, the forerunner of the RCP, the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, had organised a 'picket' of 1979's version of 'Time To Go', then fronted by the Young Liberals. While they correctly de-

nounced the rotten politics of this initiative, they nevertheless intervened to challenge it directly. So why the IFM/RCP's refusal to support this intervention? Again, Phil Murphy hints at the real reasons.

He states in his reply that: "**In the present conditions it makes no sense to mobilise an anti-imperialist contingent for a march which is decidedly equivocal on the question of anti-imperialism**". And what are the "present conditions" that Phil refers to? We presume firstly the RCP's 'insight' made in 1982 that organisations like the Labour Party, the SWP and others which cling to Labourism, are 'corpses' and thus can be safely forgotten (paradoxically, the RCP now suggests that Labour may be capable of winning the next election - not a bad performance for a "dead" organisation).

Another changed circumstance from 1979 is that the RCP now fronts its Irish work with the Irish Freedom Movement. There is nothing intrinsically wrong in that. Unfortunately, it is just that the RCP's hopelessly sectarian posturing determines the content of the work of the campaign. It simply tries to wish everything apart from itself away, and this is manifest not simply in its farcical attitude to 'TTG'.

• **Terence Macswiney Commemoration March, October 28 1989.** The IFM originally formally sponsored this march and its reps on the mobilising committee spoke of a 'national mobilisation' which would ensure about 1,000 people. Next, the committee was told that the absence of speaking rights would mean that the IFM would only mobilise its London contacts. Finally, the IFM decided that without speaking rights, it would mobilise precisely nothing.

• **Manchester Martyrs Commemoration March, November 26, 1989.** Despite attending the mobilising meetings for this important annual march, the IFM mobilised no one for the day itself. Instead, the local RCP branch brought four people out to trail after its banner. This year's demo clashed with an RCP school, but leading RCPers had assured people that this would only partially impair the IFM's mobilisation.

• **Bloody Sunday Commemoration March, January 27, 1990.** We wrote in our 'Open Letter to the IFM' that its boycottist stance was even harder to understand, given that it "[mobilises] contingents every year on the Bloody Sunday demonstrations", whose organisers, like those of 'TTG', do not stand on a principled position of Troops Out Now. This year, the IFM decided on yet another boycott. At least it now has the merit of consistency. Unfortunately, it is consistently stupid and sectarian.

Far from only boycotting demonstrations which are "decidedly equivocal" on the question of imperialism, the IFM seems deter-

mined to boycott every action not organised by itself, even when organised on the basis of principled politics. This is evidenced by its attitude to the Terence MacSwiney and Manchester Martyrs demonstrations.

In the process of building the mass, principled Irish solidarity movement we all want to see, it is

vital that the chauvinism that dominates the outlook of workers in Britain is challenged. That chauvinism does not hover around the heads of workers like personalised London smog, however; it takes a concrete organisational form in the Labourite organisations that dominate the working class movement. Revolutionaries must take any and every opportunity to openly challenge these organisations before the workers over which they hold sway. Failure to do so is in effect to give up the struggle.

While the IFM retreats into a sectarian wilderness, Hands Off Ireland! remains committed to building a mass, principled Irish

solidarity movement based on the working class. We know that this entails both support for all actions organised on a principled basis as well as direct confrontation of opportunist initiatives like 'Time To Go'.

Hands Off Ireland! is initiating a unique event this Easter - a commemoration of the Easter 1916 uprising, which places at its core the working class. We welcome all those committed to making Ireland a key issue for the working class of Britain. Join us in building for this demonstration as an important blow for the liberation both of the Irish nation and of the working class in this country.

... Fight for Irish freedom

Since this leaflet was produced, we have had the chance to directly challenge leading IFMers. We have been told that the absence of speaking rights, plus the general disorganisation of the annual Bloody Sunday march, led them to the conclusion that their efforts would be better spent mobilising for their own rally a few days later. This, frankly, is bull

IN CONTRAST to 1989, when the march seemed to be kept deliberately low key in order not to steal the thunder of 'Time To Go' later in the year, this year the organisers were far more upfront. This was welcomed by us, but with or without such an approach we did all we could to build as large a contingent as possible ... and indeed our contingent was militant and impressive.

The IFM's farcical boycottism is dictated by the increasingly eccentric insularity of its parent body - the Revolutionary Communist Party. The IFM's decision to boycott one event after another is a direct product of the RCP's politics.

We say that the organisers of the Bloody Sunday and other marches should give the IFM - and all others like HOI! who form the backbone of mobilisations - the right to speak. Excluding organisations in the name of combatting sectarianism is the most monstrous hypocrisy. Sectarianism is a phrase too often used by those whose real point is that "you are not in the Labour Party" or "you won't support Neil Kinnock".

Of course, the main forces involved in such 'anti-sectarian' sectarianism - TOM and the LCI - have done their fair share of boycotting in the past, the only difference being that they boycott from the right, while the IFM boycotts from the left. Either way, the effect is the same: it weakens the forces fighting for Irish freedom.

However, boycottism is only a symptom, a symptom of opportunism, of both leftist and rightist varieties. Hands Off Ireland! was initiated precisely to overcome the stranglehold opportunism has had

over Irish solidarity work. Thus, it has come as no surprise that we have encountered slander and opposition from those in the field of Irish solidarity work who have so far kept it to such a marginalised and sluggish state in pursuit of their narrow, sectional interests.

Our perspective is most certainly not simply to unite what exists at the moment. This is a common call by many honest militants who believe that unity is a vital prerequisite for winning new forces to the cause and for establishing a principled mass movement. In fact, the opposite is true.

The arguments that divide the left are not tangential to the struggle for unity; they are key to it. The other organisations that currently inhabit the field of Irish solidarity are not partial answers to the question of how we build a mass principled movement on Ireland: they are organisational expressions of the problems that hamper that fight. Ill-conceived attempts to unite on the lowest common denominator are therefore doomed.

The latest in a long line of such attempts is a call from forces behind last year's 'Time To Go' for "a conference in the Spring of 1990 aimed at bringing together all groups working towards British withdrawal ...", with the aim of establishing a "broad front" on Ireland.

The draft principles of this 'broad front' pinpoint its objective as being "to build the widest possible support in Britain for British withdrawal from Ireland". In other words, even before this 'broad front' is up and running, it has fudged the bottom line on Irish solidarity work - the demand for

'Troops Out Now!'

Naturally, Hands Off Ireland! will participate in the organising meetings and in the conference itself, arguing for a principled approach on the Irish war as the only way to build the movement the Irish people need and deserve. Unlike the IFM, which is even now indicating its intention to boycott this initiative, HOI! is determined to take the battle for principled solidarity to these forces.

More important than that battle, however, is the campaigning activity of HOI! Our task is to fight for what is necessary - and the place to conduct that battle is on the streets, in the workplaces, on the council estates. Action, principled and targeting the force which can take a real stand for Irish freedom - the working class: that is the key task.

Support the commemoration of the Easter 1916 uprising - Dublin 1916, London 1990! Take the streets for Irish liberation! Saturday, April 21, north London. This commemoration is unique in that it places the working class - both in Ireland and in Britain - at its core.

Easter 1916 heralded the rise of the working class as an independent force against British imperialism in Ireland. In Britain it hammered home the need for workers' solidarity with the struggle against 'our' state. It underlined in blood the fact that until workers in Britain had politically differentiated themselves from their 'own' ruling class on the pivotal issue of Ireland, they would be unable to fully differentiate themselves on any issue. This Easter, take a stand on Irish freedom - take it with Hands Off Ireland!

Mark Fischer