

# The LENINIST

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## Victory against extradition

**T**O BE AN IRISH republican is to be a criminal. That is the view of the British government. When Father Patrick Ryan was picked up by the Belgium authorities for traveling with false documents, Britain could not have been more disinterested. But the British press quickly transformed a pro-republican Irish priest into a leading member of the IRA, giving Thatcher another stick to whip up anti-Irish republican hysteria.

That Britain's allies, first Belgium and then the Twenty-six Counties refused to extradite Father Ryan because he would not get a fair trial in Britain says everything. There was no way Haughey could agree to return Ryan so discredited has British 'justice' become in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people. This represents a blow against Dublin's extradition collaboration with British imperialism. Nonetheless that there is talk of

putting Ryan on trial in the south under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act shows that the Dublin government is just as much an enemy of Irish national liberation as the Tory government in Westminster.

Of course, the refusal of John Murray, Dublin's Attorney General, to hand over Ryan, has provided Thatcher with another opportunity to parade her chauvinist contempt for other countries. That Britain has been unable to provide any evidence seems a mere technicality. After all, it did not stop a British court from sentencing the Winchester Three: Finbar Cullen, Martina Shanahan and John MacCann to 25 years in October.

In order to crush Irish resistance to its continued occupation of the Six Counties a climate of reaction has been created which effects people both in Ireland and Britain. Already the legislation banning "terrorists and their supporters"

from TV and radio has taken effect - from Gerry Adams, through the Guildford Four campaign, even to Irish bands such as The Pogues and That Petrol Emotion. All have been removed from the airwaves.

This has been coupled with mass army raids on nationalist estates in Belfast. Hundreds of homes have been raided, with tens of people being arrested. Those arrested will get to no 'justice', especially given the abolition of the right to silence in the Six Counties. Britain is escalating its drive to criminalise the Irish people.

Unless confronted and defeated, in Britain and in Ireland, such repression will get worse. Yet resistance to this here has been pitiful. It is more obvious than ever that Britain has no progressive role to play in Ireland; but the left in Britain has retreated from the demand for troops out now to a greater degree than ever. For instance, the Socialist Workers Party has joined 'Time To Go', which

has made many statements explicitly against the demand, 'troops out now'. Yet the SWP has jumped into bed with it with unbecoming eagerness.

The Troops Out Movement, which formally stands for 'troops out now', printed a double page article in its latest journal by two academics, which calls for "a phased and responsible withdrawal". TOM does not criticise this.

Worst of all, 1989's Bloody Sunday demonstration is being treated as a conspiracy. Last year, for all the political opportunism of the organisers, national and local mobilising committees were established and widely publicised. There were posters published nationally months in advance. This year, a month before the demo, there has been no such campaign.

It looks as though the demonstration is being played down in deference to the opportunists of 'Time To Go'. This must not be

allowed to happen.

Supporters of *The Leninist* and Hands Off Ireland! will be building for the demonstration and raising the need to build a distinct mass anti-imperialist contingent on the 'Time To Go' march this coming August. As part of this genuine anti-imperialists should join us in this and mobilise to make the Bloody Sunday demonstration a success, raising the slogans: Troops out now! Britain's defeat our victory! Make Ireland Thatcher's Vietnam!

Alan Merrick

•March behind *The Leninist's* banners on the Bloody Sunday demonstration, assemble Grange Park, Kilburn, London 12 noon on Saturday 28 January.

•Order copies of the Hands Off Ireland! folder at £1 per hundred from HOI, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX

## Playing the imperialist game

**G**ORBACHEV'S "we'll cut 500,000 troops" speech to the United Nations has been greeted as a Christmas present for the western imperialist powers by the media. It was. The politics that ran through his speech certainly represent a further significant step to the right by the leadership of the Soviet state and Communist Party. But far from these steps consolidating peace, as we are told by sharp suited Soviet officials and bourgeois propagandists alike, his unilateral concessions to imperialism can only but weaken socialism and bring the danger of war nearer.

"War is the continuation of politics by forcible means". "Peace under capitalism is merely a preparation for war". "Modern war is born of imperialism" (Lenin). These are the fundamental truths of our epoch. Already this century we have seen two world wars which were a direct product of the inherent contradictions of capitalism. Besides these two global conflicts which cost at least 75 million lives there have been countless smaller wars that have seen many millions more sacrificed on the altar of capitalist greed. It is no exaggeration to say that all that has stopped a World War III has been the armed strength of socialism.

This can be seen in the *non use* of the countless strategic battle plans developed by the Pentagon which have now been made available for public inspection through the Freedom of Information Act (see Michio Kaku and Daniel Axelrod, *To win a nuclear war: the Pentagon's secret war plans*, Zed 1987).

Even in the closing months of World War II the US ruling class was openly threatening to launch World War III - against its 'ally' the Soviet Union. Fortunately because the Soviet Union was able to quickly follow the US in developing an atomic bomb the top secret

American Joint Chiefs of Staff 'Pincher' atomic battle plan, which envisaged the destruction of 20 Soviet cities and conquest of the socialist countries between the summers of 1946 and '47, was kept in cold war storage.

The cost of launching an attack on the Soviet Union would have been too costly in terms of the inevitable retaliation. This has been the constant bug bear in all war plan feasibility studies carried out by US imperialism. If the US could have got away with 'only' 10 or 20 million dead a war against the USSR would already have happened. It has been the Soviet potential to retaliate, its strength in terms of conventional and nuclear power, that has prevented a World War III.

Of course, for the Soviet Union to develop a nuclear arsenal and to achieve something like parity in nuclear warheads with the US in the 1970s was a tremendous achievement. It was also tremendously costly. Not only in absolute rouble terms but also in relative gross national product terms. For as we all know the Soviet Union is a much less wealthy country than the US (something like 50% less wealthy). As can be imagined to come anywhere near matching the US in military hardware imposed a massive burden on the Soviet economy.

This is something the US strategists have long recognised. As a result they have constantly sought to up the stakes in the arms race. Not only in the never ending struggle for superiority between offensive and defensive weapons but to break the Soviet economy through deploying extremely expensive weaponry incorporating the latest exotic technology. To be sure of keeping itself safe the Soviet Union had to follow every US move. Yet with Reagan's almost war time levels of 'defence' spending, with MX, cruise and Trident

missiles, with Stealth aeroplanes, above all with the SDI Star Wars system the US appears to have at last outbid the Soviet leadership.

Under the mismanagement of the bureaucracy Soviet economic growth - which was in double figures throughout the 1950s and much of the 1960s - ground to a halt in the late 1970s. Gorbachev's perestroika has done nothing to alter this bleak picture. A Soviet economy frozen by bureaucratic inertia and further endangered by Gorbachevite 'market socialism' is in no position to compete with the US military industrial complex. Khrushchev, the last Soviet leader to speak at the UN back in 1960, told the west that "we will bury you", Gorbachev has no such confidence.

Having taken the decision not to keep up with the US in the arms race Gorbachev has gone all out to placate imperialism. He wants to persuade it that the Soviet Union can be trusted. Because of this we see unequal arms deals such as the INF treaty and sweeping unilateral cuts in the Soviet armed forces.

Along with this all vestigial rhetoric about the class struggle, the struggle of the oppressed and revolution have been discarded by Gorbachev in favour of completely idealist concepts such as "the common interests of mankind". (This puts right centrists who write *Morning Star* editorials, which occasionally throw in references to the class struggle, well to the left of the Soviet president).

What Gorbachev means by "common interests of mankind" is not the unity of mankind through the triumph of the communist mode of production but class collaboration on an international scale between the Soviet leadership and the imperialist powers. Apparently together they can remove the threat of 'environmental catastrophe' and 'regional conflicts' Gorbachev told the UN.

This is nonsense worthy of the petty bourgeois utopians in the CND and Friends of the Earth. It is capitalism which has to be removed if we are to save our planet from ecological disaster, it is capitalism which breeds war. If we are to save our planet and species we must get rid of capital through proletarian revolution. It is impossible to eliminate pollution and war without abolishing classes and establishing a World Union of Socialist States. It's as simple and challenging as that.

Gorbachev's programme is diametrically opposed to this Marxist-Leninist truth and the struggle for it. After all as we have seen what he means in practice by resolving 'regional conflicts' is selling out living revolutions. The most pronounced expression of this is Afghanistan which is in the front line of the world revolution.

At the UN Gorbachev called for an arms embargo to begin on January 1, this will also be imposed on all sides, including the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan government - which according to reports in the *Financial Times* is now considered "dispensable" by the Soviet leadership (December 8, 1988). The truth of this can be seen in the fact that Gorbachev's UN speech also called for a "broad based government" in Afghanistan. This Soviet diplomats say will not include any members of the PDPA but will contain a range of Mujahdeen counterrevolutionaries. In other words to ingratiate himself with imperialism Gorbachev is prepared to preside over the death of the Afghan revolution.

Similar treatment is in store for the revolutionary movements in Southern Africa, Central America, South East Asia and the Middle East. But whatever Gorbachev may think this will not satisfy imperialism. Already it is moving the goal posts.

Nato general secretary, Manfred Worner, obviously welcomed Gorbachev's run down of the Soviet armed forces, not to have done so would have been stupid. But Worner insisted that Gorbachev's cuts did not call for a similar gesture on the Nato side. This stance has been echoed by Reagan, Thatcher and other imperialist leaders. Indeed the imperialist countries are continuing to press ahead with their drive to modernise their weaponry and increase their technical sophistication and destructive potential.

Gorbachev's retreat, his fawning, his social democratic language and programme can only encourage the aggressiveness of the imperialists. Now they are asking for Kampuchea, tomorrow it will be Nicaragua, the next day it could be Poland, eventually it is bound to be the Soviet Union - the world's revolutionary centre - itself.

Gorbachev is playing into the hands of imperialism. The sycophants of 'official communism' welcome this - whatever Soviet leaders do commands their applause and admiration. No matter. The Soviet working class has few illusions in Gorbachevism. It is only a question of time before this mighty class deals with this traitor.

As to the capitalist world, revolutionary situations are objective phenomena and so is the world revolution. Capitalism has long ago out-lived its usefulness. It is now a moribund system, a system of starvation, pauperisation, pollution and war. Revolutions against this decadent system will emerge whatever the traitors do or say.

No pacifist lies can stop the masses of the Philippines, Ireland, Peru, South Africa in their millions fighting for revolution. And when our day comes in Britain - when we have a revolutionary situation - nothing will stop us either.

David Sherriff





Fortnightly paper of the Leninists:  
for a genuine Communist Party

CHRISTMAS is with us once again. For the ruling class this period is, so to speak, heaven sent. It accounts for nearly one third of all retail sales and provides the ideal opportunity to mount a sustained propaganda offensive peddling the dubious virtues of the nuclear family, the state and religion.

Yet for all the crass commercialism and patronising messages from the empty headed Elizabeth Windsor, Christmas definitely provokes a powerful response from the mass of the population. It is not only a matter of people over eating and drinking but exchanging gifts and subversive good will. For about a week before Christmas till new year's day a sort of anarchy reigns. The pace of work in factories and offices, mines and mills, slackens and even grinds to a halt. In a moment of madness authority loses its power.

Christmas has two sides to it. That is what makes it a problem for militant socialists. Not surprisingly they find themselves in a schizophrenic frame of mind. On the one hand Christmas is completely offensive; the mixture of crude Mammon and tinsled mysticism is understandably nauseating. On the other hand, in spite of the hype and drunkenness, there exists a spirit of genuine human warmth and community. This is something of no little significance in this the most alienated of societies.

So how should we respond to Christmas? We say we should take a lesson from the Christians themselves.

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

Even before it became the religion of the Roman Empire the Christians were busily rewriting history. Jesus the Palestinian apocalyptic revolutionary who was executed by Roman occupation forces was transformed into an other worldly pro-Roman creep. Christianity was thus made acceptable to the Roman ruling class, enabling them to take a detached attitude towards their decaying world. Christianity could also be used to pacify the pauperised masses with promises of heavenly salvation – a perfect state religion.

And in order to compete with other major religions the Christians relocated Jesus's birthday. In this way the winter festival of the Mithras and the Roman Saturnalia – which had their origins deep in the mists of time as a communistic winter solstice festival – were Christianised.

The pagan origins of Christmas might not be readily admitted by the church bureaucracy but it is hardly a secret. Oliver Cromwell – 'god's Englishman' – certainly knew of it. That is why under the Commonwealth as a good Christian he banned it!

This did not prove popular. In celebrating Christmas the masses not only paid homage to the man/god Jesus in drafty churches but in the accompanying wassails they unconsciously remembered the joyous days before classes, before man was alienated from society, when there was no state, no money, no wars of conquest. Because of this the ending of the Commonwealth was not mourned.

The task of communists is to take a leaf from the Christians who took over the Roman winter solstice festivals not the Christians who tried to suppress the whole thing. Of course, this cannot be done via the isolated individual. But with a group of communists, who have a materialist understanding of Christmas, a beginning can be made. This will reach its conclusion when the working class in Britain uses the power of the socialist state to give the whole Christmas period a new content as well as form. Our celebrations will not only be an echo of the distant communist past but through the comradesly revelry of the population provide us with a glimpse of the communist future.

*The Editor*

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## LETTERS

### Hands Off Ireland!

We would like to take this opportunity to extend solidarity greetings to all of you involved in the Hands Off Ireland! initiative.

We welcome the Hands Off Ireland! initiative and view it as both a practical and necessary development within the Irish solidarity movement. We believe this initiative will broaden the demand for 'Troops Out Now' and take it directly to the hearts and minds of the British working class.

Having observed the solidarity movement over the years, we have found that previous groups with positive views towards the war effort in Ireland, have to a certain extent not got beyond the arena of rhetoric and sloganising.

We are a group of communist prisoners serving some of the most severe sentences ever handed down in this country, which in many cases means for the rest of our lives. Even though we are imprisoned we have not flinched, will never flinch and are as determined as ever to bring about lasting peace in our country.

We say to you, *our fight is your fight!*

Hands off Ireland now!  
Self determination for the Irish people as a whole!

Eddie Hogan  
On behalf of Communist POWs,  
Portlaoise Jail, Ireland

### Ireland

Ian Mahoney (*The Leninist* No.71) is quite correct when he states that the violence of the miners' strike was an outcome of the huge class confrontation around the strike. He is also correct when he says there was no whim on the part of Shankland and Hancock to declare individual war on taxi drivers.

However, the decision to drop a huge lump of concrete off a road bridge was an individual decision and perhaps a very stupid action.

In this context one does not support or condone individual or collective actions that because of their very nature only or mainly targets civilians or should one say the general public.

Of course, one understands the causes of the armed struggle and when legitimate targets are attacked, occasionally 'civilians' are caught in the cross fire. This is different to targetting mainly civilian gatherings. The IRA are 'green' nationalists and sectarian. Communists should not support 'green' or 'orange' nationalism. The task is to build bridges and to oppose sectarianism. This can only be done on the basis of a socialist perspective and building a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party.

One must not write off the Protestant working class, many of whom suffer from bad housing, unemployment and very low pay. They are not part of an 'aristocracy of labour'.

Of course, one calls for 'troops out now' and in order to stem or combat sectarianism and sectarian violence or any backlash, it would be necessary to organise defence squads across the divide, based on the working class as a whole.

Roy West  
Bishop Stortford

David Sherriff replies:

On the violence of the young miners Hancock and Shankland. The communist position is to pose the need to organise violence under the hegemony of the vanguard party. In the absence of such a party *The Leninist* quite rightly

praised the heroism of these two brave class war prisoners. We refuse to condemn them. That comrade West cannot tell the difference between 'green nationalism' – which is progressive and revolutionary – and 'orange nationalism' – which finds its material base in the British occupation and the labour aristocracy and is reactionary – shows that he has no understanding of Marxist-Leninist theory when it comes to the national question. Precisely it is the duty of communists to support Sinn Fein/IRA against Britain. In fact it our duty to place no conditions on our support for the democratic struggle for national liberation in Ireland. The building of a genuine Communist Party in Ireland is, of course, essential. Only such a party is capable of taking Ireland towards socialism. But saying this provides no excuse whatsoever for comrade West's miserable abstract sloganeering let alone his objectively pro-imperialist neutralism when it comes to the concrete liberation struggle.

### Wales

Since the days of Marx and Engels, English socialists have had a blind spot regarding nationalism. This was apparent from their chauvinism towards Ireland and England's other colonies, and the lip service paid towards national liberation in Ireland, Scotland and Wales today underlines the barely concealed chauvinism of many left groups.

Until I read *The Leninist* No.72, I believed that this paper held a more principled position on the national question; a true Leninist position. I was sadly mistaken as the hatchet job on the Welsh Socialist Party pamphlet demonstrated.

One of the ruling class's most powerful weapons for ensuring 'national unity' is the myth of Britain. Britain, according to your reviewer, "is a nation consisting of a number of nationalities", a description which defies logical examination. But Britain is not a nation, it's a Greater English state created by the military, economic and political conquest by England of Wales, Scotland and Ireland over the centuries. The only unity in Britain is among the ruling class, which long ago incorporated Welsh, Scottish and Irish capitalists. The same myth teaches us that the Royal Family is wonderful and that Westminster is the heart of democracy.

To deny Welsh workers the right to fight for a Welsh Socialist Republic is inconsistent with your support for the same struggle in Ireland. By your logic of maintaining 'British' unity, Irish separatists should be condemned for attempting to "wrench workers in the Six Counties away from the English proletarians."

The WSP's internationalism is genuine – we support the national struggle in Ireland in both word and deed. Welsh socialists recognise that an Irish victory would destroy the myth of a 'United Kingdom'. We refuse to accept that you have to be British to be internationalist. The experience of the chauvinistic Brit Labour Party and British TUC, not to mention the Communist Party of 'Great' Britain, is enough to make any internationalist sick.

The final insult in the review was the misuse of Marx's famous quote: "the worker has no nation". Marx was referring to workers having no common cause with their national ruling class, and was not advocating some abstract

internationalism as you seem to be (I wonder what language the comrades would use?)

Your refusal to acknowledge struggles on your doorstep is a common fault of the English left – no doubt if Wales was in central America you'd be organising truckloads of guns for us. But because we're part of a mythical 'Great Britain', Welsh Marxists must endure the English left's dictates.  
MV Jones

Ceri Rhys replies:

The British nation is no myth and we are no English organisation and if our friend finds a logical problem with this as he does in distinguishing between a nation and nationality he should not call himself a Marxist. Likewise if he imagines any nation was not born with military, economic and political 'conquest' (by the ruling class).

Communists as opposed to nationalists (eg the WSP and the Labour Party) want to see the abolition of nations. Only in this way can the working class be liberated – why Marx said workers have no nation. We hardly "deny Welsh workers the right to fight for a Welsh Socialist Republic". But because there is no powerful movement demanding separation it is hardly the task of communists to advocate it. To use an analogy: we defend the right of partners in a marriage to divorce, but this does not mean that we demand that loving couples exercise that right.

Hence we have no difficulty, as Jones imagines, in opposing the separatist demands of small nationalist groups – incidentally this was also the position of Marx, Engels and Lenin – while supporting the national liberation struggle in Ireland. Workers in Wales are not yearning for separation from the rest of Britain, while in the Six Counties they are literally prepared to die for national reunification. The so-called "struggle on our doorstep" for separation in Wales is in the head of MV Jones. It does not exist in objective reality. The call for a Welsh Socialist Republic is a diversion.

Jones illustrates this when he claims that "the only unity in Britain is among the ruling class". Is that so? He should tell the South Wales miners and pit women, who fought alongside their class brothers and sisters in Scotland, Yorkshire, Notts, Kent, Derbyshire etc, during the heroic 12 months of the Great Strike?

The WSP want to shatter the very real unity of the British working class because, as we pointed out in our review, it refuses to face up to the main task of socialists: making revolution against our main enemy – the British state. For that we need the maximum degree of unity, the maximum degree of centralisation. The WSP has no understanding whatsoever of this ABC of Leninism.

By the way, friend Jones: you seem to have a problem with the 'Great' in 'Great Britain'. It refers to the fact that Britain is 'greater than', ie bigger, than Brittainy. We hope this clears up your confusion on this point at least.

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.



# Forewarned is forearmed

The Tories are out to abolish the Dock Labour Scheme. This would lead to a 15% cut in the docks workforce and much higher levels of exploitation for those remaining. Dockers must fight the attacks on them tooth and nail. And the time to start preparing is right now

**T**HATCHER'S government is being urged by bourgeois 'boot boys' on the back benches to get rid of the National Dock Labour Scheme, the system that guarantees dockers' jobs. They are clearly itching to take on the dockers. The DLS is the product of the militant tradition of strong union organisation in the ports, built on the proud heritage of men like Tom Mann, Ben Tillet and Jack Dash.

The scheme is galling to the Tories as it stands in the way of their plans to shed thousands of jobs in the industry and substantially increase the rate of exploitation. Given the dockers' strategic economic position however, so far wiser Tory heads have prevailed.

The statistics speak for themselves. In just the first four months of 1987, over 80 million tonnes of imports and exports passed through British ports. In terms of value, some £44.5 billion of commodities travelled through all British docks. And some 80% of this trade was handled by the registered men. The government has so far put off a confrontation with these workers simply for fear of the damage they could do to the already shaky British economy.

The DLS was introduced by Atlee's Labour government via the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Order, in June 1947. Under its provisions, only registered employers were allowed to employ Registered Dock Workers (RDWs). At the same time, it established a national collaborative framework in the form of the National Dock Labour Board (NDLB) organised in 84 ports.

Control of the register is in the hands of the NDLB and 20 Local Dock Labour (LDLBs). These comprise equal employer and trade union representation and are thus good examples of the type of corporative bodies that mushroomed in the boom years of the 1950s and 60s.

Rank and file dockers have served notice on the Tories that they are prepared to fight to protect their right to work. Clydeside men walked out earlier this month in protest against the use of non-registered labour in the port of Glasgow. This has prodded the national T&G leadership to step up its low level campaign to defend the scheme and even threaten national industrial action if there are any further encroachments. Calls on the other side though are becoming louder for the government to take action.

The Labour Correspondent of *The Independent* (June 27, 1987), wrote that "the last bastion of union power seems likely to be destroyed within the next five years as the government moves to repeal

the National Dock Labour Scheme, informed sources said yesterday." But as he pointed out "some ministers may argue against taking on the dockers because the scheme covers only 10,400 workers out of a workforce of 40,000, and there has been no industrial action of any consequence since 1984."

The government's hesitancy however, is not explained by the fact that they are mindful of the 'good' labour relations in the industry - far from it. First, they are wary of the dockers' industrial muscle. Secondly, the government is yet to fully work out campaign of action.

The timetable for doing away with the scheme would have to await a decision on which government department will be responsible for its administration. The Department of Employment is likely to relinquish authority in favour of the Department of Transport under Paul Channing, a particularly keen fan of Thatcherite economic voodoo.

Hence it seems likely that Channing (incidentally a Southend MP with many dockers and ex-dockers in his constituency) could have already been chosen as the Tories' hatchet man.

The employers have attempted sorties against the scheme before, of course. In the summer of 1984, the Clyde Port Authority announced the closure of the Greenock container terminal with 66 dockers facing redundancy. A ballot for national strike action saw 8,000 voting for, 3,000 against and the same number abstaining. With the miners' Great Strike in full progress, the employers, including those at Grimsby and Lowestoft who were considering similar tactics, backed off.

Times have changed and the ruling class is feeling rather more confident with the defeat of the miners under their belts. A recent pamphlet from the Centre for Policy Studies, *Clear the Decks: abolish the National Dock Labour Scheme* by David Davies MP, Tory member for Boothferry, Humberside, which insists that the government "should act now", is a Tory handbook on how to take on the dockers and win. As such it deserves our attention.

Davies claims that any national dock strike would be:

- Ineffectual. Under Tory legislation, ports not covered by the scheme would be legally debarred from joining the action.
- Expected to fail. After the miners and the seafarers Davis reckons a national strike would be poorly supported from within the dockers' own ranks, unpopular outside the movement and likely to "crumble" very quickly.

Davies considers that: "Any physical 'stranglehold' policy of the TGWU transport union cutting off imports can be tackled by a prior stockpiling, diversion to non-scheme ports and to some extent by use of non-registered workers in the ports." The number of registered dockers has declined precipitously over the last ten years or so, from just below 30,000 in 1977, to only 9,500 today. Clearly, dockers must fight to extend the scheme to those ports and workers not covered by it already. This would effectively destroy the Fifth Column that the Tories plan to use against any strike and give dockers in other ports a material interest in fighting to alongside other dockers.

This campaign cannot be left in the hands of the trade union bureaucrats. Their inaction and complacency has largely been responsible for bringing dockers to this ominous state of affairs in the first place. Rank and file docks' committees should be formed. They can forge links with similar bodies in non-scheme ports. Such a national framework would militate against the Tories' plan to drive a wedge between different groups of dockers in order to isolate and defeat first the registered men and then all workers in the industry.

Dockers must prepare themselves for war. And an important part of this preparation must be a break from the collaborative National Dock Labour Board and the joint administration of the scheme with the bosses that takes place now. The scheme is not about defending dockers' jobs, why should we cooperate with the very people who are threatening our livelihoods?

The Tories plan to strike out in a singleminded way for victory and they understand that they need the solidarity of their class for that. *Clearing the Decks* makes clear that the Tories' anti-union laws and the judiciary would be used very effectively in the event of non-scheme ports taking 'secondary' action and joining the battle.

This underlines a point we have made many times in the pages of this paper. To be an effective trade unionist today, you must be prepared to break the law. If it is hamstrung by the niceties of the bosses' legislation, any action in the ports will simply be lost before it is properly begun.

The Tories have made clear that abolition of the scheme would lead to a 15% cut in the docks workforce and much higher levels of exploitation for those remaining. Dockers must fight the attacks on them tooth and nail. And the time to start preparing is right now.

Ian Mahoney

The Manchester conference on nurses' regrading initiated by Springfield Cohse and Prestwich Nupe on November 26 was both positive and negative. Of course, that nearly 100 nurses from 39 hospitals around the country got together is positive in itself. The conference heard reports on the growing mood of militancy in previously passive sections. A call was issued for maximum unity between Nupe and Cohse, whose leaderships still insist on organising action on different days, and it was decided to launch a national bulletin. This is all positive. Unfortunately a motion for a national strike committee to coordinate action around the country was defeated. This was entirely due to the fact that the SWP was able to mobilise a large proportion of its membership among nurses to the conference. The SWP claimed that the motion was an attempt to "bypass the bureaucracy". Yet this precisely what the rank and file need to do. If they can the union tops will sabotage the whole dispute. As we have argued in *The Leninist* the spontaneous militancy of nurses has only just succeeded in keeping the dispute one jump ahead of the union bureaucrats. This spontaneity has now become a major weakness. It is essential that the rank and file organise across all sectional divisions and take the running of the whole dispute into their own hands.

Members of the Union of Democratic Miners turned down a revised two year pay offer from British Coal by more than 56%, against the advice of their scab leadership. BC's first offer, claimed by Roy Lynk to be "the best agreement in 10 years", was rejected by 54%. Clearly, there is a growing body of opposition in the ranks of the yellow union. As Arthur Scargill has pointed out, the UDM leaders were recommending a pay increase substantially below the rate of inflation. In voting against a real cut in pay the UDM rank and file in effect voted against the inevitable consequences of BC's drive to attract private capital as they go towards privatisation. If this had been combined with a 'yes' vote in the NUM's ballot the material conditions would have existed to reforge the unity of miners through struggle on pay and against BC's proposed six day week/10 hour day. We have always argued against 'sealing off' the ordinary members of the UDM and treating them like pariahs. The growing unrest in the ranks of the UDM underlines the need for a militant intervention from NUM activists to finally break the back of the scab union. But that can only be done when the NUM rank and file settle accounts with the traitors and class collaborationists in their own ranks.

Unfortunately, the NUM men voted by 50.63% to 49.37% against the executive committee's recommendation for an overtime ban. The blame for this must be laid at the feet of the Eurocommunist/Kinnockite area leaderships of South Wales and Scotland, which both urged miners to reject the call for action.

The 'Committee of 100' anti-poll tax campaign, composed of various self appointed Scottish notables, met in the early part of December. It estimates that up to half a million Scots can be won to withhold the tax. It is undoubtedly true that there is a potential mass base for a militant campaign against it. But whether the 'Committee of 100' can mobilise that potential seems unlikely. Following the Committee's deliberations it was widely reported that an overwhelming consensus emerged against attacking either the Labour leadership for its compliance position, or its councillors for fulfilling their statutory collection duties. In other words the Committee wants to make radical noises but will not mobilise people against the overwhelmingly Labour run local state machine in Scotland which will actually administer, collect and enforce the tax. The situation in England and Wales - where registration begins next spring and collection in April 1990 - is little better. Desperate to present itself as an alternative party of government the Labour Party is steering clear of all anti-poll tax campaigns while its left wing, meeting in Newcastle on December 10, has its eyes set on a "CND-type campaign". This dismal perspective simply accepts defeat before the fight even properly starts.

## New year's present



As these lines are written our £600 monthly fund stands at £568.70p. This puts us in a good position to bust through our target and make a substantial dent in the £750 shortfall we have accumulated during the year. It would be good to end the year with a clean slate or at least something near it. This would be the best new year's present you can give your paper. Next year we must ensure that our fighting fund is fulfilled every month and not every other as it has been in 1988. Of course, the fact that we can produce a paper at all it completely due to you our readers.

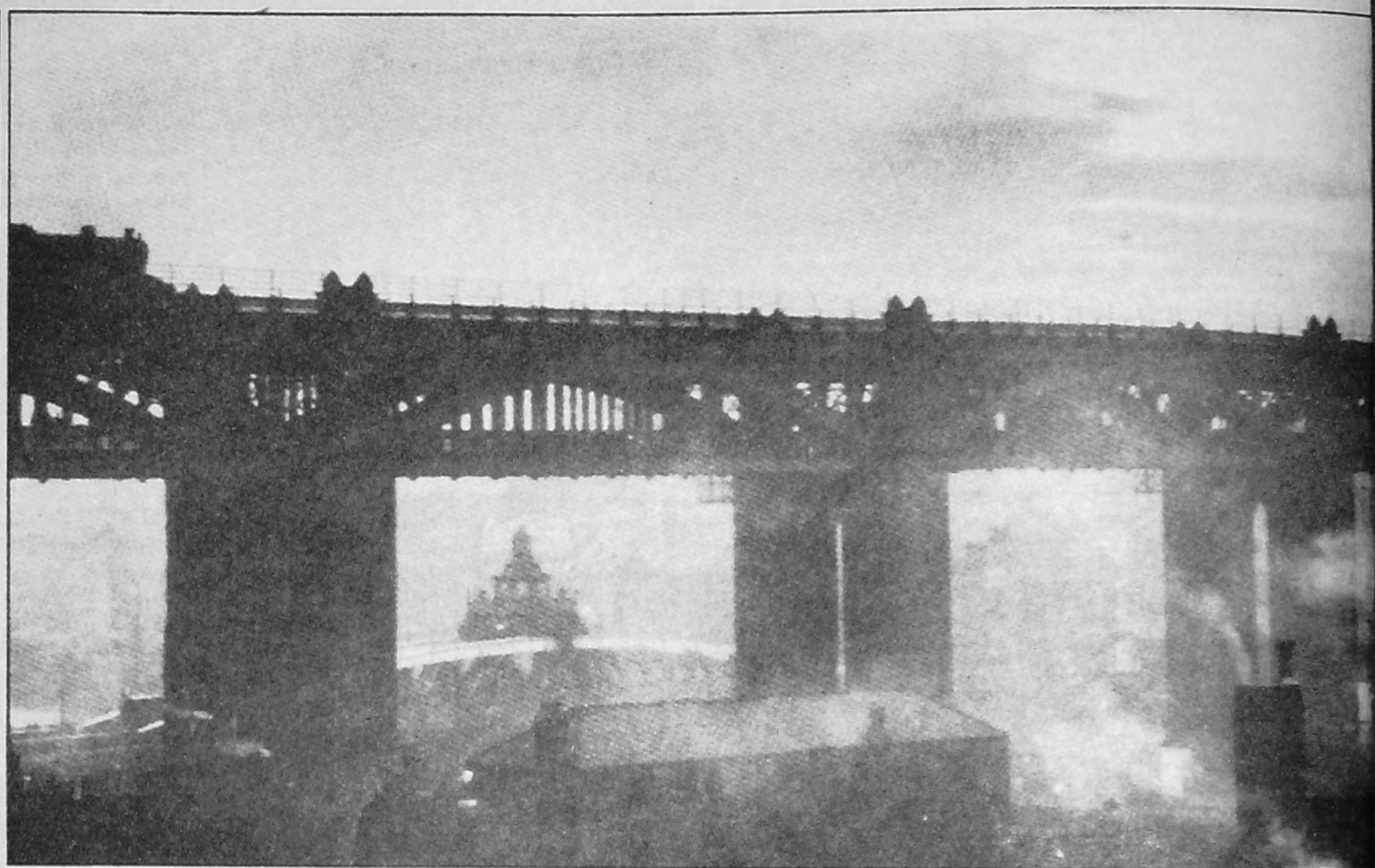


• British Coal's Haslam needs to prepare the industry for privatisation. To do this he will attack the miner's right and conditions



# England's green, unple

**Man is engaged in an unending struggle to master nature. Far from being an example of this, the destruction of the environment is an indication that capitalism has become a block on this further mastery. Capitalist social relations, because they are based on alienated labour, rely on the separating of this most fundamental of man's powers from conscious control. Labour under capitalism thus becomes, albeit in a contradictory fashion, a weapon against man, warping man and nature**



Capitalism exudes pollution from every pore

**E**VERYONE, it seems, is going green. Ecology and the environment are the conversation pieces of the day. Green politics have spread out of their original domain of the chunky-jumpered and open-toed sandled brigade who inhabit various hide away villages. Now it seems everyone from the true-blue Margaret Thatcher to the dull grey Communist Party of Britain have gone green.

A little while back we were treated to one of the last set pieces of Ronald Reagan's eventful term in office; 'Ronnie saves the whales'. Millions of dollars were spent to free three - and after the demise of one, two - whales from the ice. The point, aptly made by the Japanese, that they should have let the local population kill them and take the three off their whaling quota, thereby saving everyone a lot of trouble, was ignored in the desperate quest for authentic green credentials; the vogue this winter.

The high Tory *Economist* has given ecology the thumbs up. It even provides its own recipe as to how we may again return to Blake's "green and pleasant land": "Wise companies are therefore coming to realise that it is in their own interest to think through the effects they have on their environment ... As people get richer [a questionable assumption - SQ] the power of the check-out will be even stronger than the power of the court. Once a company gets labeled 'dirty', customers will shun it. Watch the green lobbyists use this tactic in a few advertising campaigns - and watch more businesses suddenly get the green religion." (October 15 1988).

Thatcher clearly agrees here, as witnessed by her speech at 1988's Tory Party conference. Of course, on the left there are many who also want to make this latest craze their own. Many members of the Euro organisation must be eyeing the Green Party as the next point of call as the current vehicle for their petty bourgeoisie whimsy slips slowly beneath the waves. Likewise, the *Morning Star* answered Thatcher by producing a poster with a picture of the PM, and above it the slogan, "If you think I'm green, you must be". Stirring stuff, we don't think. But it is clear, that

the race among politicians, left and right, to be 'greener than thou' is well and truly on.

What is the working class response to this? Obviously, first we need to plough through all the sensationalism to the truth of the matter. Are we just about to be sucked up through a hole in the ozone layer, fried by the 'greenhouse effect', drowned by the melting ice-caps or witness to yet another fad?

There is certainly one hell of a lot of hype about it all. This is often the case with the petty bourgeois morass which is the social basis of green politics. For many middle class 'radicals' the world is always just on the verge of extinction.

Ten years ago, we were all about to be obliterated by MX and SS20s unless we flocked to Greenham Common and Molesworth bases and squelched through the mud to pin the clothes of our offspring to the fence. Now we are on the edge of the abyss because of acid rain and what-have-you. Such hysteria from the likes of the Greens deserves to be taken as seriously as the now resigned junior health minister, Edwina Currie, and her insistent warnings that we are all doomed to die from a cholesterol-packed chip butty or an army of innocuous seeming salmonella-infected eggs. It's rather reminiscent of the character from the *Asterix* comic books; the tribal chief afraid of nought but the sky falling on his head: that, or something equally improbable.

In short, we do not take threats of our imminent demise at the hands of a mortally wounded mother nature as 'good coin'.

Worse, it is reactionary. The old argument of CNDers was that to talk of socialism with a thermonuclear sword of Damocles hanging over our head is adventurist. Ignoring the war like essence of imperialism, they argued that we must first disarm so that it is 'safe' to advance to socialism. We argued that the struggle for peace can only be the struggle for revolution.

It is likewise with all hues of 'greendom'. 'Socialist' greens would argue that to have a socialist world we must first ensure that we have a world left for the 'socialist future'. We must first be green and pleasant if we are to be

green, pleasant and socialist.

Let us look at the above quote from the *Economist* to see the logic of this. Some industries may follow its advice, propelled by 'market forces', though the *Economist* vastly overstates the potential for this. But let's just suppose, anyway. Such rationalisations are costly. That is why they are not employed to any great degree. If an industry were to take such measures, it would entail a drain on accumulation. With a given amount of capital, it would adversely affect the realisation of surplus value. And that is what capitalist production is all about.

If "the power of the checkout" were to ensure that ecological effects were to be taken into account, the people that the *Economist* is written for would have to ensure that it did not come from profits. If it did, the industry would be in a disadvantageous position in the capitalist scramble for ever greater profits. No, the cost of such measures must fall onto others shoulders - the working class, whether by increased exploitation in the industry concerned, or by spreading the cost throughout the proletariat by such measures as taxation.

This form of ecology is entirely acceptable to capitalism. They are prepared to give a thought to our environment, just so long as it is we who pay.

## Green 'socialism'

Many on the left who subscribe to the doctrine of 'freedom' will of course strongly object to being tarred with the same brush as Thatcher and the *Economist*. They, of course, are on the same side as the working class. They see a happy and fruitful marriage of socialism and green ecology.

This ideology has a strong and growing following on the left. Tony Benn is green, as are Martin Jacques, Gordon McLennan and Tony Chater. Green 'socialism' received a high profile in Tony Benn's uninspired brain child, the Chesterfield Socialist Conference. *Interlink*, the joint publication of the Socialist Society and the Conference of Socialist Economists,



# asant left



In addition, say our green 'socialists', we will all have to tighten our belts; or, in their words, "move towards a more moderate kind of consumption". Income Support claimants everywhere will no doubt find this a hoot.

Yes, we should restrict ourselves to "the meeting of basic needs". It seems "that present overall levels of production/consumption in rich countries may well prove ecologically unsustainable before long, and that certain particular and economically central forms of production/consumption are certainly unsustainable. To advocate overall 'growth' is thus ecologically heedless." And, dear reader, hang your head in shame, for here comes the big guilt trip: "the average first world citizen consumes supplies of raw materials and energy grossly larger than what is available to citizens of poor countries ... the need to limit 'growth' in our society is even more clear."

What reactionary nonsense! The assumption — for an unsubstantiated assumption is all that it is — is that the world has reached its productive limits, if not gone beyond them. It seems to our learned authors that this is self evident, because of the greater consumption of the 'first world' over the 'third'. One could have made exactly the same point two, three or four centuries ago with the same validity. Should we then return to the level of production prior to this? Such lame-brained 'logic' deserves contempt. This inequality exists, not because we consume or produce too much, but because imperialism oppresses such countries and bleeds them dry. To 'atone for our sins' we should not consume less, but destroy imperialism. Clearly the greens have no stomach for such 'drastic' measures.

The assertion that we adopt more 'moderate' consumption should be exposed for what it is — anti-working class. This society does not rest on the consumption of use values, but on the production of values. It is in the race for this that environmental ills arise, not in human productive activity itself. It is the capitalist form of production that must be destroyed, not production itself which must be crippled. Having done so, humanity can extend growth — yes, in all spheres — to as yet unimagined extents.

It is the capitalist system which destroys the environment, not production. Advice to restrict ourselves to "basic needs" is as hopeless as it is reactionary. Capitalist production would proceed heedless of whether you or I were to by that packet of chocolate biscuits in the supermarket. Capital must expand or die, regardless of the cost in human terms. It is that which must be tackled.

The response of all forms of petty bourgeois 'socialism' to capitalism focuses in solely on the symptoms of its fundamental contradiction. These are then taken as primary — the problem, to which all else is subordinated. The only real solution — the struggle for revolution — is put back to after these other problems are solved; problems which cannot be solved within the capitalist order.

## Red Marx

Though we reject the scare mongering of the greens, communists are well aware of the dangers to the environment, just as opposing the bourgeois politics of CND does not make us oblivious to the threat of nuclear war.

Capitalism, in all its forms, poses a danger to humanity. Groucho Marx once said; "Why should I care about posterity? What's posterity ever done for me?" The approach of Karl Marx was somewhat different to that of his namesake.

Marx saw the process of capitalist development and industrialisation as being a fundamentally contradictory affair. On the one hand, it created the force for its own over-

row, the proletariat, through the development of its productive forces, which in turn provided the technical basis for the society of the future — communism. On the other hand, it further immiserated the working class and turned the forces of production against them and, indeed, against their environment.

Marx illustrated this with characteristic insight in a passage in *Capital* Volume I, with reference to the conditions of the agricultural and industrial workforce, which merits being quoted in full:

"... irrational, old fashioned methods of agriculture are replaced by scientific ones. Capitalist production completely tears asunder the old bond of union which held together agriculture and manufacture in their infancy. But at the same time it creates the material conditions for a higher synthesis in the future, viz, the union of agriculture and industry on the basis of the more perfected forms they have acquired during their temporary separation. Capitalist production, by collecting the population in great centres, and causing an ever increasing preponderance of the town population, on the one hand concentrates the historical motive power of society; on the other hand, it disturbs the circulation of matter between man and soil, ie prevents the return to the soil of its elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; it therefore violates the conditions necessary to lasting fertility of the soil. By this action it destroys at the same time the health of the town labourer and the intellectual life of the rural labourer. But while upsetting the naturally grown conditions for the maintenance of that circulation of matter, it imperiously calls for its restoration as a system, as a regulating law of social production, and under a form appropriate to the full development of the human race." (pp505-6).

"Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the labourer." (*Ibid*, pp506-7).

For Marx, unlike our *Interlink* friends, destruction of the environment is rooted solely in the capitalistic social relations of production. These, though, have within them the seeds of their supersession. The basis is laid for the planning of the entire society for constantly developing — never static "basic" — needs, through the conscious and collective mastery of nature by man.

In opposition to the symptoms of capitalist production, talk of "cooperating with nature" (WH Evans, in the *Morning Star* of November 18 1988), however idyllic sounding, is anti-Marxist twaddle. What distinguishes the human species is the nature of its productive activity. Mankind, through its productive activity, transforms nature, in doing so transforming itself. To use Hegel's characteristic phrase, praised by Marx, man is a "self mediating being". This can be imagined in the form of an upwardly ascending spiral, produced by the incessant interaction between man and nature through the medium of productive activity.

Man is engaged in an unending struggle to master nature. Far from being an example of this, the destruction of the environment is an indication that capitalism has become a block on this further mastery. Capitalist social relations, because they are based on alienated labour, rely on the separating of this most fundamental of man's powers from conscious control. Labour under capitalism thus becomes, albeit in a contradictory fashion, a weapon against man, warping man and nature.

Seen in this light, armed with the tools of Marxist analysis, calls to save the environment by tightening our belts and not using chlorofluoro-carbon aerosols are truly pathetic. Only by making man's social powers directly social, not the alienated property of the few, can we properly control our environment, by mastering it. And that takes a revolution. Sorry, green 'socialists', but there's no other way. Certainly not yours.

## Grey socialist realism

But the objection will be raised here of the failure of existing socialism to overcome these problems. This is true. China 'boasts' a pollution problem to rival the West's. The Soviet Union has some quite astounding 'black spots'. For instance, Chernobyl in the western Ukraine has a large meat plant. Pollution from this plant, it is reported, has

caused the hair of 130 children to fall out in the locality. Other side effects in the wider population are not too pleasant.

The plant possesses anti-pollution equipment but, because it slows down production and plan targets are so high, it is not used. Instead people in the locality have been issued with Soviet army gasmasks. Most attractive. Then, of course, there is the Chernobyl debacle.

Such examples speak volumes. We must deal with this problem concretely. Philistine nonsense, *a la* the SWP, along the lines of "it's all the same, innit?", though no doubt a handy cop-out, is of little use.

Socialism, as it has developed, has had many birth marks from the old society to overcome. The Soviet Union after the civil war had a level of productivity commensurate with Cromwellian England. Existing within a 'petty bourgeois sea' internally and surrounded by a much more developed and hostile capitalist world, the young workers' state had strong pressures to industrialise by methods more reminiscent of those employed by Bismark than anything envisaged by Marx.

Also, contrary to Stalin's theories, the overthrow of the capitalists did not mean the elimination of capitalism. In essence, it merely heralded the start of that struggle: against the law of value, the market and the realm of necessity, all of which still exist in the socialist countries today. Distortions under such conditions were inevitable.

These were exacerbated by the transformation of the inevitably unwieldy bureaucracy from the servant into the master of the workers' state. Under such conditions effective planning could not function. Not only did the Soviet socialist state suffer from a backward economy relative to the West, it was also encumbered with a method of planning which only functioned in one direction. Planning targets were, and are, set from above, with little thought for social need. Plan targets on paper take precedence over what these targets fulfill concretely. Such a *modus operandi* gives rise to the sort of horrendous distortions as Chernovtsky and Chernobl.

Attempts by the upper echelons of the Soviet bureaucracy to lay the blame on minor officials or on the working class are totally cynical. The fault lies with the way society is organised. Retreat from such methods to the operation of the market are even more dangerous, yet they are being embarked on. The only answer for Soviet workers is to take the planning of society directly into their hands, transforming the bureaucracy from the master once more into the servant of society.

What ruling class, in control of its resources, would allow itself to be subjected to abominable events like those which the Soviet working class, and those of other socialist countries, tolerate?

## Red not Green

Capitalism has fulfilled its historic destiny. It has developed the forces of production, created the world economy — and given birth to its own grave digger. Now it is in a moribund and decaying state. With each war, each crisis and the ongoing destruction of natural and human resources it calls for its last rights and burial. It is a rabid dog. Unless we destroy it, it will devour us.

Faced with this, green politics are no opposition. In fact, they are a block to the struggle of the working class: the problem is not with the system, but with production generally: we produce too much, eat too much, so on and so forth. Instead of directing our fire at the system, we are told that the problem is with industry in general — or even, farcically, that we use the wrong aerosol.

The answer of communists is not to further fetter production, but to completely unfetter it by revolution. Think of the productive capabilities unleashed by the freeing of the world from the dictates of private property and the anachronism of state boundaries, with effective planning taking place on a world wide scale. The capabilities are boundless. They are also pollution free.

Then, as Fredrick Engels argued, man will truly leave the era of pre-history behind and human history will begin in earnest. The likes of the greens, who would have us grub about at below the existing, fettered, human productive capabilities will be an idiosyncratic footnote in that pre-history. We can hasten that day through building today a genuine communist alternative to the green's utopias.

Sean Quinn





## IRAN

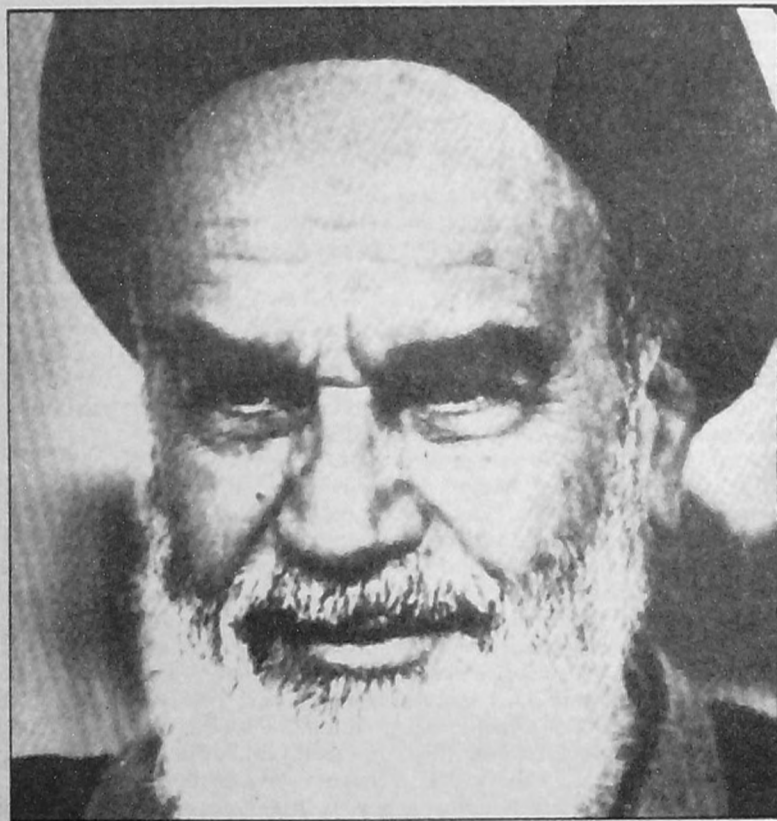
# Stop the bloodbath

Having failed to provide the promised "final victory" against Iraq the mediaevalist regime of the Aytollahs have been faced with the prospect of growing instability at home. In response to this the barbaric regime has sought in effect to 'behead' any potential mass upsurge of opposition to its rule. According to reliable sources already 3,000 leftists, communists and democrats have been executed. There is a great danger that many more thousands will be killed. In Britain, the Iranian Political Prisoners Action Committee has been set up to help stop a bloodbath. We spoke to its secretary, Neil Baker, about Ippac and the current situation in Iran

Mieczyslaw Wilczek, Poland's new Minister of Industry and leading member of the Polish United Workers Party, seems to be yet another product of the Margaret Thatcher school of 'official communism'. He owns a £million business and has a swimming pool, tennis court and peacocks in the grounds of his country mansion. In his own words he plans to turn Poland's economy into a "free market" composed of "small, private firms, like in Italy." Most ominously of all, he underlines that he is "in the process of realising most of Solidarity's economic demands" which he supported in 1980-1. We look forward to the denunciations of 'comrade' Wilczek that will no doubt soon be filling the pages of the New Worker, Morning Star et al ... but we won't be holding our breath.

The fallout from Moscow's first beauty contest continues to drop on the heads of the Moscow branch of the Young Communist League, one of the principal organisers. The extremely tacky event has drawn condemnation from many quarters, particularly from the Soviet Women's Committee. SWC staff member Galina Negrustuyeva attacked the Moscow YCLers for "playing at perestroika" in organising the beauty pageant. Her outrage is understandable, but Soviet women should be clear - the cattle market 'beauty contests' that demean women are a particularly stark example of the very market principles that perestroika is meant to foster. There really is no contradiction.

The lifting of the lid on Soviet society is allowing all manner of creep-crawlies to slither out. The last three years have seen the growth of fascist, neo-nazi and reactionary mystical groups. Pamyat - which got a favourable write up in a recent edition of the New Worker - claims a membership of over 20,000 in Moscow alone and branches in 30 cities. More overtly fascist organisations have been staging night rallies in Soviet cities and some even beating up medal-wearing war veterans. These modern day Black Hundreds are a stark warning to Soviet workers. Bureaucratic rule in the USSR has fostered the existence of these scum: the working class must organise independently to crush them before they become a real threat.



Khomeini is preparing to massacre Iran's political prisoners

Could you tell us something about the position of Iranian political prisoners since the end of the Iran/Iraq war?

Since the end of the war the Khomeini regime has closed the doors of the political prisons to visitors and started to systematically retry those held there. Recalling the terrible 1981-82 period of repression, there is evidence of a new wave of mass executions. The leaders of the regime have been openly calling for 'harsh and decisive sentences' by the so-called revolutionary courts ie executions. It is rumoured that those prisoners who do not 'repent' are automatically given sentences of death.

From the information we've at our disposal, we know that mass killings of political prisoners and opposition supporters has already started, and is gathering pace. Since August at least 3,000 political prisoners - from a wide range

of different organisations - have been killed. On one day alone in October 1988, 286 people were executed in the notorious Evin prison in Tehran - shallow mass graves have been uncovered by relatives of those executed.

The official Iranian media have reported some executions. But while pictures of public hangings have appeared in the Iranian national press, the overwhelming number of executions have not been made public. They're taking place behind a wall of silence.

What is Ippac calling for?

Ippac is out to break down the wall of silence. We're calling upon international opinion to act before it's too late. Khomeini must be forced to open the doors and to stop the bloodbath: the key to this is the ending of restrictions on prison visits, introduced in August 1988.

Just ending this ban would make

it far more difficult for the regime to go ahead and wipe out the political opponents it holds. Prison visits allow families to stand witness to the physical conditions of inmates, indeed to testify whether or not they were alive or dead. The ban on visits imposed by the regime allows it to conceal its massacre. Hence our campaigning slogans are - Stop the bloodbath! Open the prison doors!

What are prison conditions in Iran like today?

The war saw the regime's popularity give way to growing opposition. To stem this tide of opposition Iran's jails have been filled to overflowing with revolutionaries, progressives and democrats.

In fact the Khomeini regime holds many, many more political prisoners than the Shah ever did and if anything the conditions and treatment are worse. Detainees are kept incommunicado for weeks or months, trials are summary and held in secret and lawyers are barred from political trials.

After arrest political prisoners are held in detention centres. Detainees are isolated and cut off from the outside world and are completely at the mercy of their jailers. Political detainees are systematically tortured and ill-treated in prisons and detention centres throughout Iran. Former detainees have testified that torture is routine and universal. The regime uses it in order to obtain confessions and information about political activity. Although torture usually takes place immediately after arrest, while the prisoner is held incommunicado, it can continue for years.

According to Amnesty International, the most common torture methods are beating, whipping and being strung up by the arms or wrists. All kinds of rope and cable are used in this, including telephone wire. One other common form of torture is 'football' - where a detainee, bound and blindfolded, is pushed violently from one guard to another, while being kicked and punched.

Sexual abuse of detainees, including raping of both men and women, has also been reported, as well as psychological torture such as mock executions, and forcing prisoners to watch torture sessions or remove corpses after actual executions.

Execution has been the fate of many who dare oppose the regime. Most have never been officially announced, but an authoritative list with details of over 25,000 executions since 1979 was published abroad in 1985. Executions are by hanging or firing-squad but stoning to death is also prescribed for certain offences.

What is Ippac and who supports it?

Ippac is an ad-hoc committee which has been set up specifically to campaign for an end to the executions and repression in Iran. It is a non-sectarian organisation that seeks to coordinate the widest possible level of involvement from Iranian progressives, British trades unions, members of political organisations, pressure groups and individuals who are determined to prevent the massacre of Iran's political prisoners.

Our sponsors so far include Stan Newens MEP, MPs such as Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, Ken Livingstone and Bernie Grant. We are also supported by TGWU members from Salford, UCW members from Aberystwyth, Nalco members from North London, as well as the Unemployed Workers Charter.

What can be done to stop a bloodbath?

International pressure will not prevent all executions. But it is possible to stop mass executions. In the past the regime dismissed international protests with contempt. Things are different now though.

The Iranian regime is currently at its most susceptible to pressure. It's seeking to end its political and economic isolation. The war has cost it dear. It needs international help with its reconstruction and rearmament programme. Khomeini and the theocracy will not throw away its warming international relations for the sake of killing the country's political prisoners. In this at least the regime is perfectly rational.

This is why a concerted campaign based on publicising the horrific conditions within Iran's prisons and the scale of repression can have a significant impact on the regime. The reign of terror in Iran's prisons can be stopped!

As the Islamic regime embarks upon its economic restructuring, and starts to establish itself in the world, it becomes open to outside pressure on human rights issues. Because of this the lives of tens of thousands of political prisoners can be saved. We're calling for delegations to Iran of parliamentarians, trades unionists and lawyers, for letters protesting against the mass executions of political prisoners to the Islamic regime in Tehran and local MPs, along with motions condemning the executions from political party branches, trade unions and trades councils. We are also calling for activists to use Ippac's petition and folder.

What is taking place inside Iran's prisons is a massacre: it is important to be clear on that. With international pressure on the vulnerable regime, we can help save the lives of thousands of democrats, revolutionaries and socialists currently facing death at the hands of these barbarians. It is our duty, as internationalists and democrats, to act.

For more information about Ippac, write to Neil Baker, secretary Ippac, BM Box 6926, London WC1N 3XX or phone (01) 806 3677





## An SWP analysis

Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein, *The Labour Party - a Marxist analysis*, Bookmarks, London 1988, pp.427, pbk, £7.95

PACKED with hard facts and copious quotations Cliff and Gluckstein - leading members of the Socialist Workers Party - have certainly exposed the Labour Party as a bourgeois worker party and an agent of capitalism within the workers' ranks.

Going back to the end of the revolutionary Chartist movement in the 1850s, Cliff and Gluckstein have traced the development of the rise of reformism based on the trade union movement; which expanded and matured in a period of social peace and prosperity arising from the expansion of overseas colonial conquests by British imperialism.

Politically during this period the workers had become so bourgeoisified that they almost automatically voted Liberal. With the end of Britain's imperialist monopoly over the world economy this changed. But the creation of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 (which changed its name to the Labour Party in 1906) was as the authors state, a product of the trade union bureaucracy, arising not from its militancy, but from fear of the mass strike struggles of the dockers, gas workers etc, organised in what is known as new unionism by socialist leaders such as Ben Tillett, Tom Mann and John Burns.

The old trade union bureaucracy sought to remedy working class grievances not through the strength of the working class movement, but through parliamentary legislative action in collaboration with the open bourgeois party, the Liberals. The union bureaucracy created the LRC as a vehicle to take its own reformist project onto the parliamentary field.

The true nature of the Labour Party was clear from its birth; not as a combative socialist working class party that went wrong due to bad leadership, but as a political organisation that sought to channel workers' discontent into legal and peaceful avenues within the capitalist system.

As the authors point out, the 'socialist' clause four in the Labour Party's constitution was actually inserted to provide a socialist veneer in order to lead the workers away from the developing communist movement that had just come to power in Russia and insisted that a socialised economy could only be created by the violent overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of a socialist state.

With great attention to detail Cliff and Gluckstein take us one by one through the various Labour governments and in the process expose their blatant reactionary anti-working class nature, and the role of the multitude of 'left' Labour groups that have acted as a radical

cover for the reactionary policies of Labour governments and the Labour Party itself.

To deal here with a few of Labour governments' reactionary policies, detailed by the authors, there is the history of strike breaking, arrest of workers strike leaders and the introduction of the Emergency Powers Act for the first time since the 1926 general strike by what is considered to be by many the most 'progressive' Labour government, that of Attlee. All of this supported and actively implemented by those erstwhile prominent Labour lefts of pre-war days, Stafford Cripps and the darling of the today's left, Nye Bevan.

Then under the Wilson government we had *In place of strife*; a document that presaged the Thatcher anti-trade union legislation, in which another Labour lefty, Barbara Castle, tried to curb the bargaining power of trade unions through fines, industrial courts, ballots before strikes etc. This was only thwarted by workers' mass opposition.

As the authors correctly state: "Labour was taking up the anti-union stand first tentatively proposed back in 1912, but which only openly reactionary governments had dared to enact in peacetime" (p.291).

Cliff and Gluckstein leave no doubt in our minds, with the long catalogue of anti-working class legislation and actions by Labour governments, that the party's role is to defend the profit making system of capitalism at the expense of the working class.

Unfortunately the logical political conclusion to this reactionary record in government is fudged. Cliff and Gluckstein refuse to categorise the Labour Party as a reactionary party. On the contrary, the authors declare that: "Labour is a reformist party, not a reactionary one" (their emphasis p.273). This despite the authors agreeing with Lenin's definition of the Labour Party as early as page two, that "the Labour Party is a capitalist workers' party". Also their statement on page 117 that, "the leadership" of the Labour Party "always sees the wider movement as subordinate to parliament and the state" (their emphasis), meaning, of course, that the Labour Party "subordinates" the workers' movement to the needs and policies of capitalism - is this not reactionary?

How can one explain such a blatant contradiction by the authors' argument? It is quite simple when one considers that both authors are prominent members of the SWP, the largest of the petty bourgeois revolutionary organisations. When analysing statements by such leftists one does not take them at face value. One must seek out the iso-

lated little sentences, read between the lines, observe the nuances in their writings and note what is not said when it comes to class action.

An example of this can be seen on p.205 where we read of Nye Bevan's activities during the war: "Although the Labour left were not prepared to advance working class self-activity, they did try to halt government intervention against it."

Clearly what is being inferred here is a progressive role on the part of Labour lefts in parliament, and not for one instance pointing out that the Labour left feared that state action would only exacerbate the class conflict. Through their 'left' stance in parliament they could dupe the workers into continued support for the war effort. By refusing to confront this the SWP pair constitute themselves as a left cover for the left cover. Revolutionary in words, reformism in deed: that is centrism not Marxism.

This approach is taken to its highest form in the SWP's approach to parliamentary elections - it insists that voting for the Labour Party is "voting for our class". This is in spite of all it rightly says about the "capitalist workers' Labour Party" in theory.

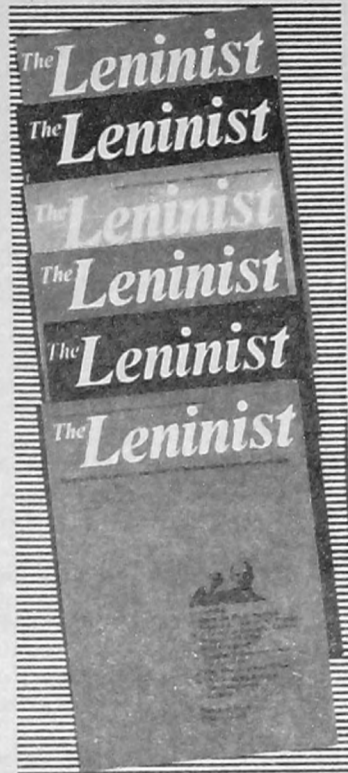
The hall mark of opportunism is placing what appertains now before principles and revolutionary policy. As the SWP's Paul Foot argued in a 1986 edition of *Socialist Worker Review*: "almost every worker who thinks like a socialist supports the Labour Party. The enormous majority of such people, including pretty well every militant trade unionist, believes that change can come through the Labour Party in office."

The majority of workers have illusions in the reformist Labour Party and its governments say the SWP quite correctly. But it hardly follows that we should therefore reinforce those illusions by tailing them and subordinating the advanced workers' consciousness and activity to that of the middle section of the working class as does the SWP.

Naturally when advocating reformist action opportunists have to adapt theory to practice. Hence Foot tries to excuse voting Labour, by claiming in contradiction to Cliff and Gluckstein that: "the Labour Party came into existence to represent the working class". Yet Cliff and Gluckstein's own tortuous denial that the Labour Party is "reactionary" is merely a more sophisticated version of this and serves the same purpose. The SWP clearly uses theory not as a guide to action but as a justification for the latest line. That has nothing to do with a Marxist analysis.

Mike Burns

# SPECIAL OFFER



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# Unity crisis

**There are great battles looming with our class enemy. The Tories will sooner or later attempt to inflict a strategic defeat on our class. Yet today there is no Communist Party which can galvanise the working class and act as a general staff**

**S**OON to go Gordon McLennan, general secretary of the Euro organisation, and the New Communist Party's dull Eric Trevett want it. A whole pack of confused "members and former members" of the Communist Party of Great Britain want it. *Proletarian* always wanted it. The pro-Morning Star Communist Party of Britain's foundation congress even gave its Derek Robinson a standing ovation for saying he wanted it. Calls are flying thick and fast at the moment for it. Today it's all the rage, what they all crave is ... unity.

Yes, having excluded, split, expelled and been deliberately expelled the opportunists now want everyone to get back together again. Something called 'unity' might well happen between a couple of the opportunist groups but if it does it will be the unity of the grave.

These calls for unity are not signs of growth and confidence. Neither are they based on Marxist-Leninist principles. No, they are cries of despair from a dying 'official communism', a political trend that has lost all dynamism and has visibly disintegrated. Indeed the louder the cries for unity from these people the deeper their difficulties tend to be. There is in fact a unity crisis gripping them.

To see the full extent of this let us examine precisely who is proposing what to whom.

•The NCP is pushing hard for unity with the CPB. It is also floating the idea of regular meetings between itself the CPB and the Euros - Britain's "three communist parties". This is a recruiting device designed to save the NCP. It split from the CPGB in July 1977 declaring that if the CPGB adopted its new version of the *British Road to Socialism* programme later that year, it would make it definitively "social democratic". Originally some 700 strong, the NCP has declined dramatically. Yet given the political flux created by the CPB's split and the NCP's 'hard line' politics and declarations of unity it has recently managed to win a number of recruits from both the Euro party and the CPB. If the NCP has not played the unity card it would have suffered extinction, its few remaining rank and file members being gobbled up by the CPB.

•The CPB is a much bigger organisation claiming around 2,000 members. It split with the CPGB in April 1988 using as an excuse a defence of the *BRS* programme which it said the Euro leadership was out to water down (and against which the NCP based its split). In response to the NCP's unity offensive it says it will unite with anyone as long as it's on the basis of the 'principles' of the *BRS*. It is busily rewriting this document at the moment for its congress in late 1989. A slightly less rightist version will help stem the trickle of members lost to the NCP and perhaps parry its unity calls.

•*Proletarian* was formed from a group of ultra pro-Brezhnev centrists expelled from the NCP in the course of 1982. At the last AGM of the *Morning Star* it proposed that it

and the editorial boards of the *New Worker*, *Morning Star*, *Straight Left* and *7 Days* had regular get togethers with a view to "communist unity". In spite of this unity tactic since then *Proletarian* appears to have disappeared. This is a danger all 'official communists' face - even the largest of them.

•Addressing his executive committee, in November 1988, Gordon McLennan, made his own call for "communist unity". As reported in *News and Views* this consists of everyone - no matter what their view - coming back into what he monstrosly insists on still calling the CPGB ie the Euro organisation, which now has only around 7,000 members - even on paper. McLennan is desperate to maintain his group's numbers (and thus legitimacy). Because of this factions are now more or less tolerated. Apart from the three main Euro ones there are the Straight Leftists and pro-Morning Star/non-CPB centrists.

•Twenty-four prominent "members and former members of the CPGB" - ie pro-Morning Star supporters who were against the formation of the CPB - have also issued their own unity appeal. It was printed in the NCP's *New Worker*, but not the *Morning Star*. Frank Watters, Elizabeth Wilson, Lawrence Harris, Vic Heath, Peter Hagger, Christabel Gurney, Ben Fine, Marj Mayo, Megan Dobney, Irene Brennan, Maggie Bowden, John Bowden, George Anthony, Bill Freeman, Terry Marsland etc want a coming together of "communist forces" at presently split between the "CPGB, the CPB and the NCP".

Our response to all this talk of unity is clear cut and solidly based on the interests of our working class. For us the unity of communists is an important question. Too important to be kicked around like a football in factional games. The opportunists are calling for unity in order to keep their own faction in business, that's all.

There are great battles looming with our class enemy. The Tories will sooner or later attempt to inflict a strategic defeat on our class. Yet today there is no Communist Party which can galvanise the working class and act as a general staff. Those groups who call themselves 'parties' insult the name, they are also incapable of proving any sort of communist lead to the working class so rotten are they with opportunism of one kind or another.

The neo-Fabian Euro party openly encourages the shift to the right in the labour movement and have earned the praise of the establishment media for so doing.

As to the NCP and CPB they are retirement homes for the burnt out or never has been. All they do is issue pleas for the Labour Party to do this and the TUC to do that. Their theory is eclectic, shallow and threadbare, that is typically centrist, their practice virtually non-existent.

Britain's workers need communist unity not for its own sake but in order to lay the basis for re-forging the Communist Party of Great Britain on the firm foundations of Marxism-Leninism. Any other unity is temporary and in the last analysis worthless. This is something Lenin taught our movement and something we will never forget.

Lenin insisted that for there to be a successful revolution against the bourgeoisie it was necessary to first do battle against bourgeois forces and influences that exist within the workers' movement ie opportunism. This was a lesson of Bolshevism which was of universal applicability Lenin argued. Unless that battle was won there could be no hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat he said.

It is for that reason Lenin and his comrades waged a ruthless and unyielding struggle against all opportunist trends and shades. From the 1890s till the triumph of the October Revolution there was battle after battle between the forces of Marxism-Leninism and a whole host of opportunist manifestations that are inevitable as long as we operate under capitalism, eg economism, legalism, Menshevism, Bundism, liquidationism and Trotskyism (of course, ideological struggle against bourgeois influences must continue under socialism but that is a separate subject).

Without these often bitter ideological and political struggles, without the forging of the Bolshevik Party against the opportunists the October Revolution would have been impossible - does anyone doubt this? Certainly looking back at history no communist should. (See the first four sections of Lenin's pamphlet *Left-wing communism, an infantile disorder* for an outline of this).

When the Third International was established it demanded that parties affiliating to it fulfill all its now famous 21 conditions. Out of 21 our opportunists would be lucky to 'score' one. And no wonder the conditions were specifically designed to keep out opportunist forces - forces which incidentally had political platforms well, well to the left of our present day unity mongers.

Lenin was no sectarian. He had a personally tolerant attitude to-

wards political opponents, always hoping to win them round as he often did. Yet he gave no quarter in putting down those trends deviating from the scientific method and principles of the Marxist programme in Russia and internationally. He defended Marxism with every ounce of his strength and refused to let any considerations of friendship or status get in the way of this. As disciples of Lenin it is natural that this combative ideological approach is our starting point in fighting for socialism in Britain today.

The principled unity of communists requires and presupposes a determined fight against opportunism. Concretely that means polemicising against and exposing the opportunism represented by the NCP, the *Morning Star*, the Euro-communists et al. That is precisely what *The Leninist* has done with its open ideological struggle.

Like Lenin we want unity, principled unity, fighting unity. The unity of communists around a communist programme. None of the opportunists are offering that. None of them can.

All of these trends mentioned above peddle illusions in Gorbachevism, believe that the Labour Party is not a bourgeois party of the working class but a vehicle for socialism, and even more damning all of them regard communism as represented by *The Leninist* with a profound hatred.

Not surprisingly therefore we sincerely consider it a great compliment *not* to have been included in any of the unity lists put forward by these various opportunist groups.

Their unity is the unity of opportunists, put forward to save opportunism from its terminal decline and in an effort to gain factional advantage. In the past these elements mocked the Trotskyites for their '57' varieties, their splits and fleeting unifications. Today the opportunists suffer from the very same disease.

We Leninists are duty bound to point this out. Some may think that in doing so we are being unfair, that we should attempt to join the unity dance and that our refusal to do so is the result of sectarianism. No matter.

True, in Britain in particular, the slogan 'unity' is a powerful one. It meets with a powerful resonance in the working class movement. The desire for unity is a healthy instinct. But unity is also perhaps the most misused, most prostituted slogan in our political culture.

Opportunism by its very nature is sectional. It rests on the short term interests of this or that section of the working class. Opportunism cannot defend or advance the long

term interests of the working class as a whole - that can only be done by a Communist Party guided by a Marxist-Leninist programme. In point of fact unity in the hands of the opportunists becomes a method of consolidating bourgeois influences in our class.

It is the standard device in the armoury of fat cat bureaucrats and opportunists of all hues to attack the militant minority. They never propose unity around the class struggle, always unity around class collaboration. Always unity on what is soft, never hard. We will have none of this 'unity' thank you very much. We will not bargain with our revolutionary line for the sake of unity with Eurocommunists, social chauvinists and Gorbachevites.

Instead we urge the fight for the principled unity of communists and that means in practice unity around the principles championed and advanced by *The Leninist*. This, as every serious student of Marx, Engels and Lenin will agree, is fully in the interests of our working class.

Of course, we do not dogmatically rule out organisational unity with opportunists in this or that party or organisation. To do so would be stupid. Such unity, say in the trade unions, is used to spread the influence of communism to broader sections of the working class. But in a party such unity would for us be dependent on having no restrictions on publishing our views. And even then unity could only be but temporary.

Sooner or later we would have to part ways with the forces of opportunism. Not to do so would be to tolerate the continuation of bourgeois influences in the workers' movement, to consider opportunism a 'legitimate' trend. That would be an act of opportunism in itself and would jeopardise the revolution. This is something Leninists will never countenance.

Opportunism by its very nature breeds factions on the one hand and bureaucratic centralism on the other. And for all the unity slogans our opportunists have been unable to meet together in one room, let alone unite. This fact is our best defence. The entire history of the groups ranged against us is one of collapse and disintegration. There crises only fortify our conviction that our organisation must follow the same consistently revolutionary road.

Genuine communists who stand on the founding principles of our CPGB and Lenin's Third International, who recognise that for socialism Britain needs a dictatorship of the proletariat, who are opposed to opportunism where ever it shows itself (yes, including in the Soviet Union), who are prepared to give their lives to the cause of our working class and communism should not hesitate for a moment: unite with us around the fiery red banner of *The Leninist*.

There you will find real communist unity. The unity that will reforge our Communist Party of Great Britain, the unity that will lead our working class to the conquest of state power.

Jack Conrad



# *Unemployed* **ORGANISER**

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**INTO THE UNION!**

**ONTO THE PAYROLL!**

**SMASH ET!**

**BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Tel: 01 431 3135**



# UWC

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS CHARTER

BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Tel: 01-431 3135

## Organising for Action

EVERYONE out against ET on June 15 1989. That's what we are calling for. Employment Training is the biggest attack on the unemployed since the 1930's. It must be smashed. ET and the Poll Tax are the weapons the bosses intend to use to make us pay for the mess they have made of their own system. The only way they can keep themselves in the manner in which they have become accustomed is to force more and more of us into what is little more than slavery. Our only 'freedom of choice' is between fighting tooth and nail for what we need for any sort of decent life or being smashed to our knees. In other words no choice at all.

We are not going to stop this attack by pleading to the establishment that ET is not fair. The only thing Thatcher and the boss class recognises is strength. Organised and together with employed trade unionists we can summon up the necessary strength to smash ET. Alone and divided, we are nothing. United everything!

But how can we overcome our problems of division and seeming helplessness? Only by getting involved in the struggle to set up a national organisation of the unemployed. That's what our situation cries out for. That's what we need. That's what we're going to build.

The first step is making sure June 15 is a success. June 15 will not be like those 'days of action' we have seen over recent years. It will not be a token gesture. It will not be 'respectable'. It will not be organised in such a way as to admit defeat before we even start.

The TUC has been very good at fobbing us off with those type of events. Remember GCHQ Day? NHS Day? We are not out to appeal to bleeding heart liberals or to win over public opinion (whatever that means).

The TUC has proved itself useless at defending the unemployed against the bosses offensive. We know that the situation for the unemployed is going to get a lot worse unless we get organised and fight to win.

The bosses know very well what's at stake with ET - its success is vital to their long term plans to really drive down wages and our living standards, smash the unions and crush the unemployed into slavery. ET is an attack on the whole of the working class and the whole class must be drawn into the fight against it.

Just as the organised unemployed must become a mighty force in the fight against the poll tax, the attacks on health workers and every other attempt by the bosses to make us pay for the inadequacies of their system.

So, there is much to be done in the months ahead. *Unemployed Organiser* must reach all those willing and able to join the fightback. It must become a weapon. The Unemployed Workers Charter is already becoming recognised as a strong voice for the unemployed and its ranks must swell through the establishment of branches throughout the country.

To help make the day of action into a day the bosses will never forget, there will be an organising conference in Manchester on Saturday, March 4.

This will provide an important opportunity to test how effective our campaign has been up to that point and give direction to all those participating.

The conference will be open to all; working, unwaged or on a scheme. Participation can be as an individual or as a delegate and we want to have as many as possible delegated from UWC branches.

The conference will not be just a talking shop. All those involved already are committed to action. Action speaks louder than words! How do you get involved? Write or ring the UWC NOW!

## ET: THE FIGHTBACK

**T**he Tories have put a great many eggs into their £1.5 billion Employment Training basket. Unlike the introduction of the Job Training Scheme, which had the Community Programme to fall back on when it failed, ET has taken over from all previous adult 'training' schemes. In other words, in the event of ET failing, those eggs could end up all over the faces of Thatcher and Co.

Indeed, despite the reactionary elation of the participants in the Tory Party conference, things are going none too well for this

TUC is now going along with it. The only big spanner in the works for the bosses so far has been the response of the individual unemployed, not trade union organised resistance.

**B**ut, as we have argued, individual resistance is not enough. The Tories have the resolute leadership of Thatcher and the forces of the state which will ensure a swift and effective action against uncooperative individuals.

If the TUC was seriously committed to fighting ET, it would be a big step forward. But it is not in spite of its congress resolution. This is a stab in the back not only of the unemployed but all trade unionists.

ET is an attack on our class as a whole - as Marx said, the wages of those in work are determined entirely by the reserve army of labour - we must develop organisational forms equipped with anti-capitalist politics. To announce this is simple. Its realisation will be somewhat more difficult. But it should be obvious to anyone by now that if the unemployed don't

to demand that they should be kicked out. We are therefore not in favour of the slogan 'Boycott ET' ... much more useful is the call to 'SMASH ET' and, linked to this, 'into the union, off the dole and onto the payroll!'

Militant trade unionists must fight for those ET workers taken on to be immediately made permanent employees on full wages. Militants must take this fight to the rank and file, demanding a voice for the unemployed within the union. This struggle in turn provides a basis for organisation within the workplaces - and, where necessary, across sectional union divides - to practically combat the cheap labour ET.

There can be little doubt that when young unemployed workers begin to find themselves dragged into crap ET or YTS 'jobs' with suspect safety standards, no security, no rights and only an extra tenner on their benefit, rank and file leaders will begin to emerge among them. That is the danger for the bosses; in providing themselves with slave labour they begin to equip a potentially volatile section of the working class with the powerful weapon of the experience of collectivity and of organisation. This must and can be tapped into and given a national direction.

We should also look to the lessons of the past, in the shape of the National Unemployed Workers Movement.

Our 'third front' must be the organisation of unemployed workers against their drafting onto the government's schemes and all other attacks on their rights. In some respects, this presents a most daunting task, given that the state has atomised the unemployed, effectively marginalising them as a powerful social force. But with the



•UWC says unemployed and trade unionists must unite ...

scheme. Since it began on September 5, the Department of Employment's Training Agency (replacing the abortive Training Commission) has found it very difficult to force the necessary number of unemployed workers onto this work-for-dole rip off.

It is quite clear from both economic necessity on the part of the bosses and the pronouncements of the government that the sham 'voluntary' nature of ET and YTS are going to be toughened up to make them water-tight compulsory work-for-dole schemes. And this is just one weapon in the state's rapidly accumulating armoury of weapons directed against the unemployed and, indeed, therefore against all workers.

The fact that these schemes are an attack on all workers is backed up by the Training Commission's own figures. The *Employment Gazette* of June 1986, in a survey of employers, reported that "saving in labour costs" was a major factor in taking on YTS 'trainees' among nearly a third of them. The TC itself estimated 17% job substitution (a trainee for a worker on a wage). A later survey by the same body found it to be up to 62% in workplaces with less than 100 workers (*Employment Gazette*, October 1987).

That's the bosses' figures, not ours. And remember that monitoring against this sort of thing will be far less 'stringent' on ET than on YTS - where it obviously has little effect. The same goes for health and safety, with figures for deaths and serious accidents on schemes speaking for themselves.

In the face of this onslaught, where's the fightback from the Labour Party and the TUC? Kinnock begged the TUC conference not to 'turn its back on the unemployed' by boycotting ET and lo and behold, despite the vote against ET at the conference, the



•... together we can smash ET get organised and fight back, no-one else is going to do it for them. This is precisely what the Unemployed Workers Charter is fighting for, a united workers' offensive against ET.

We kicked off the campaign against ET with a lobby of the TUC in September. This was the largest lobby since the miners Great Strike and, unlike Kinnock we were not there to beg the TUC to do anything, but to demand their support to smash ET. We went there without any illusions in the TUC leadership, we were aiming to get in contact with the forces willing to take up the fight against the bosses offensive and in this we were very successful. The politics and practice of the UWC began to become a focal point of resistance to unemployment. This now needs to be strengthened and extended in practice.

The fight must be developed on a number of fronts. Employed workers must organise in their workplaces to resist the introduction of work-for-dole ET 'trainees'. Where the initiative on this has come from rank and file militants, this has already had a measure of success. But this is clearly limited. Where ET 'trainees' are introduced into workplaces, it would clearly be impractical and potentially divisive



•... and build a better world

escalation of the attacks on the unemployed, many will be forced to fight just to survive. We must be there as the focus for this struggle as it emerges. To squander such a chance would be criminal.

Such a struggle demands a national focus, the ability to unite all the disparate struggles on the dole queues and in the workplaces into one. To this end, the UWC along with trade union militants such as the T&G Community Programme Shop Stewards Combine are staging a national day of action against ET on June 15. We say: STRIKE AGAINST ET!

Unemployed workers have been used and abused long enough by this disgusting system. Let's get organised and let's get fighting!



## RESTART

"Leading lambs to the slaughter" is the description given to the Restart interviewing procedure. Who said it? Arthur Scargill? The UWC? No, this comes from a confidential Department of Social Security assessment. About the trick question forms you have to fill in. It admits that the unemployed "do not realise the devastating effect their answers can make to their future". So have they seen the light and decided to scrap these interrogations? Not likely. They are going to change the procedure alright. Benefit claims are going to be handled by new "client advisers", executive officers (mere clerical officers are obviously 'too soft' on unemployed workers). Interviews for new claims will be "enhanced" by making them forty minutes long. This is to "ensure that fewer people drift into long-term unemployment". Instead you get dumped into a slave labour scheme where you have to do a full week's work for an empty week's dole.

## ROYAL CHARLIE

Prince Charles fights for the unemployed! Or so he says. The future Charles III is trying to raise forty million pounds for us! Before you start jumping for joy, let's look at how seriously his own side, the bosses, take him. Their paper, the *Financial Times*, reported the oddball king-to-be's scheme. It could only give just one example of his success in getting the unemployed to become little business people: Kiddiewinks - a professional children's storytelling company! A job for life? Hardly! Just ET plus the royal crest.

## ENOUGH FUDGE

The TUC's 'five principles' are being used as an excuse for dropping the boycott of ET voted through at the September congress. In themselves the 'principles' are not bad: trainees to be paid the rate for the job, participate in ET voluntarily, have full employee status, receive high quality training, and that there should be union approval of the scheme. Yet at its meeting on October 19, the TUC said schemes which "approached" the five principles would be acceptable. It also decided it would be up to individual unions to decide on their policy towards ET schemes. So much for the 'principles' and the TUC's boycott of ET. The fat cats at the head of the TUC have turned their backs on the unemployed and betrayed their own members. Employers love ET. ET 'trainees' can be used to replace full time workers at hardly any cost. Unemployed and employed workers must unite and smash ET. It's in all our interests!

## LOOPHOLE

A London unemployed activist took the Department of Employment to court after his Income Support was cut by 40% when he refused to go on ET. He pointed out that during the 'interview' it was not said exactly what they wanted him to do on this slave labour scheme. Because of this the court ruled the DoE was in the wrong. It had to be specific. As

they were not one man got his benefit restored. The government is bound to see to it that this never happens again. The way to fight ET is not through the courts but smashing it.

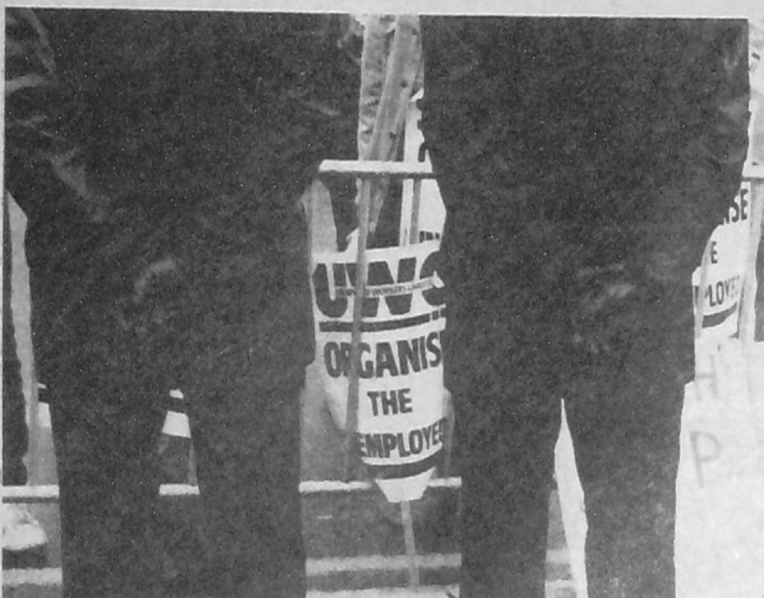
Ford motor company took on 240 'trainees' last year - only one was black.

## POST

At the height of the postal workers strike, in September, the UWC organised a spirited picket of the Post Office Headquarters, in protest at the use of unemployed people as scab labour to try and break the strike. This was welcomed by strikers and much appreciated by militant leaders in the Union of Communications Workers. This sort of active solidarity between employed and

## NEW BRANCHES

During November new UWC branches were set up in Tameside, Manchester and Bradford. If the unemployed are to live like human beings it is vital to spread the UWC to every town and city in Britain. If think you can establish a UWC get in contact with us and we'll give you as much help as we can.



•Now then, now then ...

SEPTEMBER 5, 1988. The day the Tories introduced ET. The opening day of the TUC conference in Bournemouth. The UWC was there in force. The biggest lobby of the TUC since the miners' Great Strike. Another lot were there in force too. Chin straps on. No numbers on their lapels. Ready for action.

Did the UWC lobbyists let themselves be put off by this heavy police presence? Not bloody likely! It only increased our anger and determination to let every delegate hear the message of the unemployed: SMASH ET! NO SLAVE LABOUR!

What are things coming to when the TUC has to be protected from the unemployed by the boys in blue?

An executive member of the GMB union came along to our TUC fringe meeting. He told us his union was for working with ET. They were not going to desert the unemployed. After five minutes of clear argument of why the unemployed wanted nothing to do with ET, he crept out of the meeting.

We don't need these sort of people speaking or doing deals on our behalf.

LETS STAND UP AND TELL THEM WHAT THEY CAN DO WITH ET AND ALL THEIR OTHER SLAVE LABOUR SCHEMES!

## YES MA LADY

The high-society rag *The Tatler* is not generally required reading for UWC activists. But in a recent issue there was a letter from some poor rich sod, who, feeling the pinch, wanted to know if she could get a chambermaid on YTS, and so 'save a fortune [ha!] on wages'. The answer was "yes". This is what Thatcher's "return to Victorian values" means for the unemployed workers: a return to 'Upstairs, Downstairs' - with us as far downstairs as they can get us.

## BLACK

The government's 'training schemes' is slave labour, we all know that. But they are also racist. A recent survey of the schemes in Birmingham, a city where unemployed among black people can reach well over 50%, showed that discrimination against black people was systematic. Black people were only on 42 out of 105 schemes. Where black 'trainees' were taken on, they were few and far between.

NUC places great emphasis on winning the backing of "the labour movement" and "prominent politicians". This sounds ominous for the unemployed. What Coyne means by the "labour movement" is the "official labour movement".

The last Labour government doubled unemployment and frankly the unemployed have had quite enough of "prominent politicians" of the likes of Michael Meacher MP, who graced NUC's launch and gave it his seal of approval. Both he and his leader, Kinnoch, backs unions helping the government get ET off the ground. With this in mind we must be sceptical about organisations set up by full time officials who want us to place our hopes in big name politicians. Clearly the NUC is not a modern version of the National Unemployed Workers Movement which the UWC is determined to build. We will reserve judgement though, and wait and see what it does.

## PETITION

The UWC took a petition with over 10,000 signatures to our TUC lobby. We hoped to be able to present it to congress but were told by the stewards to queue up with the press delegates and others and they'd see what they could do. Disgusted with this treatment of the unemployed, Jack Dash, our Honorary President, wrote a letter of complaint to Norman Willis, General Secretary of the TUC. The reply offered no more respect for unemployed workers, explaining the attitude of the stewards thus; "...their first responsibility must always be to ensure the smooth running of Congress for delegates and the affiliated organisations they represent. Other organisations, which have no standing in relation to Congress business (our italics), must recognise this." Further proof, if it were needed, that we are going to have to build on our own strength to get the TUC or anyone else to sit up and listen to the voice of the unemployed.



## JOIN THE



## UNION!

One of the keys to the unemployed fightback is to get the unemployed into the unions. This brings organisation and the opportunity for a voice for the unemployed in the trade union movement. The best union to join is the Transport and General Workers' Union. If you are unemployed or an ET or YTS 'trainee', join the union! Ring or write to us and we will tell you the best way to join.

## UWCers: Into action!



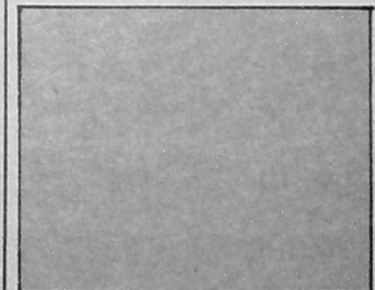
Sandra from London: "Being unemployed makes you lose respect for yourself. That's what I needed to shake off. The UWC is about getting back that respect. It's about getting other people to respect us. We have as much right as anyone else to a decent life. Through the UWC, the unemployed are given a voice at last."



John from Glasgow: "I've spent a lot of my days as a youngster burning up energy on stupid things. Then the daily grind of nothing to do starts to sap you of that energy. Total frustration gives way to apathy and looking for ways to escape. Now I don't want to escape, I'm channelling my energy into fighting those bastards through the UWC"



Reg from Kent: "What's always inspired me is that no matter how hard things get, some people are always willing to stand up and say NO! No, it doesn't have to be like this. It can seem as if the unemployed are on a hiding-to-nothing these days but the UWC is saying no! That's why I'm involved, that's how we then start to say yes!"



YOU from all over Britain: "Am I just going to sit and wait for them to dump me on some ET scheme? Am I at their mercy? They have nothing to offer me. Am I going to let them get away with? Am I hell! I'm going to join the UWC. I'm going to get my mates to join. I'm going to set up a branch of the UWC right here and I'm going to help smash ET and YTS. Yes, me!"



# BLAST FROM THE PAST

Veterans from the 1930's National Unemployed Workers' Movement have been among the first to answer the call of the UWC. We are proud to have Jack Dash, very active in the struggles of the 1930's, as our Honorary President. Jack Cummings is a fighter from the same mould. These comrades know from experience what the unemployed need – a national organisation – and they know from experience that it can be built. There are many rich lessons we can learn from the past in our struggle for our future. That's why *Unemployed Organiser* will feature 'Blasts from the past' in every edition

# JACK CUMMINGS: CLASS FIGHTER



•The 1930s saw massive demonstrations in support of the unemployed

"WE GOT bicycle clamps and fixed them to the main doors. All these bosses were kept hanging around for an hour while the police were called in to remove the clamps. We piled into the banqueting hall where they were to have a big meal after the ET launch. Unfortunately, we couldn't get our hands on the food. There wouldn't have been much left if we had!"

This is what happened at the Manchester launch of ET in the words of a man who was on the 1936 Hunger March. Then he was 14. Today, Jack Cummings is in his mid sixties ... and is a strong a fighter for his class as ever. "That's what the ruling class will never understand", Jack told me when I visited him at his home in Cheetham, Manchester recently,

"with their belief that everyone's out for themselves, they don't understand how so many of us can keep fighting for our class all our lives." And it's some life that Jack has led. After the 1936 Hunger March to London – the biggest of the many organised by the National Unemployed Workers Movement – Jack joined the navy. When he heard the call for workers to go to Spain to fight fascism, he jumped ship and at sixteen, became the youngest British member of the International Brigade!

One thing that rankles with Jack is the way that the many members of the NUWM who fought in Spain have never had their role properly recorded. He is now working on a book to redress this. He reels off dozens and is still trying to track down others.

"When I met Jack Jones recently when he was up for a pensioners rally, he told me to get a move on because this is a book that needs to be written."

"There's been plenty about the poets and intellectuals but it was the working class who made up most of the battalions," he reminded me. "Of course, the middle class lads got there first because they already had passports which weren't as easy for the working class to get hold of then as it is now."

He doesn't have many kind words to say about George Orwell and his reporting on Spain. "I'm thinking of having a pen-name for this book – Eric Blair!" (Orwell's real name).

When unemployment started to rise again in the early 1970's, Jack was there fighting. He was on the Right to Work march to London and his disabled daughter, Alison travelled with the march in the support van. On the last Peoples March For Jobs, the pair of them had their photo on the front page of the *Morning Star*.

Still ever active, he recently helped set up the Union of Unemployed and Training Scheme Workers and put his savings into publicity material. But when he heard about the UWC, he immediately got in touch with us. He knows how vital it is that the unemployed get a national organisation.



•Many brave unemployed workers fought in Spain

"We need to be seen as the best fighters, on our own streets, in our own districts and cities. That way, the class can recognise you as a fighter for their rights and be won to that fight. We need to draw millions with us. The problem nowadays is that all these groups are working on their own. If we unite and fight, no power on earth can stop us." That's a sentiment with which the UWC wholeheartedly agrees with.

# UWC

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS CHARTER

BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Tel: 01-431 3135

The Unemployed Workers Charter says:

- Work at trade union rates or full maintenance for the unemployed at the average level of pay.
- Smash ET and YTS – for real training at trade union rates.
- Stop harassment of the unemployed. Claiming benefit is a right not a crime.
- End all unnecessary overtime work with no loss of pay.
- Unemployed workers groups should have representation on trades councils and the TUC. A national unemployed workers' movement is needed to be the voice of the unemployed.
- ET 'trainees' – Off the dole and into your union! The UWC is organising 'trainees' on these schemes to join the TGWU. This will enable us to build fighting unity between employed and unemployed workers. Write to the UWC and we will put you in touch with your local branch.

## JOIN UP!

The Unemployed Workers Charter is a militant campaigning organisation. It is open to both unemployed and employed workers – united we will build the national unemployed workers' movement that our class needs. We need you, so don't just sit there – join up! Get involved in your local branch. If there isn't one, then set one up. Take bulk copies of *Unemployed Organiser* and spread the word. Get organised!

I would like to become a UWC supporter

I would like to set up a UWC branch

Please send me ... copies of *Unemployed Organiser* (bulk rates for 5 or more copies: 5p each)

Name .....

Address .....

Tel .....