

30p
10p for strikers

Monthly paper of the Leninists of the Communist Party of Great Britain

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May Day Statement

Ever since their humiliation at Sattley Gates by 15,000 secondary pickets in the 1972 miners' strike the capitalist class and their state have been working systematically to ensure that they never suffer such a defeat again. And certainly after the 1974 miners' strike they were determined that in the event of a similar struggle with the miners not only would they be revenged but the entire working class would receive a crushing reverse of strategic proportions.

The election of Thatcher marked the end of the era of cosy 10 Downing Street chats over beer and sandwiches between government ministers and trade union leaders. In place of this 1970's method of defeating the working class came head on confrontation. Steel workers, health workers, carworkers, traindrivers, printworkers, civil servants all fell victim to the Tory onslaught. Despite often heroic resistance from the rank and file the trade union officials showed none of the determination of Thatcher and her singleminded approach of advancing the interests of the class she represents. Wedded to their sectional trade unionism, softened by their bureaucratic privileges, they surrendered their members' wages, conditions, rights, and jobs. The TUC functionaries were no better, in fact they were often worse; far from acting as the general staff of the trade union movement they proved time and time again that they were nothing but a bunch of spineless fat cats, far removed from the lives of ordinary workers, who would rather betray workers' interests than take on an aggressive Tory government.

Although gaining victory over one group of workers after another Thatcher bided her time before taking on the miners. They not only have the victories of 1972 and 1974 under their belts, but despite the ravages of pit closures suffered under Labour governments they are clearly the most powerful section of the organised labour movement, they are its heavy guns.

Because of this the state has prepared carefully for the inevitable clash. Sattley is engraved on the minds of top government officials; in the light of it they scrapped the old Home Office Emergencies Committee and replaced it with the Civil Contingencies Unit, which keeps an updated file on 16 essential industries and services. It assesses their vulnerability to strikes and develops contingency plans to defeat the workers by the use of police force and deploying troops as alternative labour. This reorganisation has been augmented by a host of other measures, above all the anti-trade union laws passed under Prior, Tebbit, and King. To provide the cutting edge for this array of new laws, army units have been specially trained and the police have been radically reequipped with anti-personnel equipment.

Dixon of Dock Green is dead and buried; in his place stands the highly paid, nationally organised and coordinated PC Thug. He is well versed in the use of the truncheon, baton round, and water cannon, always ready to don riot gear, always willing to smash in the skull of any "coon" or "commie trade unionist" who gets in the way of his masters' plans.

To cap the preparations Thatcher appointed Ian MacGregor to head the NCB. As we all know he was chosen not because of his expertise in the technology of mining; he was the ideal candidate because of his record of butchery in the United States, his coldhearted crushing of the steel-

The Miners' Fight



Is A Fight For All Workers

workers in 1980. Here was a class fighter who would not flinch, who could be trusted in an unyielding fight with the miners. With MacGregor coming to the NCB the stage was now set for decisive battle.

What makes them do it?

A defeat for the miners would be a prelude to an all out assault on the rights, pay, and conditions of the entire working class. Such an attack is not the result of Thatcher's psychology, rabidly anti-working class that it is, or some collective insanity suffered by her Cabinet. No, the Tories are quite clear what they are about, they know the demands of the system itself necessitates the assault. They, like Callaghan and Wilson before them, are driven against the interests of the working class under the lash of the iron law of capital accumulation. The iron law of capital accumulation allows no argument, no appeals to reason; attack, attack, bludgeon into submission, it demands, drive down wages, destroy all that is inefficient, all that is not sufficiently profitable.

Already over three million unemployed workers stand witness to the callousness of the system, sacrificed to the god of profit, a deity which is seemingly insatiable. For faced with

an inherent decline in the rate of profit, international competition has increased tremendously. If British capitalists are not to go under, workers' wages must be reduced. In their choice or be eaten world they have no choice. Survival demands they sacrifice the interests of the working class on the altar of profit.

All this was proved by the *Financial Times* of April 6, 1984, when it reported the highly significant fact that the CBI "is telling its member companies to aim for zero increases in unit labour costs during the next ten years and where possible, to seek actual reduction of about 3 per cent," something that was vital, the CBI stated, if British industry was to compete successfully internationally.

To achieve this aim the present rise in wages ahead of productivity must be reversed, an economic end which they look to, the class war politics of the Tory Party to ensure. Thatcher's victories so far are all very well they say, but they are not enough; in order to force down real wages the demoralised and depleted trade unions must not only be blooded but now they must be cowed. Central to this is the battle now unfolding with the miners. The capitalist class reckon that if the miners can be crushed the entire

working class will be unable to resist wage cuts, non trade union measures and speed ups.

Tory ministers have no illusions about the fight with the miners. They do not believe for one moment that this is some straightforward industrial dispute between the NUM and the NCB. Likewise they know that their talk of the police being impartial is nonsense — the police serve them — it is as simple as that.

All workers must join with the miners in a fight against not only the NCB, but the forces behind it which threaten all of us: the capitalist class, their Tory government and their state. We must fight the class war without the blinkers of reformism which tells us the state is neutral — ask the miners' flying pickets about police neutrality; they will tell you what Marxists have always been propagating — the state is an instrument of force, used by one class against another. If we let the miners fight alone, if we content ourselves with pious resolutions in solidarity with them, then not only will the miners fall under the Tory boot but all workers will come to feel its imprint as they mercilessly grind us down.

How we can stop them

Let us meet the Tory attack on the miners with a united workers' front. Let us meet Tory class war with proletarian class war. Let us meet their attempts to crush us with a counter-attack which will reduce the Tory government to dust and destroy both the state machine that supports it and the economic system that feeds it. This is the way to answer the Tories. Meet attack with attack. To do this we must fight for the following demands now:

- Form local miners' support committees on the basis of elected recallable delegates from trade union branches, unemployed workers' groups, trades councils, shop stewards committees, and all working class political and other organisations. Organise speaking tours for militant miners in every town and city. Publish local bulletins explaining the miners' case.

- The militant rank and file membership of the trade unions must begin organising independently of the leadership in order that pledges of solidarity are realised, and so that in the face of Tory threats and the use of courts there is no retreat. Support the officials who are in as much as they fight to fully represent the needs of the working class as a whole.

- Set up Workers' Defence Corps to protect meetings and picket lines. These should be controlled by trades councils or, where this is not possible, by miners' support committees. They should consist above all of unemployed workers and strikers.

- The Coops must provide and send large amounts of free food and provisions to the strikers and their families; this is something that miners' support committees should pay particular attention to in non-mining areas.

- The TUC and Labour Party must be forced off the fence. They must declare their unconditional support for the miners strike and declare unequivocally that their picket lines must be respected. The TUC must be made to call a General Strike against the pit closures and against the Tory anti-trade union laws.

- Halt the movement of all coal. All out for total victory.



THE LENINIST

Our Method and Aim

In the face of the Tory onslaught on the miners what the miners and the entire working class need is firm communist leadership. Unfortunately no such leadership exists. The Eurocommunists only give their 'support' to the miners reluctantly: they are worried about the 'bully boy' tactics of the flying pickets and disturbed about drift into open class war that the miners' strike heralds. The other liquidationist factions in the CPGB are little better; the *Morning Star* and *Straight Left* only seek to tail the official trade union movement. But what our class needs today is not official optimism but a clearheaded communist lead. This is why *The Leninist* exists: we fight to reforge our Party back into the vanguard which played such an outstanding role in 1926 when the working class also faced a strategic confrontation.

To achieve this we have launched a concerted open ideological struggle in our Party in order to defeat all opportunist trends which blemish the name of communism. Some have declared that this struggle is a diversion 'from fighting Thatcher, the main enemy.' This is a mistake. Only by uniting our class around a clear revolutionary perspective, by replacing reformist leaders of our class with revolutionary ones, can our class deliver the death blow to Thatcher and her system. Surely this was the case with Lenin and the Bolsheviks; they triumphed not despite their ideological disputes with the Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, the liquidationists and the Trotskyites, but because of them. Bolshevik ideological struggle was the vital precondition for the ultimate victory in October 1917. We have the same method and the same aim.

The Editor

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CORRESPONDENCE

'The Leninist' BCM Box 928,
London WC1N 3XX

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LETTERS

Congratulations

Dear comrades,
Please accept my congratulations on *The Leninist* becoming a monthly publication.

At the moment I have not got much time, but I shall be writing to you shortly on a number of questions. I was quite impressed with your *The Leninist* No6 especially the, for me, revealing article on Turkey, which clearly formulated comrade Yürükoğlu's original thoughts on the subject of imperialism.

The new newspaper format for *The Leninist* is undoubtedly a step forward, but I hope we will not have to miss the longer theoretical articles from now on.

Please find enclosed a cheque for £10.00 for the next issues and in support of your fight against opportunism and for proletarian internationalism and a reformed Communist Party.

Revolutionary greetings,
John Deen
Sheffield

Marxist Contemplation

Dear Comrades,

Please send me another copy of *The Leninist* No6 and two of No7 — put the change in your kitty.

Since writing to you last summer I have moved slightly towards your full position, I have started reading the *Daily Worker/Morning Star* again after many years; I have also joined the PPPS and allowed myself to even contemplate reapplying for membership of the Communist Party.

But — but — but — I've a long way to go yet and a lot more thinking to do. My main motive for movement is that I realise an isolated, unorganised Marxist is not a Marxist at all.

Fraternally,
Bill Hudson
Sussex

Hackney Chaterites

Dear comrades,

The followers of Tony Chater showed how bankrupt they have become at the recently held Hackney *Morning Star* supporters' meeting.

If the audience was any indication, then the *Morning Star* will probably only have a short existence under Chater. The attendance was around 130, with most aged over 50 and only a sprinkling of young people. Missing too were representatives from the sizeable local black community. If this is the force being mustered to do battle with the Euros then they can sleep soundly.

The speakers, a collection of Party trade unionists and a local MP, managed to avoid the split between the CP and the *Morning Star*. Councillor John Kotz called for a fight against sectarianism (ie the Euros?) and for unity. A majority of the audience, believing this to be an indication of support for Chater's position, applauded. The 'unity' that Kotz wants, along with some in our Party, is the

liquidation of the CP into the Labour Party, a path that Chater may openly embrace in time.

As the meeting proceeded the Chaterites outdid each other in masquerading as social democrats, taking the attitude that any debate or question on the PPPS and the CP were irrelevant.

Leading Chater grouper Don O'Hanrahan shouted at the audience that, "the *Star* is not a debating journal." This position was developed during the 'discussion' period. The well organised Eurocommunist section of the audience rightly wanted open discussion on the present crisis over the *Star*. Unfortunately the organisers of the meeting had other ideas. Mary Davis, chairing the meeting, ruled out of order such discussion, claiming that, "this is a readers' and supporters' meeting." The local CP Borough Secretary was told to sit down by the Chair when she touched on this thorny question. The willingness of the Chater group to prohibit discussion is an indication of the danger of tailing such false gods.

Comrade Mary Davis had the cheek to tell the meeting that she was, "not afraid of open debate," while refusing to allow it to occur. Less knowledgeable comrades would have left the meeting believing that the Euros were principled Marxist-Leninists calling for open debate, while the organisers of the event were revisionists using bureaucratic methods to stop Party discussion.

Comrade Davis may 'offer' open debate, but her hero Chater has not indulged in that luxury yet. The methods of 'debate' that defenders of the *Star* use have become identical to those which the Euros use.

Yours,
A Smart
London

What is 'The Leninist'?

Dear Comrades,

Could you explain how often the journal is published, when it began and who is responsible for its production. I've had conflicting answers to the last question and hope that you can expel the confusion.

Yours fraternally,
Barrie Ashword,
Glasgow

Roger Freeman replies:

The Leninist first came out in November 1981, since then it has been published around every four or five months, but with the April 1984 edition it has appeared monthly. As to "who is responsible for its production" well it is produced by the Leninists of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Some have attempted to brand us as "infiltrators", as "outsiders", but such transparently false stories no longer wash today. Instead they now advise us to read Lenin's '*Left-wing Communism* because of our revolutionary positions-as

if we were ultra-leftists who called for boycotting parliament and reactionary trade unions etc. These comrades call us "ultra-leftists" not because of our "leftism" but because of their own rightism. The Leninists are the proletarian tendency in the CPGB who represent the long term interests of the working class as a whole, who because of the revolting opportunism of the leadership of the CPGB have organised a disciplined communist rebellion in order to reforge our Party and lead the working class in its historic mission of overthrowing monopoly capitalism in Britain.

Lenin and Israel

Dear comrades,
Would you please forward your paper as advertised in the *Morning Star*.

Last year I bought a book called *Lenin on the Jewish Question* at Central Books in Grays Inn Road and I enclose a photostat of what Lenin wrote about Zionism.

It seems to me a Leninist could not possibly be a Zionist, yet I see that Gerry Pocock says the CPGB recognises Israel as a state (don't know if the CPGB rules still describe the Party as Marxist-Leninist).

Has your journal written anything on this subject and I wondered if it agrees with Lenin that Israel should never have been created.

Yours fraternally
W E Webster
Kent

Roger Freeman replies
Answering first questions first. Yes we agree that "a Leninist could not possibly be a Zionist", Zionism is a divisive ideology which from being a response to repression has become in Israel an ideology of oppression. Lenin fought against all sectionalist tendencies in the workers' movement, including that advanced by the Bund, who argued that only they should represent Jewish workers. This was something that could not be tolerated and Lenin and the Bolsheviks successfully won very large numbers of Jewish workers to the Party.

The rules of the CPGB are explicit — we are a party guided by Marxism-Leninism. This is something we, unlike comrade Pocock, take seriously. For us the essence of the Party is Marxism-Leninism, comrade Pocock and his crew must not be allowed to hijack the CPGB, allowed to transform our Communist Party into a petty-bourgeois reformist rump.

Lastly, has our journal written anything on the subject of Israel. No. But this is clearly something that we must rectify in the near future.

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

1. Sowing illusions about trade unionism

While the Euro industrial organiser, Pete Carter, has been strangely silent about the miners' strike apart from a few pious calls to mobilise the 'communities', perhaps because he cannot stomach the 'bully boy' tactics of the flying pickets; the rest of the opportunists have fallen uncritically behind the trade union leadership in general and the NUM in particular.

The problem with this is two fold. Firstly even the best, the most honest trade union leader is limited by the nature of trade union politics which while it seeks to enhance the conditions of the workers cannot present a systematic challenge to the capitalist system itself. Secondly, we must plainly state that most trade union leaders have no intention of challenging the capitalist system, indeed many of them are fully committed to it. During industrial disputes most trade union leaders are quite capable of making militant declarations of 'solidarity' but when it comes to implementing that solidarity many fail to deliver. What is more if a struggle looks like challenging the capitalist state itself most desert the field of battle and run for cover.

It was to overcome the innate limitations of even the most extreme form of militant trade unionism that our Communist Party was established. Its founders fully realised the limits of trade union politics, they knew that for the working class to win liberation required a vanguard party which, using Marxism-Leninism as a guide, could not only point the class in a revolutionary direction but take an active day to day lead. This heritage has been totally abandoned by all the opportunist tendencies in the Communist Party. Because of this, instead of acting as a vanguard for the miners, pointing out to them that their struggle must go to the point of challenging the capitalist state if it is to succeed, they have joined the ranks of the cheerleaders.

This might have some limited effect on the morale of those in the thick of the fight, but this can only be limited, for what the miners need is not flattery but direct aid from the rest of the working class. This is where the vanguard party comes in; it does not content itself with uncritical tailing of the miners leaders. It warns that offers of solidarity are meaningless unless the rank and file have been mobilised. Above all the vanguard party can act as the general staff of the class in the developing class war.

It is because of this perspective that we do not agree with the idea that 'ballots are weapons of the bosses', we do not rejoice with joy every time a trade union leader proclaims his 'solidarity' with the miners, as the *Morning Star* does even when the opposite is the case, as it was with that right wing excuse for a workers' leader, Bill Sirs.

We call upon trade unionists to support their leaders only as long as they fight for the interests of the working class as a whole. At the same time it is vital to begin to organise the militant minority independently of the leadership; this is the way to really ensure solidarity means solidarity from unions such as ASLEF, the T&GWU, the NUR. This is the way to fight the likes of Ray Chadburn in Nottingham, the way to unite the miners. It can also be the key to obtaining solidarity from right wing unions such as the EEPTU, and forcing the TUC off the fence and forcing it to call a General Strike against all pit closures and against the anti-trade union laws.

2. Sowing illusions about nationalised industries

Most reformists project the idea that Britain is somehow 'ours'. Thus on the balance of payments, or the development of North Sea oil, they talk endlessly about 'our' balance of payment and 'our' North Sea oil. This idea applies especially to the national-



Unless a Communist Party is firmly based on the most rigorous scientific world outlook it is destined at best to tail events and at worst to actually hamper a developing struggle. Today our Communist Party is dominated by opportunism; this has led it to utterly fail to give a firm communist lead which today's unfolding struggle demands. What is more it has come out with political positions which if followed by the miners and working class can only make total victory an impossibility. We would point out in particular three cardinal sins that have been committed by our opportunists.

The Miners and the Three Cardinal Sins of Opportunism

James Marshall

ised industries, therefore a state takeover of shipbuilding, or steel, or BL, is proclaimed as a great victory for socialism, which workers ought to defend as if they were islands of socialism in the sea of capitalism.

It is this fallacy which underpins the opportunists' 'solidarity' with the miners. They contend that the miners are defending 'our industrial base' that 'Pit closures will mean disastrous consequences for Britain'. So in the place of class solidarity they place 'national interest' and appeals to patriotism.

For us the idea that because the coal industry has been nationalised it is somehow 'ours' is a dangerous illusion which can be positively lethal since it ties the interests of the workers to the interests of state monopoly capitalism — for that is what the coal industry and other nationalised areas of the

with the interests of 'our' industry. Such a position has in it the seeds of defeat. For whether we like it or not capitalism is entering a period of crisis and intensified international competition; this demands amongst other things that costs are cut drastically. It is this fact of capitalist life which demands the 'pruning' of the steel, car, and shipbuilding industries down to the bone, as it demands massive closures today in the coal industry. We can never win if we try to reconcile the interests of the working class with the interests of a capitalist system which is increasingly in crisis. In the face of arguments about profitability and efficiency we raise the slogan: Begin with what the working class needs, not what capitalism can afford.

3. Sowing illusions about the state

Few miners who have acted as flying pickets will have any illusions about the police. They know that they are vicious, determined, and well drilled opponents, who far from being neutral act fully in the interests of MacGregor and the Tory government.

And yet in the light of the experience of the miners' strike, the NGA dispute with Eddie Shah, and the Summer '81 riots, all the Eurocommunists can do is moan and groan, declare that the police are not being fair and that they ought to listen to the dire warnings about Britain drifting into becoming a 'police state'. So in the midst of the miners' strike (shortly after it was announced that the police had already arrested a total of 1,000 pickets) we have the Eurocommunist 'expert' on the police, Brenda Kirsch, writing with seeming naivety in the *Morning Star* in April, that we "should be discussing what type of policing we want" (April 14, 1984).

Well comrade Kirsch we would say to you that the 1,000 arrested pickets, all those miners who have been prevented from moving into other areas because of police road blocks, indeed we would guess all militant miners who have struggled against the massed ranks of the thugs in blue, would agree with us when we say that it is not the type of policing we should be discussing: that is a diversion. What we should be discussing and organising is how to combat the police as they are. Anything else can only weaken the miners' fight. So in the place of Eurocommunist calls for the miners and the working class to discuss community policing we pose the need for Workers' Defence Corps to protect picket lines, meetings, and demonstrations.

But it is not in just the case of the police that the opportunists sow illusions about the state, they do the same for the courts. It is not that they actually support what they do. It is more that they claim that with sweet reason, a petition or two, and even a protest demonstration, the nature of the beast can be fundamentally altered. Thus when the High Court refused an application from two Kent miners to prevent the police turning miners back at the Dartford Tunnel, the Euros cried unjust, unjust, but offered not the slightest practical measure to overcome police coercion in the here and now.

This approach by the Euros is of course based on their perspective of building socialism in Britain on the basis of reforming the state, the police, the army, and the courts, through the use of parliament. We have always said that such a programme is utterly utopian but more important than that that such a perspective actually diverts and disarms the working class and the Communist Party in the face of the real class struggle. In place of castles in the sky reformism we pose practical revolutionary measures proved in the class war, proved in their practical success. Thus we say that the police, the army, the courts, parliament itself, are components of our enemy's state machine, which it is our task to shatter, in order to replace with organs of a workers' state based on workers' councils, protected by a workers' militia.

economy are. Unless the workers fully realise this they can find themselves sacrificed on the altar of capitalist production and the needs of profit.

The coal industry, like the railways, steel, the post office, British Leyland, and a host of other areas of economic life, must be seen as the collective property of the capitalist class not the British people, let alone the working class. Nationalised industries in general provide cheap raw materials and services to private industry. They are a method with which the capitalist class keep down their individual and their collective costs in order to boost their rates of profit.

Nationalised industries can have certain advantages for workers, but these should in no way be exaggerated, and certainly not elevated to the level where workers are called upon to consider their interests compatible

Open rebellion against Eurocommunism is spreading throughout the CPGB. Already it seems a majority of activists stand opposed to the Euros, something clearly indicated by the humiliating defeat they suffered at last year's PPPS AGM.

Hot Up The Rebellion In The CPGB

Roger Freeman

The revolt has seen the emergence of a host of oppositional publications. These cover a spectrum ranging from the insipid rightism of the grey *Morning Star*, to the pro-Chater/Costello centrist, 'arty' *Artery*, through to the equally centrist so-called 'broad labour movement' *Straight Left* and its 38th Congress alter ego *Congress Truth*, to the extreme left and fiery red Marxism-Leninism of *The Leninist* itself.

The leadership alliance of right opportunists and Euros has hit back against the growing rebellion by launching a two-pronged strategy. One prong is the long term campaign to capture the *Morning Star*; the other is the setting in motion of the heavy bureaucratic disciplinary machine in an effort to crush the Straight Leftists. Four comrades have already been expelled: Charlie Woods for his insistence that he alone was responsible for the widely circulated pamphlet *The Crisis In Our Communist Party*; and Bruce Allen, Barbara O'Hare, and Brian Topping for their part in the drawing up of the Alternative List at the 38th Congress.

Other Straight Leftist comrades who refused to bow before the puffed up, assertive arrogance of disciplinary Eurocommunism have also had a taste of what they foolishly still refer to as 'democratic centralism'. The Newcastle Branch Committee has been effectively put on ice, and in Oxford six members of the Branch Committee have been suspended from office by that foul Euro Tony McNally and his unsavoury crew on the Midlands District Committee. The Straight Leftist influenced publication of the Party's teachers' advisory, *Education Today and Tomorrow*, has also found itself butchered on the altar of 'Party discipline' and Eurocommunist 'orthodoxy', while its secretary, comrade Pat Turnbull, has been ignominiously sacked and now faces expulsion.

This is, as we all know, only the beginning. The leadership have moved to extend their 'investigation' of *Congress Truth* from those who were caught redhanded in possession of it at the Congress. They now promise to include not only those 'behind' its production but all those who refused to disassociate themselves from the Straight Leftist inspired Alternative List — our information suggests that up to fifty comrades are being 'investigated.' But whatever the total, this month's EC meeting will see only the first phase of a purge which the Euros are determined will only end when the CPGB has become a 'pure' Eurocommunist party. While the Straight Leftists are the first target in this 'purification' process, it is only a matter of time before the Euros turn their disciplinary attentions to *The Leninist*, *Artery*, and the *Morning Star*; in fact all non-Euro members of the Party can eventually expect to face the Euro inquisition.

The leadership are of course playing a careful tactical game. Embarrassing and impatient calls from the likes of comrade John Cox for the launch of a 'Party' paper in opposition to the rebellious *Morning Star* have been firmly put down. Comrade McLennan,

that arch manoeuvrer, rightly fears that such an initiative would be dangerously premature. For it would create a total and unmanageable schism in the Party which could produce results similar to Spain. It is to avoid this scenario that comrade McLennan and the leadership have decided, at least in the short term, not to use disciplinary threats against the *Morning Star* comrades. It is not that they consider comrade Chater any less guilty of indiscipline than the Straight Leftists. For if we are to believe the EC, comrade Chater circulates 30,000 copies daily of a factional publication, where the Straight Leftists only produced a duplicated sheet over the four days of Congress. At least in formal terms, who has committed the greatest breach of 'Party rules', who is the greatest rebel?

While the Straight Leftists are orientated on their liquidationist path to Labourism, and comrade Chater, with equal liquidationism, declares that the CPGB is an 'outside body'; while they stubbornly retain these positions they can be easily branded as anti-Party. Thus when the EC delegation visited the CPSU over April 22-26, McLennan could argue that whatever the differences between the leaderships of the two parties, Soviet support for the opposition could be nothing but support for liquidationism. McLennan calculates that the CPSU comrades could play an important role in persuading certain forces to drop their more overt liquidationism, or end their blockheaded sectarianism. It is to prevent such a development that has led McLennan to visit Moscow twice this year and was why he opposed the inclusion of the potential clanger-dropper, that unobtrusive rightwinger John Cox, on the EC delegation.

Comrade McLennan must have had countless sleepless nights worrying about the massive growth of opposition to him and the leadership; the fact that it accounted for about 40% of delegates at the 38th Congress, and the fact that the *Morning Star* can now be considered to have joined the ranks of the unofficial Party publications. Despite this he can only be greatly relieved and encouraged that not only do comrade Chater and the Straight Leftists leave themselves open to the charge of anti-Partyism, but so far the expulsions of the Straight Leftists and the struggle to control the *Morning Star* have been kept as separate questions in the eyes of most Party activists. So although St John St has been inundated by protest letters, those supporting comrade Chater and the PPPS management committee do not oppose the purge of the Straight Leftist comrades.

Thus the joint letter to McLennan from a number of prominent Party trade unionists — comrades Rubner, Guy, Gill, Dunn, Jerome, and Field — calling upon him to exert his influence to 'persuade' the EC to overturn its resolution against comrades Chater and Whitfield failed to oppose the expulsions.

We say that the two issues are one. Both the expulsions of the Straight Leftists and the campaign to capture the *Morning Star* are the products of a concerted effort by the Euros to make our CPGB a 'pure' Eurocommunist party. It is to forget the most elementary

trade union motto that 'unity is strength' to allow McLennan to continue to divide and rule. Only hopeless idiots, incorrigible bureaucrats, and shortsighted opportunists can argue that one rebellion is justified, is legitimate, while the other is a 'violation of democratic centralism'; for both are rebellions against Eurocommunism: that is their essence.

So despite our profound differences with Straight Leftism and the pro-Chater/Costello position, we make the call to unitedly flood the EC with resolutions and letters demanding: EURO HANDS OFF THE MORNING STAR! REINSTATE THOSE EXPELLED! END ALL FACTIONAL EXPULSIONS!

We say that all the opposition must: REFUSE TO RECOGNISE THE EXPULSION OR BARRING OF GENUINE COMMUNISTS FROM THE PARTY!

It is a sad but vivid indication of the low level of understanding about today's battle in the Party, that many comrades have written to the *Morning Star* and the EC calling for the EC to reexamine its position on comrades Chater and Whitfield while innocently welcoming the EC's campaign in 'support' of the *Morning Star's* sales and shares drive. It is naivety in the extreme to imagine that the EC is fighting for new shareholders for any other reason than to capture it for Eurocommunism. Others have in similar vein called for the EC to cease being 'provocative'; instead, they say it should work for 'dialogue' and 'understanding'. Most of these comrades are transparently honest; they find the present division between the *Morning Star* and the EC inexplicable. They see only the years of sacrifice and unsung heroic work they have put into building both the paper and Party being destroyed before their very eyes. The fact that such comrades react instinctively by pleading for peace is as understandable as it is wrong. For what is unfolding today is no mere factional flash in the pan personality clash, but a life and death struggle for the soul of the Party itself: at stake is the very existence of the Party and the *Morning Star* as a communist paper.

This struggle will not allow peace let alone unity with the Euros; there must be no concessions to the Eurocommunist holy trinity of anti-Sovietism, class collaborationism, and petty bourgeois radicalism. We must win our honest Party activists to the understanding that whatever the eventual outcome of today's struggle, *our Party will never be the same again.*

It is because of this that we must look beyond those protagonists who at the moment seem to stand at the head of the battle. The potential pro-Party forces — who are a clear majority of Party activists — must be given confidence in their own strength, must be broken from their centrist tailing of that personification of a dull bureaucrat, comrade Chater. For once these comrades stand on their own feet, once they are organised into a solid tendency in the Party the likes of comrade Chater can be seen for what they are: opportunists and inflated political lightweight who must either

break from their present liquidationist path or be sent packing.

Here it is worth commenting on the position of the Straight Leftists. They have dropped their intransigent hostility to comrade Chater and Co. They now defend him, offer praise for the "important improvements" in the *Morning Star*, and declare that in contrast to last year they will now stand shoulder to shoulder with him at this June's PPPS AGM against the Euros. To win this support comrade Chater has not had to offer some sort of deal. The truth is that the first whiff of expulsion threats sent the Straight Leftist leaders into a panic stricken retreat in which the platform outlined in the "Charlie Woods" pamphlet was abandoned like so much camp baggage. In order to ensure that the likes of the Straight Leftists have some justification for their scramble to the right comrade Chater commissioned a series of rather pedestrian articles full of official optimism on Poland and trade unions in the Soviet Union respectively by comrades Whitfield and Costello. The Straight Leftist rank and file has followed their leadership's sudden aboutface loyally, but with little enthusiasm; they had been after all only a short time ago saving their fiercest attacks, their most virulent insults, not for the Euros but for their leadership's new found champions of "pro-Sovietism" and "anti-revisionism". We can only hope that such patent political opportunism, such obvious lack of principle, will be fully and quickly exposed in the minds of the Straight Leftist rank and file. We can confidently predict that it will if rumours about a new publication being prepared by the Straight Leftist leaders for after the May expulsions prove correct.

But it is not only the Straight Leftists who while privately damning comrade Chater as a "shit", or some other unpleasant, excuse, for the narrowest of political considerations, his approval of the use of bourgeois courts to settle differences between communists, and who defend his refusal to enter into an open and honest communist debate on the differences in the Party by opening up the *Morning Star*. For all the main centrist leaders are now following comrade Chater's unsightly, unsound, and uncommunist course. These centrist leaders are not only playing with liquidationist fire but are themselves becoming infected with all the political diseases carried by comrade Chater; this is something which pro-Party communists must certainly never forget and surely will never forgive. Our rebellion will see the desertion of many a fainthearted centrist, many a loud mouthed empty headed phrasemonger. But by sorting out the revolutionary wheat from the pseudo-communist chaff, our rebellion will be immensely strengthened and the struggle to reforge our Communist Party greatly advanced. What is required today is not excuses for comrade Chater's liquidationism, or calls for an ending to controversy and inner-Party struggle. We must not call for peace in the Party; on the contrary we must hot up our rebellion against Eurocommunism.

THE LENINIST

Theoretical Supplement

WORKERS' MILITIAS

Richard Hardy

"This Congress... calls for policing to be brought under democratic control and be at the service of the community." (Law, Order and Policing' Resolution, CPGB 38th Congress, November 1983.)

"...drag our police force into its rightful place in this latter part of the 20th century. Only then will we be able to enjoy the benefits of a police force performing a service for the public and working in a fully democratic and accountable way." (Morning Star, editorial, December 28, 1983.)

Glib phrases concerning police 'accountability' and 'democratic' control fall richly from the mouths of our Party's opportunists these days. Such phraseology as in the above betrays not the slightest glimmer of recognition that the police are an arm of the British imperialist state. Although we are treated to tantrums of displeasure if 'too much' policing is evident, the remedy involves, according to Euro 'thruster' Dave Cook, "... far fewer pandas prowling and far more home beat policing." (*Black and Blue* CPGB 1981 p.28) The problem such petty bourgeois radicals face is that police action against the inner city riots and in industrial disputes is getting in the way of reformist illusions about the state which they wish to foster. Labour politicians can no longer satisfactorily explain away the police presence and its anti-working class actions; then along come the Euros and Chater-Costelloites tut-tutting about 'uncontrolled' and 'unaccountable' police in their obfuscating way. Not to be outdone in the scramble for the good graces of the bourgeoisie, the Straight Leftists trail behind like the obedient Labour bureaucracy spaniels they are, and have one of their activists propose a resolution at last London District Party Congress which 'demands' (of the bourgeoisie!) "...a police force... accountable to a democratically elected police authority."

The law and order terror which grips all three liquidationist trends in our Party — those around *Marxism Today*, *Morning Star*, and *Straight Left* — is their fear of illegality, their fear of revolution, and their fear of preparations essential to revolution. To cover these fears and hide them from the

working class they pray that the bourgeoisie will 'democratise' one of its main means of oppression, the police. They thus line up with reformism and disable the day to day struggle, let alone the preparations for revolution which Leninists demand.

Mass Picketing

The impotence of Eurocommunism, the Chater-Costelloites, and *Straight Left* has been laid bare during the industrial struggles of the last decade. Ever since the success of Saltley Gates in 1972, paeans of praise have been heaped upon the tactic of mass picketing that was used there. The name 'Saltley Gates' has been given a mantra-like quality: repeat it often enough and all our troubles are over. The trouble is, 'our' ruling class is not playing ball. The way they see it, although they were unprepared and up a creek without a paddle (or baton round) in 1972, today it is a different story. The experience of Grunwicks, but more recently Warrington and the miners' dispute, show that the old British imperialist dog can be taught new tricks. It has clearly learnt a lot, while our Party sat stagnant, lacking in understanding and ideology.

What British imperialism has learnt comes from several close sources. Firstly, Ireland and the national liberation struggle there has given practical experience in dealing with an intensely recalcitrant population. Secondly, the riots in British cities in 1980 and 1981 jolted the bourgeoisie into further kitting up its 'mainland' police training accordingly. Finally,

the working class movement has not fully cottoned on to the limitations of mass picketing as at present carried on: and here our Party's failure must be pointed out. To see that mass picketing has limitations, which it has reached, and which were reached some time ago in truth, is but the first stage in developing our class's tactics to match those of the class enemy.

If, as we say, there is indeed a limit to the tactic of mass picketing, and Warrington and the miners' dispute show that there is, then what do we do next? Are we, as is implicit in all that the Euros say, helpless against the bourgeois state? Of course we are not. The working class movement does have the power to help itself, defend itself, and prepare for revolution if it is led by a Leninist Party, which by definition knows the enemy: the bourgeoisie. Knowing the enemy means you can destroy it, and that is what we are about. We know that different arms of the state are integral to it: to pretend otherwise is to disable our class and give succour to the bourgeoisie.

Simply knowing the enemy is not enough however. Defeating the bourgeoisie is not a thing of the moment or of words alone. If we examine what our tactics are against one arm of the state — the police — on the basis of what they are now and what they must become, then we can climb out of the slough of despond. Mass picketing, undefended, is not adequate; since we are Leninists we do not appeal to the bourgeois state, nor invite the class to do so: we go on the offensive. Put the police and armed forces on their guard, so that when they come to try to deal with a working class demonstration or picket they will have to take what they would like to hand out. See then the wavering, the effectiveness of propaganda directed at members of the police and armed forces. That is the way to see our class advance — unafraid, challenging capital, knowing its growing strength. In short, our conclusion must be that *we must defend ourselves*.

Organised workers' defence is nothing new. It is just that its legacy in Britain as in much of the world communist movement has been deliberately forgotten. But let us now get down to what workers' defence has meant and will mean for the advancement of the working class worldwide

and in preparation for communist revolution.

Russia

It was a precept even of the Second International — which committed harikari at the altar of "defence of one's 'own' bourgeoisie" in 1914 — that a "people's militia" was a necessity in all countries of the world. Russia's workers in particular were called upon to hold this dear and to advance the concept to organised workers' defence during and subsequent to the 1905 revolution. Numerous writings by Lenin underline what was the assumption at the time internationally: that workers must defend themselves, by means of arms when necessary, and in an organised fashion. He drew universal conclusions from that early Russian experience when he wrote in February 1905:

"...To arm the people with a sense of the burning necessity to arm is the constant, common duty of the Social-Democrats always and everywhere, and it can be applied equally to Japan as it can to England, to Germany as it can to Italy. Wherever there are oppressed classes struggling against exploitation, the doctrine of the socialist, from the very start, and in the first place, arms them with a sense of the burning necessity to arm, and this "necessity" is present when the labour movement begins. Social-Democracy has only to make this burning necessity a conscious one, to bring home to those who are conscious of it the need for organisation and planned action, the need for considering the whole political situation." (Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol 9, p.432, 'The First Victory of the Revolution' in *Proletary* November 7, 1905). Thus Lenin's view was that workers' militias were of prime importance from the beginning of the labour movement. (Let us note here that the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs took place all of 150 years ago.)

The defeat of the 1905 Revolution in Russia and the resulting reactionary period removed many possibilities for working class organisation. Subsequently, however, following the Bolsheviks' stand against the First

Imperialist World War — in line with the declarations of the Second International — and on the crest of the rising revolutionary situation, the question of workers' militias was brought to the fore. It was part and parcel of the Bolsheviks' declared aim of converting imperialist war into civil war.

Once the March 1917 Revolution had overthrown Tsarism the Bolshevik intention was, "... to create a real class and revolutionary force, a proletarian militia that will enjoy the confidence of all the poor strata of the population, and they constitute the vast majority, and will help them to organise, help them to fight for bread, peace, freedom." (Lenin CW, Vol.23, p.321, 'Letters From Afar, 3rd Letter: Concerning a Proletarian Militia', March 24, 1917.)

The primary importance of organising a militia to oppose the Kerensky bourgeois regime, which planned to rebuild the police force, was trumpeted by the Bolsheviks: "What kind of militia do we need, the proletariat, all the toiling people? A genuine people's militia, ie one that, first, consists of the entire population, of all adult citizens of both sexes; and, second, one that combines the functions of a people's army with police functions, with the functions of the chief and fundamental organ of public order and public administration." (*Ibid* pp327-328). It is evident from this, and which was borne out in the event, that the militia at this stage of revolutionary struggle forms the basis of new state forms, ie the basis of the workers' state.

In fact, during the February Revolution in 1917 70,000 small arms were appropriated by militias. "Throughout the factories of Petrograd, workers were elected or volunteered to serve in these militias in order to maintain law and order in the locality, protect life and property and register inhabitants. The factory committees established militia commissions and appointed commissars to oversee the militiamen. The latter did not leave their jobs permanently to serve in the local workers' militia, but served according to a rota drawn up by the factory militia commission." (SA Smith *Red Petrograd* Cambridge 1983 pp98-99.)

Attempts were made, and repulsed where the working class was strongest, to absorb the workers' militias into the bourgeois civil militias. The duality of power existing at this time was expressed vividly by the end of March 1917 in that, "... some 10,000 militiamen, out of a total of 20,000, were organised into specifically workers' militias." (*Ibid* p99.) And at the May 27 conference of Petrograd workers' militias, the 'integration' of all militias into one civil bourgeois militia was roundly denounced as an attempt, "... to impose on the populace 'a police force of the Western-European type which is hated throughout the world by the majority of the people, the poorer classes.'" (*Ibid* p100.) (Are calls from Euros and Chater-Costelloites for 'community policing' and 'democratising the police' more in line with the Bolsheviks or Kerensky?) The same conference that May went on to agree a Bolshevik proposal to reorganise the workers' militia as a transitional stage toward arming all Petrograd's people.

In addition to these more widely organised militias, whose effectiveness in the changing revolutionary situation was lessening, the Bolsheviks organised small groups of Red Guards. How correct this was can be seen from the reaction of lickspittles of the bourgeoisie: "The Mensheviks blamed it on agitation by 'Leninists' and said that the attempt to create Red Guards revealed a deplorable lack of confidence in the army." (*Ibid* p101.) Truly an epitaph for opportunists everywhere at all times.

The Red Guards went on to play a central role in the October Russian Revolution and the subsequent Civil War. In a decree of November 10, 1917

signed by Rykov, People's Commissar of the Interior, their primacy was underscored:

"1. All Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies shall form a Workers' Militia.

2. This Workers' Militia shall be entirely at the orders of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

3. Military and Civil authorities must render every assistance in arming the workers and in supplying them with technical equipment..."

This decree encouraged the formation of companies of Red Guards all over Russia, which became the most valuable arm of the Soviet Government in the ensuing civil war." (John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook The World*, London 1961 p293.) In the Bolshevik Revolution it was the Red Guards nurtured by the Bolsheviks who were decisive in carrying through the revolution, for, "... Military resistance cannot be broken except by military means, and the Red Guards fought in the noble and supreme historical cause of liberating the working and exploited people from the yoke of the exploiters." (Lenin, CW, Vol 27 p247, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*.)

Comintern

The experience of the Russian Revolution and the preparations for it are of inestimable importance for communists everywhere. Drawing lessons from the collapse of the Second International and the success of revolution led by Bolsheviks, the Third (Communist) International — the Comintern — early laid down ground plans for the organisation and development of Communist Parties around the world, as befitted a real body of the world's working class. One key element of working class organisation, alongside that of trade unions and complementing them, were workers' militias. They were seen as the basis to effectively countering the anti-working class direct action of the bourgeois state's forces by the direct action of the forces of the proletariat.

At the Third Congress of the Comintern two seminal decisions of particular importance were made. Firstly, under its *Programme of Action* contained in the July 12, 1921 resolution 'The Struggle Against the Amsterdam (scab) Trade-Union International', the clear direction of Comintern is given:

"12. The struggle of the workers' organizations against the individual employer or groups of employers should, while adapting itself to national and local conditions, also draw on all the experience acquired in previous struggles for working class emancipation. Every important strike, for example, needs to be thoroughly prepared. Furthermore, from the outset the workers must form special groups to fight the strike-breakers and combat the provocative action of the various kinds of right wing organization which are encouraged by the bourgeois governments. The Fascists in Italy, the German technical emergency relief, the civilian organizations in France and Britain whose membership is composed of former officers and NCO's — all these organizations have as their object the destruction and suppression of all working class activity, not only by providing scab labour, but by smashing the working class organizations and getting rid of their leaders. In such situations the organization of special strike militias and special self-defence groups is a matter of life and death.

"13. These defence organizations should not only resist the factory owners and the strikebreaking organizations — they should take the initiative in stopping the

dispatch of goods to and from the factory where the strike is in progress. The transport workers' union should play a particularly prominent role in such activity: it is its responsibility to hold up goods in transit, which can only be done, however, with the full support of all the workers in the area." (*Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*, London 1983 p272.)

And even more specifically, in the resolution 'On Tactics' agreed by the Congress on the same day, the Comintern showed its awareness that,

"Over the last year the capitalist offensive has become increasingly bold. One can observe that the bourgeoisie is no longer satisfied with the usual state institutions and in every country has created under its protection various legal and semi-legal White Guard organizations which have been playing an important role in all the major economic confrontations..."

"When the Lloyd George government in England was faced with the threat of a strike, it called for volunteers prepared to defend property and 'the right to work' by scabbing on the strikers and destroying their organizations..."

"Not only must Communists be at the forefront and explain fundamental revolutionary tasks to those participating in the struggle, but they must also work with the most dedicated and active elements of the industrial work force, create proletarian military organizations and workers' defence groups, oppose the fascists and prevent the *jeunesse dorée* of the bourgeoisie slandering and attacking strikers.

"The Communist Party, and particularly its trade union cells, must devote special attention to the extremely important question of counterrevolutionary organizations. A good intelligence and communication network must be organized which can keep a constant watch on the military organizations and forces of the White Guards, their headquarters and arms depots. It must check on the links between the White Guard headquarters and the police, the press, and the political parties, and must have detailed contingency plans ready for defence and counterattack.

"The Communist Party must work through words and actions to convince the widest sections of the proletariat that, given the right combination of circumstances, every economic and political conflict can develop into a civil war which raises the question of the seizure of state power." (*Ibid*, pp292-293.)

Ireland

There are examples of workers' militias being formed under the influence and example of Comintern which we shall come to. As an important illustration of what has occurred *without* the leadership of a Communist Party when a workers' militia has attempted seizure of state power, the Irish Citizen Army of James Connolly deserves special mention.

On the basis of need during adversity was the defence formation now well known created in Ireland: the Citizen Army. James Connolly, active in the working class movement of Belfast and Dublin, founded the Citizen Army in 1913 to afford much needed protection to strikers during the Dublin transport and newspaper strike. Following the start of mass picketing the authorities armed scabs who were protected by the police. It was at this juncture that the *Daily Herald* (then a TUC paper) demanded: 'Arm The Workers'.

Already in 1911 during unionisation struggles in the Wexford Quays iron

foundries the employers had imposed a lockout which the workers answered with fresh wage demands and a resumption of their strike. After the police had been reinforced and a worker was killed in a baton charge, an immediate response was found in the foundation of "the 'Workers' Police', the first proletarian defence force recorded in Ireland." (C. Desmond Greaves *The Life and Times of James Connolly* London 1972 p274.) So the formation of a workers' militia in Dublin in 1913 was not such a great novelty.

When the 1913 Dublin strike was little more than two months old and the dispute was escalating through solidarity blacking at English and Welsh ports, Connolly declared that, "We propose to carry the war into every section of the enemy's camp" (*Ibid* p326) and putting this into more concrete terms he suggested that, "The next time we are out for a march I want to be accompanied by four battalions of trained men with their corporals and sergeants..." He asked every man willing to join the 'Labour Army' to give in his name when he drew his strike pay at the end of the week." (*Ibid* pp326-327.)

This 'labour defence force' was consolidated towards the end of November 1913. "The Citizen Army drilled with hurley-sticks and wooden shafts at Croydon Park. For practical purposes the shafts were sometimes 'shoed' with a cylinder of metal. A favourable reaction was immediately noticeable among the police." (*Ibid* p329.) The Citizen Army was always a stalwart of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union, and was able to use its Liberty Hall as a base — indeed its duties were to include protection of Liberty Hall.

Writing in *Workers' Republic* of October 30, 1915, Connolly summed up the experience of the Citizen Army in its two years of life. "Its influence and presence has kept the peace at all labour meetings since its foundation, and the knowledge of its existence and of the spirit of its members has contributed to prevent the employers and the government from proceeding to extremes against the fighting unions... An armed organisation of the Irish working class is a phenomenon in Ireland... Now, with arms in their hands, they propose to steer their own course, to carve their own future." (James Connolly *Labour and Easter Week* Dublin 1916 p91.)

The weakness of the Citizen Army due to its lack of a directing Leninist Party was shown in its action, during the 1916 Easter Rising. Once he realised that they would form part of an insurrectionary force, Eoin MacNeill called off his Irish National Volunteers' manoeuvres due on Easter Sunday 1916. On the Easter Monday, therefore, it was but a few of these Volunteers who joined the much smaller Citizen Army in the armed takeover of Dublin's GPO building. This latter was turned into a fortress and battle for the Republic of Ireland was joined. From a force of 750 of which 200 were from the Citizen Army at the beginning of Easter Week, the revolutionaries grew to around 2000 men at its peak. 70 women took part, mostly as auxiliaries and some joined in the shooting. Insufficient numbers, however, meant that the tactic of enclosing Dublin Castle (British forces' HQ) could not be carried through. "Lack of numbers, and confusion, caused the two major faults of execution — the failure to immobilise the telephone exchange, and the failure to capture Dublin Castle by a surprise rush at the outset. Misjudgement — a belief that the authorities would shrink from using artillery in a crowded city — had caused the headquarters to be fixed in the GPO, where they were exposed to shellfire from a gunboat on the Liffey." (TA Jackson *Ireland Her Own* London 1971 p397.)

The heroic and courageous action of

Connolly and the men and women of the Citizen Army and the rest of the Easter Week insurgents should not blind us to the limitations which the militia exhibited. Neither, on the other hand, does its eventual failure invalidate its essential actions as a defence force. The question mark remains however over the role of the 'insurrectionist' Irish Republican Brotherhood which exercised an inordinate influence in the decision to proceed without the bulk of the Irish National Volunteers. The vital element lacking was a Communist Party to organise and lead the struggle.

Britain

There has not been a greater threat to British imperialism within the British Isles since Connolly's Citizen Army. The founders of the Communist Party of Great Britain were very aware of Connolly's contribution and sacrifice. Tom Bell, who in 1916 was a leader of the syndicalist Socialist Labour Party, knew Connolly personally. (Bell later became Political Secretary of the CPGB, Editor of the Party's *Communist Review*, and was an Executive member of Comintern in 1921.) He considered that, "It was an historic misfortune that there was no organized direct connection between the advanced section of the shop stewards' movement and the working class Citizens' Army led by Connolly." (Tom Bell *The British Communist Party* London 1937 p32.) There was no doubt in his mind that, "The Easter Rising in Dublin (1916) played an important part in moulding the future of the revolutionary movement in Great Britain." (Ibid p34.)

Certainly the Irish experience was a recent, near example borne in mind by both Irish and British communists in the early years of the Comintern. Faced with the implacable opposition of British imperialism in the 1920's the infant CPGB found no difficulty in accepting the tenets of the Comintern relating to workers' militias. It was not until the class conflict which burst out in the General Strike of 1926, however, that there was occasion to fully consider their implementation.

In preparation for its attack on the miners, in 1925 the British government gave official support to the strikebreaking Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies (OMS). "Blackleg 'shock troops' were given technical training. An entire dictatorial apparatus, placing all power in the hands of ten ministerial commissioners, was erected.... no counter-preparations at all were undertaken on the trade union side." (Allen Hutt *British Trade Unionism* London 1941 p105.)

The CPGB was not idle, however. It formulated demands which the working class movement should implement if in the coming sharp struggle of the miners the workers were to meet with success. The danger that the Party represented at this time to the bourgeoisie was illustrated starkly by the imprisonment of twelve leading Communists in October 1925. A few months later the extended meeting of the acting Executive Committee of the Party issued a Statement which was printed in the *Workers' Weekly* of January 15, 1926, prominence was given to:

"Organisation of Workers' Defence Corps, composed of Trade Unionists and controlled by Trades Councils, to protect Trade Union liberties against the Fascisti, and calling upon the General Council to take steps to place the workers' case before the workers in the Army, Navy and Air Forces."

(Reprinted in James Klugmann *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, Vol 2 London 1969 p201.) Resolutions were no mere trifles in those days: immediately the Party's acting Executive began to put this and its other proposals before a succession of Party District Committees and

Conferences in order that they might best decide how to implement them within the working class movement.

One very important means of implementing these decisions was through the Party's influence at the Special Conference of Action called by the National Minority Movement (NMM) on March 21, 1926. The Party's standing was high in the NMM (imprisoned Party EC member Pollitt was NMM Secretary) and its influence was visible in the resolution agreed on 'Defence and Maintenance of Trade Union Rights'. Under this resolution the NMM Conference put forward five main lines of action, of which the second was:

"To form (through and under the supervision of the Trades Councils) Workers' Defence Corps, in order to protect working class speakers from bourgeois terrorism, to protect trade union headquarters from Fascist incendiaryism, to defend strike pickets against police interference, and, finally, build up a powerful working class force, capable of defending the political and industrial rights and liberties of the workers." (Ibid p103.) In its Appeal sent out May 2, 1926 the NMM gave prominence to the call for formation of Workers' Defence Corps.

The Party persisted in making strenuous calls for the formation of Workers' Defence Corps under the aegis of Councils of Action right up to the eve of the General Strike. And then as the General Strike started on May 4, 1926, "The Party continued to put forward its organisational proposals which, at this moment, were already being adopted in many of the most important industrial centres for Councils of Action, Food Commissariats with the aid of the Co-operatives, and Workers' Defence Corps." (Ibid p136.) In fact, the importance of our Party in this respect cannot be too highly stressed: "Workers' Defence Corps or Workers' Police was one of the forms of organisation for which the Communist Party had continuously campaigned in the course of the months preceding the strike. Such organisations developed above all around the militant effective Councils of Action in which Communists and other militants were particularly active." (Ibid p153.)

Organising "able bodied Trade Unionists in a Workers' Defence Corps against the OMS and Fascisti," as the CPGB EC Statement of May 5 declared, was indeed necessary, though only done in a few areas. There, actions against the police were in some cases impressive. Some measure of the enthusiasm in those areas where there were militias is given by a participant:

"I remember going down to the (strike) headquarters when the first company were going to resume the picketing, and as they came up with their sergeant in front, he shouted 'Eyes left'. You could see the arms swinging rigidly because they were concealing pokers, hammers, etc. The picket took up its post on the road. ... In spite of the fact that there was a big contingent of police they stopped every vehicle that came along. It was a marvellous display of organised, disciplined activity." (Jeffrey Skelley (ed) *The General Strike, 1926* London 1976, p157.)

Another area where communists were leading the struggle was in Methil, Fife. After the strike the *Workers' Weekly* of June 11, 1926 carried a report of Methil Trades Council's Council of Action which shows as clearly as anything could the potential for workers' militias:

"After police charges on mass pickets the Defence Corps, which 150 workers had joined at the outset, was reorganised. Its numbers rose to 700, of whom 400, commanded by workers who had been NCO's during the war, marched in military formation through the town to

protect the picket. The police did not interfere again." (Reprinted in James Klugmann op cit p155)

The lack of workers' militias was specified by the Party Executive in its assessment of 'Why the Strike Failed' adopted at its extended meeting May 29-31 1926 (and published in *Workers' Weekly* June 4): "The Right wing leaders refused to make working class counter preparations.... They turned down the proposals for propaganda among the forces of the capitalist state and for setting up Workers' Defence Corps." (Ibid p214.)

In the months following the General Strike there was naturally a great deal of discussion in the Communist Party about the mistakes made and about preparation for future struggles in light of the experience which had been gathered. At the Eighth Congress of the CPGB, held in October 1926, the workers' militia question received extensive treatment within the thesis adopted on the General Strike: "The interference with picketing led in many localities to the organisation of working class defence, ranging from pickets carrying walking sticks up to Workers' Defence Corps." (Ibid p220.) Importantly for its reiterated acceptance and reaffirmation of workers' militias as part of our strategy was a later passage in the same document: "The unprovoked attacks of the police and Fascist Special Constables upon the workers during the General Strike and the miners' struggle justify the Party's demand for the creation of Workers' Defence Corps under the control of the Trades Councils. The Party must carry on an intensive campaign for the creation of such organs of working class defence." (Ibid p227.) It would be interesting to know exactly when this well defined policy was rescinded! The campaign for 'such organs of working class defence' certainly requires resuscitating in the light of current struggles.

Ten years after the 1926 General Strike, in the midst of anti-fascist struggles, the Party's call for workers' militias apparently had been forgotten. The role of the Party in leading these struggles, such as in Cable St in 1936 when barricades were thrown up and policemen disarmed, did not involve organising workers' militias. In fact Phil Piratin has remarked in his *Our Flag Stays Red* that workers confronted by surrendering policemen in Cable St were somewhat at a loss to know what to do with the truncheons they were presented with. However, there was no doubt about the active enthusiasm of the Party members in confronting the black plague of fascism. Their enthusiasm was not directed into workers' militias, however.

Germany

It was a different story in Germany until the Nazis came to power in 1933. The country with the largest Communist Party in Europe outside the Soviet Union, Germany had a working class movement in constant ferment. During the sectarian 'Third Period' of the world communist movement the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) had a tough time. In this disingenuous 'class against class' period, when social democrats were categorised as 'social fascists', the isolation of the KPD was assured and its prosecution of the struggle against fascism was disabled, leading to terrifying defeat for the working class movement in Germany.

The tradition of workers' militias was strong in Germany. After the First Imperialist World War the working class was under attack from the fascist Stahlhelm after 1918, and then the fascist Sturmabteilung (SA Brownshirts) from 1921. So it was hardly surprising that workers' defence formations came into being. The Proletarian Hundreds, which played such an active part in the 1923 German Revolution, were largely held together after the defeat of the

Revolution by enrolment in the communist Roter Frontkämpferbund (RFB) formed for the purpose. In 1924 the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and two liberal parties formed the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold as their own fighting formation. Reichsbanner soon became solely an SDP organisation.

KPD or the SPD formations grew throughout the late 1920's and up until the Nazi accession to power. From 1926 the sole criterion for the Nazis in targeting either the social democrats or the communists in their 'conquest of the streets' was which party was predominant in any given area. Both the SPD and the KPD thus had common cause for countering the fascist foe. Unfortunately it did not result in them making common cause in a workers' united front.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist International (July-September 1928) put forward, "the concept of 'social fascism'... essentially a rhetorical figure, an oxymoron calculated to point up the threat from the Social Democrats." (Eve Rosenhaft *Beating the Fascists?* Cambridge 1983 pp31-32.) There was little theoretical justification evinced at the time (or subsequently) for the concept of 'social fascism', and indeed there is no evidence that in Germany, especially from 1929, that the KPD militias clashed at all with SPD paramilitaries. 'Social fascism' remained largely a propaganda phrase which in practice, on the streets, did not mean equating the Reichsbanner with the SA.

Although conflict between Communist Party and SPD militias was absent, the struggle to beat the fascists 'wherever they appear' was one that could not afford the deliberate division of the working class movement. In 1932, very late in the day, and almost on the eve of the fascist takeover, the KPD's failure to stop the Nazis alone led it to begin to forsake its former policy and to turn outwards in terms of the composition of its fighting formations. By then the Reichsbanner had virtually become a drinking club and a united front of workers' defence proved impossible to produce.

Austria

Local workers' councils in Austria, especially the Vienna Workers' Council, were not slow to see the danger from the right in reaction to the suppression of Bela Kun's soviet government in neighbouring Hungary in 1919. Many workers' battalions and alarm battalions were formed quickly and then amalgamated into a special force — the Ordnerwehr — which these non-party workers' councils controlled.

The young Communist Party of Austria did all it could to influence the Ordnerwehr, but without successfully taking the leadership. "In 1921 the Ordnerwehr placed themselves under the command of the Bundesheer [the new Austrian republic's army], and units took part in the fighting against the Hungarians." (Martin Kitchen *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* London 1980 pp113-114.) The Ordnerwehr was reorganised early in 1923 to form the Republican Defence League (Republikanischer Schutzbund): later the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) was able to take full control following the abolition of local workers' councils in 1924.

The Schutzbund had the formal approval of the government. Its stated aims included, after all, protecting the government from putsch and helping the authorities to maintain law and order. There were even negotiations in 1925, and agreement in principle, to use Schutzbund forces with those of the army in case of an expected attack from fascist Italy (which never materialized).

'Defensive violence' was declared to be the role of the Schutzbund at the SPÖ Conference at the end of 1926: the Schutzbund became the party's military arm. General SPÖ agreement on the need for violence to defend basic democratic rights reflected a growing

number of violent confrontations with the older, fascist Heimwehr. Growth of the Schutzbund was dramatic in 1927; sometimes whole factories would join en bloc.

The Heimwehr and the similar Frontkämpfer were according to one liberal observer, "made instruments of an armed conspiracy against the Republic. Year after year the Seipel Government increased their illegal armament, while reducing the equally illegal armament of the Republican Defence Corps (Schutzbund). With clenched fists and teeth the Socialists had to watch the Government affording steadily increasing opportunities for the Heimwehr to provoke the workers and to see how the scales of justice at the resultant clashes were regularly weighted against the proletariat." (GER Gedye *Fallen Bastions* London 1939 p30; Gedye was Central European Correspondent of *The Times*.)

After the SPÖ's partial climbdown over the disclosure of the Schutzbund's Vienna arsenal in 1927, many SPÖ militants saw the contradiction between their leaders' conciliation with the class enemy and the theory of 'defensive violence'. This was fuelled by the intermediary role played by the Schutzbund during demonstrations against the acquittal of Heimwehr murderers in July 1927. Placed between demonstrators (who had not only set fire to the Palace of Justice but also a police station and the *Reichspost* offices) and armed police the Schutzbund was in an impossible position and eventually had to withdraw. But not before their unarmed presence had drawn police firepower to the extent that eleven Schutzbundler were killed. Its intention of preventing 'acts of violence' by demonstrators rendered it impotent as a workers' defence force.

A new organisation of 1,000 men — the Gemeindegewache — was formed, apparently specialising in sabotage and in particular, "using the sewage system to place explosive charges under police stations, barracks and other important buildings." (Martin Kitchen op cit p124.) Its precise role never became clear.

Criticisms at the SPÖ's Conference were based on the castigation of the Schutzbund's confrontation with heavily armed police when they only had clubs to defend themselves. However, the right in the SPÖ expressed its fears of civil war and suggested disbanding the Schutzbund. Even partisans of the Schutzbund conceded that it could disarm once it was as strong as the forces of the opposition, as long as they disarmed too.

The fifth Schutzbund Conference in October 1927 unanimously agreed its conversion into a fully militarized executive organ of the SPÖ Executive. This entailed scrapping election of officers and ending internal political discussion. There were to be no more Palace of Justice burnings or violent attacks on the state by the proletariat: this the Schutzbund would ensure.

In opposition to the purely military view of the new Schutzbund leadership, General Theodor Körner, a former leader, "presented his paper, 'Principles for the Use of Violence and Civil War', to the Schutzbund leaders... He was convinced that the people could never win a victory against the military in street fighting unless other significant factors undermined the power of the state... a direct fight with well-armed and well-disciplined troops was bound to lead to failure. The greatest possible mistake would be to copy the methods of the opponent, and thus fight according to his rules. Almost any weapons would be used, provided that they were in the hands of determined men who use them skilfully. The secret for success was to exploit to the full the great strength that lies dormant within the working class, to study all possibilities and to encourage self-discipline, self-reliance and self-esteem... Körner was now convinced the Schutzbund

had to be politicised ... it could not be an effective military force if it became merely the apolitical military apparatus of the party. The Schutzbund should welcome innovative and original ideas and encourage creative thinking about the strategy and tactics of modern civil warfare." (Ibid pp126-127.)

Bearing in mind that half Austria's soldiers supported the Social Democratic Military Association and most policemen were members of social democrat trade unions, Körner's methods of organisation could have had great effect. Centrist ideology could not stomach such 'shocking' proposals, however, and it is not surprising that they were disregarded.

Following a period around 1930 when mutual disarmament of the Heimwehr and the Schutzbund was again mooted by SPÖ leaders, the Schutzbund was galvanized into action by the 1931 attempted putsch. All its units were placed on alert, though it was kept out of the fighting between fascists and government forces.

In January 1932 7,000 rifles and 8 machineguns were seized by police at the SPÖ centre in Ottaking, Vienna. But of course nothing was done to disarm the Heimwehr. Even worse, there was no Schutzbund weapons training at this time.

After Dollfuss closed parliament in March 1933 some militants retrieved weapons from hiding places, but no call to action came. The time for action might have been ripe, but the SPÖ and the Schutzbund were by now completely unprepared. Then at the end of March 1933 Dollfuss banned the Schutzbund: this was accepted peacefully.

Although the SPÖ then founded the Ordnerschaften to replace the Schutzbund, its formation was hampered by legal moves against it. And by early 1934 the legacy of the Schutzbund was wasted.

On February 12, 1934 the final decisive battle against fascism began. Despite courageous efforts of armed units of workers, their forces were not sufficient, nor sufficiently well led, to defeat the army, police and Heimwehr joint operations. There was no general strike called — the railways ran throughout the fighting, and workers in the militias left off fighting to go to work! — so that by February 15 it was all over bar the shouting of the victorious fascists.

Chile and Turkey

Chile and Turkey provide two recent examples of countries where fascism has been imposed by the bourgeoisie; they give some idea of world communist thinking on workers' militias.

During the October 1972 crisis in Chile, when a counterrevolutionary coup against Popular Unity was on the cards, the Chilean trade union centre CUT made a call for workers' defence brigades to be formed. Little came of it. Certainly, though, by 1973, with deepening crisis, the fascists were bombing Popular Unity parties' premises: so committees of self-defence were rapidly formed. On June 29, 1973 a fascist coup was attempted and Popular Unity parties agreed to distribute arms to the workers — though Allende, faced with bourgeois anxieties over illegal arming of workers, stated that the time had not yet arrived for that. As in the bosses' strike previously, self-defence by the workers was in operation in the summer of 1973. The Communist Party of Chile, firmly stuck to Allende's tail, was not leading the struggle nor was it to the fore, as it should have been, in organising workers' self-defence. Instead, workers' defence was a disorganised, patchy affair; Popular Unity's faith resting after all in the bourgeois army, which promptly eviscerated working class organisation on September 12, 1973.

In Turkey, where the working class movement was deprived of its Communist Party by liquidationists for over 40 years, the rising revolutionary situation from the mid-1970's provided

some fine examples of successful and less successful workers' self-defence formations. In the enormous May Day demonstrations held in Istanbul in 1976, 1977, and 1978 armed workers' security teams protected the marchers from attack by state forces and fascist paramilitaries (though in 1977 these two combined to kill several dozen participants). In 1977 when 500,000 marched there were 80,000 armed stewards. Film of the event shows it completely free of the police escort so common and so dishonourably accepted in British demonstrations.

The following year, in 1978, "The march and the demonstration proceeded in complete order and discipline. The square was protected from any attack by a cordon of 50,000 [workers] security forces — 10,000 from DISK, 40,000 from other trade unions". ('Half A Million Marched Into May Day Square' *Turkey Today* May-June 1978 p4.)

On May Day 1979, "the traditional demonstration was held in Izmir. More than 100,000 people gathered in Konak Square... In addition to 10,000 police, also present were one gendarmerie commando unit and Aegean army command support units... But the working class of Turkey took its own measures to protect the march against attack. Militant youths affiliated to the Progressive Youth Organisation (IGD) — formed a security team." ('May Day Triumphs Despite Martial Law' *Turkey Today* April-May 1979 p4.)

In early 1980 workers took over the Tariş works in Izmir which employers had wanted to flood with fascists. By the time they had held out, with the support of the populace, for two weeks it was only by the use of the army and its bazookas and armoured vehicles that they were finally defeated. Its isolation as an armed defence of working class rights, however, was an augury for the bourgeoisie. The weakness of the Communist Party at the time, dominated by the opportunists who sought 'legality' at any price, meant that even the recent successes of workers' self-defence were ignored. Only the Leninists around *İşçinin Sesi* were capable of drawing the correct conclusions: the lack of appreciation of this in the working class movement weakened it and prevented adequate means of workers' defence from being taken. The fascist coup of September 12, 1980 followed.

Conclusion

Our Party's Eurocommunists have a well defined position on workers' self defence: they are against it. In relation to that arm of the state, the police, they are equally unequivocal: "We need community policing under community control in every locality.... It should mean the police becoming more linked to the social services... proper consultation with local organisations by the police..." (Dave Cook's 'Charter of Demands' in *Black and Blue* op cit p28.) What this means, of course, is not so much that demands are made of the state in relation to its police arm, in reality, since such demands of the class enemy will not be answered. The real purpose of such 'demands' is to act as disabling class collaboration, reformism, and betrayal of proletarian revolution.

The experience of the world communist movement, from its Leninist beginnings to the present dominance of centrism, shows that workers' militias essential in the daily struggle for economic and social demands of workers as they are in the fight against racism and fascism. Workers' militias are needed in the form of *our class's* stewarding of demonstrations in place of police 'escorts', in the form of *disciplined* defence of meetings in place of sole reliance on a chairperson's gavel, and in the form of *vigorous* defence of ethnic minorities in an offensive against fascist thugs wherever they rear their ugly heads.

Workers' militias need to be established not only for these immediate reasons; they must be established with the definite aim of their eventual development towards bodies useful in the revolution.

Workers' militias require communist leadership. The experience of Connolly and the Citizen Army illustrates this, as does the Austrian Schutzbund. Both these examples tell a tale of unpreparedness for armed struggle except in narrowly defined, limited ways; in the Irish case, of a cavalier approach, and in the Austrian, dilettante. Real communist (ie Leninist) leadership was vital to the Red Guards in the Russian Revolution. Without correct, communist leadership their relatively small numbers would have been ineffective. It was they, the Red Guards, who were thus able to provide a hardened steel tip to the revolutionary workers' lance and so cut through the bourgeois dross expeditiously. Workers' militias in various forms in 1917 first protected the gains of February, then advanced those gains to the revolutionary triumph of October.

In those periods preparatory to revolutionary working class action, as in present day imperialist Britain, it is the job of Leninists to make it crystal clear to our class that it can draw on the experiences of the past for one immediate requirement: a workers' militia. It is as natural for the working class movement to have workers' militias as it is to have trade unions, or as it was to develop consumer cooperatives. The class struggle dictates that level of offensive is required of our class and what can be achieved; our class response must not be limited at all by delusions about the state, its agencies, or any of its arms, including the police and army.

The centrists of our Party (whether of the *Straight Left* or Chater voting fodder variety) have no wish for revolution 'just yet at least' if their words and past actions are anything to go by. In contrast, Leninists around the world *do* want revolution, and the sooner the better. This means that we must be fully prepared as a Party, and our class must be fully prepared, *now* to take advantage of whatever situation arises in our advance to revolution.

One major preparation we must make now is for our Party to promote workers' militias. Unless we raise this question in the working class movement it will emerge weakly in a spontaneous way as the class struggle intensifies: as a Party we should then have been caught unawares and indeed unready for advance. That would negate our role as the vanguard. If we are to be the vanguard of the working class — and the Euro class collaborators within our Party certainly would not want to be so unfashionable — then we must put forward concrete forms of workers' defence, and be conscious that this dynamic entity will — with correct leadership — ensure that revolution in Britain has every chance of success. Without workers' defence formations you can kiss goodbye to revolution.

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The Communist Party virtually has no youth organisation. In recent years Party membership has taken a dive but YCL membership has sunk like lead. In the sixteen years between 1967 and 1983 Party membership has dropped by a catastrophic 52% but this figure pales beside the 90% decline in YCL membership. This decline has accelerated over the last few years the March 1984 record figure standing at 414. To rub salt into the wound, it is doubtful whether there are more than seventy activists, with very few branches functioning.

The latest dip in the downward curve of the YCL has been presided over by Eurocommunist bureaucrats with General Secretary Doug Chalmers at the helm. This degeneration has proved so embarrassing that the Eurocrats have sought to blame the opposition because they have 'failed to unite around Congress policy'.

To most communists who have followed the 'progress' of the YCL it is obvious that the real failure rests squarely on the shoulders of the Eurocommunists. Since the 'sixties the Euros have tailed every trend that youth has thrown up — always just that little bit late. For example, these present day advocates of feminism are from the same stable as the 'bums and tits' brigade of the 'sixties, when adverts appeared for *Challenge* featuring scantily clad young women over the caption "We want to make sure you get it regularly". The latest issue of *Challenge* attempts to cash in on the Orwellian '1984' theme, but by the time *Challenge* has caught up with it, in March, the idea is old hat.

Since the April 1983 Congress when the left in the YCL gained ground, the Eurocrats have been hard at work to reverse this situation. Bureaucratic centralism, under the guise of 'democratic centralism', has been invoked repeatedly to beat the left into submission.

At this Congress a decision was taken to re-vamp *Challenge*, the March 1984 edition was the first in this new series. The Euros have blamed this phenomenal delay on 'terrible problems' caused by 'sectarians'. The truth is that comrade Chalmers was in a minority of one on the *Challenge* collective, and an issue of the paper would have been out in October 1983 if it had not been for his bureaucratic manoeuvrings. The majority of the collective decided on the contents of the issue, the two most controversial articles being one on independent peace groups in the socialist countries and a celebratory article on the anniversary of the October Revolution. The suggestion of these titles was enough to incense comrade Chalmers and he referred the question to 'his' Executive Committee (equivalent to the Party's PC), who prevented the edition from going ahead on the fallacious basis that the proposed articles were not in keeping with Congress policy on *Challenge*. This position was endorsed by the Euro majority Chalmers had now secured on the General Council (equivalent to the Party's EC) and half the *Challenge* collective was summarily removed. In order to ensure his domination of the collective he flooded it with his nominees.

Despite comrade Chalmers' repeated pleas for unity around Congress policy this is, of course, selective. The Congress policy on *Challenge* referred to by the EC was in fact one line from a Euro resolution. The actual resolution on *Challenge*, written by left wingers, was ignored, not surprisingly:

"The overall thrust of *Challenge*, must not be simply 'feature campaigns' and articulate the demands of other broad based campaigns... Our propaganda and agitation must be aimed at producing a socialist consciousness". It is ironically appropriate that the comrade who wrote these words was expelled at the aforementioned GC.

The fact that the Eurocrats are not concerned with "producing a socialist consciousness" among young people

The YCL: the failure of Eurocommunism

Rebecca Sachs



was made clear at the last meeting of the GC (March 10-11, 1984). At this meeting the question of finance was discussed and the YCL's dire situation revealed. It was therefore suggested by a naive Euro that in order to be able to produce *Challenge* more regularly than the planned six a year, they should axe one of the two fulltimers saving £6,500 a year. This proposition was crushed — the argument being that if there was one less fulltimer increased production of materials would be impossible because all the work would fall on the shoulders of one

fulltimer. Such is the state of the YCL that communists are not expected to work for their organisation without being paid for it! For genuine communists this is a horrific and tragic situation. The Eurocrats are not interested in propagating communist ideas but in preserving a niche for themselves in the bureaucracy and as such are corrupt. It is they who are the disease responsible for the running sore in the YCL.

It is no surprise therefore that the Euros denounce Lenin as irrelevant, his views on the Youth Leagues must

be incomprehensible to them:

"Being a member of the Youth League means devoting one's labour and efforts to the common cause... Only in the course of such work do young men and women become real communists." (*The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*, Progress Publishers, p19)

This meeting of the GC marked a high point in the 'return to normalcy' campaign launched by the Euros after the left victories at the '83 Congress. With a Euro majority now secured comrade Chalmers has somewhat reluctantly changed tack. Instead of satisfying his own bureaucrat's appetite for discipline he hamfistedly emphasised the need to make it a 'positive GC'. In other words he attempted to cajole the opposition into papering over the ever growing cracks in order to minimise aggravation. Comrade Chalmers' obvious doubts about this tactic were, however, quickly assuaged as it became obvious that the opposition, largely organised around *Straight Left*, were going to smooth his path.

This was most clearly illustrated when comrade Chalmers brought it to the attention of the meeting that a leaflet had been circulated in the YCL and Party which publicised the fact that comrade Chalmers had called the police to exclude fifteen young communists from a YCL meeting in Hackney and that two YCLers had actually been expelled for defending the rights of these comrades (see *The Leninist*, No6, p36). Comrade Chalmers proposed that anyone caught handling this leaflet should be brought before the GC pending further action. *Straight Left*, whose comrades are themselves being expelled from the Party for circulating the factional *Congress Truth* and who voted against the aforementioned expulsions, demonstrated their total lack of principles by voting in favour of comrade Chalmers' proposal! The adage most suitable for these comrades has proved to be 'if in doubt go to the right' — it may well be their epitaph.

The YCL has contracted a graveyard cough, the advanced stage of the disease gripping the Party. The main reason for the more rapid decline of the YCL is the fact that unlike the Party they are almost entirely reliant on recruiting new members. But the YCL cannot recruit, youth are not won to revolutionary politics by hopeless reformism. This failure is in no small way responsible for the existence of a host of petty bourgeois groups whose sloganising often attracts but frequently dissipates and misdirects the enthusiasm of revolutionary youth. The only force in the Party and YCL capable of attracting revolutionary youth is pro-Partyism and Leninism; our task must be to harness their fervour with the object of re-forging a revolutionary YCL.

Comradely exchange

During March comrades from *The Leninist* had a fraternal discussion with comrades from the Comité de Reconstruction du Parti Communiste. Following the meeting our comrades from France issued the following statement:

During their stay in Great Britain, a delegation of our committee had a meeting with a delegation of communists from *The Leninist*.

During the wide-ranging and fraternal exchange of views the history and political objectives of each organisation were surveyed. Other than particular forms of activity, general agreement was arrived at about the indispensable and ongoing fight against opportunism and reformism, and also on the estimation of the class struggle on the international level.

Moreover, it was agreed to establish relations between the two organisations.

From: *La Barricade du 13e March* 1984.

Grenada

A Revolution On Trial

Michael McGeehan

In our last edition we drew some conclusions from the tumultuous Grenadan experience. Here we intend to present additional evidence of the differences within the NJM, also to confront the question marks hanging both over the future of the NJM leaders imprisoned by imperialism and the NJM itself. In future articles we will produce a thoroughgoing analysis of the Grenadan revolution including a critical examination of the inner-Party struggle and its relation to the possible and actual events that unfurled.

No!! cry some of our centrist comrades, it is a luxury for us in Britain to attempt to analyse those events — we should await the NJM's own analysis and meanwhile confine our activity to solidarity work, they pronounce. It is hardly surprising then, that *Straight Left* (and of course, the *Morning Star* and *Marxism Today*) have cravenly avoided facing the difficult questions raised by Grenada.

Though naturally, the position of the NJM (or the positions within it) are vital for a really full understanding of the Grenada crisis, it is blinkered brontosaurus stupidity to suggest that we communists should not discuss, analyse or even ask questions about a revolution and its demise! Did not Marx venture his weighty opinion on the Paris Commune both during and after that heroic revolution? Did not Lenin regularly criticise and analyse the problems of revolutionary movements throughout the world, from Poland to Asia to Britain (where he criticised communists for their attitude to the Labour Party, for example)? And did not comrade Fidel Castro deliver his verdict on events soon after the imperialist invasion — branding the supposed "Coard Group" as the "Pol Pot Group" and as "hyenas"? (See *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, Appendix III, p329)

Although we consider comrade Castro's characterisations *wrong*, he has every right, nay — a communist *duty* to criticise what he considers to be the mistakes of fellow revolutionaries. And whilst offering our full, unconditional support for national liberation and social revolution, we, like Marx, Lenin and Castro, will continue to openly analyse, discuss and criticise perceived errors of revolutionaries anywhere. Finally, the Co-ordinator of the NJM Support Group (UK) himself clearly feels that discussion is beneficial because "... it would give clear guidance as to what should be done to avoid the pitfalls of the Grenada Revolution, hopefully of practical benefit to other revolutionary processes emerging." (Interview — February 1984) That is our intent precisely.

Unravelling the knot

Amongst the complex tangle of events leading up to the U.S. strangulation of the revolution, the thread of developing differences on the course of the revolution within its leadership can be discerned by those who care to look. For example, compare Coard's view in November 1981, when after detailing the 'private sector's' pitiful record in economic development "over 400 years of Grenadian history," he stated "For



those developing countries who wish to wait for the private sector to develop their economies whether foreign or local, we say good luck, we would examine you again in 400 years time." (*Grenada is not alone*, p44) Contrast that with Bishop's virtual eulogy of the 'private sector' in June 1982: "They are in no way left out of our economic thrust and strategy, and we see them taking a crucial and responsible role in our present battle against unemployment, for we are the same side. ... So comrades from the private sector, we are asking you for contributions and your advice and suggestions, for you are and have always been, in the mainstream of creation in our country, and we would certainly want this to continue." (*Grenada — Fight unemployment with production!* p19)

We ask those comrades who still doubt that serious political differences existed within the NJM to ponder on those words. A recent book by Fitzroy Ambursley and James Dunkerley, which attempts to honestly analyse the crisis succinctly points to the interrelations of the differences and their essence: "The dispute revolved around the personalities of Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard, but it also involved much broader political issues. It was not essentially about ideology, but it did centre on political tactics and party discipline, which inevitably helped to draw out and sharpen incipient differences of style, approach and strategy." (Our emphasis *Grenada — Whose Freedom?* p55, LAB, London 1984) We maintain it was those differences of strategy that were the bedrock of all others in the NJM.

Grenada today

"Detainees have been tortured and maltreated. They are being refused permission to see their lawyers, and a show trial is being planned to attempt to implicate all 37 plus in murder and conspiracy charges. In addition, American and Caribbean forces have detained at least 2000

Grenadians, not in any attempt to identify those responsible for the killings of October 19th, but rather to find out all details of the NJM and Labour Movement, and intimidate its members. Grenadian soldiers have suffered particularly bad treatment and continue to do so. Surveillance and harassment of civilians involved in any form of progressive organisation is widespread. Take-over by American backed and trained Grenadians of some trade unions is being attempted, and AIFLD advisers are moving in force. Inflation has increased, 3,500 people have lost their jobs since the invasion, and the economic situation is bleak." (extract from *British Labour Movement Delegation Report, December 1984*)

Since last December, this situation has not changed, except that seven members of the Revolutionary Military Council have been charged with murder (which carries the death penalty) and another 11 including Bernard Coard and Hudson Austin "conspiracy to commit an act of terrorism" (which carries a maximum sentence of 25 years imprisonment).

Clearly, the NJM faces an extremely difficult situation. However, despite U.S. torture of detainees and harassment of militants, there have been signs of defiance. The British Labour Movement delegation reported that "When some white members of the delegation were mistaken for Americans themselves, they were subject to stone-throwing, anti-American slogans and pro-Bishop chants, particularly by youth in the countryside." (Ibid, p8) Amongst other spontaneous protest reported are the taunting of patrolling US and Caribbean soldiers with shouts of "Viva Fidel, viva Maurice, long live the revolution, support Nicaragua," (*South*, April 1984) Though the mood of the Grenadian masses is sullen and subdued at present, there are still deep reservoirs of support for the gains of the revolution, particularly among workers and youth. How then, is the resistance to imperialist occupation being organised?

The NJM

According to *South* magazine "The mantle of NJM leadership has fallen to George Louison and Kenrick Radix, ministers in Bishop's government and his heirs apparent." What then is the perspective of these two leaders of the NJM? In an interview with *International Viewpoint* (No.48 March 1984) Radix stated that "The No.1 question in the country is to bring to justice the people who committed these outrageous murders (of Bishop and others M.Mc) ... this should be done quickly so that justice can be seen to be done." But for "justice" to be done, is clearly impossible in the present circumstances of imperialist control. He also calls for elections to be held under the supervision of "the Commonwealth family of nations". The No. 1 question in Grenada is certainly not the trial of revolutionaries by imperialism, nor "democratic" elections under auspices of "the Commonwealth" (i.e. in reality, British imperialism) but the removal of all forces of occupation from the island.

But the main thrust of a "reconstituted NJM" led by Radix and Louison is the establishment of the "Maurice Bishop and October 19th Martyrs Foundation." Though it has been set up as a "charity organisation" to assist the relatives of those killed on October 19th, build a monument and name places in memoriam of the "martyrs", its aim is clearly political. One of its main objectives is: "To build and operate a centre which will collect and distribute literature and other propaganda materials about the life and work of each of the martyrs."

It appears that the pro-Bishop NJM faction is attempting to seize the Party's banner, immortalise Bishop and the other "martyrs" and effectively excommunicate the overwhelming majority of the NJM who supported Coard.

While the Radix/Louison faction of the NJM looks dangerously like becoming a respectable opposition party, the acceptable face of the Grenada Revolution, the supporters of Coard bear the brunt of the imperialist bludgeon. They also face the undoubted hostility of sections of the Grenadian masses as a consequence of the killing of Bishop and at least 13 others. We do not know whether they are able to operate underground at present, but it is they who are the true future of the Revolution.

Prisoners of imperialism

Despite our recognition of the gross tactical miscalculations of the NJM Coard majority in October 1983, we insist that they are genuine revolutionaries and so must be defended, as we would defend Maurice Bishop if he were alive today regardless of our severe criticisms of some of his actions. For those who today suffer torture and degrading treatment in Richmond Hill prison, suffer at the hands of a brutal imperialist machine. There can be no fair trial in such circumstances, only a show trial. All true communists and revolutionaries must therefore demand:

STOP THE SHOW TRIALS IN GRENADA!

FREE THE PRISONERS OF IMPERIALISM!
IMPERIALISM OUT OF GRENADA!

REVIEWS

The Poverty of the 'New' Communist Party

James Marshall

Fourth Congress of the New Communist Party, November 1983, pbk. pp 66 £0.50p

Nearly seven years have now passed since the formation of the NCP. They have been seven years of declining influence, membership, morale, and prospects. But this has not been the result of seven years of bad luck; the sorry state of the NCP today lies in its poverty of theory from its very beginnings, a flaw that, far from being overcome in the leaders of the NCP, has been compounded time and time again — something vividly proved by the documents of their Fourth Congress.

Central to the NCP's politics is the aim of peace. But instead of seeking to channel those fighting for this worthy aim into the struggle to overthrow imperialism and for socialism — the only guarantee of peace in the long term — Eric Trevett, the General Secretary of the NCP, declares, à la Kautsky and without apparent embarrassment, that today's United States led war drive is "based upon the simplistic belief that US interests are served best by global military confrontation." (p 5, our emphasis.) With this erroneous idea that the drive to war by imperialism springs from the subjective, that if only the imperialists could have some sense knocked into their heads peace would prevail, the NCP launches its contribution to the struggle for peace. Unfortunately, while the NCP joins the ranks of 'up the garden path to pacifism', imperialism relentlessly arms, deploys first strike weapons against the Soviet Union, and begins to prepare the ground for winning WWII by developing its Star Wars technology.

In their hearts there can be no doubt that the leaders of the NCP consider that their social pacifist line on peace — and not the Leninist programme of channelling the struggle for peace and all other democratic demands into the fight for socialist revolution — serves the best interests of the socialist countries, above all the Soviet Union. It is the desire to serve the Soviet Union that gives the NCP's political positions their centrist colouration, their quality of combining pacifism and unrevolutionary practice with revolutionary phrasemongering. Thus, in their Congress documents nowhere do we find charted out a strategy for socialist revolution in Britain. Yes, there are plenty of references to the need for the working class to achieve state power; it is even stated that, "We can settle for nothing less," but when we look for the 'hows' there is naught but common or garden reformism.

The NCP has no faith in its ability to lead the working class in Britain. This at least in part springs from the political physiognomy of much of its membership, who split from the CPGB in 1977 not in order to raise the level of struggle for communism but to get away from what they saw as the useless, tiresome, and irritating arguments which they were forced into while they were Party members. The fact that they had so little to pit against the ideological onslaught of Eurocommunism other than a faith in the Soviet Union not only meant that they lost battle after battle, but realising their own weakness they quit, and sought retirement from the cut and thrust of politics in the NCP.

So how do the NCP leaders think they will get to socialism then? The

answer to this is simple. Trevett says unto his followers: "have faith, work harder, and rest assured. Progress... is being made. Recognition will come." (p11.) The 'recognition' for which he leads the prayers is of course not from the vanguard of the working class in Britain but from the CPSU. On the basis of recognition, on the coat tails of Soviet prestige, on the back of their power, the socialist millennium will come to Britain. All the NCP has to do is to keep away from heresy and in the end their piety, faith, and patience will be rewarded.

Although the NCP despises what it sees as unorthodoxy it is ironic that because of their sect-like nature they have slipped into some rather bizarre positions. Because of their opposition to Trotskyism they find themselves actually supporting the expulsions of Militant supporters from the Labour Party; because of their myopic substitution of diplomatic internationalism for proletarian internationalism they accuse our Straight Leftists of having "Ideologically ... joined the Trotskyites," (p11) because of their, "call for Britain to get out of NATO as an immediate priority." (p12.) And while they say that they consider Wales and Scotland are nations in their own right and not part of a British nation they refuse to recognise their right to self determination. In unconscious parody of Rosa Luxemburg's leftist opposition to Lenin's correct defence of self determination, they declare that because the bourgeoisie of Wales and Scotland, "have long since sold out to imperialism," self determination is, "inconceivable" (p61). Surely the same would then apply to Ireland? Quirkily the NCP does not think so.

But most damning, most revealing of their insipid liquidationism, their inability to fight to change reality, and their subordination to what simply exists now, is their position on the Labour Party. Under that opportunist catch all cover of 'working class unity' the NCP proposes to take Lenin's tactical advice to the newly formed CPGB to affiliate to the Labour Party, to gut it of its revolutionary essence, and elevate his united front tactic to the level of opportunist principle. Like all those who lack a firm Marxist-Leninist understanding of the Labour Party the NCP collapses into calling the Labour Party the, "mass based party of the working class" (p45). By rejecting Lenin's definition of the Labour Party as, "a thoroughly bourgeois party," a bourgeois workers' party, the NCP finds it only natural to emphasise Britain's exceptionalism using it as an excuse for their strategic aim (like the Straight Leftists) of becoming a "legitimate" affiliated organisation "inside" the Labour Party. (p45.) Because of this the NCP not only recoils from any suggestion about their standing candidates in local or parliamentary elections but condemns our Party for doing so, not only today, but from our Leninist foundation, declaring that, "contesting elections against Labour has been a divisive factor... and has played a significant part in bringing the Communist Party... to its present depleted and demoralised position."

Those who formed the NCP were centrists, but an important minority section of them were pulled to the left by their struggle in the CPGB, and by world developments such as the victory over US imperialism in Vietnam. Tragically, because of the domination of centrism the NCP was deformed from birth. The inability of these members to break from centrism, the now ingrained centrism of its leaders has not only produced a sectarian disdain for the majority of communists in Britain who are in the CPGB but a surrender to Labourism, the black hole for all those suffering from ideological poverty.

The Roots of Liquidationism

Frank Grafton

E.H. Carr, *The Twilight of Comintern 1930-1935*, MacMillan, London 1982, hbk., pp. 432, £25.00.

E.H. Carr has rightfully gained international respect and acclaim for his profound and penetrating analysis of the Russian Revolution's early years. And although this book goes beyond his original brief, it draws upon the immense encyclopaedic knowledge already laid down in his fourteen volume history and will undoubtedly stand as his crowning masterpiece.

Carr expertly reveals, despite never having been a Marxist, the underlying truth of a very confusing, but formative, episode in the world communist movement. He avoids falling into the usual anti-communist and anti-Soviet crudities of other bourgeois historians, while providing an account free of the unfortunate sacrifices to political expediency, which have devalued official Soviet attempts to deal with this period.

We particularly welcome this book, however, because it throws light on the roots of opportunism and liquidationism in our own Party and counters the vulgar accusations by centrism and Eurocommunism, that *The Leninist* is a throwback to the sectarian politics of 'social fascism'. In fact Carr unquestionably lays the blame for the ineptitude and tragic consequences of equating social democracy with fascism, not on Leninism or any leftism, but squarely on the shoulders of centrism itself.

The policy of 'social fascism' was never a genuine expression of leftism as such, but was symptomatic of Comintern's rightward shift in abandoning the main task of world revolution and subordinating everything to the over-riding centrist priority of defending the short term interests of "Socialism in one country" (p.4). With its *raison d'être* being increasingly eroded from within, Comintern became relegated to the status of an adjunct of Soviet foreign policy, whereupon its eventual demise was simply a matter of time.

In 1928 when Comintern first formally adopted this centrist orientation at the Sixth Congress, the Soviet Union was in diplomatic isolation and threatened with imperialist aggression. The Soviet Party laid much of the blame for this on German Social Democracy, which was still intent on weakening the revolutionary proletarian movement around the KPD and undermining German-Soviet relations as a step towards re-establishing stable ties with 'the West'. Comintern considered at the time, having come under the tighter grip of Soviet Party policy, "pressing home the threat of revolution" (p.5) by means of fuelling animosity between communists and social democrats, to be the most effective method of deterring imperialist hostility and intervention against the Soviet Union. Therefore it was the protagonists of the 'social fascist' line who initially found themselves in the ascendancy.

The fact, however, that such shrill revolutionary phrasemongering was intended by centrism to be nothing but an empty threat, was soon exposed once prospects for revolution became real with world capitalism's 1929 collapse into its deepest ever economic crisis. Attempts by left centrists, such as Merker and Neumann in Germany and Barbé in France, to translate "revolutionary words into revolutionary action" (p.19) was greeted with alarm by both Soviet and Comintern leaderships, as it was feared this would

increase the interventionist danger at a time of rising international tension. All such left trends were therefore purged from the leaderships of communist parties after 1930, under the slogan of waging the struggle against both left and right — a formula designed to allow the empty rhetoric of 'social fascism' to continue while minimising its practical relevance — and safe leaders selected for their dependable loyalty to the Soviet Party and official Comintern line. This was the case with Thalman, Thorez, and Pollitt.

These changes in Comintern's policy were decisively influenced by events inside the Soviet Party and the Soviet Union as a whole. The so called 'left turn' in 1928 coincided with Stalin's 'left turn' against the Right Opposition of Bukharin (having already defeated the left threat from Trotsky and Zinoviev). And the discovery of the left danger in Comintern two years later, followed closely behind Stalin's *Dizzy with Success* article in *Pravda*, which heralded a temporary retreat from forced collectivisation, in the face of the resultant crisis in Soviet agriculture. Yet the Soviet leaders' preoccupation with the internal situation throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, as well as Stalin's widely renowned "contempt for Comintern" (p.122), deprived Comintern of any leader with political authority once Bukharin had been removed as its president, and virtually condemned it to growing impotence and ineptitude. Consequently, political divisions began to fester within the Comintern leadership, and thus created a political stalemate, which was not resolved by the intervention of any "higher authority" (p.5), until Stalin finally declared his support for the change to Popular Frontism in 1935.

The change from the 'social fascist' line to Popular Frontism at the Seventh Congress, although dramatic, did not signify a change in Comintern's foremost aim, but actually further confirmed the defence of the Soviet Union "as the highest common factor" (p.152) in its programme. The reason for the change emanated from the Comintern and Soviet Party leaders' realisation that Hitlerite fascism had become the greatest threat to the security of the Soviet Union, and that rather than rely on the ineffective support of foreign communist parties, it was deemed necessary to forge alliances with "governments of capitalist countries exposed to the same external menace" (p.152).

Although the Comintern and all communist parties were subsequently united in the forceful campaign for Popular Fronts with the full support of the Soviet Party and state, this did not alter the fact that Comintern's existence had been permanently undermined by the relinquishment of world revolution as its main aim. No further Congress or significant session of IKKI were ever summoned after the Seventh Congress and the Comintern itself was finally dissolved in 1943.

For Leninists, the responsibility for setting this liquidationist process in motion lay not with leftism but with centrism. True leftism at the time was represented by the Trotskyites, who must be castigated, not for the sectarian politics of 'social fascism', but for their desertion of the world communist movement and passage into the petty bourgeois wilderness. They have subsequently remained as insignificant as when they first emerged, despite the opportunity during the critical vicissitudes of the Second World War, to prove their hollow claim to be the true heirs of Comintern.

For us, the alternative to the centrism and liquidationism which destroyed the Comintern during the 1930s and 1940s and which still continues to threaten the existence of our Party today is the return to the Leninist foundations of Comintern, as expressed in its first four Congresses.

Although the Euros are claiming to want to strengthen the relationship between the *Morning Star* and the Party, and are thus demanding the replacement of comrades Chater and Whitfield as editors by EC Euro loyalists comrades Myant and Chalmers, it is quite obvious to the majority of Party activists that this is merely a ruse for them to get a tighter stranglehold on the remaining vestiges of communist tradition in our Party and paper.

The Eurocommunists want to complete the transformation of the *Morning Star* into a daily version of their house magazine *Marxism Today*, in which the views of all other communists are stifled in preference to conducting a "lively and free" discussion with liberals, bishops and even Chief Constables. The Euros are intent on gutting our Party and Paper of all communist content and turning it into the 'think tank' of a left forum encompassing the SDP/Liberal alliance, the Labour Party and even anti-'Thatcherite' Tories.

To achieve this end, the Euros have launched, since securing monopoly control of the Party's leading committees at last November's 38th "Liquidationist" Congress, a disciplinary crackdown on all internal dissent and are threatening to purge all opposition forces. Four comrades have already been expelled and more are certain to follow.

The response of the potentially healthiest Party activists to this onslaught has been fatal. Instead of uniting in a pro-Party rebellion against Eurocommunism and liquidationism, the majority have lined up behind comrade Chater as the lesser of two evils.

Far from taking the fight to the Eurocommunist liquidators, comrade Chater has turned tail and is busy distancing the *Morning Star* from Communist Party politics, in preparation for the day when the final split will come. He has refused to have joint discussion with the Executive Committee on the paper, not because it is dominated by opportunists and liquidators, but because it is an "outside body" to the PPPS. Moreover he has sanctioned the setting up of readers and supporters groups, which are separate from the Party and has come to rely increasingly upon the support of left trade union leaders like Ray Buckton and Moss Evans, as well as comrades such as Ken Gill who are also giving support increasingly in their capacity as trade union leaders and not as communists.

The course of the *Morning Star* under comrade Chater's 'survival plan', for which a new printing press has already been ordered and over seventy thousand pounds already collected in a campaign not initiated by the Communist Party is that of splitting from communist politics and becoming the daily paper of the broad left trade union movement. Comrade Chater's survival plan is not only equally liquidationist, as the Eurocommunist's plan, but is more so in that it plots a shorter route.

The split between the *Morning Star* and the Communist Party is rooted in the disintegration of ideological unity brought about by the incursion of opportunism over a prolonged period. The attempt to broaden the *Daily Worker's* political appeal and source of finance by setting up the PPPS in 1946 was in itself a divergence from the Leninist party principle and as comrade Halverson reported to the EC in March "the danger of conflict between the Society and Party has existed" ever since. But it was not until the namechange of the *Daily Worker* to *Morning Star* that organisational cracks began to appear as a result. In 1965 Sid French helped set up an opposition to oppose that proposal and it was a mere matter of time before the further advances of opportunism under the impetus of Eurocommunist dynamism brought about further schisms. Comrade Chater's attempt to justify his position in the principled autonomy of the PPPS is 'paper thin'. The PPPS has always been run (up till last year) as a Party organisation in essence, despite

Next month's AGM of the PPPS poses the question yet again: how do we fight the Eurocommunists?

For A Genuine Communist Paper

Frank Grafton

the pretence of being a 'broad organisation' and it is the EC which has always in practice appointed the editor, including comrade Chater himself. The organisational dispute over the relation between the Party and the paper is fundamentally an expression of ideological differences.

Why does comrade Chater therefore not wage an ideological struggle for his position in the Party? Why does he encourage his supporters such as comrade Bernie Steer to make the call "Let's have an end to these attacks on the *Star*, and get the Communist Party back to fighting the class enemy in a united way" (*Morning Star*, letters March 27, 1984) and why are his supporters who are setting up readers groups in Hackney, Haringey and elsewhere refusing to take up the Euros demand for an open debate on the differences?

The plain fact of the matter is that comrade Chater does not want to fight the Eurocommunists, and he does not want to wage a struggle against opportunism and liquidationism, principally because he is a product of that process. He has supported the Party's adoption of progressively rightist reformist programmes over the past thirty years, and still claims that the *Morning Star* is "the daily living embodiment of the *British Road to Socialism*, the strategy for advance to socialism under British conditions worked out by the Communist Party" (Comrade Chater quoted in the *Morning Star*, February 10, 1984). Although comrade Chater agrees with that reformist programme, his dispute with the Euros rests on his intention of promoting it *without them and without the Party*.

The only way to fight the Eurocommunist liquidators is to link that struggle to the struggle against opportunism in general and to regain the perspective of reforging a genuine Leninist Communist Party. It is essential that pro-Party comrades remain within the arena of the Party and wage an open ideological struggle.

Many comrades attack the Eurocommunists for airing differences at meetings called by *Marxism Today* and at *Morning Star* readers meetings, because they consider it wrong to wash the Party's 'dirty linen' publicly. The depends. Yes, we should castigate both the Euros and the Chater-Costelloites for using their contacts among journalists in the bourgeois press, to leak stories to the *Financial Times*, *City Limits*, *New Statesman* and even the *Daily Telegraph*. And we also frown on the Euros using the Trotskyist *Newsline*. But we do not consider it wrong to air differences publicly in the Party press (including opposition publications so long as they are orientated towards the Party like

The Leninist and not away from it like *Straight Left*) as well as Party meetings in which the public is present. This was the method of Lenin. He constantly published his views in papers and pamphlets, even when the Mensheviks had control of the leading Party Committees and official press, and refused to be silenced by the attempts to ban and censor those views. It is only when the working class masses outside the Party can see the debate, will the most revolutionary class conscious elements join the Party with the purpose of joining the fight against opportunism. The *Straight Leftists* and Chater-Costelloites cannot do this because they are not consistently fighting ideologically and they are not fighting openly.

The question therefore arises; how do we use the forum of the PPPS?

The Eurocommunists take the bureaucratic attitude, because it is expedient for them to do so, that the PPPS is a non-Party body, but which must come under the control of the EC. They therefore demand all Communist Party members carry out the decisions of the EC. This is really a case of having your cake and eating it. The Eurocommunists effectively impose centralism on what is in essence a Party organisation and bureaucratically deprive communists of the democratic aspect. But there is more to it than the matter of running the Party paper in such a bureaucratic manner. We must also consider the reality of the situation in the Party. The Eurocommunists have now completely replaced all remnants of democratic centralism in the Party with bureaucratic centralism. They are intent on preventing all expression of differences in the Party press and at public meetings and are making any infringements of this factional ruling a disciplinary matter. Compare Lenin's Party (where oppositions at Congresses were invited to publish their views in pamphlet form in order for the Party to properly weigh the debate) with our own, where comrades are expelled for publishing their views during the period of the Party's supposedly "fullest and freest" debate. It is in these circumstances that the battleground for the inner-Party struggle has had to shift to the terrain of the PPPS.

While the Euros are busy trying to put the screws on this area of debate as well, the opposition around *Straight Left* and the *Morning Star* both use the opportunity of the PPPS to promote their own factions in practice, yet still don't accept in principle the correctness of waging an open ideological struggle. Comrade Chater turns the letter column debates on and off like hot and cold taps as a means of only accommodating his own factional and increasingly non-Party interests. The

Executive Committee has already revealed the degree to which comrade Chater censors and blocks letters, thus confirming the suspicions of many comrades as to why it is so difficult to get letters published, unless they serve the editor's ulterior motives.

A major block to the formation of a united opposition to the Eurocommunists is the question of expulsions. The *Straight Leftists* claim to oppose them and not to recognise them, but have yet to show that this sentiment is applicable to comrades other than their own supporters. The comrades who are following Chater/Costello on the other hand have openly adopted an extremely narrow position. They openly declare that *Straight Left* and *The Leninist* supporters will only get what they deserve, and feel sure that the Euros won't touch them because they remain within the protective shadow of the *Morning Star* much in the same way that the Social Democrats in Germany let Hitler pick off the communists before he came for them. A resolution on the pro-Chater dominated London DC against expulsions only received 7 votes. Moreover, they have already retreated from the task of setting up 'pro-Party' opposition groups by excluding *Straight Leftists* and *Leninists* and transforming them into narrow little Chater/Costello supporters clubs, which do not discuss how to organise comrades who have been expelled, or how to wage an ideological struggle; they have been reduced to the level of discussing how to implement comrade Chater's survival plan, and how to stifle the attempts by various Euros to put them on the spot by demanding an open debate of differences at *Morning Star* readers meetings.

The pro-Chater supporters are counting on the recent indications that the Soviet Union is looking favourably upon the *Morning Star*, having paid a lump sum for a year's supply of the paper in advance, having invited comrade Costello to visit Soviet trade union leaders and furthermore authorised the publication of an article in January by the Soviet Ambassador in London. Other developments moreover which have undoubtedly encouraged comrade McLennan to take a more cautious approach in dealing with the Chater opposition has been the changed attitude of the Soviet Party in openly supporting anti-Eurocommunist oppositions in Spain and in Holland. Yet any attempt by the Chater supporters to form a future alternative Party would be an absolute disaster. The NCP split was not prepared by a consistent ideological struggle either, such that Sid French didn't have a clear policy on most issues simply because they had never been discussed and studied before hand. Yet the NCP was sufficiently rooted in the tradition of the 'fifties to remain a small but totally undynamic entity. With the Chater supporters it is different. Some support comrade Chater's positive interpretation of the 1978 BRS, some support earlier versions and some don't support it at all. Besides the fact that comrade Chater wants a broad labour movement paper and not a party anyway, such a concoction of forces would simply disintegrate if left to stand on their own.

The issue at the 1984 AGMs of the PPPS for all pro-Party comrades must not be whether the *Morning Star* is controlled by the Eurocommunist liquidators or is to be taken out of communist politics altogether by the Chater survival plan. For us, the PPPS provides us with the opportunity to raise an independent pro-Party platform, and to begin to wage a campaign to build a genuine united opposition to Eurocommunism and liquidationism. We call on comrades to use the PPPS AGM as an opportunity to openly wage an ideological struggle against both the positions of comrade Chater and the Eurocommunists. What the Communist Party needs is not a paper of the broad democratic alliance or of the broad left trade unions, but a pro-Communist, pro-Party paper!

OPEN THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE FOR A GENUINE COMMUNIST PAPER.