

The Leninist

Communist Theoretical Journal — Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement



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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

A Call to all Communists

We call upon all genuine communists to join the Communist Party of Great Britain; in particular those in the New Communist Party, the Workers Party, the Revolutionary Communist Group, *Proletarian*, and the John MacLean Collective. We ask these groups and *Straight Left* to answer the following questions.

- 1) What is the Communist Party of Great Britain? Will you join it?
- 2) Is organisational unity with elements under the influence of opportunism always incorrect?
- 3) Is there a world communist movement? Who is in it?
- 4) What stage are we now in?

And, each tendency is asked to outline its general perspectives. We will publish their statements in the next edition of our journal. They are sure to provoke great interest in the revolutionary movement, initiating debates not least inside the various tendencies mentioned above. This is an integral part of our open ideological struggle, which would, as we stated in the *Founding Statement of The Leninist*, have the healthy "effect of drawing new forces into the party." But in order to be won to the party these tendencies must be broken from their sectarianism; this we feel can be done only through comradely discussion and debate.

To build a healthy party, opposed to revisionism, opportunism and sectarianism, the slide to liquidationism must be firmly halted. It is for this reason that we are making our call not only to forces outside the party, but also to the comrades around *Straight Left*, for it represents the most dangerous exponent of liquidationism because it does so from the left.

Before continuing, let's have a brief detour and examine each of the six groups in turn. For although wanting them all to orientate themselves to the party, we have many disagreements with them to overcome before we can win them to Leninism. **The New Communist Party:** a product of the centrist opposition, it split from the party in 1977. It adopts an extremely narrow, even arrogant attitude towards all other revolutionary groups, this not being the result of its strength but of its weakness, a shield to protect its rapidly declining membership from the attentions of other groups. Having no sound theoretical basis, internal unity and cohesion can only be maintained through bureaucratic-centralism — expulsions have thus become common place. Its leadership has the insular and even paranoid psychology so characteristic of a sect. Despite this, because its traditions and world orientation are determined by its placing itself in the world communist movement, it must be considered part of it.

Straight Left: After the NCP split the remaining centrist opposition were promised a monthly paper to rival *The New Worker* and to heighten the inner-party struggle through building a base in the labour movement. But in the hands of leaders such as Harry Steel, the paper, *Straight Left*, became a Frankenstein monster. Posing as a product of the Labour Party, with an Advisory Board of left social-democratic parliamentarians and trade union bureaucrats stitched together to make the sham believable. Like Frankenstein's monster, *Straight Left* threatens to destroy its creator, for they are drawn inextricably towards liquidationism. Supporters of *Straight Left* in the party find themselves in a schizophrenic position: on the one hand they fight to reverse the decline in the party, stand opposed to the growth of revisionism and emphasise the importance of internationalism, yet on the other hand the liquidationism of *Straight Left* leads them out of the party into the mire of the Labour Party.

Proletarian: a publication supported by a group of ex-NCP members from its Wandsworth and Southampton branches.

This group, like the Appeal Group, a split from the CP in 1971, and the Vanguard Group, a split from the NCP in 1979, (both now defunct), is left-centrist, pulled to revolutionary politics but at the same time unable to make the break from a tailist, completely unscientific approach to the policies of the Soviet party and state. Monstrously, because of our comradely criticism of the Polish party we are labelled "anti-Soviet". *Proletarian* like all left-centrists will inevitably face the choice, back to the right or forward to Leninism; their present position is unstable and subjective and cannot survive in its present form for long.

The Revolutionary Communist Group: it emerged from the Revolutionary Opposition which was expelled from the International Socialists (now SWP). On its formation in 1974 it based itself on Trotskyism, a petty-bourgeois ideology from which it only broke in late 1976. Since then it has come to recognise the Soviet Union, Poland, Cuba etc. as socialist states with an important role to play in the struggle against imperialism. But this view is not the result of anything other than a Little England anti-imperialism, a view which leads the RCG to place all their eggs in the 'anti-imperialist struggle' and to dismiss the proletarian class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries and the world communist movement.

The John Maclean Collective: they call themselves a group of non-aligned Marxist-Leninists, who recognise the necessity to build a revolutionary vanguard communist party. They have no publications of which we are aware, but from what we understand they are a group of revolutionaries who have broken with Maoism because of its betrayal of socialism and its capitulation to imperialism.

The Workers Party: it split from the Workers Revolutionary Party in 1979 in order to uphold the "revolutionary heritage of Lenin and Trotsky." But since then its position has evolved, now referring to "Trotskyism" with inverted commas, as if there was no such thing as Trotskyism.

So what are we confronted by? *Straight Left* is in the Party, it is centrist-liquidationist. The New Communist Party is centrist, part of the world communist movement but sectarian. *Proletarian* is left-centrist, and like the NCP, part of the world communist movement and sectarian. The other groups we would define as revolutionary sectarian groups.

We would distinguish the revolutionary sectarian groups from the petty-bourgeois left; this ranges from groups such as the SWP through the myriad constellations of Trotskyism — the IMG, WSL, *Militant*, RCP, Spartacists, WRP, — to the micro sects of Maoism and Enverism. The petty-bourgeois left is opposed to the existing capitalist order but at the same time maintains a bitter hostility to the Soviet Union and the world communist movement. Despite some of these groups having some influence in certain sections of the working class, they represent alien class influences, so while we would fight to win individual members from these groups to communism, there can be no question of them joining the party en bloc.

Such a move in the revolutionary sectarian groups would undoubtedly engender *sharp ideological struggle* through which the remnants of their petty-bourgeois past and their sectarianism can be shed, and a bridge can be created over which the position of Leninism can be found. Likewise with the centrists: *for reunification* with the Communist Party in

the NCP, *against illusions* in the Labour Party among the supporters of *Straight Left*; if these questions are fought on the basis of revolutionary communist unity a bridge to Leninism can be built.

The Question of Method

Marxist analysis must be concrete; it looks upon all questions and important factors in their development, dialectically. It never plucks momentary situations out of history proclaiming their universal validity, but examines particular problems and situations in the light of an overall analysis.

The right-opportunists point to the long tradition of bourgeois democracy, the decades of 'peaceful' development; undoubtedly true, but also undoubtedly not a *permanent feature* of capitalism, as they might like to think. Our centrists likewise elevate a particular facet of reality. For them, it's the growth of the economic power of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, and the victories of the national liberation movement. Yes, they point to a truth, but they relate to Soviet reality in a religious fashion, following every policy change like a shadow. The result is a mockery of Marxism, a critical questioning science is reduced to a catechism to be learnt by rote then regurgitated. Faced with the complexities of the class struggle, problems in the socialist countries and ideological crisis in the communist movement, their only 'independent' answer is to point to 'the stupendous progress of the Soviet Union'. 'All we have to do is follow the Soviets.'

They are thus incapable of leading an ideological offensive against the ever-growing forces of revisionism. It is because of this that we see the centrists visibly run away from the revisionist challenge — into the wilderness goes the NCP, *Straight Left* one foot already in the Labour Party. Yes, the world is moving towards socialism and communism, but this requires struggle and theoretical development; it is not written in the stars and no numbers of 'Long Lives' or 'Hails' will take us an inch nearer our goal.

The revolutionary sectarian groups emphasise the importance of 'ideological purity' and point to the opportunism in our party today. But instead of using this as a starting point they, like the right-opportunists and centrists create a one-sided, passive analysis, devoid of dynamic and struggle, with which they opt out of reality. From their wilderness the sectarians impotently make calls to the masses but are unable to make any real impact.

They castigate the opportunism so prevalent in the communist movement, but using undialectical theory, they throw the world working class out with the opportunist bathwater. Merely pointing to a sin does not cure it, and in only doing this they commit the greatest sin for a revolutionary, that is standing aloof from the workers' movement. Only barren pedants can not see that the world communist movement is *the politically organised working class* in the world today. Tens of millions of class-conscious workers belong to it, parties are organised in most countries and it has established power in sixteen states. This is as much a reality as the existence of opportunism, elevating to supreme importance one or the other can only lead to doctrinarism, either of the centrist or revolutionary sectarian type.

The Communist Party

The Communist Party of Great Britain is part of the world communist movement; it is not a sect which declares itself a party when its membership exceeds the dizzy height of one hundred. As a party it has an organic relationship with the working class, and thus organises a significant section of the vanguard of the class. This combination of international links and its ability to organise class-conscious workers enables it to play an important role in the struggle of the working class. It rests on a living tradition as a militant party of class struggle with a history that stretches back to the early 'twenties; it is closely associated with the October Revolution, and it even

benefits from the mud-slinging against the Soviet Union, through advanced workers using the dictum: who is the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

Despite this, some sectarians dismiss the party with a sneer and a casual wave of the hand, declaring that it is nothing more than a small version of the Labour Party.

Such a contention is fallacious. The Labour Party is a bourgeois workers' party. From its formation in 1900, as the Labour Representation Committee, it has pursued a consistent, undeviating policy of class collaboration. It was created to advance the narrow interests of the labour aristocracy and the burgeoning labour bureaucracy, interests which fully conformed with the continuation and flourishing of British imperialism.

Since then we have seen five Labour governments: 1923-4, 1929-31, 1945-51, 1964-70, 1974-79, all with a justified image of utter loyalty to British capital, all strike-breakers, all anti-Soviet, all vigorously pro-imperialist. How could it be otherwise? The Labour Party was and is a bourgeois party.

That the Communist Party is today under the influence of opportunism is true — who would accuse us Leninists of being unaware of this sad fact? But this opportunism has *not become ripe*, has not passed over to the bourgeoisie and become counter-revolutionary like the Labour Party. This is not because of ideological strength, it's a question of the class struggle and the fact that British imperialism has yet to pass into a crisis of critical proportions. Only then is opportunism faced with the fateful choice of revolution or counter-revolution.

The development of opportunism, of bourgeois ideas in the workers' movement, is inevitable while imperialism exists. Its growth is particularly virulent in 'peaceful' times. While capitalism booms, revisionism flourishes, surreptitiously worming its way into every crevice of our movement, eating Marxism from within, destroying its revolutionary content, leaving a social-reformist husk.

The depth of opportunism in Britain should come as no shock to Marxists; it is something that is the product of historical development itself. It can and must be fought but it can never be completely eliminated while capitalism still breathes. Engels was only too aware of the basis of opportunism; the working class aristocracy "shared in the benefits" of "England's industrial monopoly" (*The Condition of the Working Class in England 1892 Preface*, p.34 London 1972). This condition, originally peculiar to Britain became generalised, fuelling the growth of revisionism and opportunism in the Second International, leading to its eventual split in 1914, into a revolutionary internationalist wing, which became the Third International, and the social-imperialist wing, which today in the form of the Socialist International has become a tool of Western European imperialism.

In our modern era we have witnessed a boom of unprecedented length and dynamism. In Britain, the least dynamic of the imperialist powers, economic growth averaged 2½% per annum throughout the 'fifties and 'sixties, higher than any other comparable period. Between 1948 and 1966, unemployment averaged only around 2% of the workforce (today it's 14%). And, amazingly, the claim in 1954 by the Tory Chancellor Rab Butler that living standards would double in 25 years proved to be no idle boast.

The boom acted like the sun and the rain, but it was the policies pursued by the party in the 'thirties and 'forties, the end of communist organisational unity with the dissolution of Comintern in 1943, and the collapse of international ideological unity, which predated 1943, that was the fertile soil. The effect on our movement could not be anything else but the luxuriant growth of opportunism.

Which class

Some claim that opportunism in the Communist Party is based mainly on its changing class composition. "It's a middle class

party!" they exclaim.

To support this, quotes from Lenin about school teachers in 1900 Russia are produced in the manner of a magician pulling white rabbits out of a hat. Our doctrinaires reduce Marxism to a theological art, a parody of living socialist theory which is based on concrete analysis. Their image of the working class seems to be based on Andy Capp and Lowry paintings. Automation, new bio-, micro- and robot- technology will eventually consign their working class to the museum of history, along with the peasantry, bargees and charcoal burners. For the working class, according to our comrade doctrinaires, is not the class of modern wage labourers who having no means of production of their own are reduced to selling their own labour power in order to live, for them it is confined only to industrial manual labourers.

The development of capitalism, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, created a new middle strata, the office and professional workers. They occupied an intermediate position between the two great classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, adopting a bourgeois outlook, but drawn to the proletariat as *the development of production deprived them of their independent position and converted them into wage slaves*. The long post-war boom had the dual effect of fuelling the growth of opportunism and massively increasing the size of the working class through the process of proletarianisation. The middle strata, the professionals and the petty-bourgeoisie increasingly found themselves reduced to the rank of the working class. Capital demanded an ever more educated work force, a fact reflected in the explosion in 'white collar' trade unions and the growth of a highly skilled strata of the working class, drawing into it the sons and daughters of both the manual workers and the middle strata.

The Communist Party was also inevitably affected by these developments, in its membership composition. We do not have detailed break-downs of the membership of the party, but according to the sociologist Kenneth Newton, the Congresses of the party are "a rough cross-section of the total membership" (*The Sociology of British Communism*, London 1969 p. 44). Looking at the Congresses, we can see that although the relationship between industrial and non-industrial workers has changed, when we consider the changes in the nature of the working class, and the decaying division between mental and manual labour, it can be seen that the party is overwhelmingly proletarian. The percentage of delegates who could be considered part of a middle strata, such as university lecturers and professionals, is very small: at the 1979 Congress they only numbered 30 out of a total of 319 delegates, in other words less than 10% of the total.

While Leninists would be the first to recognise the strategic importance of certain sections of the working class, such as car workers, miners and railway workers, we emphasise the vital question of workers overcoming their sectional interests. This can never come about by calling on the working class as a whole to unite around some sectionally defined "advanced workers"; only through the leadership of a vanguard party can the class come to realise itself fully as a class. The struggle for workers' unity must be the struggle for the hegemony of the vanguard over the class. This can never be achieved by classifying new sections as "middle class". Draughtsmen, nurses, teachers, computer programmers and technicians must be won to the realisation that they have every interest in the dictatorship of the proletariat because they are proletarian. Those who insist on incorrectly categorising them as "middle class" should follow through the logic of their position and call for their expulsion from the ranks of the party. Once this is achieved they should then look for a class alliance with them, as the Bolsheviks allied themselves with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries who represented the petty-bourgeois masses. Such a proposition in Britain has no basis, because the working class consists not of a mere 10% of the population as in pre-revolutionary Russia, but more like 75%; for us, *the struggle for*

hegemony over the working class itself is the central strategic question we face. In Russia, once the Bolsheviks had achieved the leadership of the working class they were still confronted with the necessity of a class alliance with the peasant masses. In the advanced capitalist countries it is the tactics of gaining hegemony over the working class, such as the United Workers' Front, that must exercise us; we have little need to emphasise class alliances. For opportunism to be defeated in the Communist Party requires ideological struggle. In the course of this, it is the ideological junk which has come in with the newly-proletarianised strata that must be expelled, they themselves must be won to the realisation that all forms of petty-bourgeois ideology are nothing but useless baggage. It is *alien ideologies, not alien classes* that must be expelled from the party.

Unity with opportunists

It was only with the outbreak of the First inter-imperialist world war that the ideological differences in the international socialist movement became organisational. In defence of the material privileges which the labour aristocracy and bureaucracy had gained during the 'peaceful' development of imperialism, the opportunists sided with their 'own' bourgeoisie, urged workers to the slaughter and became counter-revolutionary.

In 1914 opportunism became fully social-chauvinist and definitely passed from the camp of the proletariat to that of the bourgeoisie. As a result, the call was made by the Bolsheviks and others of the revolutionary internationalist wing of the socialist movement to replace the rotting corpse of the Second International with a new Third International. It was with its formation in 1919 that the ideological schism was fully expressed; with both the right-opportunists and the centrists like Kautsky and Bauer.

For some narrow-minded sectarians this split is enough. Nothing more needs to be said! Blowing the dust of their *Collected Works* of Lenin, they find what they have been looking for — a quote. "Eureka!" they exclaim. "This proves it!" Then, smugly, they proceed to lecture us that Lenin himself was utterly opposed to any form of organisational unity with opportunists.

In the struggle the Bolsheviks conducted, there were, between 1903 and 1912 periods of several years in which they were united, at least formally, with the Mensheviks in a single party. In remote parts of the country it was only in 1917 that the organisational split between the two wings of the movement became complete. But while united with the opportunists there was an unyielding ideological struggle against the Mensheviks as a bourgeois influence in the workers' movement.

Both the First and Second Internationals contained tendencies that were thoroughly permeated with opportunism.

In the First International, as well as the Marxists there were the English trade unionists, the Anarchists, the Blanquists, the Proudhonists, and the Lassalleans. Although the Second International expelled the Anarchists at the 1896 London Congress, seven years after its foundation, under its banner it organised forces as diverse as the Russian Bolsheviks and the British Fabians.

So we can see that history provides us with rich evidence of *organisational unity* between revolutionaries and opportunists.

What makes this principled for revolutionaries is the unbending struggle they conduct while being organisationally united.

The dissolution of Comintern, the end of Cominform, the inability to organise conferences of the world communist movement (even on the lowest common denominator basis of the 1957, 1960 and 1969 meetings), the call from the Italian and Japanese parties for the closing of the *World Marxist Review*, all bear witness to the fact that the world communist movement's ideological unity is a thing of the *distant past*, but of themselves they do not mean the end of the world communist movement, or for that matter the end for the *need* for international co-ordination.

To turn one's back on this movement is to turn away from the working class itself, a greater sin than any opportunism present in the world communist movement. Sectarian aloofness can only divert revolutionaries into the wilderness, thereby strengthening the position of right-opportunism. It is the world communist movement, the politically organised world's working class, that is pivotal for the world revolution to be successful. To stand aside from this movement is to weaken the struggle for socialist revolution. No pious references to its past and present blemishes can alter this fact.

Being in, fighting in, the world communist movement is no subtle academic debating point to be ruminated over in the fashion of learned dry professors. We are in it because it is our movement. We fight against all bourgeois influences in it, as an absolutely necessary prelude to the struggle for state power itself. For unless the ideological battle is conducted and concluded successfully, the socialist revolution will remain a dream, a beautiful one, but a dream nonetheless.

Ideological struggle in the communist movement must not be carried out in the manner of the sycophantic theologian but in the spirit of Lenin. He emphasised that "Communists are duty bound, not to gloss over short-comings in their movement but to criticise them openly so as to remedy them the more speedily and radically." (V.I. Lenin, *C.W.* vol.31, p.184).

In Britain the struggle for socialism is greatly enhanced by party unity. Our forces are tiny, to demand a split would be to demand suicide — something we have no intention of doing. Leninists are not motivated by the 'principle' of organisational 'purity'; *organisational matters are determined by and subordinated to the overall struggle.*

If organisational matters were combined with a hiding of fundamental ideological differences, if we stood in front of the workers and concealed our abhorrence of certain positions in the party, then we would be unprincipled. But this is not the case — we fight openly.

Trendy Publications

Unfortunately today because of the growth of opportunism, there is the tendency towards party publications becoming the possessions of particular trends. Look at *Marxism Today* to see this truth; a few years ago you could read in its columns debate between party members of different trends, now we have Euro-communism and polemic from forces outside the ranks of communism. We even have some from outside the workers' movement, like John Alderson, former Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, having pages devoted to their reactionary platitudes. The situation with *Comment* was little different, it read rather like a Euro-communist house magazine, in which other trends were seldom seen. Although not officially a 'party organ', the *Morning Star* does print letters on subjects such as Ireland and Poland from comrades who differ with the party leadership. But its neutral journalistic style (enshrined as a doctrine 'guaranteeing' success) inevitably moves it towards exclusiveness in the party, ironically in an attempt to be 'broad left'.

It is therefore not surprising that comrades around *Straight Left* would not be seen dead selling *Marxism Today*. Many are now reluctant even to sell the *Morning Star*. They have some justification in not wanting to build publications to which they have little or no access.

When channels in the party press are not open other outlets are created, i.e., *Straight Left*. Other such publications are bound to become more numerous unless the pages of the party press are open to all shades in our movement.

It is from the basis of a commitment to Leninism that we deal with all questions, but this said we shall give space to polemic between comrades. Differences can therefore be studied and judged by communists, in Britain and around the world, and by all class-conscious workers.

We have published *The Leninist* as part of the battle to defeat

bourgeois ideas in the labour movement, and our first task, as we made clear in the *Founding Statement of The Leninist*, is to defeat the liquidators. They come from two directions: the Euro-communists, who are the leading revisionists, eating Marxist theory away from within, striving at the same time to dissolve the party into the petty-bourgeois milieu; and: *Straight Left*, the liquidationist-centrists, who from the other wing of the party desire to become some sort of pro-Soviet *Militant* in the Labour Party. In the ideological struggle against these liquidationist trends, all pro-party trends must be united. To be pro-party, in the full sense, requires a commitment to an active struggle against liquidationism. There is a pro-party position and there is conciliation, they are not the same.

Party Discipline

Although there are deep divisions in the party this in no way negates the necessity of *fighting for democratic centralism* as the corner-stone of party organisation. Centralism and democracy complement each other and together constitute the foundation of party organisation and work. The acceptance of centralism without democracy, or of democracy without centralism means to reject unity in action. Centralism means that the party has a leading body, a set of rules, that party organisations are subordinated to higher ones, and in essence the minority submit to the majority and therefore decisions on actions by the majority are mandatory. Democracy means that all important decisions are arrived at as a result of full discussion by all party members. And that once these decisions have been carried out all have the right to critically examine the action in the light of experience.

Democratic centralism *presumes freedom of discussion* of party policy on the basis of criticism and self-criticism, as a basis of exposing and eliminating defects in its outlook. As such criticism and self-criticism constitutes one of the most important aspects of democratic centralism, serving the needs of the class struggle. The fight for democratic centralism split the Russian revolutionary workers' movement in 1903. The Mensheviks opposed the concept of a disciplined party, where the minority submit to the majority and carry out party decisions. They were in favour of federalism in the party and for allowing individual members to opt out of party actions and activity, to ignore majority decisions. The Bolsheviks demanded that all members carry out party decisions under the leadership of a party organisation. For them, as their history proves, centralism provided the best conditions for the development of inner-party democracy. Their democracy strengthened the centralised leadership, enabling them to achieve an iron disciplined unity of action.

There are for instance, many examples of Lenin himself conducting debate concerning vital principles openly in front of the masses. Perhaps the most striking case was in 1917. On returning to Russia after years of exile Lenin submitted his views of the necessity of continuing the revolution, of the task of overthrowing the Provisional government, to the Central Committee. Although they rejected his views this did not prevent him from taking the question to the All-Russia Conference of Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets, and then to the Petrograd Party Conference and finally to the Seventh Conference of the Bolsheviks, where his position won the day.

The prime aim of democratic centralism is unity in action. Lenin maintained that "the principle of democratic centralism.. implies universal and full freedom to criticise, so long as this does not disturb the unity of a definite action; it rules out all criticism which disrupts or makes difficult the unity of an action decided on by the Party." (V.I. Lenin, *C.W.* Vol. 10, p.443). Before a specific action, open criticism of a proposed course is legitimate, after it vital, but not during it.

We will therefore oppose all those who sweep under the carpet the problem of the large numbers of inactive members — is their present state compatible with party rules? Likewise, we *fully support the carrying-out of party actions*, in demonstra-

tions, in giving out national, district, or branch leaflets, in selling the *Morning Star*, in fighting for party candidates during elections, and agitating in favour of specific party actions in front of the masses.

"Let us take an example," writes Lenin, "The Congress decided that the Party should take part in Duma elections. Taking part in elections is a very definite action. During the elections (...) no member of the Party anywhere has any right whatever to call upon people to abstain from voting; nor can 'criticism' of the decision to take part in elections be tolerated during this period, for it would in fact jeopardise success in the election campaign. Before elections have been announced, however, Party members everywhere have a perfect right to criticise the decision to take part in elections. Of course the application of this principle in practice will sometimes give rise to disputes and misunderstandings; but only on the basis of this principle can all disputes and misunderstandings be settled honourably for the Party." (V.I. Lenin, *C.W.*, Vol 10 p.442-3).

Our complete *commitment to unity in action* is an *integral part of fighting openly on all questions of principle*. But, in our view, *refusal to carry out party work*, disruption or boycotting specific actions can only be regarded as tantamount to *refusal to remain* in the party.

What stage?

Theory gives an understanding of what stage of the struggle we are in. If it is faulty, horrors abound: the Third Congress of the NCP described a pre-revolutionary situation; the very name the Workers Party must provoke a wry smile, for 'party' membership is counted in tens; and *Straight Left* is fighting for yet another Labour government as the solution to 'our' country's ills.

It is to avoid such travesties, to give us a sure revolutionary perspective that we place such emphasis on the development of our theoretical position. Our answer as to what stage we are now in can be found in the article by Frank Grafton, *The Economic Crisis and its Political Effects in Britain*. We argue that the world capitalist system is heading for general crisis. Our task at present is to win the vanguard to the cause of revolutionary politics through ideological and political struggle. But talk of a revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation now, of building the mass revolutionary party now, has more to do with the leadership of sects attempting to keep their followers on the boil and in their group (or even 'party'), than with serious political analysis.

As our task is one of preparation, we concentrate on developing understanding of central theoretical questions: the coming general crisis of capitalism; problems in the socialist countries; the fight against opportunism and the necessity of working class unity. We must study these questions in great detail going from mere appearance to the essence of the problems. Observed reality as spun forth one-sidedly by so many groups is totally inadequate. We have to understand the essential characteristics, the interconnections, the laws, that underlie the observed facts. It is from this understanding that revolutionaries can confidently face the task of changing the world. This fight will of itself again strengthen our knowledge of reality and thus our ability to change it. For ideas formed in people's minds depend on prior existence of material things and relationships, but they have an active role once arisen, reacting back upon the material conditions.

In Russia, in the years 1903 to 1917, the Bolsheviks confronted rich and varied conditions. War and peace; small propagandist circles and Soviets; revolution and reaction; legal and illegal work; exile and state power. Russia's lessons were general; all the general contradictions in capitalism could be found there.

One thing above all made abundantly clear in Russia is that revolution has its peaks and troughs, and that in the light of them an infinitely flexible attitude towards tactics must be shown. Elevating one tactic or the other can only result in the parody of party building practised by the theosophic leaders of

small sects. Therefore we emphasise the need to break from doctrinaireism, from narrow-minded theoretical routinism; Marxism-Leninism is a science that questions everything and that is open to all the new questions which inevitably confront us, with each turn of events.

In ancient Greek mythology, Odysseus on sailing past the island of the Sirens put wax pellets into the ears of his crew so that they would not succumb to their seductive songs. But so he could experience the ravishing melodies, he had himself lashed to the mast of the ship; he was therefore safe from yielding to their enticements. It is much the same with centrist leaders; pro-party centrist, liquidationist-centrist, and sectarian-centrist, all rush into *Collets* to buy their copy of *The Leninisi* and other forbidden fruits. At the same time their followers are inculcated with a disdain for theory, trained in a doctrinaire fashion that produces, it is hoped, the unquestioning acceptance of someone pumped full of tranquillisers. The result is often cynical despair, and eventually desertion into private life.

The fact that centrism is in theoretical and organisational crisis is plain to see; splits, factions, and poaching abound. Many good comrades, still under the domination of centrism, are aware now that the 1979, 1981 or 1983 'plan' of winning a mathematical majority in the party was a fantasy. Most instinctively shy away from the liquidationist-centrist *Straight Left* option; but can the pro-party centrists lead the fight against the ideological steamroller driven by comrades Jacques, Johnstone, Bloomfield and Rowthorn? Judging by their output so far, it seems improbable.

A new call

Inspired by the October Revolution the best elements of the revolutionary and working class movement came together to form the Communist Party. These forces had previously often been in *bitterly opposed* organisations. The British Socialist Party and the Socialist Labour Party (which between them provided the bulk of the C.P.'s membership) had completely different views on the Labour Party and parliamentary activity. These and other differences were resolved through the fraternal aid of Comintern and comradely debate. Likewise, disagreements amongst the other groups forming the party were resolved and unity forged. As a result, the newly formed CPGB attracted into its ranks the most healthy elements from all the existing revolutionary groups as well as from the left of the ILP, and many of the syndicalist inclined leaders of the Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committees (established to bypass the labour bureaucracy during the war) came to the party.

In July 1920 the BSP issued *The Call for a Communist Party*. It invited all other revolutionary groups to join in the formation of a revolutionary party which would seek affiliation to the Third International. *The Call* outlined three major principles which can again become a rallying point for all communists. They were:

- 1) **Communism as against Capitalism**
- 2) **Soviets not Parliament**
- 3) **The dictatorship of the proletariat**

It is on the basis of these three principles that communist unity can be built, but this cannot be created with a wave of the magician's wand. It is something that has to be painstakingly nurtured ideologically and forged in the heat of the class struggle. Grand proclamations of party unity, given the present deep divisions, can only be a sham, destined to shatter at the first serious test.

The conditions in which the early Communist Party emerged were full of possibilities, but they were not revolutionary. This time communist unity will be forged in a world that is very different. Not only is there now a community of socialist states, but British capitalism no longer has the world's largest empire to fall back upon in order to cushion itself as it had in the last general crisis of capitalism.

This time things will be very different. ■

The Economic Crisis and its Political Effects in Britain (Part Two)

Frank Grafton

The crisis of imperialism

The emergence of imperialism at the beginning of this century represented a qualitatively higher stage than the era of competitive capitalism; and the first general crisis of imperialism (1914-1948) had a far greater revolutionary impact than the ten-year recurring crises prior to 1870 with the creation of the Soviet Union after 1917 and the socialist system after 1945. Furthermore, imperialism rose to a higher economic and political level during the post second world war boom and is approaching a future world general crisis of even greater revolutionary proportions than the decades during and between the two world wars.

The development of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism is still determined by the general laws revealed in Marx's *Capital*, and if the general tendency underlying capitalist development towards crisis is the falling rate of profit, then it manifests itself specifically at the imperialist stage as the tendency towards *monopoly*. Capitalism in the nineteenth century championed free trade and competition by waging open war against all monopoly barriers to its development. Capitalism then, was carrying out the overthrow of Feudal society, sweeping aside all the fetters of absolutism and the Landed classes. 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' was the revolutionary slogan of the bourgeoisie. But out of the competitive struggle of both economics and politics, grew monopoly. It may seem paradoxical, but at the height of the competitive capitalist era during the 1850s and 1860s, England enjoyed a manufacturing and trading *monopoly*, as the 'Workshop of the World'. In the imperialist era, monopoly not only grew out of free competition, but became the dominant tendency in all aspects of capitalism. Monopoly was synonymous with the capitalist class finally winning total domination of state power and becoming reactionary, as it overthrew all the ideas with which it stormed the barricades of Paris, Berlin and Vienna. Monopoly grew and strengthened its grip during the slide towards overproduction and crisis, but found its fullest expression actually during the general crisis itself. Monopoly became an absolute block to production between 1914 and circa 1948, giving rise to intense crises of economic collapse, imperialist wars and revolutionary situations on an international scale.

Although the general tendency is towards monopoly, this does not preclude the possibility of competition temporarily growing from monopoly. The phases of the economic cycle which remove

the obstacles to capitalist development, become characterised by the diminution of monopoly restrictive practices, and this was considered quite possible by Lenin, when he stated as early as 1916 in *Imperialism*:

"Certainly, monopoly under capitalism can never completely, and for a very long period of time, eliminate competition in the world market... certainly, the possibility of reducing the cost of production and increasing profits by introducing technical improvements operates in the direction of change." (V.I. Lenin. CW Vol 22. p.276 Moscow 1977)

It thus arose, that at the zenith of the imperialist epoch during the 1950s and 1960s, monopoly capitalism experienced a phenomenal growth of free trade and competition.

Lenin described imperialism as growing out of the general process of capital accumulation, and showed monopoly to manifest itself in the following ways: (1) concentration of industrial capital to form cartels, syndicates and trusts. (2) concentration of bank capital and its merger with monopoly industrial capital to form finance capital. (3) the seizure of raw material resources by monopoly capital and the financial oligarchy. (4) the division of the world market between international monopolist associations, where the export of capital as against the export of commodities becomes the characteristic means of expansion.

Imperialism grew out of the era of competitive capitalism, at a time when advanced industrial capitalist development was confined to Britain, Germany and the US, and to a lesser extent, France, Russia, Japan and Italy. Imperialism expanded from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century in the particular form of building colonial empires and dominating semi-dependencies. The extreme backwardness of Africa and Asia provided the major imperialist powers with easily oppressed, exploited colonial populations and rich resources, from which superprofits could be expropriated. Yet the form of the world imperialist system today is quite different, because although its inner mechanism hasn't changed, imperialism has been forced to adapt to the changing balance of world forces, with the rise of the socialist countries and National Democratic Movements.

This article seeks to show that imperialism today is more highly developed economically and politically than monopoly capitalism prior to 1950, and that the basis has been laid for an even sharper world revolutionary crisis, which threatens to finally break the back of imperialism as a system, and bring to an end the imperialist epoch. Secondly, imperialism intensifies class contradictions to the highest degree, and thus

prepares the road to revolution. We must look to our role as communists in leading and raising the economic and political struggle of the working class, and in recognising our tasks of bringing the class struggle to revolutionary fruition, we must understand and use all forms of that struggle. Lenin emphasised that in order for the proletariat to do battle with the bourgeoisie proper, it must simultaneously wage a fierce *ideological* struggle against opportunism — the agent of the bourgeoisie within. Only if *all* sides of the class struggle are fought, can a communist party be built and a socialist revolution be won.

POST-SECOND WORLD WAR DEVELOPMENTS OF IMPERIALISM

Imperialism emerged after 1945 into a period where most blocks to capitalist development had been removed, fundamentally due to the rising rate of profits throughout the 1950s and 1960s (See *The Leninist No.2 The Economic Crisis Pt. One*) For twenty years or so, nearly all branches of the world capitalist economy were able to temporarily offset the *tendency* towards monopoly and stagnation, which in combination with the scientific and technological revolution, resulted in a complete transformation of the world economy. Most of the major cartel agreements and trade tariffs restricting international markets and production were broken up during the late 'forties and early 'fifties, through a tightening of anti-trust laws. The US Department of Justice, for instance, took legal actions against the operation of monopoly restrictive practices by the National Lead Company, Du Pont, Alcoa and ICI, and furthermore, the US Federal Trade Commission published a document attacking the oil companies, making it difficult for them to re-establish any formal international cartel agreement (See C. Tugendhat. *The Multinationals*. Harmondsworth. p.53. 1971). The US imperialist state was not acting against monopoly capitalism in doing this, but enforcing changes appropriate to the new conditions of world economic growth.

The blocks to investment and profitability due to high interest rates had been effectively weakened with the collapse of the international credit system during the 1929—33 slump. Interest rates fell to their absolute minimum, and although they began to rise again during the 1950s, credit was still relatively cheap and easy.

Finally, the monopoly control of colonies by Britain and France was ended by the successful rise of National Democratic Movements throughout Africa and Asia. The economic loss of these colonies, although fiercely resisted by the colonial powers was not immediately felt, due to the particularly favourable conditions for economic growth. In fact, US imperialism in particular, seized the opportunity to open up the Middle East, Africa and Asia to international oil and mineral investments, thus releasing a tremendous productivity in cheap raw material resources. It is in this context, that US imperialism favoured decoloni-

alisation as part of the settlement of the new postwar world order and opposed British and French attempts to continue colonial policy during the Suez crisis of 1956. However, it is important to note, that the decisive, consistent factor which has swung the balance in favour of national liberation to the present day, has been the growing strength of the socialist system, and in particular, the political, economic and military resources of the Soviet Union.

Imperialist integration

The essence of postwar capitalist development is *international integration*. The reformation of a stable international monetary system at Bretton Woods in 1943 and the negotiation of a General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947 both laid the basis for a renewed growth in world trade and prosperity. In the OECD countries (top twenty capitalist economies), annual growth of exports was an unprecedented 8½% between 1962 and 1973. Regulations on international flows of capital were liberalised, with restrictions on holding paper currencies outside the country of origin being finally removed after 1958. The imperialist economies became more closely knitted, giving rise to an integrated system of imperialism centred on the US, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, and more peripherally, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Israel. The movement of capital and trade between these economies was facilitated by international agreement, transnational company operations, and trade blocs such as the EEC and EFTA. Furthermore the demand by US imperialism for political and military integration and imperialism's recognition as a whole of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries as the common enemy, brought about the formation of imperialist military blocs against 'the threat of communism', primarily NATO.

The most important developments underlying these changes was the formation of international financial organisations, with the IMF and the World Bank at the apex, and the growth of transnational or 'multinational' corporations, which have brought about a massive qualitative change in the international division of labour. Transnational companies expanded by establishing subsidiaries in several countries, and exported capital, not as interest-bearing capital (known as portfolio investment), but as factories and machinery. This became known as 'Direct investment', and it was during the 1950s and 1960s that direct investment became the most important form of capital export. Christopher Tugendhat, a Tory MP with close connections to the City of London and a former correspondent with the *Financial Times*, notes in his book *The Multinationals*:

"The period since the end of the Second World War has seen a complete transformation from the situation prevailing between the wars. It has been marked by an explosive expansion in international direct investment, which for much of the time has been rising at twice the rate of the world gross national product. The international company with subsidiaries in many countries is no longer a rarity; it is well on the way to becoming the characteristic industrial organisation of the age." (C. Tugendhat. *The Multinationals* p.45)

According to *North-South*, the report by the

Brandt commission published in 1980, transnational companies control between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ of all world production and have total sales of all affiliates of about \$830 billion. In trade, for example, 30% of British exports are accounted for by trade between subsidiaries of the same company, such as Ford (UK) and Ford of Germany and Belgium. OECD figures estimated that direct investments in 1966 totalled \$90 billion with an annual growth of 12% (*The Multinationals* p.21), and this had risen to over \$270 billion by 1975 (*North-South* p.187). The initial impetus for direct investment expansion came from the US, where about 60% of all transnational companies were based, rising from \$7.2 billion in 1946 to \$70.8 billion in 1969, of which \$21.5 billion was invested in Europe (US Department of Commerce). What we can say therefore, is that political and economic integration of the world imperialist economy under the overwhelming hegemony of the United States, stemmed from a massive growth in trade and international direct investment, for which the giant transnational monopolies were primarily responsible. By climbing to a higher level, world imperialism has in effect prepared the way for a greater fall.

Concentration and centralisation

Simultaneous with the international growth of capital was its continuing concentration and centralisation, such that fewer capitalists tended to control greater proportions of the economy. This is closely associated with increasing productivity, and contributes to the forces which in turn, reduce the rate of profit. By the late 'sixties, the concentration of capital had reached such a high level that the factors counteracting the falling rate of profit were overcome. (See *The Leninist* No.2 Part One.) The tendency for the rate of profit to fall once again resumed its determining influence over the world capitalist economy. An idea of the growth of the largest transnational companies can be seen from *Figure 1.*, which shows their sales output compared to the GNP of some of the smaller European economies. In fact 23 US and six European companies had sales of over \$3 billion a year in 1969. The vast bulk of international investments were held by the largest companies, with just Standard Oil (New Jersey), Ford and General Motors alone holding 40% of US direct investments in France, Britain and W.Germany during the

Figure 1

Gross national products (\$000 m)		Sales (\$000m)	
	1970		
Holland	31.28	General Motors	18.75
Sweden	30.77	Standard Oil (N.J.)	16.55
Belgium	25.88	Ford	14.98
Switzerland	20.31	Royal Dutch/Shell	10.79
Denmark	15.57	IBM	7.50
Austria	14.37	Unilever	6.88
Norway	11.39	Phillips	4.16
Finland	10.22	ICI	3.50
Greece	9.39	Hoechst	1.42
Ireland	3.89	Alcan Aluminium	1.36

(Source: C.Tugendhat, *The Multinationals*, p.20, Harmondsworth, 1971)

Figure 2

U.S. percentage of total assets held by:

	Top 100 companies	Top 200 companies
1925	34.5%	—
1929	38.2%	45.8%
1933	42.5%	49.5%
1939	41.4%	58.7%
1954	41.9%	50.4%
1939	41.4%	58.7
1954	41.9%	50.4%
1958	46.0%	55.2%
1962	45.5%	55.1%
1965	45.9%	55.6%
1968	48.4%	60.4%

U.K. percentage share of largest hundred firms in net manufacturing output.

1909	1935	1949	1958	1963	1970
16%	24%	21%	32%	37%	46%

(Source: *International Socialism* 2:16, p.71)

'sixties, whereas $\frac{2}{3}$ of all US direct investment in Europe was held by a mere *twenty companies*.

The effect of this massive concentration of capital on national economies, can be seen from *Figure 2.* An incredible $\frac{2}{3}$ of both the US and UK economies are owned and controlled by just 200 companies! This historic tendency towards concentration accelerated towards the end of the 1960s, with a dramatic explosion of mergers throughout Western Europe. The driving force behind this process was the demand for 'economies of size', and was especially visible in Britain and France, where the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation and the Institut de Development Industriel were specially set up by the state to facilitate rationalisation.

The general point which can be drawn, is that despite the increasing concentration and socialisation of capital throughout the 'fifties and 'sixties, the tendency towards monopoly restrictive practice was inhibited, so long as the rate of profit continued to rise. Once the rate of profit began to decline again, however, the drive for monopoly in the face of rising overproduction actually accelerated the centralisation of capital through mergers and cartel agreements. It is to the decades of the 1970s and 1980s which we must turn, to trace the ever growing grip of monopoly on the world market.

Acceleration towards crises and monopoly

The most visible milestone dividing the postwar boom with its relatively free development and competition, from the present period of overproduction and revitalized drive to monopoly, was the quadrupling of oil prices by the oil cartel OPEC in 1973. The Bretton Woods International Monetary System had already collapsed in 1971, and the GATT agreements on free trade were coming under extreme pressure in the imperialist economies, as export competition from Japan and the medium developed capitalist economies of the Far East and Latin America intensified. Shipbuilding

experienced an absolute decline, with major producers like Britain being forced to nationalise the industry and close down shipyards. Steel likewise developed immense problems of overcapacity, and in 1980, the EEC introduced Mandatory Production Controls over member countries, forcing a 14.2% cutback in output. Trade relations between the US and the EEC have since become strained, with the former reducing steel quotas from Europe in 1982. Similarly, the European petrochemicals industry suffered a 30% fall in demand during 1980, as the rise in oil prices began to bite. The European Commission subsequently imposed duties on the much cheaper petrochemicals imported from the US. Another industry which has come under pressure is textiles, where a Multifibre Agreement was negotiated in 1977, to restrict exports to the EEC, from medium developed capitalist producers in Asia, such as S.Korea, Hong Kong and India. In the Car Industry, European and American manufacturers began to face a major challenge from the Japanese companies, with British Leyland and Chrysler falling as the main victims.

Competition in the 1970s and 1980s has become a dangerous and cut-throat affair, and so monopoly capital has acted to restrict it in order to safeguard their superprofits, through mergers, forcing out rivals and negotiating cartel agreements. Today, whole branches of industry and world markets are divided up between a handful of transnational monopolies. For instance, 75% of the US car market is held by Fords and General Motors, as is the case with Nissan and Toyota in Japan. As a proportion of the world market, 10 European car companies control 27.7% and General Motors alone has 22.6% (*Financial Times* Jan. 12, 1981). World Aerospace is dominated by the American giants Boeing, Lockheed and McDonnell-Douglas, and IBM controls over 50% of the world computer market. But perhaps the widest known example of monopoly are the seven 'international majors' which account for 80% of oil production outside of the US and Soviet Union — Standard Oil (New Jersey), Mobil Oil, Chevron, Gulf Oil, Texaco, Shell and BP. Since the 1970s, Japanese companies have come to the fore for the first time in many industries such as electronics and machine tools, and the Japanese Ministry for International Trade and Industry (MITI) has been promoting joint projects and tie ups with American and European monopoly companies. In this way, the Japanese companies have offset growing trade restrictions and are integrating themselves in with the monopolist associations, which are carving up the world market between themselves.

In Britain, the overproduction of capital and the tendency towards monopoly and stagnation is particularly marked, with whole industries being forced to retreat from competition in the world market. This is shown by the fact that British Leyland, shipbuilding, aerospace, computers and Rolls-Royce have all been nationalised in the 1970s and companies like ICI, General Electric, Courtaulds and British Petroleum have come to

dominate whole branches of the British-owned economy, as smaller rival capitals are absorbed or go into liquidation. This process is accelerated during the periodic world recessions, for monopoly is a means of off-loading losses onto smaller, weaker capitals, and with cutbacks of 15% for British manufacturing since 1980, these pressures have become especially fierce.

During the postwar boom, the absence of barriers to expansion gave rise to an explosion in world trade and direct investments. Capital export then was initially the domain of American and British transnational companies, while West Germany and Japan concentrated almost exclusively on expansion through commodity exports. West Germany became the world's largest exporter of manufactured goods in the 1960s and is second to the US today, in total exports with 10.5% of world trade, while Japan has been rapidly catching up to become third largest with 6.3%. Consequently, both the US and Britain have suffered a relative decline in world trade since 1945. As overproduction in the 1970s gave rise to restrictions on export markets, so the export of capital became more important for continued expansion. For West Germany and Japan, this has meant becoming major exporters of direct investment for the first time, as a means of securing their massive shares of the world market against the growing threat of tariffs. For example, the West German car manufacturers Volkswagen began to invest in production in North and Latin America during the 1970s and now produces over a million cars annually abroad. The growth of VW car production in West Germany for 1980 was down 0.2% on 1970 figures, whereas overseas production had increased 109% over the same period. Similar trends are shown for Daimler-Benz, which now controls 10% of US heavy truck production. (*Financial Times* October 19, 1981). Direct investment by Japanese companies have until recently been quite modest, yet it nearly doubled to \$8.9 billion in 1980/81, with the bulk of it in Indonesia (\$2.4bn) and the US (\$2.3bn). Direct capital exported to the EEC rose 38% to \$798 million for the same year, and figures published by the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry have shown an explosion of EEC-Japan projects since 1979, involving joint research and development, co-operation in third markets and capital investment in cars, machine tools and electronics (*Financial Times*, July 5, 1982). For most medium developed capitalist countries like S.Korea, which have also begun to expand their share of the world market, the export of capital is not really possible; restrictions on their trade exports to the imperialist economies are becoming a real block to their expansion from which they find it difficult to escape, unlike Japan. The inability of medium developed capitalist countries to expand by becoming imperialist, is giving rise to an intensification of economic and political crisis within them, and makes them the primary centres of instability and revolutionary situations, which we shall look at in more detail in a later section.

Export of finance capital

The development of imperialism resulted in the formation of finance capital from the merger of industrial and bank monopoly capitals. Finance capital is the highest form of capital, and comes to dominate capital in general, because it is not confined to any one sphere of production or exchange. Finance capital stands over the reproduction of capital as a whole, controlling production, circulation of commodities and money. Finance capital not only includes the international banks, which increasingly intervene in all aspects of the economy, but also the giant transnationals, which all have special 'finance departments' for investing funds inside the company as well as outside. And of course, the state itself becomes a major focal point of finance capital as it intervenes in production via nationalised industries, and directs investments through public spending, National banks and grants to capitalist enterprises. Because capitalist accumulation can only continue during periods of overproduction through credit promotion i.e. the lending of money capital (See *The Leninist* No.2), and because the most critical link in the reproduction cycle becomes money-capital, so finance capital intervenes in and dominates capitalist reproduction by controlling money-capital. For this role, finance capital expropriates surplus value in the form of interest, which increasingly takes the largest share of profit, and in the most extreme case, finance capital extracts all profit as interest.

The export of finance capital due to overseas bank lending has literally exploded in the 1970s, to replace direct investments as the most important form of capital export. World annual growth in international lending since 1976 has been around 20%, and Lloyd's Bank estimated it to have risen \$315 billion in 1981 and says it will increase by \$355 billion in 1982 (*Financial Times* Survey, May 4th 1982). UK annual overseas investments stood at £462 million in 1967, trebled to £1,290 million by 1975 and then quintupled to £6401 million by 1979, since which time all barriers to movements of capital out of Britain have been removed. UK overseas profits as a percentage of gross trading profits rose from an annual average of 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ % for the 1960s, to an average of 21% for the 1970s with a peak figure for 1974 of 26.6% (*Economic Trends* 1981). US statistics for overseas investment and profits show a similar trend, and furthermore, they are broken down to differentiate between Direct investments, Government investments (military aid etc) and non-direct investments i.e. financial investments. As a proportion of the total US overseas investments, direct capital rose throughout the 1950s and 1960s as the largest category, to a peak of 47% in 1970, from which it has since fallen to 39% for 1977. Financial investment however, has risen from around 25% for the 1960s, to become the largest share with 43% in 1977 (*Historical Statistics of the US*, and *Statistical Abstracts of the US*).

All of this confirms our picture of the imperialist economies, which have increasingly faced problems of overproduction since the 1970s, and whose growth has generally come to rely, not on export trade and direct investments, but on credit transactions and the export of finance capital. This process stretches capitalism to its limits, and as a result intensifies all class contradictions and crises.

Post-colonial development

Because imperialism is the stage at which capitalism outgrows national boundaries and draws the whole world capitalist economy onto a genuine international division of labour, it accelerates the growth of industrialisation and capitalist relations on a world scale. The National Democratic movements arose as a product of this process. To say, however, that imperialism has been abolished with colonialism is merely to consider the superficial and overlooks the essence of what imperialism is:

"It would be absurd", Lenin says, "to deny that some slight change in the political and strategic relations of, say, Germany and Britain, might today or tomorrow make the formation of a new Polish, Indian or other similar state fully 'practicable'". He goes on, "finance capital, in its drive to expand, can 'freely' buy or bribe the democratic or republican government and the elective officials of any, even an 'independent country.' The domination of finance capital and of capital in general is not to be abolished by any reforms in the sphere of political democracy." (V.I.Lenin *The Socialist Revolution and Self Determination*. CW. Vol 22. p.145).

This is precisely what happened in many former colonial countries, where foreign finance capital continued to rule by means of neo-colonialism. This is still true to a large extent of Ireland and of many backward African states, where domestic capital is small-scale and weak, and where puppet regimes can be installed, such Diem of South Vietnam and Mobutu of Zaire. However, the victory of national bourgeois movements in many countries has also given rise to a process of industrialisation through combined foreign capital investment and domestic capital formation. In many developing capitalist countries, the state has been recruited in order to lay the foundations of infrastructure (roads, rail, schools etc.) and large scale industry, such as iron and steel, electricity and transport. In conjunction with this state capitalism has grown domestic monopoly capital, which is integrating with the state sector of the economy and with foreign finance capital. This is particularly characteristic of those capitalist economies intermediate between the imperialist and under-developed capitalist countries, which we refer to as medium-developed capitalist countries e.g. Brazil, South Korea, Argentina and Turkey.

Newly industrialising capitalist countries

Many developing capitalist countries have been receiving greater attention since the 1970s, due to their increasing competitiveness in export markets, and their importance as raw material producers e.g. oil. *Figure 3*. from the *UN Yearbook*

Figure 3

	1967		1979	
	Developed economies	Developing economies	Developed economies	Developing economies
Electrical machinery	68	37	136	160
Transport equipment	80	34	124	127
Heavy manufacturing	75	49	126	130
Manufacturing	77	58	123	125
All industry	76	61	123	120

	% Annual growth rates, 1967-1979	
	Developed	Developing
Transport equipment		3.7
Electrical machinery	6.0	13.0
Heavy manufacturing	4.4	8.5
All industry	4.1	5.8

(Source: *UN Yearbook of industrial statistics 1979*)

of *Industrial Statistics 1979* compares industrial growth rates for the imperialist OECD economies with those of the developing economies. It shows the developing countries to have the higher rates, which in some spheres are double that of the imperialist economies' growth.

As a proportion of world manufacturing, the developing countries have a very small share, which has grown from 7% in the 1960s to 9% in 1977, but because of higher growth rates, the developing countries have also increased the proportion of their non-fuel exports as manufactures, from 10% in 1955, to 20% in 1965 and over 40% for 1975 (See *North-South* p.174). Much of this development is confined to about 15 medium developed capitalist countries, where up to 25% of the labour force is employed in manufacturing, and which receive 70% of all transnational company direct investment to developing countries (Brazil and Mexico alone receive 20%). *Figure 4* shows that although the low income countries fare badly compared to the imperialist economies, the medium developed capitalist countries have actually overtaken them in the last decade in terms of growth rates for trade and GNP. For instance, South Korea has experienced annual growth rates of 9% since the 'sixties, as has Mexico since the late 'seventies. Brazil has increased value-added by manufacture from \$11.9 billion in 1960 to \$57.4 billion in 1980 (1980 dollars), and exports for the same period have increased from \$3.2 billion to \$20 billion; but more striking are the figures for South Korean manufactured exports, which show a remarkable rise from \$10 million in 1963 to \$11.2 billion in 1977 — over a thousand-fold increase! In certain industries, medium developed capitalist countries have made a major

Figure 4

Rate of growth of GNP/person (1977, dollars)

	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80
Industrial countries	3.1	3.9	2.4
Middle income	2.5	3.4	3.1
Low income	0.6	1.7	1.7

Rate of growth of foreign trade

	1950-60		1960-70		1970-80	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
Industrial countries	—	—	8.7	9.4	5.7	5.1
Middle income	—	—	5.5	6.8	5.2	5.8
Low income	—	—	5.0	5.0	-0.8	3.2

(Source: *World Development report, World Bank — for 1980 & 1981*)

challenge to the imperialist economies e.g. footwear, textiles, shipbuilding, and the oil producing countries are poised to begin production of cheap petrochemicals used in plastics and synthetic fibres. South Korea is already the world's third largest textile exporter, and as *figure 5* indicates, is also the world's second largest shipbuilder. Infact *figure 5* shows four major European countries have been displaced in the shipbuilding league by three medium developed countries and socialist Poland in the space of a decade. Now we turn to the question: has this development in the medium developed capitalist countries been accompanied by the formation of domestic monopoly capital and finance capital?

Figure 5

The top five shipbuilders (mT GR T)

	1970		1980
Japan	22.6	Japan	12.5
Sweden	5.8	S.Korea	2.2
U.K.	5.1	Brazil	2.0
France	4.9	Spain	2.0
W.Germany	4.3	Poland	1.6
World total	64.5	World total	33.0

(Source: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*)

Monopoly capital in medium developed countries

The countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia are all drawn into the world system of imperialism by the export of capital, and it is through this agency that the working class of these countries suffer the highest degree of exploitation. But many communists believe the imperialists to be the sole oppressors and exploiters, as if countries like Brazil, South Korea and Turkey were simply 'dependent', in the sense of being neo-colonies or colonies. They sometimes reduce it further to the United States *alone* oppressing all other countries in the world, and some have even described a country like Britain, as a colony of US imperialism! This sort of analysis is far from the truth, and is often promoted in an opportunist fashion, to denounce the foreigner instead of one's own ruling class.

Many communists point to the dominant activities of all transnational companies in developing countries, as evidence of them *all* being neo-colonies, yet minor imperialist countries like Belgium, Denmark, Australia and Canada also depend on foreign transnationals, mainly American ones, as the dominant form of monopoly enterprise, and even large sections of the British economy are foreign owned. Does this mean British is a dependent neo-colony of foreign imperialism? This view totally ignores the fact that in all imperialist economies, including the US, domestic monopoly capital, foreign monopoly capital and the state become intertwined, to promote the integration of imperialism as a system. Of course the British imperialist state has a special role in defending British owned monopolies at home and abroad, but that doesn't stop it supporting the interests of Fords, Talbot-

Peugeot or Nissan with government grants, or defending US oil companies in the North Sea. For British imperialism to become isolated from the world imperialist system would be suicidal.

This is not to say, that US imperialism is not the central, most powerful, most exploitative power in the world imperialist system, but to argue that all other imperialist countries are merely oppressed puppets, as against partners in plunder, is pure opportunist nonsense.

So what is the situation with medium developed capitalist countries like Spain, Brazil, Turkey or South Korea? Are they simply neo-colonies, because American transnationals conduct major operations there, or do they provide focal points of integration between domestic monopoly capital, foreign monopoly capital and the state, to form state monopoly capitalism? Is there domestic monopoly capital in these medium developed capitalist countries, which is *attempting* to integrate itself in with the world imperialist system? We say, yes, there is. For instance, most oil producing countries have formed state monopoly oil companies, which control pricing, production, and distribution of oil, such as Pemex in Mexico and PDVSA in Venezuela, most of which operate through the OPEC cartel, in order to bargain from strength with the transnational oil companies and the imperialist countries.

In other sectors of the medium developed capitalist economies, the state performs the function of organising industry and allowing the participation of foreign and domestic owned monopolies. In Mexico, the state is investing in an industrialisation programme to build four industrial port complexes and is backing heavy industry projects through the state development bank Nacional Financiera. Steel production is controlled by the state holding company Sidermex, and is to triple production over the next decade to cater for the oil and capital goods industries. The state oil company Pemex is to more than double production for the export orientated domestic petrochemical industry. Foreign investment is encouraged through joint projects, in which the law imposes 51% ownership for Mexican capital, although cars and electronics are allowed 100% foreign ownership. Subsequently, direct investments have risen from \$6.8 billion to \$8.46 billion for the year 1979/80. (See *Financial Times* Surveys Aug. 12, 1981 and Mar. 22, 1982).

In Brazil, the economy is dominated by state holding companies such as Electrobras (electricity) and Siderbras (steel), which comprises of several public companies controlling 60% of the domestic steel market. The fourth largest state enterprise CVRD (minerals), is the world's second largest exporter of bauxite and is soon to become the world's largest exporter of iron ore. It runs iron ore pelletising plants and port facilities jointly with foreign companies, and also runs the aluminium producing holding company MRN in conjunction with the giant transnational monopoly Alcan (19% share) and the Brazilian company Votarantim Holding (10% share). CVRD is also responsible for opening up the Amazon

Basin and is currently investing \$60 billion in the Carajas project, which will increase Brazilian iron ore production by 50%. (*Financial Times* Survey Nov. 18, 1981).

South Korea has similar state holding companies like Posco (iron and steel) and Korea Electric Company, which also runs the massive industrial complex at Changwon. During the 1970s, the state promoted the heavy industry sector, which was dominated by the domestic monopolies Hyundai Heavy Industry and Hyundai International. Furthermore, the state holding company Korea Heavy Industries and Construction was set up jointly by KECO, the Korea Development Bank and S.Korea's Exim Bank. Car production and power equipment are now dominated by the domestic monopolies Hyundai and Daewoo, the former having developed the 'Pony' Korean car, and Daewoo being mainly involved with the subsidiary Saehan Motor, jointly set up with General Motors. (*Financial Times* Survey June 5, 1981).

In Turkey, 40% of production is run by state enterprises, such as Tusas (military aircraft), Tumosan (engines), Taksan (machine tools), Temsan (electrical engineering), Testas (electronics) and Telsan (telecommunications). All of these companies are encouraging investment by foreign and domestic monopoly capital limited to 49% private shares (*Financial Times* Survey, Sept. 25, 1981). In fact, the most profound and far-reaching Marxist analysis of the development of monopoly and finance capital in a medium developed country is *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*, by R.Yürükoğlu, first published in 1978 by *İşçinin Sesi*. This book, which is also available in English, describes how in Turkey, "The period 1960-1970, is characterized by the efforts of finance capital to establish its hegemony. In this period, we witness restored planning and growing state intervention in general. A large number of mixed enterprises appeared. A mixture of what? A mixture of state, bank, industry, foreign and 'military' capital. The Army Mutual Aid Corporation (OYAK) in Turkey, is a direct partner in this complex. The clique occupying the upper echelons of the army has merged, coalesced with finance capital." (R.Yürükoğlu, *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*. p.37-1979, *İşçinin Sesi* Publications).

This describes a process which is going on in nearly all medium developed capitalist countries, and explains why in many of these countries, fascism, the open terroristic dictatorship of capital, led by finance capital takes the form of military fascist juntas i.e. Chile 1973, Argentina 1976 and Turkey 1980, because the 'upper echelons of the army' have become an important part of finance capital. Yürükoğlu continues to show, that in the 1970s, the monopolies 'seized' the state, became integrated with it, in order to manage their interests in the economy and to increase the oppression and exploitation of the working class and people as a whole. He summarises with the definition:

"Turkey is a medium level developed capitalist country under

imperialist exploitation, a country which has not completed its industrialization and in which agriculture in particular is technically backward. Alongside this, it is a country in which the growth and strengthening of the monopolies provides the basis for the formation of finance capital and the merger of the state and the monopolies." (*Ibid.* p.40)

The emergence of monopoly and finance capital within Turkey and other medium developed capitalist countries is the central feature of these countries and moreover is not contradictory to their simultaneous exploitation by imperialism. Their 'dependence' on the world imperialist system does not preclude the development of domestic monopoly, but actually *encourages* it:

"Because the network of relations of the world capitalist economy which emerged together with imperialism bears the stamp of monopoly, it determined the situation and the forms of relations in all the countries within this system accordingly." (*Ibid.* p.43).

The medium developed capitalist countries are at the stage intermediate between the underdeveloped capitalist countries and the imperialist countries, a stage where domestic monopoly and finance capital have not only emerged, but are attempting to seize the state and to utilise it as the agent for its economic and political domination and expansion.

Now we can begin to draw together some of the threads, to get an overall view of the world situation and the developing crisis of imperialism.

Imperialism today

Imperialism emerged from its first general crisis into the postwar boom, and the outcome of these new world conditions forced certain changes in the world imperialist system, partly because of the new balance of world forces, which had been forged during that general crisis, but also because imperialism was developing to a higher level of productivity and socialisation of capital on a world scale. The colonies and semi-dependent countries gained their 'independence' and many have subsequently developed capitalist relations, such that even monopoly capital is no longer based solely in the imperialist countries. The imperialist powers themselves have further integrated their economies, such that a single interdependent imperialist system has replaced the separate expansion of imperialist countries through empire-building. This factor, plus the rise of the world socialist system, has reduced interimperialist rivalry, and reorientated the imperialist countries to a common political and military front against the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. This is now the most visible antagonism in the world today, and the one which poses the greatest threat of *world war*.

It is on the basis of these transformations in the imperialist system and the world as a whole, that imperialism now approaches a second general crisis. The first imperialist general crisis manifested itself *primarily*, as world wars of redivision between imperialist powers, closely linked to the emergence of international revolutionary situations, which in many countries turned into actual revolution. What can be said of the future general

crisis, in whatever form it takes, is that it will still result *directly from the drive for imperialist expansion and redivision*.

Since the 1970s, the tendency towards stagnation, crisis and monopoly has returned with a vengeance, intensifying all class contradictions. Despite the strains of trade relations between imperialist countries, they have succeeded so far in their strategy, to integrate and fortify their system against the siege of political and economic crisis. They have driven for expansion through the export of capital, finance capital in particular, in order to appropriate greater profits and interest from overseas investments. The major target for this capital export is shown by *Figure 6*, which indicates the world's largest borrowers of capital. They are all medium developed capitalist and socialist countries, and also happen to be the fastest growing economies today. (This is true for socialist countries, because they do not experience blocks due to the profit motive). Capital is still exported as direct investment, but this increasingly becomes invested between the imperialist countries themselves. In 1966, one third of direct investment was exported to the developing countries, but this had fallen to a quarter of the total by 1975.

Because the interest rates which finance capital expropriates tend to rise, the burden of indebtedness in those medium-developed capitalist countries to which finance capital is exported becomes excruciating, intensifying the class contradictions in those countries, squeezing the working class with the highest rates of exploitation, making them *weak links of imperialism*. The workers in medium developed capitalist countries suffer the double oppression of not only imperialism, but also the domestic monopolies which also strive for monopoly profits. As an aside, the events in Poland (see *The Leninist*, No.2), show that although the workers there are not exploited by domestic capitalism, the socialist countries which borrow capital are not immune to economic crisis. The dilemma of monopoly capital in the medium developed capitalist countries is that in general, it is unable to expand outwards. It lacks the ability to become imperialist, as a means to alleviate its internal crisis.

Figure 6
The world's big borrowers

	Gross \$bn	Net \$bn
Mexico	49.9	40.0
Brazil	45.6	41.0
Argentina	21.6	15.8
Venezuela	21.3	3.4
Spain	20.7	3.3
South Korea	15.6	12.9
USSR	15.4	10.9
Poland	14.2	13.4
East Germany	9.7	7.8
Yugoslavia	9.6	6.9
South Africa	9.4	7.8
Chile	8.8	5.4
Greece	8.2	2.8
Phillipines	6.9	3.7
Hungary	6.9	6.1

(Source: *Bank for International Settlements; World Bank Atlas*)

"The phenomenon of finance capital, whatever the general economic level of a given country, brings with it a striving to expand outwards. And this striving has appeared in the medium level developed capitalist countries. But finance capital in the countries at a transition stage is in all respects, in both capital and technology, very weak against the giant imperialist monopolies. So much so, that even the exploitation of their own countries, they must conduct under the wing of imperialism. For this reason, the countries at a transition stage are, in general, unable to realise the pressing need to expand outwards. We say in general, because it is possible that new imperialist forces may emerge from among these countries. Given the operation of the law of unequal development, some of these countries are bound to join the imperialists, relying on their vast lands, rich resources, or petrol etc. Certain countries are making rapid progress in this direction. According to the Communist Party of Brazil, Brazil is one of them. But this does not change the general direction. In general, this door is closed for the countries at a transition stage." (R. Yurukoglu, *Turkey - Weak Link of Imperialism* p.32)

The developing capitalist countries have attempted to offset their growing internal crisis, by calling for a redivision of the world market, for a 'New International Economic Order', to which the imperialist countries have conceded so much hot air, with the Brandt Report and the Cancun Conference. The imperialists know, that to give concessions to the medium developed capitalist countries especially, will only exacerbate their own internal political situation. Some medium developed capitalist countries have attempted to expand by force. According to *The Cyprus Question*, published by *Iscinin Sesi*, Turkish finance capital is turning Northern Cyprus into a colony, and we argue that the intentions of Argentine finance capital in the Falklands/Malvinas were also expansionist and redivisionist.

The inability of these finance capitals to generally expand, forcefully or otherwise, gives rise to revolutionary situations. These countries become 'weak links' of imperialism. In the 1970s, revolutionary situations arose in Chile, Argentina, Portugal, Greece, Turkey and Iran. For some of these countries, the crisis has been temporarily soothed by closer association with the imperialist economies of the EEC; for some of the others, the revolutionary situation has been temporarily resolved in the negative, by counter-revolution, by fascism. The necessity for imperialism to expand, will ensure that the crisis for the weak links of imperialism will intensify, and that revolutionary situations will return time and again, until they are resolved in the positive, by revolution. But this same process reduces the ability of imperialism to expand, to export capital, as instability, crisis and revolution become endemic in the under and medium developed capitalist countries. In order for imperialism to safeguard its markets for trade and capital, it must intervene using violence. This is the meaning of the 'Rapid Deployment Forces'.

In general, the drive for expansion and redivision today still focusses on the contradictions between capitalist countries, as the Falklands war has shown. Even hostilities between imperialist powers cannot be excluded, as tension between them rise over trade and capital markets,

interest rates and military strategy; divisions between imperialist governments are occurring now and will become more problematical in the future. Yet in the face of the threat, not only to a single imperialist power, but to the integrity of imperialism as a system, then the imperialist bourgeoisie must consciously act to moderate some class divisions and intensify others. Imperialism must increasingly use force to expand and to safeguard its system from the threat of revolution, and the Soviet Union is a major obstacle to imperialism freely carrying out such acts of aggression. Subsequently, confrontation between imperialism and socialism must increase, and it is from this antagonism that the threat of world war is greatest.

It is within this world context of growing economic crisis, revolutionary situations in the weak links of imperialism and the imperialist drive to expansion and war, that we can look at the developing crisis and class contradictions within Britain.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Before dealing in a more concrete fashion with Britain, it is useful to elucidate certain general laws, which link political developments to the economic crisis. The inner motivation of capitalism is the production and realisation of ever increasing masses of surplus value, which are then accumulated for the further expansion of capital. To achieve this, capitalism must resort to methods to increase the social productivity of labour, which as Marx says, "... is the historical task and justification of capital." (K.Marx. *Capital* Vol. III. p.259)

Yet it is precisely the development of the productive forces, which come into conflict with the limits set by capital, its preservation and self-expansion. Increasing productivity manifests itself in two ways: an increase in the mass of cheapened use-values, which provide the basic materials and conditions for extended production, such as machines, buildings, raw materials and necessary goods for productive workers; and secondly, a relative and absolute decline in the number of workers employed by the means of production, with improvements in new technique, automation etc. The proportion of workers in the imperialist economies, who work directly in manufacture, has historically declined over the past thirty years, with a growth of non-productive and non-manufacturing jobs in the state, service sector and offices etc.

It is the competitive drive for profit, which forces the capitalist to revolutionise technique, to reduce costs, and expand sales by undercutting the average market price.

The general effect of increased social productivity in the long term, gives rise to a tendency for variable capital, which directly employs labour power, to shrink as a proportion of total capital. As value produced by living labour is the source of surplus value, so this is expressed as the tendency for the general rate of profit to fall. If the rate of

profit of a given size of capital is halved, then in order to expropriate the same *mass* of profit as before, then that capital must double in size. It is this impetus to accumulate inversely faster than the rate of profit falls, that accelerates the process of concentration and centralization, and gives rise to the *tendency towards monopoly* in the present epoch.

For those capitals, which are too small, or otherwise unable to compensate for the falling rate of profit with an increased mass of profit, they experience an *overproduction of capital*. This means that capital is becoming over-accumulated, overproduction in relation to labour, such that the *existing rate of exploitation* of the latter is insufficient to comply with the conditions of producing 'normal' levels of surplus value. It is alongside the falling rate of profit, which is synonymous with the overproduction of capital, that a growing over-production of labour appears, who are "... not employed by the surplus capital owing to the low degree of exploitation at which alone they could be employed, or at least owing to the low rate of profit which they would yield at the given degree of exploitation." (K.Marx *Capital* Vol. III. p.256.)

The fall in the rate of profit connected with accumulation, intensifies the competitive struggle between capitals, and gives further momentum to the drive to increase productivity, thus the vicious cycle continues and the slippery slope into crisis becomes steeper. The more productivity advances, the greater is the overproduction of capital, and the greater are the masses of unemployed labour, who stand at one pole, opposite surplus capital at the other. Unemployment has been rising universally since the 1970s, and now stands at an average of 8-10% throughout the EEC countries and North America, and is even higher in the under-and medium-level developed capitalist countries.

Given the falling rate of profit, the only limit to a continuation of the capitalist mode of production, is the further expansion in the mass of surplus value. This is a product of the rate of exploitation and the mass of workers exploited at that rate i.e. $S = s/v \times V$ (V = mass of variable capital employing labour power). Because increasing productivity connected with a rising organic composition of capital is the same as relatively fewer workers being employed by greater masses of machines etc., and because the over-production of capital forces out labour from production, for whom the rate of exploitation is too low, then there is actually a tendency within a given 'mature' capitalist economy for the mass of productive labour to fall. This means that within the confines of the national capitalist economy, the capitalist class must *primarily* resort to increasing the rate of exploitation, as one of the factors for raising the mass of surplus value.

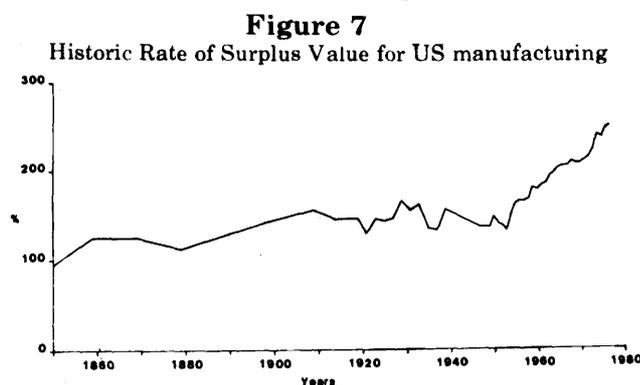
Rate of exploitation

The class struggle between capital and labour stems from the division of labour value between

the workers' wages, which reflect on average the value of labour power, and the capitalists' surplus value, more commonly known as profit. For a basic rendition of principles and variable factors involved in this process, Marx's pamphlet *Wages, Prices and Profits* is still unbeatable, and the following explanation has been mainly taken from that work.

There is a direct inverse relation between wages and profits, because a rise in one brings about a fall in the other and *visa versa*. In common language, the ratio of profits over wages is called the rate of surplus value. We have already seen that the capitalist class must constantly raise the rate of surplus value i.e. the rate of exploitation, and thereby force the value of labour power to shrink. Historic evidence of this is best taken from US statistics, which go back as far as 1850, and although their accuracy cannot be relied upon, they still illustrate a tendency. *Figure 7* shows the US rate of exploitation for manufacture rising continuously from the 1870s to the beginning of the twentieth century, a period of massive growth for US capitalism, during which monopoly capital first arose. Confirmation that failure to raise the rate of exploitation sufficiently, brings forth disturbances in the production process and crises, is illustrated by the stagnating rates between 1909 and 1953, which coincided with the general crisis of imperialism (1914-1948), whereas the postwar boom after 1953 is one of unprecedented increases in the rate of exploitation.

The demand by the capitalist class to raise the rate of exploitation is not necessarily accompanied by a sharpening of the class struggle, as the period after 1953 testifies to, because the worker measures his share by consumption of use-values, by his standard of living, whereas the capitalist measures his share, not by use-values, but by value. The scientific, direct method of defining value is to measure *labour time*. During the most favourable conditions for capitalist production, a rise in productivity provides an increased mass of *cheapened* use-values, which if consumed by the worker, reduce the value of his labour power, while allowing his standard of living to remain the same, or even rise. During the 1950s and 1960s, both workers' standards of living and capitalists' profits in the imperialist economies, rose at an historically unprecedented rate due to increased productivity in raw materials production etc. The



working classes condition in these countries improved absolutely, despite their fall in *relative* wages and *relative* social position.

The Leninist No.2 published data for UK manufacturing, which showed the rate of surplus value to be 122% in 1955, and 170% in 1968. In terms of labour time for an 8 hour day, a manufacturing worker laboured 3 hours 36 minutes for himself in 1955 and 4 hours 24 minutes for the capitalist. By 1968, he only worked 2 hours 58 minutes for himself and 5 hours 2 minutes for the capitalist; a transfer of 38 minutes labour-time in favour of the latter, assuming a constant 8 hour day. It was this fall in the value of labour power, which removed all blocks to capitalist production during these years. By the late 'sixties, capital had been accumulated to immense levels, in fact it had become *over-accumulated*. The high demand for labour prevented the rate of exploitation from rising to sufficient levels thereafter. Furthermore, the general expansion and increased productivity of the world economy was beginning to stretch the supply of natural resources, and therefore reduce the benefits derived from productivity and cheapness of raw materials.

By the 1970s, the conditions which allowed the rate of exploitation to rise in a relatively 'peaceful' manner had disappeared. Other methods had to be increasingly used. Raising relative and absolute rates of surplus value by increasing intensity and length of the working day respectively, is a means of increasing surplus value, yet allowing the worker to maintain the value of his labour power. In this case, it is not the worker's standard of living outside the factory which necessarily suffers, but his physical health, due to worsening work practices and conditions. Increasing the rate of exploitation, furthermore, becomes synonymous with the forcing down of wages *below the existing value of labour power*. For example, wages express the price of labour power, and are constantly effected by changes, not in the value of labour power, but in the *value of money*. Subsequently, the depreciation of money due to credit expansion results in a general inflation of prices, and if wages lag behind, then the worker experiences an absolute deterioration in his living conditions. He effectively receives a wage cut. Efforts by the capitalist class and governments of both Conservative and Labour Parties in Britain, to raise the rate of exploitation by these methods have become systematic since 'In Place of Strife' in 1969.

Productivity and crisis

We can state clearly now, that it is the process of increasing social productivity of labour which constantly comes into conflict within the limits of capitalist production, as expressed in the falling rate of profit, giving rise to an intensification of class contradictions. It is during periods, when this tendency becomes decisive, that competition rises to frenzied heights, and the capitalist class accelerates the drive towards crisis by further revolutionizing the techniques of production. This

was true for the forty years prior to the First World War, when America, Germany and Britain competed to develop the world market and founded the new industries of the 20th century, such as cars, electrical power generation, aeroplanes, electronics (telephones, wireless), petrochemicals etc.; with new techniques in mining, mass assembly (Fords) and work practises (Taylorism) in order to help accelerate the process of capital accumulation. All of this paved the way to the general crisis of imperialism (1914-1948). Similarly today, we read in the bourgeois press of the 'micro-electronics revolution', genetic engineering and bio-technologies, of automated factories and robots. These are the new industries of the 21st century, the sort of techniques Marx spoke of, as being necessary to erode the division between manual and mental labour, for building not simply socialism, but *communism*. The advent of the automated factory is laying the basis in the 1980s, for an unprecedented explosion in social productivity, with all its effects on the rate of profit and mass unemployment. The further this process advances, the more *catastrophic* will the dimensions of the approaching general crisis be, and the greater will be the revolutionary threat to the survival of imperialism itself.

The more the productive forces are developed, the greater is the course into crisis determined by the class struggle. The demand by the capitalist class for a constantly rising rate of exploitation in the period of overproduction, finds direct expression in the tendency for *the conditions of the working class to deteriorate*. The success of the capitalist class in enforcing this, is inversely proportional to the organisational strength and resistance of the proletariat. The road to the general crisis becomes therefore, one of intensifying class antagonisms, for the point at which a revolutionary crisis emerges, is determined by when the class struggle breaks out into open *class war*.

The Imperialist Factor

The intensification of class contradictions, and the development of revolutionary situations does not reach the same height in all capitalist countries at the same time. Historically, the most powerful imperialist countries have alleviated class tension inside their own borders, by expanding outwards. Neither Britain nor the US have ever developed a revolutionary crisis this century which threatened the rule of imperialism, because both have exploited the whole world to a greater degree than any other imperialist power. Even today, Britain is still the world's second largest exporter of capital, although there is no guarantee it will maintain this position for much longer.

Returning to our discussion of the limits imposed on capitalist production, we stated that of the factors which determine the mass of surplus value, capitalism cannot increase the mass of labour exploited within the national economy, and must first resort to increasing the rate of

exploitation. For an imperialist country, this is modified, because surplus capital which cannot be employed internally is exported, in order to exploit workers abroad at a more intense rate, to expropriate superprofits. Even according to their own statistics, which do not reveal all the tricks for sucking profits from abroad, the bourgeoisie in Britain admit to extracting between $\frac{1}{5}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of their gross profits from overseas.

Countries where the proletariat suffer the highest levels of exploitation, and where domestic capital has developed to a monopoly stage but is unable to expand in an imperialist manner, are called medium-level developed capitalist countries. Before the First World War, only Britain, America, Germany, France, Russia, Japan and Italy had developed industrial capitalism to any extent, and all of them were developing monopoly capital which strived for expansion outwards. Tsarist Russia was the most contradictory in the sense that it was the fifth largest industrial power, with some of the greatest concentrations of factory production in the world; yet, industrial capitalism had developed in an economic and political framework dominated by backward pre-capitalist relations. The Tsarist state proved ineffective against its imperialist rival during the 1904 Russo-Japanese War, and acted as a block to the free outward expansion of monopoly capitalism. Monopoly capital in Russia had no alternative but to expand 'inwards', by increasing the rate of exploitation of the working class at home, who also suffered imperialist exploitation from British 'Textile, Railway and Oil' Capital and French 'Loan' Capital. The outcome was the revolutionary explosions of 1905 and 1917. Lenin termed Russia a 'weak link' in the chain of imperialism, because it threatened to break even before 1914, before the general crisis had matured.

Today, there is not one weak link, but many, in the under- and medium-level developed capitalist countries. Many have developed monopoly and finance capital. The working class of medium-level developed capitalist countries suffer the 'double yoke' of imperialist exploitation as well as that of domestic monopoly. An example of this is illustrated in *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*:

"The working class of Turkey is under very heavy exploitation. In 1973, the rate of surplus value in the large manufacturing industry taken alone, was as much 400%. The figure for the whole of the working class is much higher. Moreover, the general tendency indicates that the rate of surplus value will continue to increase." (R. Yürükoğlu, *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*, p.80)

This figure of 400% compares with rates of surplus value of 178% in Britain and 224% in the US for the same year of 1973. (See *The Leninist* No.2) The workers in Turkey and other countries at that stage, suffer much higher rates of exploitation than in the imperialist countries, and it is here, that the tendency for the conditions of the working class to deteriorate, becomes most openly expressed and absolute. Yürükoğlu shows real wages in Turkey to have declined between 1971 and 1977, and for recorded industrial accidents to be one of the highest rates in the

world. The working day is the longest in Europe. Unemployment is a 'social disaster' with up to 20-25% of the labour-force. The offensive waged by finance capital to cut wages below even the minimum value of labour power, becomes a bloody offensive, once it resorts to fascism. The case of Chile, where malnutrition has become endemic among children of the working class since 1973, is well known. In Argentina, wages were slashed by 50% within two years of the Generals coming to power in 1976, and according to the *Financial Times* Survey, real wages in Turkey have fallen 10-15% since the fascist Junta came to power in 1980, after they had already fallen 44% in the three years previous. The report illustrates the fall in value of labour power thus:

"In February 1982 the many non-unionised workers on the minimum wage had to work 73 minutes to buy a kilo of bread, compared with 44 minutes in 1963. Again in 1982 they would have to work 14 hours and 12 minutes for a kilo of meat, compared with 6 hours and 17 minutes in 1963." (*Financial Times* Survey, May 17, 1982)

It must be remembered that *all* workers in Turkey are now effectively 'non-unionized' with the outlawing of the DISK trade unions.

It is for these reasons that, "The working class and all working people are suffering under unbearable conditions. For these reasons, the under- and medium-level developed capitalist countries, Turkey among them, are becoming the weak links of the imperialist chain. The class struggle in those countries is assuming unprecedented dimensions with frequent explosions". (R. Yürükoğlu, *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*, p.86)

If Tsarist Russia was the country prior to 1914, from which valuable lessons in class struggle could be learnt, then it is the weak links of today which we must study. We must learn from the lessons of Chile, Portugal, Argentina and Turkey, all of which have been given in blood, and where in many cases, the reasons for defeat have still to be fully answered. The world communist movement as a whole must learn, so that mistakes are not repeated and the way forward in all countries is more clearly understood. Revolution has not yet reached Britain or the imperialist countries, but it *will* come. A failure to prepare now will lead to immense tragedies and needless defeats, which can be avoided.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN BRITAIN

Since the emergence of the developing world crisis in 1968, imperialism has been gripped by political and economic convulsions, which increasingly threaten the very fabric of that system. Similarly in Britain, transition from the relative social peace of the postwar boom has been heralded by an upturn in class struggle and radicalisation of working class politics. Further exacerbations of that crisis here are a result of Britain's relative decline to other imperialist powers, as expressed by the fall in its share of OECD export markets from 14.4% in 1964 down to 9.4% within ten years.

For the imperialist bourgeoisie, the crisis leaves them with little choice. To maintain production of value and profit on a stable basis, they must constantly raise the rate of exploitation. Unlike the 1950s and 1960s, this has given rise to the demand by capital for a cut in working class living standards. Wages and profits have become diametrically opposed to one another over the past 14 years. A rise in one has tended to force a decline in the other. It is from the dynamic of this contradiction that the class struggle flows. As the crisis deepens, so the economic struggle of the working class assumes a more political character, and at a higher stage, the trade union demand must give way to the revolutionary demand.

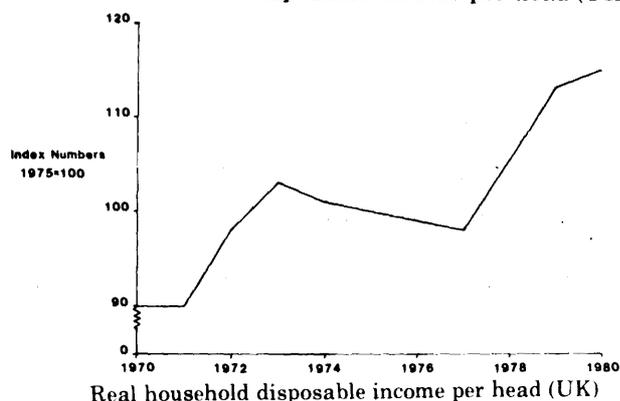
If we look at *Figure 8*, we see the changes in real household disposable income per head (allowing for tax and inflation). Historically, this figure has doubled since the 1950s, and it is only in the 1970s that any significant fall occurs. In fact during 1974-1977 and 1981-82, living standards declined further than at any other time this century. The support of the 1974 Labour Government by the Trade Union leaders forced a retreat on all mass actions by the workers in support of their living standards. This brought about a disastrous decline in the organisation and militancy of shop stewards. The demise of our Party as it tailed those same Labour Leaders, removed any possibility of sustaining a counter-attack against the capitalist class and their Labour Government.

During 1972-73 and 1978-79 however, living standards rose faster than at any other time, primarily because the working class intensified its fight for those gains.

From this we can state a relationship: the conditions of the working class tend to fall, unless counterposed by its class organisation and actions. The logic of capitalist development means that the class struggle must follow certain paths. The dialectic of this process forces it to a higher level and we can now look at these tendencies in more detail.

Firstly, ever wider sections of the working class are recruited to the organised labour movement. The British working class pioneered trade unionism, and has always maintained a higher level of organisation relative to other workers in capitalist countries. In 1979, membership of TUC affiliated unions stood at 13½ million — over half the total workforce — having grown at a substantially higher rate after the onset of crisis. Newly organised sections were drawn into struggle. Over a million woman workers have been recruited during the 1970s, bringing with them a resolute determination as was shown at Grunwick and Lee Jeans. Their demands for equal opportunities and equal pay are being raised inside the trade union movement, and it is to the working class in general, that many women have turned in their fight to participate equally in society as a whole. Trade unionism among the millions of scientific, technical, educational and administrative staffs has grown. With the expansion of monopolies and state enterprises employing white-collar workers, the

Figure 8
Real household disposable income per head (UK)



pay and conditions of these jobs have become progressively regulated by unemployment. They are no longer pampered by the imperialist bourgeoisie as a professional elite, but have become proletarianised. It is for this reason that the student movement has also orientated itself towards the labour movement, as students are more than ever, likely to become highly educated workers and members of trade unions. The image of a student blackleg driving a bus during the General Strike is long gone.

The ever broader base which trade unionism creates amongst the working class, inevitably draws greater masses of workers into the industrial struggle for economic demands. As the strike wave of the late 'sixties escalated into the early 1970s, it was the traditionally militant car workers, miners, dockers and engineering workers who took the lead. By 1973 however, the public sector workers were coming out for the first time — a potential army of millions with just a single employer, the monopoly capitalist state. In that year, 128,000 civil servants were called out on their first ever one day national stoppage. Since then they have learnt through more recent struggles, the need for militant trade unionism. Again nine years ago, 50,000 hospital ancillary workers took

Figure 9

U.K. Working days lost ('000)	U.K. Workers involved ('000)
1960	817
1961	771
1962	4420
1963	591
1964	873
1965	869
1966	531
1967	732
1968	2256
1969	1656
1970	1793
1971	1175
1972	1726
1973	1513
1974	1622
1975	789
1976	670
1977	1155
1978	1003
1979	4583
1980	842

(Source: *Annual Abstracts of Statistics*)

selective actions and have now risen to the level of conducting a national strike campaign with all other health workers, involving over half a million. Furthermore, the threat of spending cuts since 1976 and the fight against low pay, has united all public sector workers in strikes and demonstrations.

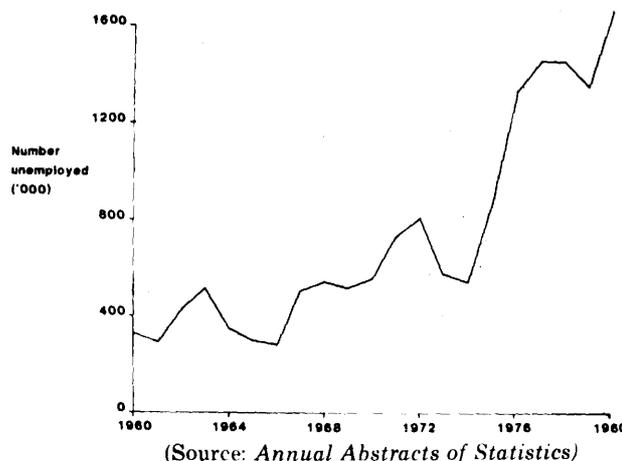
It is this growing dissatisfaction and unrest among even the lowest and most backward strata that underlies the tendency for strikes to involve wider masses of workers. *Figure 9* shows the growth of industrial actions since 1968, which in general have also become more prolonged and bitter. Despite downturns in activity, the underlying developments periodically come to the surface, as in 1979. More days were lost and more workers took part in strikes during that year, than at any time since the 1926 General Strike. The class conflict then was not so intense or political as in 1972, but it was far broader.

Another way in which this trend finds expression is the rising minimum level of industrial action necessary for success. In an imperialist country such as Britain, the economy is concentrated under the dominance of monopoly ownership and the state itself, employing hundreds of thousands in a single enterprise or industry. For many sections of the labour movement, it is necessary to conduct *national strikes*, in order to mobilize sufficient forces. In the past twelve years, national industrial actions have been taken by the Postmen and Dockers (1970), Miners (1972 and 1974), the Building Workers (1972), Civil Servants (1973 and 1981), the Firemen (1977), Lorry Drivers (1979), Steelmen (1980), Railway Workers (1982) and Hospital Workers (1982).

Secondly, the class struggle must assume greater political character. In an imperialist country, monopoly and finance capital have already emerged to dominate economic and political life. The monopolies have coalesced with the state to form state monopoly capitalism. Increasingly, the state intervenes in the class struggle against the working class, and on behalf of capital as a whole. In 1969, the Labour Government proposed *In Place of Strife*, as a legislative means of restricting trade union activities. The response of the working class was immediate and political, with a protest strike on May Day of that year. The mounting opposition by the trade unions forced a total retreat by the Wilson administration. The later attempt by the Tory Government to impose the *Industrial Relations Act* after 1970 provoked the most intense period of directly motivated political strikes in British Labour Movement history. Over 3 million days were lost in strikes against that Act, culminating in 1971, with one of the largest trade union demonstrations ever, and a threatened one day General Strike in July 1972, when five picketing dockers were imprisoned in Pentonville. Further days of national political protest and stoppages occurred on May Day 1973, with support from 1.6 million workers, and two more against the Thatcher Government in November

Figure 10

UK unemployment



1979 and May 1980.

Trade unionists are, more than ever, being confronted by the state, if only for the fact that they are employed by it and must negotiate with it over wages and conditions. The demand for "more pay" or "no redundancies" by the miners, hospital workers or railwaymen, can very quickly become transformed into a popularly styled rank and file slogan against the Government of the day. Of course, this has no revolutionary content by itself, but reflects the growing sentiment of millions of class conscious workers, as was the case with the downfall of the Heath Government during the miners' industrial action of 1974.

An increasing block to the working class over the past twelve years, has been the fact that "... in its merely economic actions, capital is the stronger side." (K. Marx, *Wages Prices and Profits*, p.52, 1974 Moscow.) This stems from Capital controlling the conditions under which labour is bought and sold. Capital strengthens its own hand by weeding out unproductive labour and swelling the ranks of the unemployed. As Marx commented, it is not the 95 employed workers who ultimately determine pay and conditions, but the five standing outside the factory gates. Today, the working class is disciplined by fear of redundancy, with an all time record of over 3 million in the dole queues. *Figure 10* shows the progressive rise of unemployment since 1968, and it is this trend which has decisively weakened the economic bargaining power of the working class up to the present day. Moreover the trade unions have consequently lost members and finance over the past two years, thus compounding their impotence.

Today the Labour movement has been effectively paralysed by the onslaught of monopoly capitalism as represented by the Thatcher Government. In order to overcome the resistance of capital, it must elevate its struggle to greater heights. The level of workers' actions necessary to increase living standards ten years ago, is totally inadequate today. Capitalism and the Government is far more intransigent than it was then. In order to overcome its economic weakness, the

working class must again raise *political demands*. To win more pay and to safeguard jobs, the use of militant *mass actions* must be developed; workers must draw upon the experiences of mass picketing at Saltley Gate, factory occupations as exemplified by the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in, and the *mass political* strikes and demonstrations of the early 1970s.

A factor which was crucial at that time was the existence of a vibrant and militant shop stewards movement. The trade union bureaucracies proved themselves to be unwilling then as now to lead and develop a mass political movement. There is no question that the strength of the Communist Party among politically conscious workers was decisive in setting up the *Liaison Committee for the Defense of Trade Unions*, in calling for political strikes, in mobilising the engineering workers against the Industrial Relations Act, and in providing the leadership at the UCS. Consequently, the weakness of the rank and file movement today is undoubtedly linked with the subsequent decline of our Party.

Whether our Party rises to the demand for leadership by the working class or not, the objective need for it remains. It is not impossible that the shop stewards movement will rebuild itself without the Party. In that event, militancy may yet prevail, but without the clear perspective of communist leadership. The problems posed by that failing will become ever more critical with time.

Thirdly, the struggle of the working class must go beyond bourgeois legality. Tighter laws against strikers, picketing, factory occupations and the closed shop force this to happen. The experiences with the *Industrial Relations Act* have taught the labour movement that to defeat the 1980 Employment Act and the *Tebbit Bill*, the law must be flouted and made inoperable. The recipe for conflict is further intensified by the reactionary tendency for Finance Capital and its monopoly capitalist state to become more anti-democratic and militaristic. Ever since the founding of the Special Patrol Group, the state has been preparing for confrontation on the streets in the event of civil unrest. The war in Northern Ireland since 1969, has provided the army and the paramilitary police force with a live-ammunition training ground for military exercises, house raids, riot control, mass political internment and interrogation. The slightest excuse of laying siege to 'armed terrorists' is blown up into a full scale dress rehearsal for an emergency. This was the case during the Three day week in 1974, when armed troops and police moved into cordon off Heathrow Airport with armoured cars and tanks. The outburst of discontent and anger against increasing police oppression by black and unemployed youth during the 1980/81 riots was another qualitative step in this process. CS gas was used in a British city for the first time, and police have since been specially trained in the use of rubber bullets, water cannon, riot control and equipped with fire-proof shields and clothing.

It is within this context that the next major

battle between the police and mass pickets will be fought. The 1980 law restricting pickets to six has been infringed on many occasions, and it is merely a matter of time and place, before the police choose to enforce this law. Even during the low-key picketing in the recent Health Workers dispute, 80 were arrested at Epsom. The bourgeoisie certainly still remember the failure of the movement to successfully defend the Shrewsbury Two.

Another factor directing political forces onto the streets and beyond the safe bounds of bourgeois legality, has been the increasing instability of the bourgeois parties and parliamentary democracy itself. The growth of various nationalist parties and more especially the SDP-Liberal alliance has reduced the stability of single party government. Parliamentary stalemate which the Italian bourgeoisie have developed into a fine art, threatens to paralyse Westminster Palace in the future with endless petty wranglings. The divisions within all major bourgeois parties, potentially exacerbate their unity in the face of growing crisis. More important for the working class has been the decline of the Labour Party as a viable alternative for government. No longer can the TUC and Labour Leaders easily channel discontent between the safe banks of bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

In all the mass organisations of trade unions, the Labour Party and CND, the demand for extra-parliamentary direct action and civil disobedience is rising. This is not the invention of 'left' leaders like Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill. Such leaders are responding to the demands of the masses, to the objective need of the class struggle to go beyond the confines of bourgeois legality.

As the crisis grows, so the objective conditions mature. The masses, in defense of their class interests, are forced to raise the struggle from the economic to the political, to elevate their actions from the small-scale to the mass level, to go beyond trade union spontaneity and towards a conscious proletarian revolutionary movement. These tendencies arise from the objective processes of class struggle. As the objective factors ripen, so the consciousness of the working class becomes increasingly decisive in determining the direction and the aims of the movement. As Marxists, we recognise the historic task of the working class as being the socialist revolution. It is the role of the Communist Party to impart to the working class the necessary revolutionary consciousness through ideological leadership, in order to carry out that task.

Our immediate objective in building that Party, fully armed with a revolutionary perspective, demands a resolute and determined struggle against all opportunist influences which seek to distract us from that purpose.

In the years to come, there is no doubt that Britain will face the emergence of a revolutionary situation as a result of the developing crisis of imperialism. With that in mind, it is our task to prepare ahead, and ensure the Party is in a strong position to lead the approaching socialist revolution. ■

Should We Stand in Elections?

James Marshall

For a number of years the policy of standing in elections, both national and local, has become a major source of contention within the ranks of the Communist Party. That debate on this is taking place can only be regarded as healthy, especially as it raises some fundamental strategic questions confronting the entire working class movement in this country.

And such a debate in no way contradicts the principles of democratic centralism, unless it is continued during an actual election campaign.

There can be no doubt that the stimulus for the debate has been the inability of the party to gain a high, or even a 'reasonable' vote when contesting elections. Of course, as the *British Road to Socialism* rests on the foundation of an ever increasingly successful communist record in elections, the facts are extremely uncomfortable for the party leadership. When the *British Road* was first written, it was against the background of the 1945 election triumph for the Labour party, and the Communist Party's performance of over 100,000 votes and two MPs. Those days are long gone, the percentage of the electorate voting Labour has steadily declined since 1951 and those voting Communist have dwindled into an electorally insignificant rump. The fall of the Communist vote has reflected the general decline in the party's influence and its decay in activity and membership.

These conditions have led to increasing unease among a wide spectrum of party activists concerning the contesting of elections, especially when this means opposing Labour candidates. This problem of party conviction was referred to by comrade Reuben Falber in a letter to the *Morning Star*. He called for "a determined effort to overcome hesitations and inhibitions within the Communist Party on electoral work and a harder and more consistent fight to advance the understanding that winning Communist votes is an essential part of the political struggle." (August 5 1981) For without electoral success the *British Road* is an irrelevance. Thus for the leadership the "giving the maximum possible number of people the opportunity to vote Communist, and the winning of seats" (*Ibid*) is a central strategic question, a question of principle. The leadership feel they have no way out, they must fight for maximum participation in electoral contests, they made the *British Road* and they must lie on it.

Besides those party activists who simply feel that all the hard work expended during elections is in no way justified by the number of votes obtained at the end of the day, there are those who opposed the 1977 version of the *British Road to Socialism*, as a "rationalisation" of the "consistent undermining of Marxism-Leninism in our party" (Glen Baker, *Comment* April 16 1977). These comrades felt no commitment to the leadership's electoral strategy which they regard as reformist. However, since 1977 they have developed their alternative. Unfortunately this is not a revolutionary road to socialism carried through with the dictatorship of the proletariat, no — what they offer is nothing but an

'Alternative British Road to Socialism', differing from the original or so it would seem, only in the emphasis placed on affiliation to the Labour Party. They stand opposed to independent electoral activity because they see it damaging their affiliation strategy. "The party" argues comrade Dave Morgan "can only have an effective leading role if it wins the right to a place as an affiliated section of the Labour Party." (*Discussion* 37 No.1 p.7). Comrade Brian Filling states that "It is sectarian when we act at elections as though they were mainly about Communist candidates" (*Discussion* 37 No.2 p.11).

What is the Labour Party?

Writing to the *Morning Star* on the Hillhead by-election Comrade Filling develops the 'Alternative British Road', opposing not only proportional representation (which would damage the Labour Party's prospects) but, using the SDP threat, he argues that we must "rally to the defence of the Labour Party, now under right-wing attack from within and without, and in the course of this, expose the lie that we are against the Labour Party." (March 11 1982). Underlying all the argument is a false conception of the Labour Party, held not only by the leadership of our party, but by the 'alternative leadership' as well. The 1977 *British Road* calls the Labour Party the "mass party of the working class" (p.24); comrade Dave Morgan calls it the "broad church"; comrade Noah Tucker says it is "the political wing of the Trade Union movement"; and for comrade Brian Climie "The Labour Party was ... formed to unite all sections of the labour movement ... that would be independent of (the) capitalist parties." (quotes from *Discussion* 37 No.1 p.8 and No.2 pp.22, 30).

We, on the other hand, follow Lenin's scientific definition of the Labour Party — it is a bourgeois workers' party. (See comrade McGeehan's review article: *The Labour Party — a force for Revolution or Reaction? The Leninist* No.2). Lenin argued that descriptions of the Labour Party as "the political expression of the workers organised in trade unions" were "erroneous" and that in reality, despite the working class composition of the Labour Party, it "is a thoroughly bourgeois party ... which exists to systematically dupe the workers." (V.I. Lenin *C.W.* Vol 31 p257-8)

Those opposed to party electoral activity 'base' their position on a passage in the *Communist Manifesto* which declares that communists have "no interests separate and apart from the proletariat as a whole" (K. Marx and F. Engels, Moscow 1969 p61). They monstrously pervert this to mean that communists should not oppose the Labour Party in elections. Experience since 1848, when the *Communist Manifesto* was written, shows all too clearly that it is only the communists who can express the interests of the working class as a whole. Our comrades seem to have transferred this role to the Labour Party, a party which was established to serve the interests of the labour aristocracy and the growing labour bureaucracy, whose interests fully conformed with the growth and continuation of British Imperialism. The Labour Party

was from its inception a social-imperialist party, committed to the bourgeoisie, violently opposed to workers at home and abroad. To use quotes from the *Communist Manifesto* about "the interests of the proletariat as a whole" or even about communists not opposing "other working-class parties" as a cover for not standing communist candidates in elections is a dangerous opportunist ploy.

"The Communist Party" declares comrade Susan Michie "cannot and should not seek to replace the Labour party ..." in fighting elections. "The Communists' task should be to gain" leadership of the working class "within the Labour Party (by gaining the removal of bans and proscriptions, and achieving affiliation), not to stand candidates against the Labour Party." Likewise comrade Jeff Sawtell argues "The concept of a mass party has always meant a party of mass influence not an oppositional force that would divide the working class. Let us unite the Party on the basis of the necessity of a Communist Party to work to unite the class by uniting its political representatives with the people. To do this we have first of all to work to change the constitution of the Labour Party to enable it to become a true federal party of the working class ..." (both quotes from *Discussion 37* No.2 pp.21 and 51).

Yes, we must fight for working class unity, but this will be achieved by a Communist Party mass in membership and influence. Workers' unity is *not* unity with the agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers movement. This in no way means that the leadership's recipe for success through standing as many candidates as possible is correct. But our aim should be, in the words of comrade Paul Fauvet:

"to replace the Labour Party as the main working class force in British politics ... to compete with and overtake the Labour Party: this only sounds like madness if you assume that Labourism is indelibly scored onto working class brains at birth, and cannot be removed or transformed. But if you believe this, then why have a Communist Party? (*Discussion 37* No.2 p.41)

Comrades like Dave Morgan, Brian Filling, Jeff Sawtell and Susan Michie seem to have put all their revolutionary eggs in the reformist Labour Party basket. This course has been adopted by some centrists because of their inability to develop a revolutionary alternative to the *British Road*. Their failure in 1977 to block the further right shift, represented by the new version of the *British Road*, combined with the split in the opposition and the formation of the NCP, meant that these comrades followed what was for them the line of least resistance, that is towards the Labour Party. The progress of the Labour left, the emergence of Bennism, with the deepening of the capitalist crisis looked like a shining beacon to the confused and bewildered. But *Straight Left* and other centrists were drawn to the Labour Party not as Leninists, determined to expose the social-democratic leaders and win the masses to communism, no they are like moths drawn to a flame.

Although, the centrists castigated the leadership for their parliamentary roadism they themselves *now indulge in exactly the same sin*, for they both now look towards the Labour Party as the source of progress to socialism.

The United Front Tactic

Ever since the formation of the Communist Party in 1920, the necessity of confronting the problem of Labour's mass support has vexed party leaders. For unless the mass of the working class is won to the banner of revolution, socialism will remain on the

drawing board. It is to this task that the tactic of the united workers' front is directed. Basically, it is a tactic through which communists join with the mass of workers in defence of immediate, basic interests, against the bourgeoisie. Everyday struggles, given the development of the crisis of capitalism, leads to the workers being convinced of the need for revolution. To facilitate this it is important that Communists achieve not only propaganda victories but also organisational results. Thus the united front presupposes active co-operation between the Labour Party, and our party. In doing this independence of the Communist Party, its freedom of action in relation to the Labour Party, must *under no circumstances* be jeopardised.

To carry through a struggle for a united workers' front and to preserve the Communist Party's *absolute autonomy and complete independence*, it is vital for the leadership of the Party to be strong, united and ideologically sound, being firmly based on Marxism-Leninism. If this is not the case the danger of liquidationism is great. In Britain today the Communist Party's leadership is weak and riven with divisions; under such conditions the slogan of workers' unity *can become* one of conciliation with the agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class; the tactic of affiliation, applied now, can only amount to a call to liquidate the party, especially as the block to liquidation lies not in the Communist Party, but in the Labour Party. Their rules preclude communist affiliation, but if this obstacle were removed, or if communists were allowed to join the Labour Party as individuals, there is a great danger that the party's independence and freedom of criticism would be sold for thirty pieces of silver.

It is common now to view the existence of the Communist Party outside the Labour Party, and the lack of common candidates in elections as *the* problem. Nothing could be further from the truth, *the* problem is the continued ability of the Labour Party, despite being in government seven times, to hold on to the loyalty of workers. It is to overcome this problem that the tactic of affiliation should be considered, and it is for the same reason that the call for a Communist/Labour front would be made. These are *tactics*, subordinated to the overall aim of destroying the influence of the social-democrats, and achieving *communist hegemony* over the working class. If we look at the past we can see that electoral tactics varied constantly, in contrast to today's monotonous diet.

The Party and Parliament

Although the Labour Party refused the Communist Party's applications for affiliation in the early 1920s, it initially allowed party members to join as individuals. Hence in those days party members either stood as Labour candidates, official or unofficial, or where they stood as Communist Party candidates they were unopposed by Labour. This situation was not only the result of the then rules of the Labour Party, but of the immense prestige enjoyed by the party and its leaders in the broad labour movement. This was reflected in the high percentage of the poll gained by party members. In the 1922 General Election seven party members gained a total of 52,819 votes, and two were elected — J.T. Newbold in Motherwell — standing as a communist and S. Saklatvala in Battersea North — standing as an official Labour candidate. The following year, the December General Election produced 76,741 votes for the nine party candidates, and in 1924, standing for the first time universally on a Communist Party ticket,

eight candidates secured 55,355 votes (in seven constituencies there was no Labour opposition).

It was not until 1929 that the Communist Party *deliberately sought to oppose* Labour candidates. Standing on a platform of militant opposition to the Labourites, the twenty-five party candidates secured over 30,000 votes. A similar strategy was pursued in 1931 under the banner of "Class Against Class" and "Forward to the Workers Dictatorship". This 'Third Period' line was dropped by 1935 with the inception of the Popular Front strategy and Labour's debacle of 1931. Calling for a "Vote for a Labour Government to Fight Capitalism" the party only stood two candidates; Pollitt in Rhondda East gained 13,655 votes to Labour's 22,088 in a straight fight, and Gallacher won in Fife West with 13,462 votes to Labour's 12,869 and the Tories' 9,667.

By 1950 everything was thrown into the electoral ring, the party aimed to greatly improve on its 1945 result, the leadership campaigned for 100 candidates, but the result was shattering. Only 91,684 votes were secured compared with 102,760 by 21 candidates in 1945 (and two MPs). As a consequence, only 10 candidates stood the following year, and in 1955 only 17. It was only after the recovery of party membership following its collapse in the wake of the 1956 Hungarian events, that the leadership again set their sights on a large number of party candidates in General Elections, one eye firmly fixed on the minimum needed for time on radio and television.

Our task is not to try to return to the past, we must proceed from an analysis of the concrete features existing today. Electoral tactics must be determined in the light of the ideological and organisational crisis in the party, and the need to combine independent communist work with the necessity of building links with Labour Party activists and the broad working class. Clearly, in the immediate future their is little chance of communist success in parliamentary elections, we do not even command much leverage over the Labour Party towards concluding any sort of reasonable deal, we often find ourselves only being offered the task of giving out Labour Party leaflets for Labour Party candidates.

Our Alternative

For us, the standing of communist candidates is *obligatory*, for it offers immense possibilities to disseminate communist propaganda, thereby bringing us into contact with the broad masses of the working class. Lenin castigated those 'left' communists who, on principle, refused to participate in parliamentary activity, constantly pointing to the example of the Bolsheviks: How they had operated in the Tsarist Duma, the Democratic Conference, Kerensky's parliament and the Constituent Assembly. How they used these institutions to espouse revolutionary ideas, entering them with the aim of smashing the bourgeois state machine, including parliament itself. Boycotting of elections or walking out of the parliament were considered acts only to be carried out during a situation where the masses were clamouring for revolutionary change, (the Bolsheviks even fought the elections for the Constituent Assembly on the morrow of the Soviet Revolution itself).

But in Britain today, the disease communists are suffering from is not 'infantile leftism' but senile rightism. The right-opportunists, their tactics fossilized, seem incapable of now exercising even the slightest degree of flexibility; the centrists have little better to offer, some of them such as those around *Straight Left*,

advocate self-inflicted euthanasia. What a sorry state of affairs.

But all is not black, underneath the surface mighty forces are operating, maturing the conditions for revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, not only in our country but throughout the world. The forces operating within capitalism create the conditions for the world Soviet Republic, and inevitably bring into motion the now dormant working class masses, forcing them towards revolutionary politics. None who call themselves communists can doubt any of this, but in order that we are ready for these developments we must settle accounts within our own ranks and win the vanguard to the banner of Marxism-Leninism.

Liquidationism must be defeated. On the electoral field battle can be joined on the question of the necessity to differentiate between communists and social-democrats. *At the same time*, we must fight on the crucial question of *what platform* communists should stand on: that of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism or social reform. Because we are not talking about winning the masses (yet) but securing the vanguard itself, our campaigns inevitably must take on the form of outlining the principles of communism.

We would advocate the standing of only a few candidates in parliamentary elections. These should be in constituencies where, despite the rhetoric from the SDP about there being no safe seats, there would be *no danger* of letting the SDP/Liberals or the Tories win by our action. Certain constituencies spring to mind immediately, those held by particularly vile traitors (such as Michael Foot in Ebbw Vale). Where there is no communist candidate, in our view, there can be *no other* call but vote Labour. Those who claim that it has thoroughly exposed itself over the past eighty odd years are mistaken. Healey, Callaghan, Wilson and the like — yes, but what of Benn, Race and Holland, let alone Scargill and Livingstone. Surely they have gained and will gain yet more support from class conscious workers. To ignore this fact is to indulge in wishful thinking. When advocating similar tactics Lenin summed up this approach in the following words:

"At present, British communists very often find it hard even to approach the masses, and even to get a hearing from them. If I come out as a Communist and call upon them to vote for Henderson and against Lloyd George, they will certainly give me a hearing. And I shall be able to explain in a popular manner, not only why Soviets are better than a parliament and that the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill (disguised with the signboard of bourgeois 'democracy') but also that with my vote, I want to support Henderson in the same way as the rope supports a hanged man — that the impending establishment of a government of Hendersons will prove that I am right, will bring the masses over to my side, and will hasten the political death of the Hendersons and the Snowdens just as was the case with their kindred spirits in Russia and Germany." (V.I. Lenin, *'Left-wing' Communism, an infantile disorder*, CW, Vol 31, p.88)

Such a course cannot be separated from the overall ideological struggle in the party. Only on the basis of a solid commitment to Marxism-Leninism can we construct a secure foundation from which to build a united workers' front. Only once *we have settled accounts in our own ranks* could we safely countenance launching a full-scale offensive for a Communist/Labour bloc in elections, let alone a fight for Communist Party affiliation to the Labour Party. Until then — Stand candidates in national and local elections on a propaganda basis: Fight for a principled communist platform: Use the elections to build links with the masses: Support Labour candidates with critical communist propaganda. ■

Lessons of the Falklands War

Bill Cobban

The only way to eliminate the threat of war is to eliminate class society. Once faced with the reality of a war however, we must study it in an historical context, to determine our immediate position towards the belligerents involved. In the modern epoch, wars fall roughly into two types; the reactionary, which are fought between imperialist plunderers for the division of spoils from exploitation; and progressive wars, which are waged by the oppressed against the oppressor. In the immediate past, these have predominantly been wars of liberation against colonialism, but also include civil wars, such as the present conflict in El Salvador, and of course those waged by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. We recognise the justice, necessity and progressive role of these wars, in aiding the destruction of reaction, and we openly support all such rebellions of the oppressed against the oppressor. So what was the character of the recent war between Argentina and Britain? What was the aim and intentions of both countries?

Nearly all left tendencies condemned Britain's control of the Falklands as a colonial vestige. Despite Argentina committing the first act of aggression, the British imperialist bourgeoisie sent the Task Force to defend its prestige and dwindling world imperialist role. In addition to this, are the resources in the South Atlantic which may be exploited at a future time, the military strategic position of the Falkland Islands vis-a-vis important trade routes around the Horn and South Africa. The ideological differences within the Party and outside of it emerge when we consider the role of Argentina. *The Leninist* issued a leaflet on the London May Day Demonstration and had this to say about Argentina:

"The seizure of the Falklands was no war of national unification or liberation. Argentina is no 'banana republic', it is a medium developed capitalist country with a per capita production nearer Spain than Turkey (both candidates for EEC membership, both medium developed), as such it has imperialist ambitions." (*May Day Manifesto, The Leninist*)

Argentina is one of the richest countries in Latin America, where industrial production accounts for over 45% of its GDP, and the mass of rural workers are not peasants, but employed as wage labour on the expansive latifundias of the pampas plains. Argentina is a medium-level developed capitalist country under imperialist exploitation and is over \$30 billion in debt to foreign banks. Besides this intervention of foreign finance capital however, there has emerged domestic monopoly and finance capital which has 'seized' the state, to form state monopoly capitalism.

Capitalism has matured within the boundaries of Argentina to a relatively high stage, and since the development of crises throughout the 'seventies, domestic monopoly and finance capital has sought to expand in order to continue capital accumulation on a stable basis. Expansion can operate 'inwardly', by intensifying the exploitation of workers, who already suffer the 'double yoke' of imperialist monopoly and domestic monopoly, and which has given rise to

growing class contradictions and internal instability. Alternatively, to offset the growing internal crisis, domestic monopoly and finance capital has also shown signs of attempting to expand 'outwards', beyond its own borders. As the burden of imperialist exploitation and interest rates rise, so the pressure to expand overseas must increase. With international export markets becoming more restricted, Argentine finance capital has attempted 'emergency measures' to relieve its internal economic and political crises. The collapse of the largest Argentine-owned Holding company Sasetu in 1981, illustrated the depth of that crisis.

The Argentine bourgeoisie are incapable of a progressive role today and have become reactionary to the core, with the rise of finance capital to a position of dominance. This is further proved by its adoption of fascism, to forcibly suppress the revolutionary crisis by terror in the interests of capital. A bourgeoisie which butchers and tortures 20,000 people and cannot openly admit to the fate of what is termed 'The Disappeared', can hardly extend the torch of liberation and democratic rights to 1,800 Falklanders. Those who call the Argentine regime 'bonapartist' or who divide it into 'progressive' and 'conservative' wings, are disguising the essence of fascism, as *counter-revolution in the epoch of imperialism*. The Argentine fascist junta is reactionary in foreign politics as it is in domestic politics, and it waged the war against British imperialism as a reactionary imperialist war of annexation.

What should the position of communists be towards such a war of plunder, despite the differences in size and strength of the belligerents?

The only principled communist position is to call for the defeat of one's own bourgeoisie, to take advantage of any weakness of the ruling class during the crisis and to advance any opportunity for its revolutionary overthrow. Moreover, the idea of putting an end to war in general, through revolution, must be constantly propagated.

So what positions did various parties, groups etc. take towards the war and their own bourgeoisie? First, is the utter treachery of social chauvinism here, which openly and unashamedly sided with imperialism. The leadership of the Labour Party, as usual, came out behind monopoly capital under the hypocritical and ineffective leadership of Michael Foot, whose reputation as a so-called 'peace monger' has been justly torn up and exposed as rubbish to even the most naive pacifist. No amount of bleating and pleading should be wasted on urging Foot to change his mind. The Labour Party leaders have shown themselves constantly throughout history to be at one with British imperialism, and should be exposed and condemned as such.

Tailing on behind Foot, in a sickening attempt to strengthen its tenuous foothold inside the Labour Party, is the spineless and utterly corrupt Militant Tendency who declare:

"The Labour movement should be mobilised to force a general election to open the way for the return of a Labour government to implement socialist policies at home and abroad (...) A

Labour government could not just abandon the Falklanders and let Galtieri get on with it. But it would continue the war on socialist lines." (*Falklands War, Militant International Review*, Issue 22, p.4, June 1982)

These so-called Marxists use the social-chauvinist tactics of attacking the fascist character of the Argentine junta, as an excuse for supporting British imperialism. Similarly, the Liberation leadership split ideologically when Stan Newens MP (chairman) and Tony Gilbert (Secretary) condemned Argentine fascism, no doubt for opportunist reasons, in a letter to the *Morning Star*:

"... we have had no real analysis by either those for or against the sailing of the Task Force from Britain.

"Those who simply see this as the ending of colonial rule of the Falkland Islands run smack into the danger of presenting the leader of the fascist junta as a 'liberator', or a fighter against colonialism.

"... There can be no possibility of mobilising mass support against the dangerous war moves of the Thatcher government unless we can expose the manoeuvres of the imperialist powers, the US, Britain and the Argentine have engaged in." (*Morning Star*, May 18th, 1982)

But nowhere in the letter was there the demand to wage a campaign to expose British imperialism, nor "defeat for one's own bourgeoisie", which is the only possible proletarian basis for condemning the other imperialism.

So what was the position of the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain? In the initial statement by the Political Committee, it says:

"We support the call by the UN Security Council for withdrawal of Argentine forces and a negotiated settlement through the United Nations which takes into account that Britain's claim to sovereignty is a hangover from this country's colonial past and should be ended." (Published in *Comment*, May 1st 1982).

In these and other articles by comrades Gordon McLennan and Gerry Pocock in the *Morning Star* (May 1st and June 19th 1982 respectively), the Party leadership was extremely reluctant to openly declare their support for Argentina's claim to sovereignty. They merely hinted at it. They circumvented this problem, principally because they wished to avoid having to support a supposedly just war against Britain. They did not want to be seen publically supporting the Argentine junta in war.

For example, Gerry Pocock, the International Secretary of the Party said:

"The question of sovereignty of the Falklands or anywhere else, cannot be determined by the nature of the regime asserting a claim, or by the means used to pursue it (...) But it is also wrong simply to ignore the Argentine military seizure as some ultra-left and sectarian elements do. For them the Argentine right to sovereignty was paramount above every other consideration, and led to the production of divisive and offensive slogans that created some confusion in the anti-war movement."

By "divisive and offensive slogans", comrade Pocock was referring to petty bourgeois groups like the Revolutionary Communist Party, who called for an Argentine victory. Comrade Pocock continues:

"It is important to condemn the Argentine action. It was in total violation of the principle that must guide international relations; non-recourse to force to resolve disputes and conflicts between nations, alongside maximum use of the UN." (*Morning Star*, 19th June 1982)

The problem with this position, is that he omits to pinpoint the source of war. He does not show that it is the militaristic and reactionary nature of imperialism that is the driving force for war. The Socialist countries

quite rightly consider it their duty to avoid any head-on confrontation with imperialism, but the very existence of imperialism creates the war threat. The Soviet Union did not want war in 1941. Both Korea and Vietnam would have preferably gained their unified independence in a peaceful manner. Every other oppressed class and people would also prefer freedom without recourse to war. But what is our attitude when faced with a just war of the oppressed against the oppressor: in Vietnam, in South Africa, in Ireland, in the Lebanon and in El Salvador? Do we condemn the PLO, the ANC, the Vietcong or the IRA for threatening world peace?

The problem facing our Party leadership, is that they have declared the Falkland's issue, "... a question closely connected with their (Argentina's — T.L.) rights as an independent nation (...) the content of the struggle is still anti-imperialist." (Article by Tony Chater. *Morning Star*, Editor, May 22nd 1982) Yet they did not want to follow their own logic through to its Marxist conclusion and support what they should have declared as a just war on behalf of Argentina. Why is this?

The reason is quite simple. The position of the Party leadership is imbued with social-pacifism, in order to comply with the bourgeois-pacifism of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the left-social democracy of Tony Benn. Pacifism does not recognise the connection between war and class society; it does not link the struggle for peace with the revolutionary struggle to overthrow imperialism and class society; it does not recognise the necessity of supporting an oppressed people in a just war. Pacifism as an ideology makes imperialist war *more inevitable*, by disarming the working class of any revolutionary perspective for peace. In Britain today, the peace movement is mass, but it is predominantly pacifist. In saying this, we do not condemn it or ignore it. It means we pose ourselves a task as communists to win those in that movement to the struggle (violent if need be) to overthrow imperialism. Our Party leadership consciously surrendered any principled position in order to tail and ingratiate itself with pacifism.

What should our attitude be towards disputes over sovereignty between 'slave-holding nations' and to wars of annexation? We support Lenin's principled position of "The Right of Self-determination", which he struggled for over a protracted period, coming into conflict with Rosa Luxemburg on many occasions. We believe the Falklanders should have this right. This is not to say we welcome the creation of small states. Logically, the Falklands should eventually integrate with Argentina, but it would be a grave injustice if this were done by forced annexation.

The only interest the Argentine workers have, is in exposing the imperialist ambitions of their own bourgeoisie and calling for its defeat. In carrying this task out, they must declare their support for the right of self-determination. Only then will they win the support of the Falklanders for the Argentine revolution.

An argument often used by socialists and communists to support Argentine sovereignty over the Falklands/Malvinas is the historic character of the islanders as colonial settlers. Do white settlers in Australia, New Zealand or America have no rights to be where they are now? Of course colonialism has resulted in a mass of injustices towards the native population, especially in Israel and South Africa where oppressed peoples are denied even political rights. But we must also look at the situation as it exists today. 1,800 people live on the Falklands and they constitute the majority of a distinct geographical and cultural population. This does not mean we support as communists, their desire to remain with British imperialism, nor any actions or

claims by British imperialism to secure that link. Our role is to expose and defeat British imperialism. We demand the withdrawal of British imperialism from all colonial territories, as a necessary condition for all oppressed peoples as a whole, to exercise their right of self-determination.

What was the position of the Communist Party of Argentina? The Declaration of its Central Committee on April 3rd, 1982, stated:

"The Communist Party fully supports the recovery of the Islas Malvinas after 150 years of imperialist domination by Great Britain. In Argentina, as elsewhere in the world, we have thus eliminated a colonial enclave against which the Argentine People had always fought." (*Comment*, May 1st 1982, p.9)

We as Leninists consider it our proletarian internationalist duty to openly condemn this statement by the leadership of our fraternal Party in Argentina, as an unprincipled surrender to vile social-chauvinism. It has associated itself with the reactionary interests of its own monopoly bourgeoisie. While correctly attacking British and US imperialism as "... seeking to seize the vast resources of the region (oil, minerals etc.) and to establish military bases there, as part of its aggressive foreign policy..." (*Ibid*), it totally fails to expose the *connivance and co-operation* of Argentine monopoly capital with imperialism. Was it not the Argentine junta which was party to a proposed South Atlantic Treaty Organisation with the US and South Africa? Equally, they do not make any suggestion that perhaps the Argentine junta was seeking to annex the Falklands, in order to expand and strengthen its regional and military pact with US imperialism. Moreover, the leadership of the Communist Party of Argentina has posed no revolutionary tasks for its working class, by calling for the defeat and overthrow of the Argentine monopoly capitalist state.

The working class in Argentina has been dominated by Peronism, a bourgeois ideology, for over 30 years. The Communist Party should have sought to expose the peronist trade union leaders as agents of the bourgeoisie. Given the ideal opportunity to do this, what does the Party leadership do? It tails the peronists. There is no hope for communism in Argentina, so long as opportunism dominates in this way. The situation there demands an ideological struggle for Marxism-Leninism inside the Communist Party immediately.

Equally disgusting is the unprincipled performance of the centrists in this country, who if not tailing behind opportunism in the British working class, latch onto centrist positions emanating from the world communist movement.

The centrist-liquidationist tendency in our own Party *Straight Left*, condemned British imperialism while backing the Argentine monopoly bourgeois claim to sovereignty. In order to keep in line with 'general opinion' in the world communist movement and the 'Third World', *Straight Left* disguised the reactionary nature of Argentine finance-capital, even to the point of 'disproving' its fascist character:

"The Argentine government is a mixture of nationalists and conservatives with fascist elements (...) The working class movement in Argentina distinguishes between these contending elements in seeking to open the door to progress (...) Calling the Argentine military government fascist is just the latest in a long line of excuses for defending our imperialism, and bosses, against other capitalists." (Harry Steel, *Straight Left*, No.39, May 1982).

For our comrades in *Straight Left*, not calling the "Argentine military government" fascist is just the latest in a long line of excuses for opportunism in the world communist movement.

The New Communist Party on the other hand got off to a flying start by literally stumbling onto a 'principled' position without thinking. *The New Worker* Editor had this to say at the beginning of hostilities on the 2nd April:

"At issue is a battle between two third-rate imperialisms, the US-directed quisling regime in Britain and the equally US-directed dictatorship in Argentina. 'Which one for us?', ask the 1,900 Falkland Islanders, and we reply that they have the same rights to independence, to freedom and to self-determination as everybody else." (*The New Worker*, Editorial, April 2nd 1982)

It finally seeped through to *The New Worker* Editor and the New Communist Party, that they were somewhat out of step with the world communist movement and the Communist Party of Argentina in particular. The NCP statement on the Falklands adopted on May 8th 1982, said:

"The dispute between British imperialism and Argentina (neither imperialist nor fascist — *The Leninist*) can only be resolved by Britain relinquishing all claims to the Islands and conceding via negotiations under UN auspices sovereign rights to Argentina in a form that is in keeping with the UN resolution against colonialism." (*The New Worker*, May 14th 1982.)

So what are the lessons of the Falkland's War? Our position of defeat for ones own bourgeoisie, as the means of creating revolutionary opportunities, has been backed up by post-war events in Argentina. Contrary to the position of petty bourgeois groups like the IMG and RCP, who argued that the Argentine bourgeoisie would be weakened by victory (!), defeat has brought a growing political crisis within the ranks of the fascist junta, with Galtieri and the Air Force Commander being replaced. The three armed services have been unable to agree up to now on a reformed junta, and are breaking up into several tendencies — one preferring further fascistisation and another wanting a return to bourgeois democratic rule. *The Financial Times*, reported the regime as, "... showing increasing signs of disintegration." (*Financial Times*, August 20th, 1980).

Meanwhile, mass action of the working class has risen with a 24 hour bus and train strike on August 18th and a mechanics strike the following day. The moderate peronist leaders of the General Confederation of Labour were described as, "... under pressure from their rivals and an increasingly militant membership." (*ibid*) Things change very quickly in a developing revolutionary situation, which is precisely what is now happening in Argentina. Had the Communist Party there adopted a Leninist position, it would now have indeed been unpopular during the war, as were the Bolsheviks during their 'July Days'. Yet the working class is rising in anger, and a principled revolutionary position by the Communist Party five months ago could have now been channelling that discontent into definite revolutionary mass action.

The second lesson concerns Britain. It was never likely that 'our' bourgeoisie would suffer a revolutionary crisis as a result of this war. But we should now look to the future and show the Falklands war to be an illustration of imperialism's drive to war. The threat of world war looms ever closer, and it is our duty to draw lessons from small wars, in order to prevent world wars. So long as imperialism exists, each finished war sows seeds for a new war. The only way of eliminating that threat altogether is to link the demand for peace to the struggle against imperialism. Only the revolutionary overthrow of imperialism can safeguard world peace. ■

FROM MILLERANDISM TO MITTERANDISM

Michael McGeehan

When the elections to the National Assembly in June 1981 resulted in an absolute majority for the Socialist Party, complementing the prior election of Mitterand in May, the *Morning Star* greeted these events with undisguised glee. On Mitterand's election, their editorial glowed with optimism for "real, lasting fundamental change" (*Morning Star* May 12 1981) and went on to suggest that "Mitterand's breakthrough might be emulated here in Britain", it being "well on the cards" that the Labour Party would lead such changes. But with the inclusion of four PCF ministers in the government they positively boasted of such an "historic" occasion. Moreover the *Star* confidently predicted that "It is going to be a great contrast — the Thatcher government here in Britain struggling with the working class to drag our economy down into ruins, while in France the Mitterand government is working with the French working class to do just the opposite." (*Morning Star* June 25, 1981) Well, sufficient time has elapsed to enable us to assess the performance of the 'socialist' government of France.

The economic and social policy which the Socialist Party presented to the electorate included extensive nationalisation, a wealth tax, increases in pensions and social benefits, political decentralisation and other reforms, in conjunction with massive investment in industry and an expanding economy. Why might this all sound so familiar? Precisely because it is just a variant of the Alternative Economic Strategy which the TUC and left labour leaders, amongst a whole variety of British opportunists, propose as the solution to the capitalist crisis.

For this reason alone, the developments in France should be very instructive for all who doubt that the AES is essentially reformist. What then is the government's record on domestic policy?

CGT and CRS - Social Partners?

The crisis in the capitalist world is growing, and to get out of it the bourgeois governments are preparing war on the socialist countries. In France, we have a capitalist regime, with bourgeois ministers, who've only got one thought in their heads: how to safeguard and maintain capitalism. They have found a simple time-honoured solution: make the workers pay for it.

Just like other governments we've known, all the measures which will weigh heavily on the working class have arrived like a torrent at the start of the annual summer holidays. Devaluation by an admitted 10%; a wage freeze.

Barre, in September 1976, decided on a price freeze for three months, but he didn't dare freeze wages, contenting himself with a "recommenda-

tion" to the bosses to "hold them". This government has done better — it's frozen them. If one can believe the economic experts on this, this course of action is unprecedented in recent French economic history.

This devaluation has been perfectly orchestrated. The government was explicit that no measures had been decided in haste: "The head of state had been informed prior to the Versailles summit." It was he who

Initially, the new administration introduced a few reforms including increased pensions and other allowances, an extra weeks holiday and a shorter (by one hour) working week. However, it did not take long for that 'sugar' to dissolve and for the workers to taste the bitter pill. Last November the government re-imposed Giscard d'Estaing's 1% levy on wages; by the end of that year unemployment had been allowed to reach a record 2 million; and this July they ordered a wages freeze.

But of course, the working class is unlikely to meekly accept austerity. Already, France's largest union federation, the CGT, has rejected the wage freeze outright. But there is a major block to any developing resistance — the position of the PCF in having 4 ministers in the government.

It is well-known that the CGT is dominated, especially at the middle and leadership levels, by the PCF. It is therefore obvious that the CGT will be restrained from taking action against the government's attacks. It is in this light that the new General Secretary of the CGT, M.Krasucki, (a PCF member) told the federation's congress: "There can be differences between us and the government... The essential thing is to try and overcome the obstacles." (*Financial Times* June 18, 1982)

The action of the PCF in participating in a government which attacks the working class is a disgrace, representing the most recent tack in a long string of opportunist zig-zags. However, such manoeuvres have not gone unopposed.

In recent years, a group centred around the paper *Le Communiste* has grown in influence and support and represents some of the healthiest forces within the left of the PCF. We reprint below two articles from the July/August 1982 edition of *Le Communiste* sent us, which fire trenchant criticism at the 'socialist' leaders and their PCF accomplices in the government, the new perpetrators of what Lenin termed "Millerandism" or opportunism in practice. ■

Translation by Liz Calvert and Martin Taylor

decided to proceed with the currency realignment after the summit. In other words, Mitterand played by the rules; he took the decisions that would make the workers pay for the austerity.

The reformism of the PCF and CGT has allowed the government to be able to bully the workers in this way; by their policies they have permitted the workers' capitulation.

The government profits from this in order to put everything to work to bring strength back to capitalism.

The government considers that wage costs are rising too fast in comparison with our neighbours', to the tune of 5% in the first quarter of this year, that's to say, in comparison with the annual rate accepted by the West German unions. What's more, Mauroy spelt it out: "For the price measures to have the full effect, the participation of every one is required, primarily the participation of the social partners." From this, workers will see austerity increase in their homes.

In the government's work of undermining, we mustn't forget unemployment, lest it be thought under

control. Capitalist profit comes before everything. Unemployment is up 1.4% in comparison with May, at 2,034,000. An example of the government's destructive will is the steel industry. Before Mitterand, between 1970 and 1981, 43,000 jobs plus 8,300 in iron mines disappeared, and the present plan for reconstruction entails 12,000 extra redundancies. After which Mitterand can well whip himself up into a hymn to industrialisation, to high technology, etc. All is operated and applied to keep the workers under the boot. Economically, of course, but also by repression. Defferre did not hesitate to use raids by the CRS to clear factory occupations, and to that end, he re-equipped them with new arms

and equipment. To a journalist who remarked to him that the interventions were multiplying, he preferred to equivocate, declaring: "You forget all the factories emptied in good will, that no one mentions", thereby letting it be understood that in certain cases, there are ways of arranging things with the unions before bringing in the CRS.

Economic restraints, physical coercion; this government feels sufficiently strong to bring the workers to heel, reinforce capitalism, prepare the workers to accept sacrifices in the name of France, in order for capitalism to survive.

All this is very far from the class struggle to which the PCF and the CGT refer. ■

Act to Rebuild the Party!

Le Communiste statement July 4, 1982

"The Communist Party of France (PCF) is not communist anymore, neither in its theory, in its practice, nor in its organisation. Its theory is reformism, its practice is class collaboration, and its organisation is nothing but bureaucratic." We made this statement a year ago in our July 1981 issue. Day after day, month after month, this truth has not ceased to be valid.

We explained this again last May: "Apart from a few critical tendencies heard or read, here or there, the PCF has taken the step, a decisive, irrevocable step, that leads from an opportunist practice which doesn't fundamentally question capitalism, to a reformist implementation of the interests of the bourgeoisie."

The behaviour of the PCF in the face of the most brutal attack which workers have had to suffer on their living standards for decades is an illustration of our point. Their spokesmen have expressed their "reservations" about what is happening, whilst their M.P.s gave the government a vote of confidence, "without reservations", and Communist ministers help to depress wages and make the employers rich. Like it or not, what we are saying is the most objective reality.

The purely verbal and platonic misgivings uttered by the PCF do not make any difference whatsoever. After all, the bourgeois parties, especially the social-democrats, have been saying the same sort of thing for a long time. Their platonic criticisms of the unpopular measures taken by their government are meant only to

● The militants who help to produce this paper are trying to rebuild the PCF, destroyed by Euro-communist reformism.

● To achieve this, they aim to assist any anti-opportunist current characterised by the rejection of reformism, class-collaboration and anti-Sovietism.

● They consider themselves an expression of the revolutionary workers' and communist movement, and struggle for the triumph of communism in France and throughout the world.

keep the trust of those whom they wish to influence.

The PCF has not got anything to do anymore with either communism or socialism, nor with the defence of the immediate interests of the working class. It has become an instrument of the bourgeois state to integrate the most class-conscious workers into the capitalist system and its imperialist institutions.

The PCF's complicity with regard to the austerity policies goes hand in hand with and conforms with its complicity in relation to the government's ultra-Atlantic policies. Those who cannot see that the relative moderation of the PCF's criticisms of the socialist countries is but circumstantial and superficial are making a tremendous mistake, because these critics could become virulently anti-Soviet overnight.

In the same way these people are deluding themselves if they seek refuge in just organising everyday protest actions. The party will not be reborn spontaneously from its ashes,

nor will the leadership which today wallows in the delights of reformism, suddenly see the light. Without a party which can build on the experience of struggles in an anti-capitalist way, the working class will continually waste its energy in pointless struggles which were doomed from the start.

This sort of blindness is typical of the opportunism which affects militant workers nowadays, this commonplace opportunism which has ended up as the worst example of this evil: the opportunism of the party of the working class. Over the years we have struggled against trends and upsurges to stop the spread of opportunism and re-orientate the party to a revolutionary path. Unfortunately, the tide of capitulation has swept it away, and, as our heading read in June last year, "The Party of communists must be rebuilt."

Yes, everything must be rebuilt. The task is tremendous. At the present time, the main task is to establish and maintain links between all those who refuse to accept the reformist consequences of opportunist behaviour, that is, with those who are beginning to break from opportunist practice by rejecting class collaboration. Basically, it is matter of making sure that those who think like communists, act like communists as well. Now is the time to stop wasting words and writing proclamations and to start strengthening the anti-opportunist current. Some progress has been made during the past year; there are now two co-ordinating districts, one in the Paris area and one in Southern France. Without doubt an initial assessment will be possible before the end of the year. ■

Reviews

Women's Freedom and Sweet Revolution

Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell, *Sweet Freedom* Picador London pbk. 1982, pp.258, £1.95.

Liz Calvert

Coote and Campbell describe their book as an "interim report" on the recent history of the women's movement of the late 'sixties and 'seventies. They begin with a lament on the disappearance from view of previous "women's uprisings" — how each generation has to find their rebellion anew. The fear is also expressed several times that the present movement could simply fade out in much the same way, especially in the hostile mood of the 'eighties. But the only explanation they give for this is one which springs from their view of society: it is that male domination of the presentation of ideas and of history has prevented women's views and achievements from getting handed down to posterity.

This is not strictly honest, of course, for the bald achievements, and often more, *are* there for all to read: the Married Women's Property Act, the changes in divorce laws, the campaign and the granting of women's suffrage, they're all in the history books, just as the 1967 Abortion Act and the Equal Opportunities Act and their ilk will be. What Coote and Campbell really mean is that the spirit, the sisterhood, the personal strength and knowledge are not chronicled.

These gains *must* be seen in conjunction with the struggle for trade union recognition, for universal *male* suffrage etc. Because of this, it is clear that any campaign which does not recognise the limitations of even the most far-reaching of reforms under capitalism does consign itself to the history book.

This WLM, with feminism as its ideology, is going down exactly the same path. Those who support "patriarchal politics — whether on the left, centre or right" are wrong, because they concentrate on "one relatively limited area of life: production." For these trail-blazing women, it has got to be "reproduction and

production ... relations within the family and community as well as relations between labour and capital." (*Sweet Freedom* p.242)

There is a very good reason why Marxists, at least, concentrate on production, and it has nothing to do with patriarchy or with Marx being a man. No, Ms Coote and Ms Campbell, it is because production determines *not only* relations between capital and labour, but, *also and therefore*, relations within the family. In short, it pervades every area of life. It is because of its scientific analysis of production that Marxism has not been confined to the history books like every "women's uprising" of the bourgeois variety. Concentrate on reproduction if you like, but you will certainly not find the answer to the oppression of millions of women and men in the world today.

Women are crucial for the capitalist means of production, not only because they provide domestic work and future workers for nothing, but because they also exist as a cheap, unorganised reserve army of labour. Women can and will be drawn into or thrown out of employment at the whim of the needs of capital accumulation — the aim of capitalist production.

At times of crisis, in the developed stage of capitalism, with the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, one of the crucial ways in which capitalism will attempt to resolve the crisis is by increasing the reserve army of labour, putting capital in a strong position, from which it can attempt to drive wages below the value of labour power — and start increasing profit. Women are useful, because as domestic slaves they fit in with capitalism's needs for a reserve army of labour. It is the very privatised nature of women's individual drudgery in the home, together with the inferior position allowed women in social production, which form the basis of women's oppression under capitalism.

This crisis, this "bitter climate" for Coote and Campbell, only serves to illustrate that reforms can only be temporary, that capitalism itself is the root cause of women's oppression. The attacks on the already limited abortion and contraception provisions, the increase in infant-mortality rates, the decrease in the availability of child-care, the cuts in education, the retreat from 'equal pay', which was never anywhere near 'equal' anyway, the rate at which women are becoming unemployed, at a faster rate than that of men, the increase in women doing part-time work, home work, night work, often temporary and low-paid — all this is not happening because the *patriarchy* is

in crisis. Women face an ideological onslaught from those who support patriarchal ideas, who are in short the apologists of the bourgeoisie; they are on the rampage against women. yes, because of the crisis of capitalism.

Coote and Campbell end their book with a plea for a feminist-centred Alternative Economic and Political Strategy. The reforms which for them would make up the strategy are all reforms which could extend the freedom of women under capitalism. The innate conservatism of such strategies, propagated by men or women, is perhaps nowhere better indited than here, where our two feminists are forced to propose equal sharing of housework, instead of its abolition as an individual activity. However, a programme of reforms to fight for, to emancipate women, is a basic tactic Leninists would support. As Luise Zietz, a German social-democrat said in 1907: "In principle, we must demand all that we consider to be correct and only when our strength is inadequate for more, do we accept what we are able to get... The more modest our demands the more modest will the government be in its concessions" (quoted in Lenin, CW—Vol.13, pp.90-1).

It is vital for communists to raise the demand for reform to its highest level, to fight for the greatest extension of women's rights, and to push capitalism to the limit of its ability to grant these reforms. This is the only way to demonstrate our seriousness on the 'woman question', to unite all sections of women in the struggle for equality with men, and above all to force them to break with feminism. For this bourgeois ideology can only be exposed when the absolute limitations of capitalism are displayed clearly.

If feminism is not broken with, and if the role of women under capitalism is not understood as crucial to the maintenance of that system by the proletariat as a whole, the only form of "sweet freedom" won by women will turn out to have been sweet *f.a.* For when capitalism decides it is time to retract its concessions, at the whim of that out-of-date, 'patriarchal' nonsense of a concept, the necessity of capital accumulation, all the laws and committees, all the consciousness raising, will count not a jot. If they continue with their present ideology, the WLM, Coote, Campbell, radical feminists, 'socialist' feminists, all will be following Emmeline and Christabel into the history books, with their own achievements and failures set in black and white, whilst capitalist production continues in oppressing the majority of the population, men and women. ■

Whose Revolution in Ethiopia?

Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux **The Ethiopian Revolution**, Verso, London 1981, pbk pp. 304, £5.95.

Joseph Wright

In 1974 the fetid regime of Emperor Haile Selassie slowly disintegrated under the pressure of popular discontent. Students, workers, peasants, nationalities, all stood in opposition, but it was the army, in the *absence* of a serious mass revolutionary party, that delivered the final blow. Although initially promising a civilian government, the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC or Derg) soon entrenched its total domination of the state.

The National Democratic Revolution's aim was to sweep away all vestiges of the ancien regime and to destroy the block on development the feudal/bureaucratic capitalist regime had imposed. Part and parcel of this was opposition to U.S. imperialism, which had been a major prop to the absolutist monarchy. The Derg proclaimed a series of radical reforms; the nationalisation of all land, 75% of industry, all banks and the leading insurance companies; the disestablishment of the Coptic Church; and the creation of co-operatives.

To carry out its programme the military needed popular support. As a result it handed "substantive power to the *kebeles* (urban dwellers' associations J.W.) in the towns and the Peasant Associations in the countryside." (p.110) And what's more, it quickly adopted the aim of 'socialism' and concluded agreements with the socialist countries. So although the leaders of the Ethiopian Revolution, like Mengistu Haile-Mariam, had more in common with Jacobins like Robespierre, because this was the twentieth century, the era of proletarian revolution, the rhetoric employed was that of Russia 1917 and not that of France 1789.

Because of its narrow social base, the Derg courted a series of civilian allies to win its popularity and provide it with a coherent ideology. But one by one these civilian groups came into conflict with the aims of the military; first the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), then the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (Me'ison), and finally the Oppressed People's Party of Ethiopia (Echa'at) and the Labour League; all fell victim to the "Red Terror" launched by the Derg. As well as these revolutionary

groups the trade unions fell out with the military, the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions (CELU) was banned and even its officially sponsored replacement, the All-Ethiopian Trade Unions (AETU) had its dissenting leadership purged on more than one occasion.

While declaring its aim as socialism the Derg banned strikes, all opposition parties were eliminated, including those based on the working class, and, after consolidating its position, it greatly reduced the powers of the *kebeles*, because they constantly fell into the hands of forces which ended up in opposition. Despite constantly quoting Lenin, the army leaders were utterly opposed to any calls for the right of Ethiopia's numerous nationalities for: *self-determination, up to, and including, separation*. Mengistu mimicked the slogan, but for him and other Derg leaders Ethiopian unity came first. In reality, as Halliday and Molyneux make clear, it was the Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer's theory on nationalities, not Lenin's, that the Derg's policy resembled. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, like Ethiopia, was made up of a patchwork of peoples; separation, it was argued, would only result in chaos and therefore 'self-determination' could and must only be exercised within the confines of the existing state. While Lenin advocated national unity, he stood four-square for *the right* to separation.

What reveals the present regime's true character perhaps more than anything else are its plans for a 'proletarian party'. The first scheme involved the merger of five groups, Me'ison, Malered, the Labour League, Echa'at and Seded (Revolutionary Flame, which was overwhelmingly made up of many officers). They united under the umbrella organisation the Union of Marxist-Leninist Organisations (Emaledh). In the end three of these organisations were banned, the leaders arrested or killed, their membership persecuted and by "July 1979 members of the only civilian group persisting in alliance with the PMAC, Malered, were also reported to have been arrested." (p.131)

Emaledh's responsibilities included organising an ideological school *Yekutit* 66, to train future cadres of the party "from which Eastern European instructors were excluded despite pressure from the USSR and East Germany to have them included." (p.130) The Derg was determined that any party to be formed would serve their interests and would not challenge army hegemony. At the end of 1979 the Commission for Organising the Party of the Working

People of Ethiopia (COPWE) was formed and it was announced that all previous political groups were dissolved and membership of COPWE was to be open only to individuals. "In practice, this gave more opportunity for control by the top leaders" (p.142). And as we can see from its First Congress, COPWE was totally dominated by the army. Of the 123 full members of the Central Committee 79 were from the army or the police, its Executive Committee of seven were all Derg members and all fourteen Provincial Committees were headed by army officers.

Halliday and Molyneux do not confine themselves to Ethiopia, they also attempt to tackle the whole question of 'socialist orientation' and National Democratic Revolutions. They rightly point out that the state played a crucial role in putting countries like Japan, Germany and Turkey on the road to independent capitalist development and that this course is not open for a backward country like Ethiopia in the latter half of the twentieth century. It like Egypt in 1952, Iraq in 1958, and Somalia in 1969 has broken the shackles placed on it by a corrupt neo-colonial regime, but will Ethiopia follow them in the development of state capitalism or can it take the path of Cuba?

Since the 'fifties we have seen numerous cases of states claiming to be 'socialist'. What are they now? Many today hold high hopes for countries like Iran, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Grenada, Burma, Libya, Zimbabwe, Syria, Algeria, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique as well as Ethiopia. What will decide their fate in our view is the *independent organisation of the proletariat with the aim of establishing their dictatorship*. Tailing the bourgeois or the petty-bourgeoisie can only in the end lead the working class to defeat. Cuba is the exception that proved the rule, what is needed in all the above countries is the organisation of *genuine* communist parties, politically *totally* independent from all other parties. Only the working class can lead the struggle for socialism, rhetoric from petty-bourgeois and bourgeois politicians about socialism is a facade to cover the development of capitalism. The workers must pursue their *own* aims, must never be diverted by incantations for 'anti-imperialist national unity'.

For us the example for underdeveloped countries to follow is that of Afghanistan in 1978 when the PDPA provided a model of *uninterrupted* revolution, enabling the country to embark upon a course of non-capitalist development, pioneered by Soviet Asia and Mongolia. ■

Letters

French Letter

Dear Comrades,

As a member of the French Communist Party currently teaching and studying in Britain (P.H.D on the far left in Britain since 1945 for the Sorbonne) let me first say that *The Leninist* is probably the best mag I've come across so far in this country.

Although *The Leninist* is closer to what my party (the French) says than the official CP press (*Star* and *Marxism Today* — which, I agree with you, is in many respects everything but Marxist) — I must admit that your paper's frighteningly accurate loyalty to Marxism-Leninism makes even ourselves-the French CP-look revisionist, if not reformist (though obviously not to the same degree as the CPGB, or the Italian and Spanish parties.) After all, we have renounced Marxism-Leninism as a means of action (including the dictatorship of the proletariat) although-unlike the CPGB-we have obviously not given up Marxism as an analysis and theory. Also, we are currently supporting Mitterand's own AES. Nevertheless, our manifesto was quite different from the Socialists: we called for the nationalisation of the top 200 companies, that is to say changing the economic structure of France (as Mitterand is doing, to a much lesser degree, by nationalising all private credit and only five industrial groups) instead of simply reinvigorating capitalism.

I look forward to your analysis of the situation in France.

Congratulations for putting the best analysis I've read in England of the Polish situation. Your article on Ireland fits in as well with what we in the French CP think. Can I point out what seems to me a minor inconsistency? On page 2 (*The Leninist* No.1) you write that the bourgeoisie benefits from white/black working class racism, whereas on page 32 it is the working class-Protestants-who you say gain from the Catholic/Protestant discrimination (although you rightly point out the similarities between Ireland and South Africa!)

Yours comradely

B.Pirard

The Leninist replies. In the Six Counties British imperialism consciously bribes the Protestant working class, with jobs, housing etc, this is not the case with the mass of workers in Britain.

We look towards breaking the division between Catholic and Protestant workers through communists in Ireland leading the struggle against British imperialism with a programme of leading the revolution uninterruptedly to socialism. Only with such a position can the Protestant workers be won away from a loyalty to British imperialism.

John's Collective

Dear Comrades,

We are a small group of non-aligned Marxist-Leninists and as such are very happy to see the appearance of a communist theoretical journal whose primary objective is to engage in ideological struggle around the question of re-establishing a genuine revolutionary vanguard Communist Party in Britain. At present, we are engaged in a study of the Left in Britain, and this work is being carried out with the agreement that the principal task in Britain is to create the conditions necessary to build such a party. We are also in agreement with you that open ideological struggle is required and of the need to carry out theoretical work. It is within the context therefore that we wish to make some comments concerning your analysis of the obstacles in relation to this task.

It is with your analysis of the existing Communist Party and your subsequent formulation of how to tackle the problem of re-establishing a revolutionary party that we have a number of disagreements.

These disagreements lead us to a very different conclusion to your own, namely that the ideological struggle must be waged outside, not inside the Communist Party. We would argue that it is those forces to the left of the Communist Party who have attempted to make a break with revisionism who should be the people that you are attempting to reach through your journal. We therefore ask you to reconsider your decision to address yourself to the Communist Party. Instead, we ask you to make your journal available to forces left of the Communist Party and where necessary, to make an analysis of what is wrong with the positions taken by the anti-revisionist forces.

How do we come to such a different conclusion? We agree with you that there is the problem of revisionism within the existing Communist Party, however, we consider that you are underestimating the problem.

We consider that it is this question of the general line of the Communist Party which is primary. Under the conditions we have outlined above, we consider that the correction of the general line of the Communist movement is a task which has to be undertaken outside of the ranks of that party. We agree with you that bureaucratism, distortions of democratic centralism and inner party democracy and a slavishness toward the Soviet Union are serious errors, however we consider them to be secondary questions.

We would welcome the opportunity to contribute to such a journal as yours, were it orientated to the forces left of the Communist Party and the opportunity to discuss further with you these differences which we have touched upon in this letter.

Yours fraternally,

John MacLean Collective
London E.9

Dear Comrades,

Many thanks for sending me *The Leninist*. I have not long finished reading it. To me it was excellent. Having been a member of the CP for many years the description of how "pub-room conspiracy" operates in the Party was very accurate to say the least!

Recently I joined the NCP. After reading your critique of them, I wonder if I have done the right thing. Also, I have been assisting the RCG in selling their paper FRFI. As your political position is basically my own, I would appreciate and respect anything you have to say of this organisation. I am concerned whether I am assisting the revolutionary process, or hindering it, by being helpful to the RCG. They told me they had a Trotskyist inception, and that they were a very small organisation. If you could send me as much information on them as possible... I would be very grateful to you... I will be meeting them... to discuss areas of agreement/criticism. If I could have some "ammunition" from you, it would be of great assistance to me.

I read a critique of *The Leninist* in FRFI. Basically, they were favourable to the journal. One of their criticisms was that it was an illusion on your part that the CP can "return" to the working class. And that *The Leninist* fails to recognise the enormous obstacle to revolutionary developments which the CP represents. They went on to say that if you did not break with the CP-and contribute to building a real (?) communist movement — *The Leninist* will sink in a sea of opportunism. What is your opinion on all this? Also — (more) — they said that the authors of *The Leninist* need to recognise the danger of themselves becoming the "Marxist" excuse for remaining in the CP. They think that your fine principles will remain untested (?) as long as you remain in the CP. If you stay in the Party your principles will not be put into practice because the Party won't let you! More! You did not state (says FRFI) how long the views of Aaronovitch and similar views have dominated the CP. Another criticism! That *The Leninist* mechanically (?) believes that as British imperialism "declines" in strength so too will opportunism weaken.

In conclusion, they feel that you have set yourself an impossible task. Why? They say that the CP is a thoroughly pro-imperialist party. Its programme belongs body and soul to the opportunists, and that *The Leninist* runs the danger of persuading those honest members in the CP to remain in the party that does not need "reforming" but needs destroying.

To me this is Trotskyist, ultra-left, and does the work of the ruling class for them.

Best wishes

Will Shirer

'Party' Games

Dear Comrades,
We are studying with great interest the first issue of *The Leninist*.

The founding statement is excellent. From a different political direction, we were ourselves forced to take up the struggle for a genuine Bolshevik party. I enclose a copy of the conclusions we came to, remarkably similar to yours in many ways.

Our subsequent struggles have led us to a complete reappraisal of our position on the Soviet Union and its role in the world Socialist revolution, out of our determination to defend the Polish workers state against the international bourgeois, revisionist, and 'Trotskyist' attacks on it.

We are still studying the rest of your first issue but already feel confident that we have much in common, and would be eager to meet for discussions about your path inside the C.P., our own path, etc.

Sincerely,

Royston Bull
Stockport

The Leninist replies.

But after seeing *The Leninist* No 2 and its article on the Polish crisis, our friends seemed to have changed their assessment of us. In a two part article attacking our position on Poland, Royston Bull, leader of the Workers Party, calls both James Marshall and Gus Hall (his article on Poland appeared in *The Leninist* No.1) "far from Leninist". And working himself up in to a frenzy, Bull rages that what "motivates Mr. Marshall is plain old-fashioned "anti-Stalinist, anti-communism."

Thanks for *Leninist* 2.

Don't mistake the harsh polemical words about Poland for a lack of comradesly feelings.

We are still very keen to have the most constructive and friendliest possible discussions.

We regularly sort each other out in similar language-without too many lasting hard feelings.

Roy Bull
Stockport

The Leninist replies.

In the interests of accuracy (and sanity) we sent the *Workers Party Bulletin* a reply.

But instead of publishing this letter, which was under 1,000 words, Bull launched a new attack. Gone was the "remarkably similar" conclusions, instead *The Leninist* is described as: "The bizarre 'self-styled 'revolutionary' faction of the right-wing reformist Communist Party." So much for "comradely feelings."

As a result of this failure to print our letter, and the hysterical response it produced, we again wrote to 'party' HQ in Stockport.

Dear Comrade,

Following the publication of *The Leninist* No.2 the *Workers Party Bulletin*

carried an article by Royston Bull over two issues, attacking us and our views on Poland. Your article covering seven pages was a mockery of polemic as it totally misrepresented our positions.

As a result of this, and in the interests of open ideological debate we sent you a reply which dealt with some of your most glaring 'red herrings.'

In issue 149 you published a three and a half page reply. But not in this issue, nor in past ones, have you published our original letter.

We trust you will rectify this situation.

Surely it is an elementary principle in the working class movement to grant a right of reply to any tendency which has been subject to a direct and lengthy attack as we have been. Only those who are politically shallow and vulnerable could be afraid of open polemic and ideological struggle.

Could you please reply within ten days. (August 14, 1982)

Yours fraternally,

R.Freeman

(for *The Leninist*)

The response again came in the pages of their incoherent *Workers Party Bulletin*, announcing that the WP would not publish our letter — they 'have better things to do' or so they say with the 'valuable' space in their publication! Pick up a copy and see!

Spart Out

Dear Comrades,

You may recall that I wrote to you some months ago as a Communist Party member expressing an interest in your journal.

Since then I have had chance to read the article published in *Spartacist Britain* analysing your political positions.

I find their arguments powerful and convincing and agree with them. Enclosed is a copy of a letter I sent to *Comment* and the *Morning Star* for publication. I would be interested to hear of any comments — you may have regarding either the *Spartacist Britain* article or my letter.

Many thanks for your cooperation,
Comradely,

M.J. Kavanagh

The Editor

Comment

Comrades,

The recent demonstrations by supporters of Solidarnosc in Poland should be a reminder to all of us that the crisis in Polish society was not brought to a halt by the imposition of martial law. I have no doubt that by the time Solidarnosc was openly announcing its aim of running Polish society it had become a threat to the socialist foundations of the state which had to be stopped by any means necessary.

I ask those comrades who have been trying to explain the roots of the crisis by arguing that the Polish leadership has

made mistakes, don't some actions go beyond mistakes and become crimes against the interests of the proletariat? Glorifying the role of the Church (and even turning a blind eye to anti-Semitism), allowing agriculture to remain in private hands and placing an entire economy in debt to capitalist banks cannot simply be called mistakes for any Leninist party, especially if they persist, even after these policies almost bring society to the point of counter-revolutionary conflict.

I think we have to look elsewhere for an answer. Everyone knows that these crises have been brought about because of the counterposition of interests between the working class and the regime, especially the corruption, mismanagement, bureaucratism and lack of democratic rights for the workers.

If we are to be materialists, I see no reason to believe that this situation can be changed by reforms. I would urge comrades to look at accounts of what happened in Poland and Hungary both in 1956, when the workers started setting up workers councils and arming themselves without getting sucked in by nationalism and the Church. Both the history of the Russian Revolution and Lenin's works like *State and Revolution* and *Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* teach us that workers can rule in their own interests only through their own organs. We should be clear that we oppose Solidarnosc counter-revolution and all imperialist roll-back schemes in Poland. I think the regime in Poland has proven itself to be an enemy of the workers interests and has to go. And the only way it will go, short of counter-revolutionary courtesy of Reagan and Co., is if the workers rise up under a party modelled on Lenin's party and get rid of it, lock, stock and barrel, and start running the workers society through organs of workers rule, soviets.

M.J.Kavanagh
Communist Party
University Branch
Liverpool

The Leninist replies.

We of course agree with many of the observations comrade Kavanagh makes about the crisis in Poland, but deserting the communist movement, for the sectarian wilderness of the Spartacist League, is as good as useless in solving the questions confronting us.

As far as we know there has been no article in *Spartacist Britain* analysing our political positions, all they have published is an attack on the Leninists of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP). And while we sympathise with these comrades, we certainly cannot reply for them.

Note: Letters have been shortened due to shortage of space. We have adopted the policy of changing names, addresses, and certain details in letters published in *The Leninist* where we think political security would be jeopardised.

Back Issues of *The Leninist*

Number One

Founding Statement of The Leninist: The Communist Party, The Crisis and its Crisis

Frank Grafton — The Road from Thatcherism; or The Road from Marxism? (A Critique of Sam Aaronovitch's book and the AES)

James Marshall — Ireland and the Opportunists

Gus Hall (General Secretary of the CP of the USA) — What's Happening in Poland?

Number Two

Editorial Statement — After the Congress

James Marshall — The Polish Crisis

James Marshall — The Paradox of Afghanistan

Frank Grafton — The Economic Crisis and its Political Effects in Britain (Part One)

Liz Calvert — Liberation and the Class Struggle: The Real Link for Women

Reviews: Michael McGeehan — The Labour Party: A Force for Revolution or Reaction?

John Kelly — The Irish Working Class: Past and Future

Roger Freeman — Austrian Lessons
Letters

For prices and postage see inside front cover (subscriptions)

Note: In *The Leninist* No.2 Article on the Economic crisis, the calculation for turnover of surplus value is incorrect. Instead of dividing total sales by capital tied up in production, termed 'work-in-progress' it should also include capital tied up in circulation i.e. finished goods and money. The calculation therefore, overestimates turnover. However, a more accurate estimation does not other the fact, that the simple rate of profit has tended to decline since the late sixties.

Books Received

R.Yürükoğlu, *Living Socialism: An evaluation of the 26th Congress of the CPSU*, İşçinin Sesi Publications, 1982, pbk, pp. 169, £2.00

A.Sivanandan, *A Different Hunger*, Pluto Press, London, 1982, pbk, pp.171, £3.95

Enrico Berlinguer, *After Poland*, (Edited by Antonio Bronda and Stephen Bodington) Spokesman, Nottingham, 1982, pbk, pp.114, £2.25

Berch Berberoğlu, *Turkey in Crisis*, Zed Press, London, 1982, hbk, pp.149, £11.95

R.Yürükoğlu, *Socialism and Democracy*, İşçinin Sesi Publications, 1982, pbk pp.58, £1.50

Eric Hobsbawn, *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* Verso Editions and NLB (in association with *Marxism Today*) London 1981, pbk, pp 182, £2.95

Peter J.Mooney, *The Soviet Superpower — The Soviet Union 1945-80*, Heinemann, London, 1982, pp 210, £4.50

Ann Showstack Sassoon, *Approaches to Gramsci*, Writers and Readers, London, 1982, pbk, pp.254, £3.95

South African Communist Party, *The African Communist No 90*, Inkululeko Publications, Third Quarter, 1982, pp.111

Ernie Trory, *Hungary 1919 and 1956*, Crabtree Press, Hove, 1981, pbk. pp.88, £1.40

Ernie Trory, *Munich, Montreal and Moscow — A Political Tale of the Three Olympic Cities*, Crabtree Press, Hove, 1980, pbk, pp.96, £1.35

Michèle Mestre, *Défense du Communisme, Le Communiste*, Paris, 1972, pbk, pp.35, 5F.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) *PFLP Bulletin* No.61, April 1982, pp.51

James R.Millar, *The ABC's of Soviet Socialism*, University of Illinois Press, London, 1981, pbk. pp.215 £4.85

Michael Manley, *Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery*, Writers and Readers, London, 1981, pbk, pp. 253, £3.95

Rosa Luxemburg, *The National Question* (Edited by Horace B.Davis) Monthly Review Press, London, 1976, pbk, pp.320. £3.75

Organisation of Iranian Peoples' Fedaiian (Maj). Against Liquidationism in Defence of Principled Unity, International KAR, London, pbk, pp.40

David Rousset, *The Legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution*, Allison and Busby, London, 1982, pbk, pp.333, £5.95.

Wladyslaw Bienkowski, *Theory and Reality*, Allison and Busby, London, 1981, pbk, pp.303, £5.95.

Ellen Nalos (ed), *The politics of Housework*, Allison and Busby, London, 1982, pbk, pp.250, £3.95.

Alec Nove, Hans Herman Hohmann, Gertraud Seidenstecher, *East European Economies in the 1970's* Butterworth, London, 1981, hbk, pp.353, £19.95.