

ONLY HE IS A MARXIST who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested.
V.I.Lenin

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The fight for Leninism: – open polemical revolutionary theory and party building. Part Two

The vital task and purpose of the revolutionary party is first and foremost the constant living struggle to grasp, correctly understand and explain unfolding world events, imperialism's Catastrophic breakdown and the balance of class forces they express. That requires building on and developing the brilliant science and analysis of capitalism established by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik Party as well as challenging and exposing endless incorrect, opportunist and/or hostile revisions, distortions and outright lies – both from non-stop bourgeois brainwashing anti-communism and from debilitating Stalinist revisionism and its even worse "opposition" in Trotskyism, which despite sometimes crucial insight, did things the wrong way, and ending up serving only counter-revolution (Books Vol 29 and 30).

Only with a convincing explanation of ALL aspects of the world, and their movement and change, can proletarian forces

find the LEADERSHIP to go confidently into battle for the vital revolutionary ending of the criminally degenerate and corrupt rule of imperialism and building of a rational socialist society.

That demands the deepest study of already achieved dialectical materialist philosophy, non-stop incorporation of new phenomena and correction of past and current errors or misreadings, through polemical party conflict, openly fought in front of the working class, and constantly drawing in the best of them to become revolutionaries themselves in dialectical interaction with the proletariat and its constant necessary class struggle.

The theoretical issue of party building itself, has been a crucial element of the fight for understanding as set out in the first volume of this book (EPSR Books Vol 14) and further experiences reproduced here, including battle for theoretical perspectives via building centrist movements like the Socialist Labour Party.

Building the party. The day for a rational scientific solution must come

[EPSR No796 04-04-95]

Nothing like enough revealing capitalist-press information can ever be collected for the study of the imperialist crisis and where it is heading next.

People can start protesting whenever they like, on the streets, about 'Hands off Mexico', or 'Hands off this, or that', etc. And the Mexicans, properly, already are doing it. And given tens of thousands of cadres, anti-imperialist movements everywhere would not be wrong to be doing the same.

But building serious anti-imperialist political movements to start with is still the problem most places are facing, and the continuing reason for the slow development is obvious: The entire planet is still badly suffer-

ing under the basic illusion that it is communism which is flawed and has collapsed and failed, and it is capitalism which is endlessly perfectible and has won the battle of history for all time to come.

Faced with such deep cynicism, a revolutionary anti-imperialist analysis either wants to start being very comprehensively and scientifically accurate, or else it wants to consign itself to an endlessly revolving turnover of protesting dilettantism, – like the SWP's 'cadres'.

In their different ways, various CP and Trot tendencies have been correct to the limited extent that they have recognised that a serious party of revolutionary theory leading (eventually) mass struggles is the only way forward.

The very major problem so far, however, is all such attempts have failed utterly to get the crucial analyses even remotely right. Which is why so many have flourished for a while, – but then collapsed utterly.

Even revolutionary parties which had maintained a more or less correct scientific understanding of how the postwar world was developing in all its aspects would almost certainly have suffered a very difficult period of development in certain parts of the world like the USA or West Europe, where major CPs gradually crumbled to nothing as a result of getting everything wrong.

With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been a long hard struggle for a communist party to have developed a correct line of unconditional but critical support of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp (roughly along the lines of the analyses that

the ILWP [EPSR - ed] has evolved over the years through some bitter trial and some bitter error) while keeping sharp a longterm perspective of eventual revolutionary overthrow of eventually collapsing Western imperialist decadence, – but it would have been a correct understanding, exactly interpreting the real world, and a healthy major party of theoretically-trained revolutionary-minded workers could have survived through this difficult period.

What is obvious is that no other kind of serious cadre party could have survived in any other way in the difficult conditions of the imperialist revival and the revisionist degeneracy in Moscow and the Third International.

More activist groups will come and go, as the crisis deepens. But serious-minded revolutionary workers will eventually conglomerate around where the best

understanding has been achieved, – either the ILWP around other larger groupings, or other groupings around the ILWP.

Interventionist protests can certainly attract activists, and such political struggle is absolutely in order. But the overwhelmingly greater struggle at the moment is just to understand what is going on in the historic systemic crisis of the world, and precisely what has gone on before that has led things up to their present unprecedented and complex position.

Some people will respond to 'Hands off Mexico' protests. But a far more important response is likely to be achieved by cadres who can also provide a complete historical account of exactly what 70 years of the Soviet Union represented; what the remainder of the socialist camp signifies; exactly why did the USSR self-destruct; what was the essence of its major mistakes and major achievements; what was the problem with the great array of different aspects of the Third International; what did Trotskyism represent; is the national-liberation struggle dead; what is Islamic fundamentalism all about; will imperialism avoid war; in what form are Marxist economic laws still valid; is the Western scene of anarchic drugs and despair permanent; is the dictatorship of the proletariat still valid; did the workers states misunderstand some fundamental points of human motivation; etc, etc, etc.

Political influence spreads through friends and family, in the workplace, in trade unions, in the neighbourhood, in political protests and meetings, in study circles, etc. The difficulty for supporters of revolutionary ideology, or for anyone else, would be to keep isolated from such contacts rather than naturally make use of them.

The problem remains essentially not where to go and what to do, but how do you convince people of anything in the present climate.

But not a second of time is being wasted, or needs to be. Let every would-be revolutionary cadre cram as much Marxist-Leninist scientific understanding in as urgently and as rapidly as they can possibly manage it. And however good a knowledge anyone develops, it is still absolutely guaranteed to be less than what the revolutionary masses will need, want, and demand of them when the time comes.

Making a correct analysis of the situation is crucial for all successful revolutionary leadership. Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice. There can be no more useful or committed activism

than that which constantly struggles in public to interpret in the interests of the revolutionary workers every fresh development in the international balance of class forces as it happens.

Only on this basis alone can the correct programme, strategy and tactics of a successful revolutionary workers party ever be worked out.

As scientifically analysed by Lenin in 'What is to be done', a party newspaper is the crucial organiser, educator, and revolutionary theory elaborator for revolutionary workers, and the forum for their unity, conflict and development. If it has consistent solid achievements to its name, a revolutionary newspaper can either be greatly valued or viciously hated. It can be treated indifferently only by people not yet remotely awake to the real issues facing mankind.

Principally, these remain the issues of how will the imperialist system avoid imposing the even worse conditions of inter-imperialist war on the working class in the course of each monopoly-capitalist bourgeoisie struggling to do better in the international trade war so that slump conditions on its own workers do not have to be forced beyond the point of revolutionary explosion.

The Mexican ruling class is sweating under this exact dilemma at this very moment, already facing communist revolt in its two southern provinces even before the present crash occurred followed by the savage destruction of living standards that the imperialist bankers ordered be placed on the Mexican masses.

Mexico may turn out to be a major turning point in the evolution of understanding how this coming great crisis of the imperialist system is going to develop, but again it may not. Things might be patched together again, briefly.

But lessons about how the ruling class is going to respond, and what lines of struggle the proletariat might adopt facing a revolutionary fight, can already be studied, in the Mexican situation and many others besides. The sooner workers get a correct analysis of important world developments, the greater will their confidence in anti-imperialist struggle grow. It is what building a revolutionary party is all about.

The ruling class watch all such developments very closely indeed, as does the capitalist press. Another 1917 is never far from their worst fears: [cuttings]

The shattering of the petty-bourgeois dream is one of the things that communist revolution is all about.

Workers make the revolution, but it is the demoralisation of the monopoly-bourgeois state's

essential middle-class support which is the crucial disintegration leaving the capitalist establishment no longer capable of governing on in the old way, – thereby forcing the proletariat to open the doors to a completely new class-dictatorship situation, – rule by the workers, the only class strong enough to seize the power.

Washington is not even close to wanting to let Mexico degenerate quite so far yet, or very close to not being able to prevent it even if it wanted to.

But as initially analysed, it is Washington itself which is in the greatest and most interesting economic trouble, – so bad indeed, that there is already talk in the capitalist press of the existing dollar-domination of the 'free' world being challenged by a Far Eastern yen bloc, a notion which could dramatically escalate all the subjective factors of decline which play such a strange and unpredictable role in revolutionary crisis: [cutting]

But such a challenge to US dollar domination in such a crucial part of the earth could not possibly pass off as smoothly in political reality.

With economic domination comes political and military domination and/or vice-versa.

As trade-war clouds threaten new world upheavals, only Leninist science can help workers, not fake-'leftism' and formalised ideas about party structures

[EPSR No803 23-05-95]

[...]The whole point about the forthcoming long period of bitter international trade war is that there are bound to be some spectacular losers, no matter how ruthlessly all the rivals might perform. And it is this that is making the ailing decadent British bourgeoisie sick to the bottom of its soul.

And it is the character of the depth of this crisis which is missed by the whole of the 'opposition' to the Tories, from servilely class-collaborating Labourites to the servilely anti-communist Trots. All kinds of efforts are still being made to find an 'answer' to the economic and political catastrophe the Tories are clearly running into.

But by the whole nature of the colossal coming-together of all the historical strands simultaneously, – the imminent collapse of the postwar 'free world' illusion of 'guaranteed permanently peaceful progress'; the insane self-liquidation by the workers states revisionist leaderships in response to that illusion; the similar self-liquidation of Labour's 'socialism'; the not-unrelated blowing-up of Trotskyite fanta-

And the former victims of aggressive Japanese imperialism is the least part of the objections to such a yen-domination transformation. US imperialism itself, not to mention Western imperialism generally, particularly France and Britain, would hardly be able to avoid nightmares of apprehension about such a comeback by Tokyo.

Uncontainable economic rivalry by Japan may be the trading and financial reality, but that does not yet make it the military and political reality. American power remains vast, and a fight for supremacy seems inevitable.

But the need for a much more detailed scientific understanding of exactly how the imperialist crisis will work out next is screeching obvious.

The next popular political protests will take place in Britain and throughout the world whether anyone is 'masterminding' them or not.

But the vitally necessary further development of Leninist science will only take place purposefully. The best bet, and the only runner as far as can be seen, is to continue building a deliberately-constructed cadre party for this aim.

Spread the *Bulletin*, or write a better one. JH

sies which parasitically depended on a 'degenerated' Soviet workers state and a vague hope for 'left' Labourism for a living; etc, etc, – something much more profound needs putting to the working class and workers generally than just a bit of smarter Labourite electoralism; or a renewed Trot rant that exhortation alone will transform the health-workers and teachers disputes into a TUC-led General Strike to bring the Major government down immediately; or a vain search for the 'perfect' democratic-centralist structure by the Stalinist remnants of the CPGB; or a pathetic new stab by Ken Loach at saying where the 'perfect' revolution got lost, – somewhere in the dust around the POUM debacle in Barcelona in 1937, or whatever; etc, etc.

Cannot we first hear why all that was glorious in Trotskyism collapsed so ignominiously in the 1980s; or what really should be done about China and Cuba now that anti-communism has proved such a disaster in East Europe; or something credible from a scientific revolutionary angle at last about what was really wrong with Stalinism and its dismal liq-

uidationist suicide, in the light of the towering fascist-slump crisis which is about to drag the whole of the imperialist 'free world' towards a new warmongering holocaust shortly; etc, etc.

Not until all the old anti-communist crap of Labourism, Stalinism, and Trotskyism has been cleaned up will workers be in much of a mood to follow a new revolutionary leadership anywhere.

All the sects involved in the renewed search for a 'perfect revolutionary democracy' have distinguished themselves by sweeping the past under the carpet and avoiding polemics about their own record.

The search for a revolutionary party structure which will be ideal or make political catastrophe avoidable is empty formalism.

A party and a movement evolve out of the struggle for correct understanding. Specific ideas take shape inside specific human heads. The social nature of man and his thoughts about society lead him or her towards collective action.

The failures of resulting communist parties have always occurred because of a mistaken analysis of the world, not because of faulty party structures.

Communist discipline and democracy also flow out of the correctness of ideas, not out of constitutional rules.

The only possible basis for unity is not an agreed democratic structure for party decision-making but a correct analysis of the international class struggle. Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice, no united party struggle.

Ideas have to be fought for. The highest form of the class struggle is the struggle inside the revolutionary party.

The only worthwhile 'rules' are those dictated by the need to take theory into practice.

Argument can only go on for so long before the need to act arises. Once a decision to act has been clearly established in the eyes of most of the party, the requirement for the whole of the party to carry out that decision so as to test it in practice, (the only way to find out if the understanding is correct), – or at least not to sabotage the decision, – is obvious.

The party's action is continuous, first and foremost in its non-stop analysis of the world and the need to put this forward in polemical argument.

Such matters are decided by leadership. Leaders emerge in the battle for correct understanding, proved in practice. In a party of permanently developing revolutionary theory, the consistent best sources of ideas will be obvious.

The democratic essence of

a correct scientific analysis of international revolutionary class struggle lies in the fact that the right theory is going to lead quicker to the complete emancipation of the proletariat on a worldwide basis than anything else.

Lenin's correct scientific objective understanding of the need for the Bolsheviks to seize power, when a majority of the central committee dithered in 1917, was the true democracy, – not the barren formality of the vote against him.

When a revolutionary party dares to act in the seizure of power, it invariably does so as a tiny minority of the proletariat and the intelligentsia, and would be voted down heavily if the decision were put to a ballot.

The true democratic spirit of Lenin's understanding that the October 1917 seizure of power was the greatest event yet in the history of mass civilisation became formally obvious in the revolutionary wars when the main forces of the proletariat stood behind Soviet government, and in the subsequent development of the socialist camp, and the defeat of fascist imperialism. The temporary central committee vote against him was a nonsense, relevant only for showing that all formal democracy fetishism is an ass.

The encouragement which the Bolsheviks drew from beginning to win majority votes in the Moscow and St Petersburg Soviets was not because of having won formal democratic approval but because the science of Leninist theory was proving itself correct in practice.

It is not true that "democracy enables the party to consider and decide its line", as the Open Polemic editorial claims. It is success in the struggle for scientific understanding which makes this possible.

And it was not a lack of democracy, or its cultist debasement, which steadily put the Stalinist majority of the CPSU onto the wrong path on so many questions. It was the philistine failure of understanding, an inability to grasp Marxism-Leninism well enough.

And to state that "the kind of relationship that the party has to the class as a whole is determined by the actual practice of democratic centralism within the party" is equally meaningless formalism. The CPGB died because it degenerated towards the same petty-bourgeois centrist mentality which Moscow's bureaucratic revision of Leninism inflicted to a greater or lesser extent on the entire complacent Third International, – not from graft.

The eventual revisionist self-liquidation of the Third

The real democracy, of correct understanding, was clear when the main forces of the proletariat stood behind the Bolsheviks in the civil war after the 1917 October insurrection



The "Railway War." Red Guards (armed workers) and de-mobilised soldiers helped the Bolsheviks to take control of most of central Russia in the winter of 1917–1918.

International and the CPSU was never a matter to be dealt with by Trotskyite hysterical despair, demanding 'insurrection against counter-revolutionary Stalinism' at every turn from 1923 onwards.

But even less is it a matter to be dealt with now by some completely delusory formalism setting out some supposedly cast-iron infallible structure for democratic centralism.

Dialectical materialist philosophy made massive inroads into civilisation through the 1917 Revolution and subsequent developments worldwide over the next 45 years, but all the time that advance was steadily petering out, even while still gaining new ground.

The imperialist resurgence of bourgeois idealism was still far from finished with. Currently, in appearance, it seems to have regained firm international supremacy with its 'New World Order'. But just the faintest grasp of Marxist-Leninist science will explain how imperialist crisis is relentlessly preparing the ground for by far the deepest and most

widespread revolutionary crisis that has ever shattered civilisation, and to which proletarian-dictatorship science can have the only possible answer.

It was the collapse in understanding of world proletarian dictatorship as the only possible future for mankind on the way to communist society which basically undermined the Third International and the CPSU, ousted by all the centrist-revisionist crap about Popular Fronts, peaceful roads to socialism, permanent peaceful coexistence, and the 'quiet self-liquidation' of imperialism.

It was insufficient confidence in the dictatorship of the proletariat which was the real evil of Stalinism, not insufficient confidence in democratic centralism. The KGB and the Berlin Wall needed to be bigger and better, not demolished. The entire *Open Polemic* campaign for foolproof Democratic Centralism has been barking up the wrong tree.

The OP critique of 'leader centralism' is just as off beam. Leadership just happens to be a

fundamental building block of all social development, – in science, in art, in all public life in general. All new thinking must initially spark in individual human brains. To be frightened of leadership is to be absolutely terrified of Marxism-Leninism, – there never were more dominant leaders.

What makes good communists, who will eventually dominate world society, is the willingness to struggle for an independent grasp of what leadership science has already begun to prove is correct understanding of the world.

What stands in the path of such development is petty-bourgeois individualism, cloaked as a fetish for democratic centralism.

The development of communist cadres was of a far higher calibre when the Bolshevik party was 'overly dependent' on Lenin than in the last half of USSR history when the leaders themselves became a completely sad revi-

sionist joke, impressing nobody, – exactly the opposite of what OP has implied.

The better the leadership in understanding the world, the better the cadres. The less authoritatively the leadership speaks in interpreting the world correctly, as in the last years of the idiots in charge of the CPSU, the more paralysed and useless the cadres become.

It is incorrect leadership in analysing the world situation properly which undermines the party's relationship to the class, not 'over-dependence' on leaders, not a problem under Lenin.

And OP is equally wrong to attribute CPSU liquidation to strong leaders. It was exactly the opposite. Gorbachev was a totally philistine nerd, completely dominated by his wife's Amex credit card. He had less communist conviction than the Kremlin cat. Study Leninism. JH

Fight for proletarian dictatorship science

[EPSR (South-West Bulletin) No815 15-08-95]

It is these trade-war antagonisms which are tearing bourgeois imperialist existence wide open. But it is the oppressed masses of the world, orientated around the class politics of capitalism's best-equipped gravediggers, the proletariat, which alone can grasp the class-struggle point of imperialism's collapse back into world war, and start to make revolutionary history out of this understanding.

Imperialist crisis is the best recruiting sergeant for revolution, but the conscious fight for proletarian dictatorship science cannot be ducked, wherever a new front is opened against imperialism, whether in Chiapas, in the Gambia, or in the inner-city heart of the USA.

What has brought modern world society to its urgent condition of preparedness for communist revolutionary transformation at the hands of its working masses has been imperialism itself, an imperialism now going deeper into crisis than ever before.

Since October 1917, with the exception of the gains made by the working class in the former workers states of Eastern Europe, most communist advance has been made in the context of anti-colonial struggles. As in the early Soviet Union itself, the peoples making those gains were very largely peasants, with often a relatively small proletariat. But what trounced the collaborationist Chinese nationalists and gave victory to Mao's armies, what made Vietnamese anti-imperialism unbeatable, what made it possible for the Afghan revolution to hold out as long as it did against endless US-backed subversion, –

was the class-struggle proletarian politics which took the lead.

The revisionist contamination of those politics inflicted huge unnecessary burdens on the class fight. But the contradictory reality of Third International history remains that the same Moscow which handed out disastrous popular frontist advice (and worse) was also the Moscow which in a thousand and one ways – and most significantly, simply by its continuing bourgeois-free existence bang in the middle of world imperialist society – gave aid, succour and inspiration to movements of the oppressed masses around the world.

Reading what Lenin said to the Third International in 1920 shows how far short communist leadership subsequently fell, before finally deteriorating into self-liquidation with Gorbachev.

But it also brings home again the fact that it is imperialism itself which creates its own gravediggers worldwide, and strengthens the grasp that October 1917 and the subsequent 70 years of planned socialist development was a WORLD development from which modern WORLD society can never look back, new world order triumphalism notwithstanding.

The Cold War which imperialism imposed on the Soviet socialist camp was designed to make room for US imperialist domination of its fellow-imperialist rivals and to prepare the ground for forcing history into reverse, putting the genie of proletarian dictatorship back in the bottle.

But what German imperialism failed to do, the US also failed to do. Materially, the strength of the Soviet workers state could

not be subverted or blackmailed or blitzkrieged out of its historical class challenge by Western imperialism.

In this sense, there was nothing phony about the Cold War. The existence of proletarian dictatorship on the planet was permanent proof that history had set limits to the 'right to rule' of the bourgeoisie. Sharing the planet with proletarian dictatorship was an intolerable and sickening affront to capitalism's historical self-regard, an unbearable reminder of its mortality as a ruling class.

What was phony was the dire revisionist confusion which took Lenin's correct understanding of 'peaceful coexistence' (as a temporary tactic to divide the class enemy and secure a breathing space for the revolution) and added it into a popular frontist rationalization for endless retreats from world revolutionary leadership, finally culminating in the tragically unnecessary own-goal of Gorbachev liquidation, achieving at Moscow's own hands what all imperialism's worst efforts had hitherto failed to do.

It was those revisionist illusions which indefinitely let the West get away with dividing the world into 'spheres of influence' in a phony equilibrium, putting obstacles in the path of revolution, and gave Washington the chance to play the Cold War card

in cynical pursuit of its own hegemony over its imperialist allies-cum-rivals.

The weakness of revisionism was its retreat from the understanding that proletarian revolutionary development comes out of the class-struggle contradictions forced out of imperialist crisis. Losing sight of this truth meant losing track of the real source of the Soviet Union's proletarian dictatorship strength.

The problem with Stalinism was never, as the Trots pretend, the insistence on building socialism in one country if need be. That was the best of Stalin, and the Trot rubbishing of this aspect of his leadership puts them squarely in the camp of the Mensheviks who clamoured that such an 'immature' proletariat should not dream of taking the power.

The problem was lack of a sufficiently confident understanding that October 1917 was a weak-link historical expression of a WORLD imperialist incapacity for continued rule, and that proletarian dictatorship in Russia and beyond, on territories where there was either a relatively small proletariat or even no proletariat at all, was a concentrated Bolshevik expression of a WORLD readiness of the proletarianized masses to start making communist history.

It is precisely such a strong revolutionary understanding which Lenin demonstrated in 1920:

I should like especially to emphasize the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. It was this question that gave rise to some differences. We argued about whether it would be correct, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of this discussion, we arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than the "bourgeois-democratic" movement. There is not the slightest doubt that every national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, for the overwhelming mass of the population in backward countries consists of peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relations. It would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties, if indeed they can emerge in these backward countries, could pursue communist tactics and a communist policy without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support. But here objections were raised that if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement, all distinction between the reformist and the revolutionary movements will be obliterated. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in the backward and colonial countries, for the imperialist bourgeoisie is doing everything within its power to implant the reformist movement among the oppressed nations too. There has been a certain rapprochement between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonial countries, so that very often — even in most cases, perhaps — while the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries does support the national movement, it is at the same time in accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie, that is, together with the latter it fights against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably demonstrated in the commission, and we decided that the only correct thing was to take this distinction into account and in nearly all cases substitute the term "national-revolutionary" for the term "bourgeois-democratic". The meaning of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organizing the peasantry and the broad mass of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie, to which belong also the heroes of the Second International. Reformist parties already exist in the colonial countries, and in some cases their spokesmen call themselves Social-Democrats and Socialists. The above-mentioned distinction has now been made in all the theses with the result, I think, that our viewpoint has been formulated much more precisely.

Next, I would like to make a few remarks on peasants' Soviets. The practical activities of the Russian Communists in the former tsarist colonies, in such

backward countries as Turkestan, etc., confronted us with the question of how to apply communist tactics and policy in precapitalist conditions, because the chief characteristic feature of these countries is that precapitalist relationships still predominate, and there can therefore be no question of a purely proletarian movement. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Nevertheless, even there we have assumed, as we must assume, the role of leaders. Our work has demonstrated that colossal difficulties have to be overcome in these countries; but the practical results of our work have also shown that, despite these difficulties and even where there is practically no proletariat, it is possible to inspire in the masses the urge for independent political thought and independent political action. For us this work has been more difficult than it will be for comrades from the West-European countries, because in Russia the proletariat is overwhelmed with the work of state administration. It is quite understandable that peasants living in semi-feudal dependence can assimilate excellently, the idea of Soviet organization and put it into practice. It is also clear that the oppressed masses, exploited not only by merchant capital but also by the feudalists, and by a state based on feudalism, can apply this weapon, this type of organization, in their own conditions too. The idea of Soviet organization is a simple one, and is applicable not only to proletariat, but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations. Our experience in this respect is not very considerable as yet, but the debates in the commission, in which several representatives from colonial countries participated, irrefutably demonstrated that the Communist International's theses should indicate that peasants' Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, are a means that can be employed not only in capitalist countries, but also in countries with precapitalist relations, and that it is the absolute duty of communist parties, and of those persons that are prepared to found communist parties, to conduct propaganda in favour of the idea of peasants' Soviets, or toilers' Soviets, everywhere, backward countries and colonies included. And wherever conditions permit, they must make immediate attempts to set up Soviets of the toiling people.

This opens up a very interesting and very important field of practical work for us. So far our general experience in this respect is not particularly extensive, but gradually more and more data will accumulate. There can be no question but that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should assist the toiling masses of the backward countries, and that the backward countries can emerge from their present stage when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet republics extends a helping hand to these masses and is in a position to render them support. Lenin: *The Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions*, 16th July, 1920.

“More data will accumulate” on this question of giving proletarian dictatorship leadership in a whole range of different local situations, from precapitalist indigenous communities like those clinging to life in the southern hinterland of modern Mexico, to the full rank maturity of the metropolitan heartlands themselves: this is more than ever true now, as imperialist rule collapses back into trade-war and the aspirations of modern world society are forcibly shoved back down into the ditch of fascist slump and war. Whether the next decisive revolutionary challenge to imperialism again comes from weak links in the chain of exploitation (e.g. Mexico?), or from decaying sections of metropolitan

imperialism (e.g. Britain, France?) or from the most concentrated historical experience to date of imperialist cultural degeneracy, combined with potentially the most unstoppable proletariat in history (the American working class) remains to be seen, though the enormous significance of an eventual collapse of US imperialism into revolutionary ferment can hardly be overstated.

But it is certain that, wherever the next breakthroughs are made, what will prove crucial is the readiness to give a conscious proletarian dictatorship lead which starts by looking at the world class struggle, driven on by the world imperialist crisis.[..]

Fight for Leninism. Build the
EPSR. Dominic Hull

Revisionist liquidation of the USSR now revealing the bankruptcy of anti-communist “theory” as the ‘new world order’ collapses in disarray. Trot & SWP denial of the colossal significance of the workers states experience for 20th century history is doomed to ridicule.

[EPSR No830 28-11-95]

The ‘triumph’ of anti-communism following the collapse of revisionism has paradoxically only served to bring out the full wretchedness of the Trotskyites and fake-‘lefts’ of every description.

It is through the final self-liquidating defeatist folly of the Stalinist ideological inheritance

that the colossal importance of the first 78 years historical experience of workers states has been made manifest.

Now that the Soviet Union and the world communist movement is no more, the enormous significance of its anti-imperialist and planned socialist achieve-

ments is outstandingly obvious to all but the wilfully blind, and anti-communists poisoned by petty-bourgeois class hatred.

But far from accepting that the contribution by the fake-‘left’ in the West to the Cold War isolation of the Soviet camp has now been shown to have had some catastrophic unforeseen consequences, the SWP centrists are more panic-stricken than ever to ensure that not one shred of re-examination of their fatuous ‘neither Washington nor Moscow’ posturing should see the light of day.

Revealing patterns of history can no longer even be discussed for fear that they might clearly reveal imperialist crisis as the driving force of the 20th century, and record the valiant struggle of the USSR and the Third International, albeit grotesquely mistake-ridden, to turn the tide of counter-revolutionary reaction, led by industrially and technologically superior imperialist warmongering, from the 1920s to the late 1980s.

Collectively, the SWP are getting older, and more and more stiffly middle-class.

One of their latest rejuvenation fixes has been the Loach-Allen *Land and Freedom** vicious slander of communism’s heroic efforts to halt the advance of fascist-imperialist reaction in the Spanish civil war.

The film is turning into a giant love-in for every anti-communist neurosis that middle-class ideology has ever spawned.

A recent seance of the SWP freemasonry in Manchester went into such raptures over Loach’s scurrilous work that all their old mutual sectarian hatred with the WRP was forgotten, and they simply failed to notice that their star guest speaker, a civil-war veteran, shot the theme of their meeting (and the film) down in flames by explaining that far from helping the fight against Franco, the DIY leftist ‘revolutionary’ anarchy behind the Republican lines would have brought defeat as early as 1937 but for the aid and military-instruction stiffening from the Soviet Union and the Communist International.

Voices of opposition, attempting to raise these and other historical questions bringing out the need to view the Spanish civil war in its entire historical context, including the long dismal record of Trotskyite ‘revolutionary’ dilettantism compared to the outstanding 20th century achievements made by proletarian dictatorship, – were either quickly terminated, or not given a hearing at all.

*See also review comment on Loach’s film in *EPSR Books Vol 29 on Trotsky: Counter-revolution no answer to Stalinism: Part one* p63-4

The extreme subjectivism of Loach’s film which could leave a politically naïve audience imagining that the Spanish Republic was not destroyed by fascist imperialism led by German, Italian and Franco forces, aided and abetted by the rest of the West, but was destroyed by jack-booted Stalinism, – was simply ignored.

The actual historical circumstances of the late 1930s, of the still desperately weak and underdeveloped Soviet workers state entirely surrounded by the total world might of hostile armed-to-the-teeth imperialism just looking for the slightest excuse to all collectively unleash a completely destructive holocaust against the USSR, was just not mentioned at all, and no one else was allowed to mention it either.

And the only reply to the observations that the anti-Franco frontline forces, armed and trained by the Soviet Union and the International Brigade, were the only real obstacle to the international fascist-imperialist coup against the Spanish Republic, and that the ‘leftist’ adventures behind the Republican lines by the POUM and others were criminal treachery, – was the stubborn repetition that ‘socialist revolution’ was on the cards in Spain, would have easily sorted out the Franco reaction (and presumably the entire international warmongering imperialist mayhem which was on the advance at that epoch), and that only ‘Stalinists’ wholly prevented this potentially greatest-ever turning point in human history.

Well, this is certainly film-making on a slightly more epic scale than *Raining Stones*; but Loach, of course, cleverly leaves all of this Trotskyite ‘revolutionary’ logic severely alone, limiting his emotional appeal to gaining sympathy for the ‘lovely, honest, openly-socialist, openly-democratic, real rank-and-file revolutionary’ sentiments of his fetchingly red-bandannered ‘ordinary anti-fascist volunteers’, – strictly non-Stalinist of course.

So gushing were the SWP about this simple spontaneous revolutionariness, which was only prevented from transforming the world there and then in 1937 by ‘bureaucratic Stalinist terror’, – that one ecstatic workerist climax embraced also “all those inspired honest international workers who volunteered to go out to Spain to fight for the socialist revolution”, etc.

The problem with this argument is that the workers International Brigade was 99% Communist Party originated, and inspired by Stalin. And rightly or wrongly, they actually went out to Spain to try to halt the advance of fascist warmongering, – which was clearly not the agenda of the

POUM and anarchist middle-heads who kept on dividing the Republican forces.

As the meeting was told, the questions of revolutionary consciousness and leadership in these specific historical circumstances is indeed a fascinating one which it would yield invaluable lessons to re-examine endlessly, in honest scientific debate.

Not only did the SWP ignore this offer, it is doubtful that they had the faintest idea what was being talked about. Their triumphalism implied that if the capitalist film industry could go on making heart-warming 'revolutionary' films like *Land and Freedom*, and the SWP could go on doing the working class's leaflets and banners for it, – then the 'perfect socialist revolution' could be just round the corner.

What need for 'boring history lessons'?

Such rank-and-file activism has been substituting itself for working class revolutionary consciousness since before the 1920s when these centrists first came up with their insane anti-communist 'ultra-left' abuse that the Soviet workers state was not socialist but 'state-capitalist', – and therefore to be betrayed, slandered, and vilified to every Western petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' heart's content.

And in more than 100 years, centrism itself has never so much as laid a finger on the imperialist bourgeoisie or its system anywhere.

Proletarian dictatorship, on the other hand, wiped out from history the legendary reactionary bourgeois-feudal autocracy in Russia which was the scourge of half Europe, central Asia, and the Far East; entirely wiped out warlordism and comprador bourgeois colonialism from mighty China which was a huge source of reaction throughout the Third World; and thereby opened the door to the whole national-liberation struggle which has truly changed the world by wiping out the direct Western empires, thus preparing the way for future socialist revolutions which will even dwarf 1917 and 1949 in scale and significance.

The SWP hate all thought of such historical reality more than any other type of bourgeois could possibly do, because only by denying the historical necessity of Marxist-Leninist proletarian dictatorship can these middle-class 'revolutionary' activists find a role for themselves and their trendiness.

So they just ignore the hopeless contradictions in their demonology of Stalinism which has the KGB somehow acting as an unchallenged law unto itself in fascist-encircled bourgeois Spain in 1937 at the height of the impe-



International brigade volunteers marching through Madrid: the vast majority were communists organised by the Stalinist parties so sneered at by the Trotskyist dilettantes and counter-revolutionaries

rialist warmongering build-up to imposing World War II onto the whole of mankind, and has this KGB deliberately sabotaging the 'collectivisation of agriculture', for example (and other incipient 'spontaneous revolutionary socialist developments'), – whereas the even more degenerated Soviet revisionist influence in China in 1949, in Vietnam in the 1970s, and Cuba in 1959, not only showed no such inclination, but worked magnificently to achieve the exact opposite result, namely the establishment of fullscale socialist revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Do the SWP perhaps acclaim these subsequent Soviet-inspired socialist transformations, while still perversely castigating the 'deliberate failure and betrayal' by Stalinism in 1937?

Not at all. They hate the subsequent expansion of the socialist camp more than they hate anything else in all of history.

What is being dealt with here is not an 'alternative approach' to the real history of the 20th century, but a total avoidance of that actual history by a strain of wilfully self-inflicted subjective-idealist fantasy 'philosophy'.

As one of the forms of middle-class ideological retreat or self-preservation, immunising oneself from the world's difficulties, – it is no different from, say, the Jehovah Witnesses only half-digesting real historical events over the past 80 years because they are mere play-acting, shadow-boxing preliminaries to the truly

Great Development which is now imminent.

Belief in the arrival of 'real socialism', – somewhere, somehow, at some glorious date in the future, – is just like the belief in the arrival of Armageddon and the Day of Judgement, when everyone will finally get their just deserts.

Meanwhile, the 'believers' within these sectarian religious freemasonries of every description, get on with being passive, mildly posturing, little bourgeois, content to basically put up with imperialist domination of the planet because they 'know' that all the unrighteous (basically anyone who isn't them) will face a come-uppance sooner or later.

Thus the SWP do not think that the bourgeois imperialist control of the planet through the international domination of monopoly-finance capital was ever really challenged by the spread of the system of workers states led by the USSR.

Their sympathies, therefore, have never truly been with the mass movements of real revolutionary heroics which furthered that challenge to Western imperialist domination, such as the colossal defeat of fascist-aggressive armed imperialism by the Soviet proletariat, the routing of Western imperialist dominance by the Chinese proletarian revolution, the humiliation of US imperialism by the communist masses in Indo-China and Vietnam, the overthrow of American mafia imperialism by the Cuban

revolutionary mass movement, the defeat of apartheid colonialism by the communist-inspired ANC, etc, etc.

Faint lip-service is paid to such titanic struggles when it cannot be avoided, – struggles which alone have explained to mankind how and in what direction the future triumph over imperialist reaction really will be obtained.

But what the SWP and other petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' frauds really like doing is closing their minds completely to all of that, pretending that it doesn't exist, and concentrating their entire thoughts and emotions instead on heroic little rank-and-file failures here and there, which preferably totally ignore the big picture of the world struggle against imperialist reaction.

Thus the Grunwick strikers, gay feminist lobbies, victimised individuals, anti-racist actions, wrongful police persecutions, etc, – all of these routine 'human rights' conflicts are the only 'real' world that middle-class dilettantes such as the SWP recognise, – especially when such protests are totally devoid of any international revolutionary consciousness, and even more especially when such protests are defeated, – for then the recruitment for this sect, which lives for the 'perfect revolution' in its head, is at the highest.

When the bourgeois-imperialist system was conducting its international propaganda blitzkrieg on world public opinion to vilify communism and all its acts under

the dictatorship of the proletariat in the workers states in order to make possible capitalism's continued repression throughout the 'free world' (giving rise to all these endless human rights abuses) – such single-issue isolationist mentalities as the SWP just did not want to know, – or rather they invariably jumped in right behind imperialist reaction to add their twopenny-worth to the general anti-communist hysteria, just as Loach is now doing over 1930s Spain.

The SWP were challenged about one of their more recent treacheries to the international anti-imperialist struggle when they went into ecstasy in 1980 over "a little Polish electrician's heroic struggle for human rights, Lech Walesa, and his brave rank-and-file Solidarnosc trade union, the real people of Poland", etc, etc, – convinced, of course, that he would be defeated, and that they would have another fabulous martyr for the lost cause of "real rank-and-file socialism" (or "socialism with a human face" to quote another arsehole anti-communist charlatan Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia) which Lech & Co were allegedly fighting for.

All the actual historical revelations since 1980 of how Solidarnosc and Walesa were nothing but a completely CIA and Vatican organised counter-revolutionary racket, bribing a huge membership and paying for endless anti-communist publicity stunts with the crooked proceeds of the Banco Ambrosiano scandal, where God's Banker Roberto Calvi siphoned off tens of millions of dollars of illicit Vatican profits (from laundered drug money, and a dozen other scams) to secretly finance imperialism's greatest-ever anti-communist offensive, – were just ignored by the SWP.

They even chose to ignore Walesa's open public espousal of near-fascist pro-imperialism subsequently, – and that of Solidarnosc too, all factions. It is the "ten million originally-inspired ordinary working-class people who believed in Solidarnosc that matter" of course.

Of course they do, because they

also have been cruelly betrayed and defeated, – more mythical martyrs to the cause of the 'perfect socialist revolution', even though these ten million never even existed.

This SWP mentality is a very vicious deception, every bit as nasty as the fantasy worlds of Transcendental Meditation, the Children of God, L Ron Hubbard's Diatonics, Jehovah Witnesses, the barmy suicide love-in sects of James Jones, David Koresh, etc, etc, – indeed every unpleasant hallucinatory auto-suggestion that parents worry about protecting their children from.

So don't look to the SWP for concern about the removal of the East-European workers states (for all their weaknesses and mistakes) as a barrier to total US imperialist world domination, – they could not care less, no more than could the Natural Law Party.

But when a big-star film-maker like Ken Loach puts on a couple of hours of "triumphant socialism" anti-communist make-believe at the Corner House, then you can fantasise so much that you could almost start levitating. No need to think now about the little anti-communist runt Loach sitting quietly in his 'special branch' WRP meetings eating shit from Gerry Healy.

And when is the film coming out about the fantasy-world fake-'left' in Britain, – all the 57 Trotskyite varieties, – where the grossest human exploitation rules, vilely taking advantage of those sad, innocent, naive aspirations that the SWP so prizes in workers and in its would-be recruits, a rotten real-life drama that Loach has personal experience of (unlike his total ignorance about Spanish and world revolutionary history), and could easily access endlessly more personal knowledge of? But perhaps the bourgeoisie would not finance such a film exposing anti-communism.

Away from the Trotskyite fantasy world, the 20th century can now clearly be seen as the first great epoch of incipient workers-state planned socialist development. Just as the capitalist

free-market system took several centuries to fully establish itself and its superiority over the feudal absolutist world, so will the socialist system take some time, and several false starts, before it finally proves its complete superiority to capitalism.

But these sensational first breakthroughs of the 20th century are what history is all about, the absolutely heroic achievements of the Soviet workers state in initially routing and overcoming the total blockade and devastation by the invading armies of 14 imperialist powers to back up the counter-revolutionary White Terror, then in achieving a planned development of the completely destroyed economy in a miraculously short time, just in time to meet the next great imperialist onslaught behind fascist imperialism, planned by the West from the early 1930s onwards.

It was because of the USSR's still hopeless inadequacy to take on a renewed combined onslaught of all imperialism, whose economic and technological development had far from stood still, and was now led by rabid fascist military aggression, – that Soviet hands were to some extent tied as to what it could do for the Spanish Republic, a bourgeois state totally abandoned by the 'free world' to a fascist coup and whose parliament had only a tiny handful of communists in it.

But the Soviet Union did all it could to defend Spain, the only help Spain got, – as did the communists, of Spain and the International Brigade who were the acknowledged backbone of the Republican forces.

Could a bold strike for total proletarian revolution have won the day in Spain, and thereby transformed the fight against Franco and the world fascist-imperialist offensive completely, there and then?

The permanent trouble with this SWP/Trot fantasy world is that they are the greatest revolutionaries that have ever lived in the whole of world history....when it comes to fighting other people's revolutions with hindsight. On their own account, there has never ever been a 'left', or Trot, or rank-and-file 'revolution' anywhere at any time, or even remotely approaching one.

The idea, of course, that proletarian-dictatorship power was there for the taking, there and then in Spain in 1937, without the slightest chance of instant total imperialist invasion there and then to crush it totally without trace, – is such utter bollocks that it is hard to take seriously. Fascist-imperialist counter-revolutionary aggression was on the march worldwide, – with every intention of stifling every last gasp of socialist revolution-

ary aspiration everywhere on the planet.

The whole of Western policy from the 1930s onwards was turned towards using the renewed fascist-imperialist trade-war crisis for blitzing the Soviet Union first and foremost, to finish off the work which had been left undone after 1917.

Nothing on earth could have halted this renewed slide of the world-dominant monopoly-capitalist system back towards inter-imperialist warmongering (other than a sudden conversion by the whole world proletariat to total communist unity behind a single inspired Leninist leadership, which not only did not happen, but was not even remotely realistic in the actual prevailing conditions of universal anti-communist hysteria of the time, – a fear and hatred of the Soviet Union which the predecessors of the SWP and the Trots were in fact hell-bent on increasing and spreading as far and wide as possible, in step with the major thrusts of imperialism's international anti-communist propaganda).

There was no wave of revolutionary fervour, leading towards imminent revolutionary situations, raging round any part of the 'free' world at that moment, – as there had been in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, for example, of which the Bolshevik Revolution was itself the prime example.

Unquestionably, imperialism had managed to consolidate itself, renew its international economic development, continue to impose colonial tyranny over five-sixths of the planet, and sabotage and agitate against the world's first workers state so effectively that it was able to get Germany rearmed, refuse all peace and disarmament appeals, and start signing treaties (such as Munich) which openly encouraged further fascist-imperialist aggression, now all directed plainly against the survival of the Soviet Union.

Workers in the West, organised into communist parties (a tiny minority of the working population), of course all resisted this anti-communist reaction and renewed drift to warmongering. Plenty of other 'workers' (like the SWP's forbears) put up no such fight, being more than happy with all the anti-Soviet hysteria.

The strength of fascist-imperialist aggression was eventually such that far from a handful of 'left' anarchist adventurers taking over the Barcelona telephone exchange (while the Republican forces had their hands full with trying to halt the Franco offensive) being a halt to German imperialist ambitions and an instant end to the fascist warmongering.

Lech Walesa reactionary leader of the bogus Solidarnosc "trade union" was deep in cahoots with (and funded by) Catholic and CIA interests from the beginning





September 1938 delight as Western imperialists agree the Munich Pact to give East Europe to the Nazis as reward for planned fascist blitzkrieg on the USSR, but Stalin out-

manoeuvred them all, undermined the Pact, and forced the imperialists to declare war on each other over Poland

Neville Chamberlain
Making a deal with Hitler

gering threat to mankind, – not all the powers of Western imperialism united against Germany could halt the Nazi war drive. The whole ‘free world’ was being thrashed by German imperialism, – until the Soviet workers state stepped in.

Nor did the working-class of the whole ‘free world’ rise up either against the renewed imperialist warmongering (as the Trots always implied would happen, behind a bold move for proletarian power in Spain), even when finally forced to make a choice about being dragged back into another imperialist war for profits when universal conscription was imposed at the beginning of the Second World War. There was no ‘spontaneous’ revolt anywhere.

The only organised refusal, of any size, against fighting in the imperialist war was led... by the Communist Party, and hardly to the universal approval of the ‘left’ petty-bourgeoisie either. The Communists were in fact vilified and attacked, – for allegedly ‘refusing to fight fascism’.

It was, of course, 100% correct for the Communist Party to denounce the inter-imperialist war.

It was warfare which was intended by the West to be unleashed solely against the Soviet Union via the treacherous Munich Agreement to encourage German imperialist ambitions eastwards rather than westwards. Brilliantly, the Soviet workers state turned the tables on the West. After long being refused any sort of mutual defence arrangements against any future potential fascist aggression because the West wanted Nazi Germany to crush the USSR,

the Soviet Union signed its own non-aggression pact with Hitler, thereby reversing German imperialist ambition back westwards.

The best the USSR could hope for was that it could keep imperialism from uniting against it when imperialism eventually went back to war, which no one anywhere was going to stop, least of all the ‘left’ adventurers from Spain, certainly not under pro-Soviet communist leadership.

For all the obvious defects and deficiencies of Soviet revolutionary understanding and leadership, already apparent, Stalin’s tactics were a master-stroke, – dividing Western imperialism so totally that when the USSR was attacked itself eventually, it immediately had all the Allied support it could want, which had been denied it in Spain.

So completely had the Soviet Union turned the tables on the West’s fascist machinations that it was the Western imperialists who were more glad of the Soviet alliance than vice versa as German aggression proved unstoppable for so long, – until the Red Army and the Soviet planned workers state got a firm grip of the situation, a historic watershed which will in time be seen as significant as 1917 itself.

Only after the imperialist self-destruction in war did (and only could, realistically assessing the situation) the wave of ‘spontaneous’ revolutionary struggle resume against imperialism, under the unchallenged leadership, of course, of the proletarian—dictatorship communist parties, – in China, Indo-China, Korea, Eastern Europe, etc. – all the time, naturally enough, to the total (if occasionally unspoken) hostility

of the petty-bourgeois fake-‘lefts’ all round the world.

By 1980 in Poland (and elsewhere), the wretched revisionist degeneration of the Soviet leadership and the remnants of the Third International had well set in.

But to take the Solidarnosc line against the Polish workers state was not just a naïve vile treachery, it was open class-collaboration with imperialist counter-revolution which was so obviously behind Walesa & Co that only the wilfully blind petty-bourgeois ‘revolutionaries’ could fail to see it (see *ILWP Books* vol 3).

Revisionism has self-liquidated totally now, but the only sensible line for international revolutionary workers to adopt throughout the Solidarnosc stunt was to call, as loud and long as possible, for the Polish workers state to reassert its authority, as a first step towards renewing its own international revolutionary understanding, which by this time had degenerated a long way from Leninism.

The Trot line of the ‘political revolution’ against the failing workers states was always totally unrealistic. The workers states were always far too successful for that, in spite of their weaknesses and defects, – as is now becoming apparent with the re-election everywhere of all the former communist parties, including just winning the Polish presidency away from Walesa in a completely Western propaganda-dominated and Church-subverted poll, – such is the nostalgia now for the plain successes of the workers states, even if uninspiring and unimaginative because of the wretched revisionist philosophy.

Trotskyism’s long-lost ‘political revolution’ was just more fantasy-world subjective-idealist nonsense.

No Trots or SWP ‘lefts’ can address any of these matters now. They just won’t do so. They simply resort to Western propaganda-fied lies about there having been ‘popular revolutions’ of some sort or other in East Europe.

There were no revolutions of any kind, popular or otherwise. There was just a slow long-drawn-out self-liquidation by the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, imitated by the revisionists everywhere, – and seized upon eagerly by anti-communist counter-revolutionary cliques of any and every description, whatever Western influences could muster.

The bureaucratic leaderships, brainwashed by their own revisionist stupidity, simply destroyed their own workers states, – in Gorbachev’s case, for example, in the insane belief that the introduction of bourgeois democracy and free-market commercialism would make the Soviet Union flourish as never before, and make him the most popular political leader in the world. What a moron.

The SWP still try to raise the fear-filled bogymen about ‘KGB terror’ in Spain, and invoke Orwellian nightmares of *Animal Farm* and 1984. It is just total crass crap from beginning to end. The one great crime of revisionism from first to last was that it did not insist on the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat, firmly enough. It let all manner of bourgeois-democratic and liberal woolly-mindedness flourish inside the Soviet Union and the Communist International, eventually capitulating totally itself to class-collaboration and the dismantling of the dictatorship of the proletariat, putting its faith, glitz-bedazzled by phony Western consumerism, in the ludicrous free-market lottery of parliamentarianism.

By the end of this feeble degeneration, the much harder Marxist-Leninist grasp of proletarian dictatorship as the kernel of revolutionary understanding, had lived in vain.

But 78 years of accumulated living experience of a variety of workers states under the dictatorship of the proletariat, – still going on in China, Vietnam, Cuba, etc. – has not at all been in vain. Just the opposite. The international anti-imperialist struggle is now well-armed with priceless knowledge. Not only is a capitalist class not at all necessary for triumphantly dramatic and successful workers-state development. The entire might of the imperialist system itself can more

than be held at bay by a system of workers states, even in some of the formerly poorest countries on earth.

The next imperialist slump and fascist-war-mongering crisis, not long delayed now, will mean the next great upsurge of workers-state proletarian dictatorships. They will far exceed in achievement even all the great things that have gone before. Paradoxically, the really important death to flow from revisionist self-liquidation will be the death of anti-communism, not the death of communism.

The middle-class smugs of the SWP are enjoying imperialism, not socialism. But when their hobby of 'doing things for the working class' is further on in the imperialist crisis, their gimmick

which distinguishes them from other 'left' reformists, – using words like 'revolution' and 'Marxism' occasionally, etc, – will not be enough.

Any party, centrist or otherwise, which starts to do well will be ferociously challenged by anti-communist propaganda, raising historical questions of all kinds to cloud the picture for revolution.

Workers themselves will want explanations of what the 20th century means. And no revolutionary cadres will be able to take a step without being able to offer a scientifically correct explanation for how the world has got into its present position and with the history that it has.

The SWP charlatans will be found out very rapidly. Build Leninism. Reg Potts

Silly foot-stamping by SWP against Scargill's SLP will not protect their "united anti-Tory vote" nonsense, or expose the fatal anti-theory weakness of Scargillism (which the SWP activists share)

[EPSR No832 12-12-95]

A breakaway from the Labour Party mooted by Arthur Scargill has met with a less than rapturous response from the SWP (Socialist Workers Party).

These sectarian anti-communists, who persistently stabbed the Soviet workers state in the back throughout its entire history on the posturing ultra-left pretence that the USSR was still 'capitalist', i.e. not socialist enough for the middle-class 'revolutionary' heroes of the SWP, – are worried that their centrist ground (half-way between reform and revolution, speaking the word 'revolution' a lot but never going further than 'left' pressure on the existing status quo, and never educating their party or the working class in the cataclysmic nature of real revolution which can only be achieved through the dictatorship of the proletariat) may be stolen.

But rather than be heard pathetically bleating that they were there first and don't want Arthur stealing their 'leftist' patch from them, – and incapable of theoretically demolishing Scargill's centrist delusions (which they suffer from themselves), the SWP cobble together the most spurious 'reasoning' to try to put the miners' leader off and cover up their own dog-in-the-manger small-mindedness.

'The problem', they start by pretending, 'is that a Socialist Labour Party (SLP) under Scargill would split the anti-Tory vote.' The SWP say:

The thought of the loathed Conservatives winning again is too terrible to contemplate.

This poses a problem for a left of Labour party which wants to make parliamentary

elections a major focus.

At the last election there were 51 seats which other parties won over Labour by less than 4,000. There were 56 seats where Labour won by less than 4,000.

So there are over 100 seats where it would be complete suicide to stand. Nobody could shrug their shoulders and say they do not care if voting SLP allows the Tories or the Liberals to win.

In addition, the Tories' crisis means that at the next election there will be many seats where Tory MPs with much bigger majorities are quite likely to be thrown out.

An SLP candidate would be seen as at best irrelevant, at worst a splitter dividing the anti-Tory vote.

If Arthur Scargill does turn his discussions into reality it will be a very serious development for the left.

They throw in their usual scorn of Blair's Labour leadership so that it not be thought that these opportunist 'lefts' are sucking up to the reformist establishment, but their message is clear: 'Vote Labour'.

The SWP are continually embarrassed by this exposure of their own fundamentally class-collaborationist souls.

In between elections, they always denounce the Labour Party more noisily than anyone else. At such boastful moments of their own meetings, they deny that they will be back in the Labour Party's pocket by the time of the next election. But at every election, they dutifully mislead workers by telling them to go and vote Labour again, and again, and again, etc.

This is the heart of their essentially reformist philosophy of 'revolution' by gradual 'left' pressure. It reveals zero theoretical understanding of the nature of revolutionary contradiction, only confirming the hostility to theory

which has doomed the entire history of 'leftism' in the British labour movement.

It has been completely obvious for a very long time to even the most remotely class-conscious worker that what has been building up for decades, or generations in many cases, is the arrival of the time when the proletariat will need and want to vote against Labour as vehemently as it votes against the Tory Party.

The SWP will quickly claim that 'we know all that' when it is pointed out that the fundamental class position of the Labour Party is every bit as bourgeois-imperialist, and in defence of the capitalist system of bourgeois dictatorship, as all the rest of the parliamentary cretins. However, Scargill's 'leftism' has potentially stolen a march on the SWP's 'leftism' by implying that his political philosophy is about to embrace precisely such a clear-cut denunciation of the class-collaborating essence of Labourism. The SWP's only pathetic response is to feel miffed, and to throw at him the most nerdlike outrageous hypocrisy that even rightwing Labour would be proud of, – "don't split the anti-Tory vote".

And what does Labour's anti-Toryism consist of? At best, just the same 'left' posturing that much of the middle-class has always got up to. At worst, being even more rabidly anti-communist and imperialist-reactionary than much of even the Tory Party is.

All the grossest acts of fascist tyranny by British imperialism since 1945 are actually down to Labour Governments, not Tory, – the genocidal war to re-impose the British Empire against the Malayan communist revolution; the treachery to the Soviet triumph over fascist imperialism by launching the Cold War nuclear encirclement of the USSR and resurrecting monopoly capitalism in West Germany; the imperialist slaughter of the Greek communist revolution; helping US imperialism's foul Korean War stunt; quietly supportive of US imperialism's even more monstrous genocide against Vietnam and Indo-China; conniving with Ian Smith's colonial-fascist dictatorship UDI in Rhodesia; re-establishing the British colonial police-military dictatorship over Occupied Zone of Ireland in 1969, bogusly to 'help the nationalists'; rushing the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act through 'parliamentary democracy' in under 12 hours, still in force to brutally harass every Irish person in Britain and the Occupied Zone; etc, etc, etc, etc, etc.

And it is worse than ever currently, with the Labourite imperialists primitively screaming first, loudest, and longest

for maximum bombing terror against the Serb nationalists fight for self-determination, – falling completely for the US imperialist intrigues around the Croat and Bosnian Muslim fascist circles, the same groups which helped German imperialism nearly genocidally wipe out an earlier generation of Serbs from their traditional homelands in Krajina, Sarajevo, etc.

The SWP's centrist opportunism just is incapable of grasping total contradiction as the essence of Labour's relationship with the working class. They pretend to 'see all that', but then always get helplessly seduced by the utterly philistine delusion that "a Labour Government would nevertheless be better than a Tory Government". On the surface, the SWP lay a loose claim to 'marxism' of a sort. Scratch the surface, and the most tedious deluded nonsense emerges that 'left' protest politics will keep on pushing capitalist government to the left.

This is gibberish. Of course the working class must defend its gains every inch of the way, – and will do so whether the SWP exists or not to posture mightily that they have produced X amount of leaflets for this struggle, and X amount of posters for that struggle, etc, (implying that these struggles would not be happening if it was not for the SWP! – such is their petty-bourgeois subjective-idealism, substituting themselves for a revolutionary proletarian vanguard such as the miners provided in 1972 and 1974, and again in the great 1984-85 strike, (incidentally, a strike that the sectarian SWP fatally ignored for several months on the grounds that it was just an unimportant momentary gesture which would soon fizzle out!))

The working masses will fight for their rights whether anyone wants them to or not. What the working class cannot do for itself, even its revolutionary vanguard, is theoretically develop an entire programme, strategy, and tactics for taking the class war against the monopoly bourgeoisie all the way to a victory for planned socialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only a party of revolutionary theory can do that. And whatever the SWP might be, the one thing it certainly is nowhere near being, never has been, and never will be, – is a party of revolutionary theory, a Leninist party.

What Scargill needs to be challenged with is precisely all of the above, not this pathetic jealous subjectivism of 'Get off our patch. We are the party to the left of Labour, not you'.

Let Scargill damage Labour as much as possible. Let the SLP stand in every constituency in the country to expose and taunt

Labour's bogus credentials as a party of working-class interests. Leninists will gladly help this fight along.

Scargill is just as hopeless a 'left' centrist posturer as the SWP, and Leninists will openly point this out, even while helping the cause of debunking Labour. But Scargill is an opportunist who has at last turned his political programme in a slightly more useful direction than when he guaranteed that the 1984-85 strike would fail (it was probably doomed anyway at that time for many other historical reasons) by limiting its revolutionary political horizons merely to a return of a Labour Government committed to the Plan for Coal (in a reformist-boom capitalist economy of the past which could never then be restored, and never will be in the future either). Deep down, the working class had no faith in the effectiveness of such a Labour Government orientation, and the working class was right (as was the unconditionally supportive Leninist participation in that strike, – see *ILWP Books* vols 6 & 7).

And Arthur Scargill also happens to be a very outstanding trade union leader with a highly creditable record of service to the cause of the working class, at home and internationally. When such a lifelong traditional 'left' Labour-movement figure starts pushing the boat out to such an extent, it will generally help the struggle for clarity to everyone's benefit to give him a hand.

Nothing but a huge and useful debate can flow from SLP candidates standing against Labour calling on workers to opt for socialism as a solution to the capitalist crisis rather than the murderous policies of Blair & Co who will do anything to maintain Britain's imperialist position in the 'free world' (the latest stunt being to damn the Irish peace process more certainly than the Tories are risking by demanding a fatuous IRA arms surrender even more stridently than the fascist Unionists are doing).

Having opposed Scargill's new party venture for the wrong reasons, the SWP then wretchedly fail to criticise the out-of-date NUM leader for the correct reasons, namely his failure to make clear the Labourist political causes (and his own opportunist part in them) for the failure of the 1984-85 strike; and his failure to get beyond "Labour's new (!) abandonment of socialism" as the reason for the SLP, and start grappling with the issue of world imperialist crisis which totally dominates all political questions on earth now.

And this despite the most astonishing further humbug from the SWP of warning Scargill that

the 'honesty' required for playing a really revolutionary role in the British labour movement (i.e. like the SWP, nudge, nudge) would make too difficult demands for a trade-union milieu to cope with:

The search for votes pushes a party towards a softening of its message, towards a search for accommodation with the union leaders in order to secure backing and finance.

Any honest approach to building strikes involves recognising and organising against the waverings and sellouts of the union leaders. This is unlikely to endear them to a new party.

So why do the SWP soften their message to Scargill? Why not tell the working class (while welcoming an SLP kick up the backside to Labour) just how flawed Scargill's own politics are and always have been?

Because the SWP are even bigger opportunist creeps than even the old Labour-TUC back-scratching circles were.

And incredibly, the SWP are also more muddle-headed, even.

Their next silly sour whinge against Scargill's venture is to declare that middle-class fake 'revolutionaries' have postured to the left of the Labour Party before, and were worse than useless to the working class. Quick, get a mirror someone!

There are also far more fundamental reasons for thinking that a "purified Labour Party" is not what we need. Such a party has been tried before.

In the 1930s a large group of socialists, gathered in the Independent Labour Party (ILP), were driven from the Labour Party. They had argued for a more fighting policy after the betrayals of the first two Labour governments.

They were told to shut up or get out, and many of them left.

For the previous ten years the ILP had maintained its own conference, branches and policy while being part of the Labour Party.

At the end of the 1920s it could claim support from 142 Labour MPs—although this dropped to just 17 when the ILP's leaders insisted on a disciplined voting policy.

Nevertheless 17 is a base—and outside parliament the ILP had 16,000 members in 645 branches.

It had real working class roots with 40 members on Glasgow City Council.

The ILP's chairman, Fenner Brockway, announced it was "all set to replace the Labour Party".

The party's words were good. It said it "always recognised that socialism could not be made by parliamentary methods only. Socialists must be prepared to organise mass industrial action."

But the ILP was still committed primarily to parliament and this proved disastrous.

In practice the main focus of its activity was the ballot box and here the party could not compete with a Labour Party backed by the trade union leaders.

ILP membership fell from 16,773 in 1932, to 11,092 in 1933, to 7,166 in 1934, to 4,392 in 1935 and below 2,000 by the outbreak of war.

What is bizarre about this half-hearted exposure of ILP centrism (or really mere 'left' reformism) is the condemnation of really being "still committed primarily to parliament" when the SWP declare their own main reason for trying to damn Scargill's honourable stand is that it will damage Labour's parliamentary electoral chances.

And the SWP's triumphal at-

tempt at a bogus linkage between the SLP 'wrongly' splitting the Labour vote and the ILP being wiped out by an attempt to replace the Labour Party mainly via parliament, – is utterly destroyed by another point that the SWP make themselves, namely that the Communist Party grew from 3,000 members in 1931 to 17,500 by 1939 (whilst running against the Labour Party at general elections, a point the SWP omits). Obviously, the crucial question is what political philosophy and programme is going to be put up opposed to the Labour Party. And that is the one question, of course, that the anti-theory SWP fail to take up with Scargill.

Their final argument against an SLP is such self-important sectarian nonsense that it is scarcely believable. The SWP see their petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' appeal permanently remaining a minority interest, and being a continuous barrier to any worthwhile participation in elections:

A socialist Labour Party will soon face a choice. In words it is possible to talk about combining serious interventions in elections with struggle outside the Commons. In practice the two pull in opposite directions.

The alternative is to centre on struggle and to recognise that in any situation short of an insurrection revolutionary socialists will appeal to only a minority of the class.

This is bad for elections, but means that intervention can be focused on the battles where people's ideas can change fastest and most fundamentally.

Any honest approach to building strikes involves recognising and organising against the waverings and sell outs of the union leaders. This is unlikely to endear them to a new party.

But it does mean the possibility of increasing the strength and confidence of rank and file workers to act independently of union leaders.

But in those discussions we will insist the left needs a socialist party that is prepared to criticise ruthlessly the failings of union leaders, a party that must have clear socialist politics and one that must be based on struggle, not elections.

There are some partial obvious truths referred to here, but overall the sense of this is crassly

misleading.

Revolutionary ideas do not necessarily only appeal to a minority of workers, even well in advance of a revolutionary situation or an insurrection. And the battles to be focused on, knowing the SWP's record, implies strike struggles and demonstrations of one sort or another, whereas the first 'intervention' required of a revolutionary party (as opposed to a primarily electoral party in the SWP's tendentious categorisation), should be towards the development of revolutionary theory and understanding, – political philosophy of the widest possible scope. But this does not even get mentioned. Ideas certainly can change fastest and most fundamentally through conflict and contradiction, but the SWP implication that this basically means pay disputes, a fight for jobs or conditions, or other industrial struggles, is ludicrously workerist and apolitical. Working class thinking is undergoing constant transformation under capitalism as a result of every aspect of bourgeois society and inter-imperialist crisis. The picket-line is a heroic class-war battleground. But the fight to change ideas is a far, far wider struggle than that. It is not impossible, even under the fraudulent racket of bourgeois elections (a point the SWP fail to make every time they say 'vote Labour'), that an election itself could turn into an important class-war struggle.

To repeat, the issue to raise with Scargill is not these envy-driven, impressionistic, point-scoring superficialities bodged out by the SWP hacks, but to challenge the philosophical class-collaborationist essence of all 'left' Labourism hitherto (including those who canvass for Blair & Co as well as those who will now canvass against them).

Build Leninism.

Ben Tulley

'Left' Labour's 'long-game' complacency is now hopelessly out of date. Potential of Scargill SLP breakaway for theoretical struggle

[EPSR No837 23-01-96]

The opportunist Labour MP Ken Livingstone has consigned Arthur Scargill and his SLP to recruitless oblivion on the grounds that the 'left' is already defeating Blairism inside the existing Labour Party.

But whatever the truth or otherwise of a re-interpretation of last year's conference voting (which refused to reinstate Clause 4) on trade-offs with the unions on other matters, Livingstone is missing the historical point by as huge a margin as conceivable.

Talk of slight signs of some turn in the tide on the NEC elections, for example, or on the backstage party bargaining over

the minimum wage issue, – thus implying that the wheel is going back full circle to the 'left' again, – ignores totally the passage of time itself and the vast changes in historical conditions.

Facing the greatest inter-imperialist trade-war crisis ever, the ordinary people of the world can no longer afford to wait for the same old roundabout of relative 'reformist' ups and downs in their situation to go round again. And the dramatically escalated nature of this newest monopoly-capitalist crisis basically guarantees that the up-and-down 'life as usual' simply cannot be re-established

again (as the following SWB major feature examines – see below).

Livingstone's stupid complacency is to pretend that working-class existence under capitalism can rub along for ever in tolerable frustration. Not so. The world-wide struggle for socialism has been growing as a need for the masses, and as a conscious idea, relentlessly from the mid-19th century onwards. And imperialism's ability to fob off the proletariat's anger at periodic slump-crises with a few more 'reforms' paid for by a bit more successful colonial exploitation and empire brigandage, has similarly been relentlessly diminishing. The extraordinary nazi-genocide character of the last great inter-imperialist war for trade and political domination was a reflection of that, unleashing in 1945 even more decisive and devastating turn to communism and national-liberation than 1917 itself had sparked off.

The imminent greatest-ever trade-war imperialist crisis will inevitably result in the most spectacular revolutionary explosions ever, with the working masses all over the planet pitted against the monopoly-capitalist ruling class and its hangers-on in total conflict for supreme national and international power. Livingstone's delusions of endless more decades of posturing 'left' parliamentary pressure on capitalist tyranny, criminality, corruption and decadence is just idle wishful thinking by a 'reformist' parasitical stooge of the capitalist system.

Of course traditional 'left' working-class ways of fighting back against capitalist decay will also feature, as Livingstone pretends to be excited about. But those old forms will simply be smashed aside, when the time comes, by far more significant inroads by proletarian-dictatorship power into the unchallenged dictatorship of capitalist economic domination and bourgeois political rule.

Of course a Blair government

will rapidly decline into even worse crisis than the Tories are now facing, and of course Blair's reactionary intentions will come into total conflict with the real interests of the working class.

But a trade-union bloc-vote at Labour conference, or a revolt by a few 'left' backbench Labour MPs, will solve nothing, as Livingstone would like to think. A challenge against the whole system of permanent deception of the working class via parliamentary 'democracy' is inevitable, sooner or later.

It goes without saying that Scargill's political evolution has nowhere near reached such understanding yet, and probably never will. But, as discussed later, the decisive question is that Scargill's dramatic challenge (to Labour's endless rightwing retreats) via an independent Socialist Labour Party both reflects and further feeds an all-important historical shift in working-class aspirations and understanding.

The SLP is a major development in the class struggle in Britain, plainly indicating the direction in which the working class must progress further towards eventually destroying its bourgeois parliamentary 'democratic' chains completely. Voting SLP inevitably appears to lead in the wrong direction to start with, – straight back into the same old 'left' reformist illusions behind a politics which shows no understanding at all of the real realities of revolution. But in terms of a serious, traditional, spontaneous, mass-movement break from the past 100-year history of Labour bourgeois-parliamentary domination (under the complete fraud of 'reformist' electoral promises), this SLP continuation of the epic transforming, 1984-85 miners' strike, – which finally broke the Labour spell over the working class, – looks plainly full of significance for further revolutionary transformations after that. Build Leninism.

Reg Potts

Sectarian nonsense needn't stop socialist-minded workers from using every opportunity thrown up by imperialist crisis to clarify their political grasp. SLP centrism potential

[EPSR No837 *South West Bulletin* 23-01-96 - as referenced above]

What underlies the political problems of the ruling-class at home is the culmination of an imperialist crisis that is global in scope.

The most urgently feared consequence of that crisis for decadent monopoly capitalism in Britain is the fear of defeat in the trade war ahead.

But behind that panic lurks an even worse nightmare, shared by every last bourgeois soul on the planet, – and everywhere undermining their credibility as a class

to go on running modern society. The reality is that imperialism's worst problem is not simply that there can be only one imperialist winner, and therefore there must be many imperialist losers, in the bruising trade-war and shooting war struggles ahead, unthinkable though that already is for the losers. Still more devastating for world bourgeois self-confidence is the dawning suspicion that, so far has its debilitation as a class gone, there just is not going to be

any imperialist winner capable of setting its new stable world exploitation stamp on the oppressed masses on behalf of world capitalism. The dread is that this time **no** rival imperialist bloc will have the means and historical conviction to keep the exploitation show on the road, thereby keeping up the essential and universal imperialist delusion that 'next time it will be our turn'.

What gives that fear substance now is precisely the unprecedented wealth and authority which the USA was able to sweep into its grasp postwar, and which it is now obliged to defend from the consequences of capitalism's own inbuilt law of uneven development. Many rivals now gather to bait the wounded giant, and economically the might of the USA has long since been challenged by Japan and Germany. But it's one thing for America's rivals to take advantage of US imperialist degeneracy to help hasten its decline, eventually all the way up to armed contention. It's another matter entirely to aspire to supplant the entire scope of America's titanic postwar role and blithely carry on where America leaves off.

The reality is that the degeneracy is not particular to the USA but is a feature of **all** imperialism, thanks to the final stages of the deepest seated class-struggle contradiction of all in the capitalist mode of production: that between (on one side) the public, collective, social character of modern productive existence, and (on the other) the crippling effects of the dead hand of private property still holding sway over the means of production.

And the other half of that reality in this century, making of it the beginning of the epoch of wars **and revolutions**, has been the working through of that contradiction in the course of anti-imperialist and communist struggles, in whose twists and turns, triumphs and collapses, future generations will readily discern the hard-fought battle for proletarian revolutionary class consciousness which alone will be seen finally to have made possible the overthrow of class-exploitation rule worldwide.

Without having to wait for the benefit of future classless communist hindsight, however, the awesome scale of the Bolshevik achievement is already paradoxically starting to impress itself with renewed force since Moscow's self-imposed liquidation of proletarian dictatorship authority left the former socialist Soviet and East European populations (and everybody else) stranded in a world increasingly dominated by imperialist crisis and whipped on towards fascist slump and war.

Under these testing circum-

stances, it is the proletarian dictatorship essence of the Soviet achievement, so vilely misrepresented and betrayed by the petty-bourgeois Gorbachevite cretins, which now can be recognized as the single most outstanding Soviet triumph, on which all other achievements hinged. And most important of all, the collapse of revisionism gives stronger grounds than ever before for grasping just how crucial to the whole Soviet achievement was the fight by Lenin and his Bolshevik party to keep the struggle for proletarian dictatorship science at the heart of everything.

The setback for the former Soviet working class was an unnecessary tragedy. But the more significant setback in the long run will prove to be capitalism's. It was imperialist crisis which first put revisionism's shameful capitulation onto the agenda. And now that revisionism (and simultaneously its reformist twin in the West) have been shown to be utterly bankrupt, utterly poisonous to the real interests of the working class, capitalism is more and more obliged to reorganize its entire ideological containment of the modern proletariat **minus** this once-potent class-collaborationist tool. What was proclaimed as the 'death of communism' and the 'end of history' turns out instead to be the death of reformism and the threatened end of capitalism.

It is in this context alone that any sense can be made out of the Blairites' colonization of the moribund Labour party, or *The Leninist* rump's grave-robbing of the corpse of the CPGB, or Redwood's failed leadership putsch, or the panic 'one nation' flight from the Tory party, or Mandelson's prescriptions for a new Lib-Lab pact, or Scargill's centrist move against New Labour, or any of the still weirder and more confusing domestic political developments undoubtedly yet to come – as the ruling class gets more desperate in its search for a brand of mass politics adequate to the fascist slump realities of British capitalism in crisis, with less and less in the way of recognizable reformist landmarks to fall back upon, but with no great confidence either in their own capacity for really trying to take the fight to the working class as Thatcher tried before (only this time without the bribes and soft soap). Cracking a few heads at Newbury to give the CJA a trial run keeps their hand in, but can't indefinitely substitute for making serious headway in the class war.

Only don't try telling any of this to the (by turns) gloomy, hysterical, defeatist and cynical British 'left'.

More remarkable than any political self-explanation heard

so far from the Scargill camp itself, for example, has been the hysterical clamour from all kinds of 'lefty' and liberal quarters scrambling to rubbish in advance the whole idea of starting up a socialist party to stand up for common ownership of the means of production and stand against the Labour frauds, – even before any debate is allowed to get properly under way.

The left-liberal press just can't wait to print Goebbels-style cartoons showing Scargill dressed up as Lenin holding forth from the 'dustbin of history', or loopy editorials mixing crass petty bourgeois condescension about 'old Arthur' with real venom against anyone daring to behave as though the class struggle against capitalism might possibly still be a matter of serious interest for society at large.

Meanwhile, the 'revolutionary' SWP, as the *Bulletin* has already reported, is tying itself in knots over whether to rubbish the SLP on right-opportunist grounds ('it'll split the anti-Tory vote') or left-sectarian grounds (gloomily pretending that revolutionary parties are by definition permanent tiny sects, permanently unfitted for electoral tactics).

Out of this ludicrous tangle, only one message comes across loud and clear: Get off my fake-“left” patch! And don't anyone dare disturb the SWP's sectarian peace by bothering their 'cadres' with any serious debate about what this potentially centrist development on the British political scene (i.e. revolutionary-sounding, but in practice still clinging onto reformism) might possibly reveal about the impact of the imperialist crisis (which in reality is what is driving everything on, and not some supposed arbitrary whim on Scargill's part).

And what about the 'non-sectarian' Bristol “Marxist (sic) Forum”? The favourite excuse of these anti-communist philistines for drowning out any honest attempt at bringing Leninism to bear was always that such theoretical-notions were inappropriate, obstructive, time-wasting, even menacing to the “unthreatening broad church” atmosphere which (it was alleged) BMF offered and was best suited to 'attract-workers'. For a year and a half of regular attendance at these monthly sessions (throughout which the ILWP's interventions were a model of non-sectarian restraint under endless sectarian provocation), every attempt to relate the month's chosen topic to the crisis of imperialism was treated with contempt and hostility by the little clique running the BMF outfit, culminating in the party's abusive excommunication from further participation in their 'broad church' services.

This lying pretence of a 'broad church' of “Marxism” (which apparently embraced just about everyone, including self-proclaimed anarchists, **except** anyone who wanted to argue for proletarian dictatorship science) was coupled with a slavish reverence for 'labour movement traditions'.

However strong their whinges against Labour and certain union bureaucrats might get on occasion, underlying everything they said could always be detected their dyed-in-the-wool trade-union snobbism and their self-justifying sense of a web of 'real' labour movement contacts 'outside', – which in the end mattered more than the outcome of any 'mere theoretical debate'. Locked into this caricature of 'organic connection with the working class' (unbroken and unexamined ties with the class-collaborating anti-communist traditions of the labour movement) and 'non-sectarian discussion' (= sectarianism hiding its own petty-bourgeois politics behind a smokescreen of eclecticism, and finding an instant common enemy in people trying to fight for Leninism), this weird clique felt themselves justified in habitually deriding the fight for Leninism as 'disconnected from ordinary life', 'just spouting dogma in a vacuum', 'talking like men from Mars' etc.

After over a year's absence, the branch decided to attend a further BMF meeting, billed as discussing amongst other things the Scargill development. Given all the 'broad church' protestations, it seemed possible that some form of united front work around this significant new development from within the mainstream labour movement might yet prove possible on however cautious and temporary a basis.

It really seemed to us likely, ahead of the meeting, that the political revolt led by Scargill against the Blairized Labour party (welcomed by Bolshevism for the opportunity this might give everyone to clarify themselves

on some fundamental class-struggle issues) might yet draw the BMF gang some way from their sectarian perches and on to common ground. Despite all we had learned about the sectarianism of this group, it seemed just possible that this new episode in the death of reformism, and shift in the direction of centrism, might open up a chink for honest socialist debate. However, even this guarded optimism proved to be wide of the mark.

The chairman's opening remarks took the form of a querulous health warning for anyone present who had not previously been exposed to Leninism ('we threw then out before, I'm not going to throw them out again just yet, we'll have to see' etc.), which childish insults were silently endured in the interests of hearing as soon as possible what thoughts those present might have on the far more interesting matter of Scargill.

The BMF clique's unprovoked rudeness to the ILWP then transformed into the most grovelling deference for two lengthy harangues from some outfit called the “Independent Working Class Association”.

After making heavy weather of their own street credibility, and the street-fighting record of the various groups whose allegiance they claimed (Anti-Fascist Action, Red Action, RCG among others), they concentrated on rubbishing the Labour party and trade unions in 'lively' but very vague terms (“Labour is for the birds” etc., with no explanation attempted as to the anti-Soviet, anti-communist root of class-collaborating reformism, or the crisis of imperialism which is now cutting the ground from beneath its feet).

Before any debate started, the IWCA people asserted that since the object was the “self determination” of the working class, no “programme” could be “imposed in advance”. The IWCA could

Socialist Labour Party centrism emerged from the 1984-5 miners strike - eventually

organize meetings, but it was up to workers to advance their own programmes. Scargill's new venture was dismissed out of hand as a meaningless sentimentality, with no possible influence in the working class.

When asked what kind of political lead they could hope to give if they just waited for programmes to emerge from the working class spontaneously; and how the IWCA hoped to avoid becoming just another vehicle for middle-class lefty posturing, they simply reasserted that it was all in the leaflet (more on this later), all the supporting groups had won leadership influence in the working class by actions, not words, and that the IWCA's membership was proletarian by “self-selection”, because the middle-class feared for their careers and abhorred law-breaking.

To cut a long story of demagogic workerism and provocation short, the IWCA's crunch assertion was that workers were now faced with a clear choice between voting for New Labour, the SLP or the IWCA. Sounding for all the world like pyramid salesmen, they assured the assembled punters that this was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to “get in on the ground floor”, before any programme had been thought up, and really corner the market in anti-Labour electoral politics. In short, the message was: Labour is “for the birds”, the SLP is beneath consideration, and workers must jump into the IWCA if they really want “self determination”.

And all this poured out without any serious challenge from the “anti-sectarian” “broad church” Bristol Marxist Forum, who on every other occasion just couldn't wait to vilify basic **Leninist** positions as crazy ultra-leftism or as simple reactionary prejudice against trade unions, but were now apparently only too happy to hear this pair of ignoramuses dismissing the whole Scargill record of leadership in the class struggle



(maintained against every kind of bourgeois pressure and slander) as simply of no further consequence, interest or influence in the working class. It seems that for BMF, any trick will serve, right-opportunist or 'left' adventurist, so long as it gets them out of having to respond honestly to real complex developments unfolding under the pressure of the class-struggle contradictions at the heart of imperialist crisis.

By the same token, BMF may jump the other way if the SLP starts looking like an unmissable 'bandwagon', and apply their finely honed 'anti-sectarian' skills there instead to help confuse everyone for a bit longer. And needless to say, the largely uncritical warmth with which the lumpen stupidities of IWCA were embraced never actually involved these frauds actually climbing off their fence. Enough world-weary cynical reservations about the IWCA's plan were registered (plus a squawk of pain from the chair at how 'unfair' the IWCA were being to 'the middle-class left' – he clearly didn't grasp the 100% petty-bourgeois essence of the cheap workerist politics being peddled) to serve as future alibis for switching back to emphasizing all their 'mainstream' credentials if that looks to be a safer bet. But meanwhile, no serious challenge was forthcoming to the ludicrous posturing arrogance of the IWCA demanding that the working class 'make their minds up' forthwith: Blair, Scargill, or the IWCA.

But why the hell should workers choose to back this outfit? on the basis of what politics? This whole bid for workers' allegiance is so arbitrary and groundless that it's hard to get a grip on this nonsense. It only really makes any sense when understood as an attempt to put a spoke in Scargill's wheel.

The working class has a long history of expertise in organizing its own defence against the economic and political aggression of the capitalists, not least in the Great Miners Strike in whose leadership Scargill played such a significant role. It doesn't need the IWCA to substitute itself for the class and teach it how to organize.

And if it's street-fighting courage which the IWCA regards as the litmus test, what superior gems of wisdom on this question does it have to dispense to the miners of Orgreave, or to Scargill himself?

But if it is objected – correctly – that what really is key is the class character of the politics, then what reason has the working class to prefer the IWCA to Scargill?

At no point in the evening did the IWCA say anything so simple and obvious as 'we need a socialist movement', or 'we need to fight for the common ownership

of the means of production'.

When challenged on this, they slid away on some evasion about, 'you could discuss what socialism is till the cows come home', but the fact remains that they chose not to say anything so simple and clear about their own politics, either at the meeting or in their dire leaflet.

Scargill by contrast is perfectly clear so far as this goes. He wants everyone to build a big socialist party, standing for the common ownership of the means of production. And he now says that this can only be done in opposition to Labour.

The IWCA say Labour and the unions are "for the birds". And it is perfectly true that Scargillism locked the Miners Strike behind hopeless reformist perspectives, urging workers to 'fight for a Labour government and the Plan for Coal'.

But in the absence of any serious analysis from the IWCA of the anti-Soviet, anti-communist roots of reformism this century, or of the way that class-collaboration muddle was materially foisted on workers by systematically bribing the trade union and Labour labour aristocracy with crumbs from imperialism's super-profits table, or the mortal consequences for reformism of the accelerating crisis of imperialism, how can this parrot assertion that "Labour is for the birds" be seriously characterized as a political advance, even on Scargill's 1985 position?

Consider the contradictory reality that, despite the ultimately paralysing consequences of this reformist perspective, the miners struggle, led from the front by Scargill, in practice drew workers into class-struggle examination of a whole lot of issues banned from official consideration in the Labour party since at least 1935 (when the CP was expelled), including questions about the phony nature of bourgeois democracy (in the row over strike ballots), soviet-type experiences in self-organization (flying pickets organized with military levels of flexibility and planning; food supply and billeting likewise), and even some spontaneous thrusts in the direction of what proletarian dictatorship will really mean in practice (with miners speaking in public and with relish about getting 'the whip hand' over Thatcher's police state operations to crush the strike).

Yes, it was Scargill's self-defeating Plan for Coal perspective which turned the (in any case already historically probable) failure of the strike's aims into a certainty. But the easy Trot get-out of contrasting Scargill sell-out with grass roots brilliance was never any help to anyone wanting to grasp the rich class

experience of that strike and the contradictory nature of Scargill's leadership role, then or now. Such 'leaders versus masses' simple-mindedness pretends to exhaust the lessons of this crucial class experience at a single stroke, but really only closes down the struggle for clarity before it even starts.

One more question about Scargill's leadership back then. Who else with his kind of standing in the labour movement was prepared to stand by the Polish United Workers Party and the Polish workers state, at a time when every last Trot was eager to use the issue of state-to-state coal-trading agreements to undermine communist leadership in Poland? Despite the fact that it was the strikes he was in the middle of leading for which imported Polish coal was creating a new difficulty, Scargill was strong enough in his class instinct to defend proletarian dictatorship when under sniping attack from petty-bourgeois ultra-lefts, and even it seems clear enough in his grasp of contradiction to make the distinction between the necessary trade and diplomatic deals workers states had to negotiate at state level, and the political leadership given at communist party level. Let history judge what every other little lefty in Britain was saying at this period when the counter-revolutionary pressures were being stoked up by the CIA and Vatican underneath Polish socialism, organized behind that other 'independent' body, Solidarnosc.

And now back to 1996. Something important has changed in Scargillism: it no longer believes that a vote for Labour can ever produce a socialist government. Instead it argues that Labour must be fought head on.

For that penny to drop at this historical juncture and in that particular political quarter cannot be a matter of uninterest for the working class, and will only be dismissed out of hand as "for the birds" by those who are completely numb to the lively opportunities for revolutionary education being opened up sooner or later by the progress of imperialist crisis, the political bankruptcy of the British ruling class, and the collapse of reformism and revisionism as blocks on the development of class consciousness.

Simply to write off the whole thing as evidence of Scargill's wounded vanity, or incorrigible sentimentality, or love of the limelight etc., is just crap. All these psychological factors may figure, who knows. But the real significance in all this renewed character assassination (with the *Guardian* vengefully piling in where Stella Rimington, Roger Cook and the *Mirror* previously

left off) is precisely in the hysterical insistence that society in general has once and for all outgrown all that 'primitive fundamentalist stuff' about socialism and class-struggle. The psychology which is really revealing politically is not Scargill's foibles but the mania which obliges 'triumphant' bourgeois ideology to compulsively reaffirm, over and over, that communism really **is** dead, that history really **is** at an end, and that any evidence to the contrary must be put down to psychological aberration.

And whatever bureaucratic blocks may in the future be placed in the way of revolutionaries wanting to give Scargill a hand in his avowed intention to build a socialist movement in Britain based on the politics of common ownership of the means of production and taking on Labour head to head, it is pure sectarian cowardice to hide behind these likely future obstacles **now**, declaring the debate a washout before it's even started.

After the meeting closed, the ILWP made another effort to elicit from the IWCA what their politics were really about. It was put to them that, street-fighting brava-do aside, all their talk about finding out what workers' everyday problems were and helping them to solve them was really indistinguishable, in the absence of any clear informing political perspective, from some Lib Dem turd justifying his political existence by getting himself photographed next to the latest street bollard to be 'won for the community'.

This is not a caricature: the IWCA man actually cited as an example helping people to get the hole in the roof fixed. Not that there's any objection to any amount of such organized neighbourliness or solidarity in the face of do-nothing councils, known racist bigots etc, it's what the working class has always had a knack for, given half a chance. What is complete crap is the pretence that this kind of activity can ever, in the absence of any clear class-struggle explanations of the imperialist crisis beginning to engulf everyone's lives, stand in for the kind of revolutionary political leadership the working class absolutely requires in the storms to come.

The IWCA were happy to have further rational discussion blocked by an anarchist type whose contribution consisted of claiming that workers on such-and-such an estate 'would not understand' or 'would laugh at' or 'would beat up' anybody who insisted on trying to explain about world capitalist crisis (and 'quite right too' was the pretty clear unspoken addendum), eventually climbing on to the most worn out self-righteous activist

hobby-horse of all: 'Where were you when...' (the scab bus went through the picket/the fascists marched up the road/we were delivering leaflets in the rain, etc.). In this case, it was "Where were you during the Hartcliffe riots", closely followed by "Where do you live". Under cover of all this provocative bollocks, the IWCA soon sloped off, their real thoughts on the imperialist crisis still a mystery.

That mystery isn't solved either by the IWCA leaflet, but what it **does** say makes it thunderingly obvious that Scargill, whatever his illusions, has more class-struggle intelligence in his little finger than this crew possess across the entire length and breadth of their egos:

Now more than ever what is needed is a politically independent working class organisation. The setting up of such an organisation is the only practical response to the situation we are faced with the total abandonment, even as a concept of the working class by Labour.

For without organisation the working class has no voice. Without a voice there can be no resistance. Without resistance, the British working class fulfils the role ordained for it by the establishment and becomes politically extinct.

The IWCA is distinct from anything that exists in Britain now or in the recent past. A working class organisation not only independent, but hostile to Labour. It will seek to absorb and unite groups (without demanding that they abandon their distinct positions or organisations) and accommodate individuals on the basis of that platform, while aspiring to be a pole of attraction to the tens of thousands of working class militants who long despaired of the Left ever doing anything worthwhile.

The IWCA will be a clean break with the past and will be seen to be so. From the outset it will be clear that we have rejected entryism and the prospect of reform, be that reform of Labour or the economic system. We will not orientate or seek solace from the official 'labour movement'. Trade unionism as a strategy for total social change is no longer vaguely credible.

Instead the IWCA will be community orientated and in time community based. It will be led by the working class but not limited to the working class. Essentially it will be a can do organisation; an organisation that can make things happen or prevent them happening. Membership will be openly available and its activists will join with those fighting to achieve immediate results in the interests of the working class.

At the heart of the IWCA lies the concept of working class self determination. Therefore the question of a political programme does not arise as this would mean the collective will of the sponsors being imposed in advance. In time, following an appropriate period of common activity a programme will be hammered out in day to day confrontation with the practical needs of the class who will in turn play a key role in the development of that programme. Initiating a dialogue with local working communities will in many cases determine the immediate priorities.

A 'clean break' with the anti-communist imperialist-corrupted labour movement of the past will be made possible by a strenuous effort to **understand** that past, at the highest level of revolutionary science, not by this sick-making mock-humility about 'not imposing our ideas' etc.

The 'clean break' required is with capitalism and the reform-

ist swamp, all varieties including this latest "can do organization" promising weirdly to "make things happen or prevent them happening", and not with the knowable history of social development through class-struggle contradictions.

Revolutionary understanding will be won by a proletarian revolutionary vanguard that learns to stand on the shoulders of every battle ever fought to advance the science of proletarian dictatorship against the opposition of bourgeois dictatorship and bourgeois ideology, – most crucially in the Bolshevik revolution and the seventy-odd years of planned socialist achievement, – and learns to fight for the only 'independent' politics worth having: the fight for communism.

The working class is not some endangered species requiring protection from leftwing do-gooders, or some tiny nation whose perspectives are limited to "self-determination". The simple historical reality is that the revolutionary struggles of the vast modern world proletariat carry with them the future of everything that is forward-looking in modern world society. Proletarian dictatorship is the door through which human history must resume its progress.

And what will everywhere inspire and clarify the working class on its revolutionary road to overthrow world capitalism and impose proletarian dictatorship in its stead is the fight for conscious Marxist-Leninist science, nothing else.

None of which yet features at all prominently in pronouncements so far heard from the Scargill camp, it is true. It is for Scargill too to start examining with greater honesty the left-reformist political tradition in which he himself has played so prominent a role, beginning by ridding himself of the illusion that Labour was ever anything other than a complete fraud on the working class. The Blairizing of Labour is simply the end-of-boom exposure of reformism as the treacherous agency of bourgeois ideology in the working class which it has always been.

Scargillism's thrust towards centrism is perhaps more daring than it realizes itself. It is not Labour that is moving right whilst the Clause Four faithful stand still. It is Labour reformism which stands revealed in its true anti-working class colours, whilst the SLP is moving to take up the cudgels.

Nor even is it quite so obvious as some at the BMF meeting pretended that Scargill is incapable of revising his view of Labour's historical role, as witness the contradictions in his recent *Guardian* piece:

At the heart of our unhappiness was the ditching of Clause 4. The commitment to common ownership was fundamental to the principles leading to the birth of the Labour Party nearly a century ago. To me, and in the communities and traditions that shaped my thinking, this aim represents an abiding hope for a better world, and is a cornerstone of any fight for economic democracy en route to true socialism.

However, the changes to Labour's constitution incorporated in the new rule book adopted at the 1995 Labour Party conference went far beyond ditching Clause 4. New Labour's constitution has not only abandoned socialism but embraced capitalism and the free market. In other words. Labour ceased any pretence of being a socialist party.

Many on the left argue that it was never socialist, that it was at best social-democratic and that people like me were deluding ourselves in thinking we could campaign for socialism effectively within it. I now accept that argument, and believe that New Labour can no longer be a "home" to socialists.

What reads at one moment like a frank admission that he got it wrong about Labour all along immediately gets fudged, it's true, with the Blair coven given far too much credit for what is really no more than the reversion of Labour to bourgeois seed.

But when was the last time anyone in BMF even got near to learning from a mistake? In fact, the BMF, like their recent ICWA guests, **can't** learn from their mistakes; – since they never commit themselves to a political line on anything in the first place. If you never give a clear political lead, you can never be proved wrong, Q.E.D.

Whether or not Scargillism can learn from mistakes has yet to be proven. More importantly, honest workers, who may find themselves drawn into debate around an SLP fight against Labour reformism, won't all be so paralysed with the BMF's brand of tired cynical sectarian bullshit that they can't start learning from their own mistakes, and then keep coming back for another try at understanding what's really going on with capitalism now.

When an ILWP cadre ventured to suggest that Lenin's famous 1920s injunction to British workers to support Labour lefts "as

a rope supports a hanged man" might become a relevant tactic again if centrism were to have its day, he was jeered at for learning nothing from all the intervening period of Labour treachery. Yet it is exactly because, once again, imperialist crisis is creating dangerous instability for bourgeois rule in Britain that a revolutionary-sounding challenge to that record of treachery seems to be in the offing again, and Lenin's tactics for exposing centrism could be relevant again.

In case anyone supposes Henderson and Snowden were just an early version of Benn, Skinner, Livingstone, Corbyn etc. (all now getting brilliantly exposed as the frauds they've always been by their cowardly attacks on Scargill from behind Blair's skirts), listen to what Snowden had to say to an ILP conference in 1919:

The year last has been crowded with events of tremendous importance. We have seen the beginning of the end of the old order of class domination and economic slavery. Slowly and painfully humanity has climbed the hard road to the summit of Calvary, but the resurrection to the new life is at hand. Over two thirds of Europe the Red Flag of Socialism, red with the blood of our martyred dead, floats where but yesterday despotism held the people in vile subjection. The mighty reverberations of the Russian Revolution have sounded through the world... With prophetic insight the Independent Labour Party in its manifesto issued on the outbreak of war in August 1914 said: In forcing this appalling crime upon the nations, it is the rulers and diplomatists, the militarists, who have sealed their doom. In tears and blood and bitterness the greater democracy will be born. With steadfast faith we greet the future; our cause is holy and imperishable, and the labour of our hands has not been in vain. The state of the world today is a fulfilment of that prophesy.

Scargill's not quite there yet, but then neither is the fascist warmongering slump, yet. There again, Scargill may sink without trace, centrism may take a completely different form from any anticipated, or not happen at all.

But come what may, it is only the fight for proletarian dictatorship science which can learn from history, learn from class-struggle setbacks as well as triumphs, learn from its own mistakes, and struggle to go on making sense of all the class-struggle contradictions which warmongering imperialist crisis will be driving to the surface. Fight for Leninism

Dominic Hull



Inter-imperialist conflict's frightening perspectives cause guarded uncertainty in the working class. Labour's 'oppose the Tories' class-collaborating act still not fully exposed. Meagre SLP offering fails to convince. But fake-'lefts' trip up even worse over this centrist challenge to Labour, unable to rid themselves of their class-based anti-communist sectarianism.

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The increasing evidence of capitalism's dismal problems worldwide is the necessary background to understanding the Hemsworth by-election result.

Economic and political catastrophes now loom in all directions, from Russia to Mexico, but inseparable from all these problems is the most terrifying nightmare of all for the 'free' world, – the possible crash of the American imperialist economy itself, which pulls all the strings everywhere else on the planet.

In such circumstances, the rivalry of the smaller imperialist powers around Europe becomes ever more menacing now that the old routine of US domination as the ultimate arbiter of everything, shows such clear signs of eventually becoming impotent or falling apart.

And Helmut Kohl's tragi-comic outburst about "integrate Europe or face war in the 21st century" at Louvain at the weekend, which met such calculated hostility from some of the British press and Tories, illustrated this dramatically.

The international trade war can only continue to sharpen relentlessly, steadily demoralising the ruling classes which fear the worst from such a conflict-ridden outcome, possibly all of them. The time is approaching when chauvinistic fault will be found with anything any rival power comes out with, no matter how carefully they choose their words.

Kohl is historically correct anyway, regardless of how he meant his words to sound. If monopoly-capitalism is unable to carry on its boomtime growth and merger frenzy in which slump and company-crash tragedies here and there always seem to leave some sort of replacement opportunity open, however foreign or unexpected, – then the surviving multinational competing organisations will eventually start fighting out the trade-war competition with only really big winners, or really big losers, emerging.

At that point, the rival nation-states will become fully involved in directing national economic survival operations, – along openly chauvinistic and warmongering arms-race lines.

Kohl is right. Either there will be continued integration in Europe, – or there will be war. The problem for the weak British ruling class is that they know that they are already the big losers in the 'integration' trade-war that has already taken place, – mostly British industries and corporations, defeated in the trade war, being taken over by German, Japanese, French or American rivals. This wing of the Tory Party has no confidence left in the 'European Union' phase of phony 'collective development' (which puts the German ruling class in an ever-increasing dominant position inside the EEC and Europe as a whole).

It has not much confidence in any other outcome for British imperialism either, – whether of the 'go it alone' tendency, or the 'closer to the USA' tendency. Hence the unprecedentedly recriminatory mood inside the Tory Party, and the deluge of conspiratorial back-stabbing, and the virtual collapse of that most crucial authoritative ingredient in a monopoly-imperialist establishment, – ruling-class loyalty.

The Government's weak and spiteful mood has been added to by further humiliations at the hands of its so-called American imperialist 'allies', most recently over Bosnia, and yet again over Ireland, where the Mitchell Commission and its report's reception in the USA has bluntly condemned London for its ridiculous delaying tactics in finding ever new excuses for not convening the all-party talks with Dublin and Sinn Féin for a completely new political settlement for the whole island of Ireland, (getting rid at last of the despised artificial colonial statelet of non-existent 'Northern Ireland' which has caused all the trouble since being treacherously ripped out of Ireland at bayonet point in 1921 to deliberately frustrate the total independence of the country which Sinn Féin had fairly won overwhelmingly at all-Ireland elections in 1918 and had then won again on the independence-war battlefields from 1919-1920.)

Britain's ruling-class party will be further undermined later this month when the Scott Inquiry

report is likely to condemn Tory Cabinet ministers for their lying part of the criminal cover-up of the illegal sordid arms-sales deals with Saddam Hussein at a time when the rest of the 'free'-world imperialist crooks (the United Nations) were supposedly imposing a sanctions blockade on Iraq for its warmongering activities around the Persian Gulf, – (activities which the very same Western imperialist powers had themselves initially encouraged Saddam Hussein towards, and supplied him with arms in order to accomplish, – as Britain continued doing, against the Westminster Parliament's own orders).

But this same wretched British ruling class nevertheless still receives loyal class-collaborating support from the Labour Party, – the 'Loyal Opposition', – at crucial national-humiliation times such as over Ireland, and probably shortly over Europe too.

Instead of exposing the British ruling-class bankruptcy in its silly shabby tricks of still trying to avoid facing up to the necessary eclipse of the wretched 'Northern Ireland' colonial disaster, the Labourites immediately give Major their full support in all his worm-like squirming. Likewise, they continue accepting the Orange-fascist British colonial gangsters in the Occupied Zone as the 'legitimate majority' there, instead of as the exposed and defeated imperialist pirates that they are.

Similarly on Britain's economic malaise as part of the insoluble international imperialist trade-war crisis, the Labourites will say nothing to rock the 'free-market' boat, dedicated to the capitalist system right up to their rotten little brains.

The Blairites will score points off the Tories over this or that item of monetary, investment, fiscal, or labour-market minutiae. They will even, via their carefully crafted major speeches like *'Faith in the City'* or via their Keynesian journalistic pals' more daring copy, emphasise just how disastrously the present economic order is failing the world generally, the British people, or even the American people:

[Cutting omitted]

But the Labourites will never go any further than occasionally stressing that permanent mass unemployment has already got a grip in the USA as well as in Britain, and that even worse slump conditions are only being held back by the insane creation of ever greater consumer debt via plastic credit cards, fictional purchasing power which can only help sink the whole economy eventually.

What Blair & Co will never say

is that the capitalist system **itself** is heading for incurable crisis, and that monopoly imperialism is no longer anything but a totally disastrous regime for ordinary people to live under, – anywhere in the world, whichever party governs. Hence some of the enormous confusion and demoralisation which limits the Hemsworth working class to a derisory 28 votes out of every 100 potential voters there, to turn out for Labour last week in a by-election which could have told this most unpopular Tory Government in history exactly what ordinary people thought of it. No less than 72 people in every 100 refused to turn out to vote Labour in Hemsworth last week.

Of course, they did not vote for Arthur Scargill either, or for anyone else. They stayed away in a complete lack of enthusiasm for the party political process within capitalism which endlessly deceives people, and then betrays them if they do vote.

It is not necessarily easy to analyse the precise mood of the working class at any moment, in Hemsworth or anywhere else. But there is a fair bit of cynicism about in general, and some fear for the future. A feeling persists that people would rather prefer not to think too obsessively about how bad things might just become. Certainly there is not much confidence about the future, and above all no confidence that Blairism is really going to work wonders.

In such a sour and slightly apprehensive frame of mind, it would have been a very remarkable phenomenon indeed if Hemsworth, a devastated mining-industry area with trade-union and labour movement divisions plus a complete lack of scientific clarity in general about what the 1984-85 miners strike meant historically, – had gone overboard for the Socialist Labour Party when many shallow lumpen responses still blame Scargill for calling the strike, for the defeat, and for all the subsequent suffering at the hands of the vindictive Tory Government and capitalist system.

A large vote for the SLP would have implied a development in working class understanding far beyond what at present is to be anticipated. It would have required people to have grasped that the 84-85 strike was the definitive moment in ending illusions that the 'democratic rights' of trade unionists and the 'political pressure' of the parliamentary parties could guarantee, via a good 'left' push, that no really terrible injustice could befall large legitimate communities in Britain, and could guarantee that all the supposedly 'permanent' postwar welfare-state class compromises of arbitration set-

lements for all vexed questions would continue.

The guarantees were worthless. All the postwar class-collaborative illusions began to be shattered; but there is no general understanding of that yet even among 'intellectuals', let alone workers whose hands are still full just trying to survive, and still assuming that the old mixture of routes as before is the way to just about surviving.

A large vote for the SLP would have required extending that understanding to seeing that Scargill's own role in that defeat consisted in his own illusion that calling for a Labour Government and a revived boom-era Plan For Coal was a feasible historical solution for the problems of the mining industry, when by 1984-85 it no longer was, (a lack of clarity made even more confusing by the fact that Scargill himself still seems not to have grasped this, or accepted it in public).

For all these and many more reasons, the working class of Hemsworth probably could not see why Scargillism 1996 was really so different from Scargillism in 1984-85. It is also possible that the working class at the moment is still more frightened now of losing what it has got than it was in 1984-85 (when workers trade union confidence was still quite high), but is far from yet reaching the point where it begins to feel that it has nothing else left to lose, a point of possibly revolutionary departure.

The real significance of Scargill's move, – the first break by a major labour-movement figure away from the accumulated treachery to the working class of all reformist thinking and parliamentary opportunism, (while in no way implying any shift towards revolutionary science in the thinking of Scargill himself), – has probably not registered with many in Hemsworth yet.

The unfortunate superficialities of the SLP campaign, and its obvious omissions, have more caught the eye, most probably, – such as blithely insisting that unemployment could be totally eradicated tomorrow, just like that, if a Labour Government really wanted to do it; and failing to hardly refer at all to the international imperialist economic crisis conditions completely surrounding the SLP in Britain and making the whole political situation what it is; and such as trying to inspire workers with the comparison that the SLP was like Keir Hardie starting out 100 years ago for a new-labour-party break from Liberalism, and losing his deposit (a grim perspective of yet another 100 years of fake-'left' electoral promises and betrayals to come, backed by equally ultimately ineffective 'left' trade-union pressure,

if not understood correctly).

In reality, neither the SLP nor anything else could ever tread such a one-off reformist blind alley again. Spontaneous developments alone, much such as the SLP phenomenon itself must be considered to be, would inevitably take the class struggle into new territory, not to mention the real transformation towards conscious revolutionary struggle (which the last 100 years of super-imperialist profits, financing 'reformist' welfare-state class-collaboration of all kinds, has steadily been preparing via the slow decline in British imperialism's world-dominant position, making such concessions ever more difficult to provide.)

As has always seemed most likely, it now looks as if it will be the return of another Labour Government, the ninth, (or just possibly Blairism's failure to defeat the Tories), which will begin to speed up the understanding that British monopoly-capitalism itself is what can no longer deliver what is required by the British working class, – not just the people currently running it, overall, in the Government, – as Blair, and to a large extent Scargill himself, still pretend.

Spontaneously, reformism's basic servitude to the capitalist system, and its inability to offer a serious alternative to capitalism, will begin to force workers towards ever more profound SLP-type breaks from the old parliamentary game of musical chairs. Conscious revolutionary agitation will inevitably add its influence to such spontaneous developments, whether of new forms of trade-unionism, or united-front electoralism, or workers-council type sovietism.

Only standing apart from such developments, or artificially avoiding taking a leading role in them if it happened that way, would constitute an attempt at sectarian substitution for the way workers themselves want to go, or create confusion about how large a centrist phenomenon will be 'necessary' or 'inevitable'. A few dry wells may be sunk; but sinking wells is hardly a barrier to finding water eventually.

And seeking out revolutionary cadres within the labour movement, however long the search may go on fruitlessly, can never be a waste of effort because the development in understanding from the struggle itself is the midwife of all revolutionary theory anyway, the only possible basis for guaranteeing that Leninist parties ever will be built again.

The SLP's embryonic centrism has already put a cat among the fake-'left' sectarian pigeons of every anti-proletarian-dictatorship, anti-Leninist kind (i.e. all

57 varieties), causing them to trip over their own feet in all directions.

Listen to how the *Weekly Worker* of the CPGB (the 'Leninist' rump) initially 'welcomed' in issue 122 (Dec 14) Scargill's announcement of an SLP which

"gives the left an opportunity to unite politically and organisationally with a mass movement, disaffected with Labour,"

followed by detailed advice to Arthur as to when he ought to hold his inaugural conference, how it should be arranged, etc, so as to allow

"the widest possible discussion and debate as to the programme and organisational shape of the SLP. To this end, the SLP must have open debate.... to create a serious, mass leftwing organisation in Britain. It is crucial that such an opportunity is not wasted on the altar of political sectarianism or bureaucratic methods."

But a later article in the same issue already starts finding that this conditional 'welcome' to give the CPGB sectarians an opportunity for a rare orgy of bureaucratic kibbutzing at someone else's expense, has immediately run into disappointment:

The publication of the proposed Constitution and Rules may come as a shock to those who have welcomed Scargill's call for a Socialist Labour Party, but have so far been excluded from debates.

A meeting last Sunday was by invitation only, and many were quite obviously excluded, primarily those in other leftwing/revolutionary political organisations. Even Tommy Sheridan from Scottish Militant Labour had trouble receiving an invite apparently.

This is disgraceful, given his own and his organisation's history of struggle in Scotland, whatever criticisms we may have of it.

The Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB feels that so far the debates towards a Socialist Labour Party have been conducted in a conspiratorial manner at odds with the interests of the working class. A party which can truly serve the interests of the working class will be forged through struggle itself and at the initiative of leading partisans of the class. It cannot be hatched by a handful of selected trade unionists and Labour Party members, whatever their proud and militant history.

Following Sunday's meeting the Constitution and Rules, drafted it seems primarily by Scargill, is now in circulation. It has to be said that this document does not bode well for the success of a future Party.

Unfortunately it still seems unclear how widely this document was intended to be distributed and how open it is for change. More invitation-only meetings are planned for January. A special meeting has been arranged for the Scottish Socialist Forum, since these comrades were the main opponents of the proposed Constitution on Sunday.

As communists we would have much to disagree with both in detail and the whole approach of the document. But fundamentally Clause 11 on eligibility for membership would doom this Party as useless to the working class from the beginning and so must be opposed.

Other areas of the Constitution can be fought through and won and lost in the course of struggle and the heat of debate. But if *individual members* in other political organisations — let alone those organisations themselves are excluded, this battle cannot take place. We are led to believe that 'other political organisations' would include animal rights campaigns, CND, Amnesty International presumably, not to mention the Labour Party.

As Scargill implied in his original call for a Socialist Labour Party, he is obviously terrified of what he calls 'sectarian' wrangles. So he is

in particular concerned to keep out organisations on the revolutionary left.

Surely the extremely restricted, invite-only, December 10 meeting was not the 'Discussion Conference'? At the very least, the wider meeting mooted for February 13 of next year should have the authority to adopt a draft constitution of the party – providing it is genuinely democratic and representative of all "those committed to founding" a party to challenge Blair [my emphasis]. The final decisions should still rest with the founding congress of the organisation.

Ironically, *Future strategy for the left* points out that it was the 'modernisers' of the time the Labour right wing that were responsible for "introducing the bans and proscriptions which were prevalent in the 30s and later during the Cold War period of the 50s". Is the new organisation going to go one better and proscribe communists and other revolutionaries from its very foundation?

There is no more room for secret meetings or hidden debate. The party of the working class is the property of no one but the working class itself. A party which is built bureaucratically around a few individuals' own schemes cannot possibly rally the energy, imagination, discipline and commitment of leading sections of our class. To deliberately keep workers divided around the basis of different political affiliations and organisations is the worst manifestation of sectarianism, and a crime against our class.

How interesting, therefore, to read that by issue 127, the *Weekly Worker* had changed its tune slightly:

The Socialist Labour Party's by-election campaign in Hemsworth is an important step forward. This fight deserves the wholehearted support of all sections of the left.

Communists have participated in the campaigning work in the constituency with enthusiasm. We say that a vote for Brenda Nixon, the SLP candidate, is a vote for a break from the Labour Party. Of course, we have many disagreements with the platform that the SLP has stood on in this election. But that is a secondary question. This campaign has put the call for a genuine workers' party – a serious challenge to the poison of Labourism – firmly on the practical agenda of everyone in the workers' movement.

A successful Hemsworth by-election campaign will be a blow for independent working class politics and against the stranglehold of Labourism – a death grip that has paralysed the majority of our class throughout this century. Every socialist, communist and revolutionary should support the important fight of the SLP in Hemsworth.

Even more interesting, this issue 127 of 25/1/96 takes a rare old swipe at the SWP for getting its line on the SLP so badly wrong:

But it is the stance of the Socialist Workers Party that is the most contradictory. It has now dropped its 'hard line' objections and has been eager to be involved in the by-election. More generally, it has shifted to a position of soft support for the new organisation...but only where it stands in safe Labour seats! The SWP is caught in a real contradiction. It seems to believe that as long as the new party presents no real challenge to Labour in the ballot box – the most important arena for Blair's party – then it is perhaps worthy of grudging support.

The SWP cites the SLP's "electoralism" – Socialist Labour actually stands in elections – as the key problem. The mere act of contesting elections is crassly counterposed to 'class struggle'.

And so on. It is a fact that just after the *WW* issue No 122 had gone to press, issue 832 of the *Economic & Philosophic Science Review* was circulating, by the middle of the very same week.

This contained a massive analysis of the SWP's hopelessly sectarian political response to Scargill's development, exposing in particular the SWP's falsely opposing election interventions to 'struggle outside the Commons', and its hostility to any SLP candidate in marginal Labour seats which might 'split the vote and let the Tories back in'.

That issue 832 [see page 9] of the *Review* added, among much else:

'Let Scargill damage Labour as much as possible. Let the SLP stand in every constituency in the country to expose and taunt Labour's bogus credentials as a party of working-class interests. Leninists will gladly help this fight along. Scargill is just as hopeless a 'left' centrist posturer as the SWP, and Leninists will openly point this out, even while helping the cause of debunking Labour. But Scargill is an opportunist who has at last turned his political programme in a slightly more useful direction than when he guaranteed that the 1984-85 strike would fail (it was probably doomed anyway at that time for many other historical reasons) by limiting its revolutionary political horizons merely to a return of a Labour Government committed to the Plan for Coal (in a reformist-boom capitalist economy of the past which could never then be restored, and never will be in the future either). Deep down, the working class had no faith in the effectiveness of such a Labour Government orientation, and the working class was right (as was the unconditionally supportive Leninist participation in that strike, - see *ILWP Books* vols 6 & 7).

And Arthur Scargill also happens to be a very outstanding trade union leader with a highly creditable record of service to the cause of the working class, at home and internationally. When such a lifelong traditional 'left' Labour-movement figure starts pushing the boat out to such an extent, it will generally help the struggle for clarity to everyone's benefit to give him a hand.

Nothing but a huge and useful debate can flow from SLP candidates standing

against Labour calling on workers to opt for socialism as a solution to the capitalist crisis rather than the murderous policies of Blair & Co who will do anything to maintain Britain's imperialist position in the "free world" (the latest stunt being to damn the Irish peace process more certainly than the Tories are risking by demanding a fatuous IRA arms surrender even more stridently than the fascist Unionists are doing).'

How interesting that the *Weekly Worker* should then change its tune.

One particular piece of kibbutzing hypocrisy by these CPGB sectarians should be noted. When a group of serious students of Leninism were first starting out on a movement which has resulted in the building of the *Review* and all its achievements, we offered a membership-to-membership debate to these CPGBers (to avoid the closed-mind droning of their sectarian leaders). Nearly 20 of the *Review's* then London supporters turned up, - from all stages of recruitment, education, and polemical preparation, - for a genuine membership-to-membership debate. The CPGBers sent just their two most hard-bitten sectarian bureaucrats. Yet now they have the cheek to posture to Scargill:

"A party which is built bureaucratically around a few individuals' own schemes cannot possibly rally the energy, imagination, discipline, and commitment of leading sections of our class."

The class mentality of these sectarians is petty-bourgeois politics, founded on an opportunist scuttling away from unconditional defence of proletarian dictatorship, in its actual historical setting, at every opportunity (see countless past *Bulletins* and *ILWP Books*). Scargill's fear of posturing sectarian entrists is well founded.

These charlatans only ever

pretended to be pro-Soviet. They nestled inside the anti-communist CP for decades, parading their 'Leninist' badge ostentatiously, but opportunistically milking their 'official world communist movement' cachet for all it was worth against genuine Leninists outside, slyly safe in the knowledge that the 'Eurocommunist' degeneracy of King Street, insanelly tolerated by the equal degenerates in Moscow, would never put them on the spot of having to defend any really tough acts of proletarian dictatorship (the essence of Leninism) which could embarrass them in their fake-'left' intellectual circles.

A fuller picture of the 'Leninist' CPGBers anti-communism will be to hand when in an *ILWP Book*** [**to come - ed] but their treachery to the Polish workers state in 1980, at the height of the CIA/Vatican counter-revolution around their fascist stooge Walesa sticks in the memory.

These sectarian opportunists put on a clever show of not falling for the CIA's "Solidarnosc rank-and-file socialism" fraud as the rest of the fake-'left' did (despite the Sparts' subsequent denials), but could still never bring themselves to support any firm proletarian-dictatorship stand by the Polish workers state, because "that had faults too", or words to that effect.

And the hopeless philosophical bankruptcy of this cowardly fence-sitting confusion remains the putrid petty-bourgeois essence of these CPGBers to this day:

"Let the difficult and painful history of international proletarian-dictatorship attempts to keep Western imperialist domination at bay go to the devil. No more

bureaucratic-revisionist cock-ups or Stalinist clumsiness for us. Somewhere there must be a perfect communist revolution, and that is what will go down well in our 'left' circles", etc.

And they are still at it over the corpse of the Soviet workers state, and the Chinese Peoples Republic, etc, always fearing too close an identification with anything which "might go wrong", etc, or "be an embarrassment", etc.

But what is crucial to workers philosophically is precisely this complete class identification with what the workers states represent historically, - the world of the proletariat struggling for the right to keep on striving to develop without a bourgeoisie in power, or aid from international capital or commerce, - and striving to overcome their own mistakes in the teeth of relentless and devastating Western imperialist propaganda onslaughts, economic sabotage, political subversion, and military arms-race threats, etc.

Every anti-imperialist struggle to survive, to develop, or to come into being by proletarian-dictatorship forces, or vestiges, gets automatic unconditional support from Leninist science, - whatever the supposed 'horrors' or 'crippling embarrassment' (such as quelling the petty-bourgeois 'democracy' movement of Tiananmen Square, or the unsubtleties of the leadership cult in North Korea). Let bad workers-state practices or understandings be overtaken by better workers-state practices or understandings, not by bourgeois-'democratic' revivalism. Let proletarian-dictatorship rule plumb the depths of arbitrary vindictiveness or voluntarist folly. To the workers states, comradely criticism to help strengthen their proletarian dictatorships. To the 'free' world, get lost with your hypocrisy & lies about 'Red terror'.

Historically in total, it can never amount to a tiny fraction of one percent of all the horrors that bourgeois-imperialist exploitation, slumps, colonialism, and inter-imperialist wars have already imposed, and will continue to impose in the future, on mankind. And planned socialist economic powers under proletarian dictatorship rule can only continue improving on their already considerable historical achievements, and learning from their historical mistakes. The bourgeois-capitalist system can only continue to fall into crisis, and degenerate into complete rotteness. The class war between the two is absolute. The fake-'left' petty-bourgeoisie in the West has always been on the wrong side.

The total division between proletarian rule and bourgeois dic-

Scargill's new Socialist Labour Party showed its centrist potential in recognising the achievements and massive contribution the Soviet Union had made to international development and anti-imperialist movements including training tens of thousands of engineers etc



Some 72,000 foreigners study at Soviet higher education institutions. Practical work in a laboratory of the Lumumba Friendship University in Moscow.

tatorship is re-emerging relentlessly in Russia, where, whatever the bureaucratic complacency and inefficiency of the final revisionist degeneracy in the USSR, the yearning is insistently heard for getting back to old Soviet certainties and rough justice, – and as far away as possible from the total corruption, unfairness, and anarchy of the renewed ‘free-market forces’, i.e. bourgeois dictatorship under so-called ‘democracy’. All this is now being admitted, reluctantly, between the lines, by the capitalist press itself: [cutting shortened]

“We are not striking for more money. We are striking because we have not been paid at all” said the deputy engineer, Valery Mazurev.

Four years ago he lost all his savings, 50,000 roubles, everything he had earned in 15 grinding years. “I had saved the equivalent of five Ladas. Then Yegor Gaidar came along, raised prices in January 1992, inflation soared and my savings turned to paper.”

Neither management nor workers had been paid and there was no one to rail against, except the government; the whole region was grinding to a standstill.

The village boss, Volodya Cherkassov, a former miner, walked in. He said: “My friend Kolya came to me in the administration and he was extremely angry I asked Kolya: ‘What do you want – coffee, tea, biscuits?’ Kolya swore at me and said: ‘Look at you drinking coffee with biscuits and look what I take to eat underground.’”

“He opens his paper and he showed me two pieces of black bread, two boiled potatoes, two salted cucumber. ‘This is what I have been eating for the last two years.’ I felt so ashamed.”

Mr Cherkassov has left the independent miners’ union, which helped Boris Yeltsin come to power.

The old Communist union is back in power.

Djamila Khalilova, a miner’s wife,

said: “We don’t believe in Yeltsin.”

Her husband, Irfan, part of a community of Tatar miners, recalls: “Before, to be a miner was something. Each month you brought home a wad of money. You retired 10 years earlier than everybody else and the pension was very high – 120, 160, even 175 roubles. Today this means nothing, but then the rouble was a rouble. To be a miner today means being a non-person. We don’t exist any more.”

Anatoli Diedok, the mine’s acting director, sat with the men. He had not been paid either and felt equally bitter. He said: “We need the rule of law in Russia, and normal people don’t understand why the West is supporting our president and our government, who are now considered to be very doubtful people. When everything gets out of control, as it has done now, Russians start to ask themselves why is the West so interested in supporting Yeltsin?”

The mood was angry, mistrustful, resentful. Pits were being closed and the community was dying.

THIS time last year the talk at the World Economic Forum was of how Mexico had slid from being the darling of the West to the brink of bankruptcy in six short months.

Russia is an economy halfway into the abyss. [...]

Little wonder that a growing number of people now look back with nostalgia on communist rule. Who can blame them?

The ludicrous mess that anti-communism has made of the Soviet Union is an indication of what will be happening to the entire Third World and also to the weaker monopoly-capitalist powers as the international imperialist economic crisis continues to strengthen its grip, and also a permanent reminder of how the proletariat dragged itself out of the mire during an earlier inter-imperialist crisis.

Build Leninism.

Adam Carr

leadership, structure, and political line” which

“would allow factions and organised trends, but would fight in a disciplined and unified way on agreed actions. We are for a combat party of the class, structured around a revolutionary programme and the revolutionary action that flows from it.”

They chide other groups like *Militant Labour* for not joining up with the SLP, but urge them in their various Socialist Alliances to

“take forward the type of principled joint work that can help resolve differences in practice.

“We must agitate for the SA forces we work with to join and build the Socialist Labour Party as revolutionaries. This will focus the debate away from programmatic questions in the abstract, or the next series of general solidarity meetings, and onto the question of what sort of party we need, – a disciplined Bolshevik organisation, or a ‘broad church’-style social democratic organisation with different affiliated organisations? In other words, are we for revolution or reform?”

Leaving aside that this is the crudest-sounding entryism imaginable, moving in on Scargill’s party like a bunch of cuckoos or parasites to fashion it exactly how this CPGB sect has manipulated all its previous unprincipled existence (first inside the Soviet communist tent, boasting louder than anyone about ‘world official communist authority’, and then outside it, pissing in harder than anyone else), – these sectarian ramblings even give bogus ‘unity’-posturing a bad name.

Their problem starts and finishes with their apparent absolute ignorance about what constitutes ‘unity’ for the revolutionary working-class forces.

Clearly, the revolutionary party can only ultimately unite on an agreed and correct (more or less) understanding of the world, – a colossal longterm struggle. Over the last 130 years, Marxist-Leninist science has made prodigious

advances for achieving this revolutionary consciousness, but currently there is absolute chaos again worldwide on this question. There is profound ignorance throughout the ‘left’ on all basic Marxist-Leninist theory, and nothing but the most shallow sectarian opportunism in practice.

Scores of fundamental disagreements reflecting contradictory class positions keep the entire bogus middle-class ‘left’ at each others’ throats, disputing the meaning or significance of almost every detail of 20th century history. All of them variously write gibberish about Ireland, or Tienanmen Square, or Solidarnosc, or Gorbachev, or Stalinism, or Trotskyism, or the Labour Party, or nationalism, or imperialist crisis, or ex-Yugoslavia, etc, etc, etc, etc.

This all represents a total philistine swamp of confusion, riddled with petty-bourgeois anti-communism, which could not unite for anything worthwhile in a million years, – whatever the determination was to help put body and soul into unity through joint work in practice.

But without agreement on correct revolutionary theory, – the meaning for class war of all previous history of struggle, and its crucial lessons for all present and future struggles, – then there can be no correct revolutionary practice.

And so all these posturing sectarian appeals for ‘unity’ for everyone while papering over all the very real differences which have shattered the anti-imperialist struggle for long periods under large areas of capitalism, – are worse-than-useless hot air.

Lenin himself touched upon this problem:

The main point of the Bureau’s resolution states unequivocally the following: “Any practical step towards unity must be preceded by a preliminary clarification of existing differences.”

This decision is a perfectly correct one.

If we do not want to present the working class with a hodgepodge of miscellaneous elements miscalled “unity”, and if we want real unity of *action*, the first obligatory step in this direction must be to ascertain exactly what the “points of disagreement” are. Let us first ascertain exactly the “points of disagreement” by means of a “general exchange of opinion”, and then it will become clear whether it is possible to talk about any practical steps towards unity. That is how the question is formulated in the Bureau’s resolution. We whole-heartedly approve of this formulation. We responded to the proposal of the International Socialist Bureau by calling upon the workers calmly and thoughtfully to discuss our disagreements once more, and to express their views on the points of disagreement. We, for our part, promised to do all we could to help familiarise our foreign comrades with the existing differences. The resolution published in *Proletarskaya Pravda*, No. 9, gives a quite correct summary of the points on which we and the liquidators³² disagree. This is what our reply to the Bureau’s proposal should be, and of course, there could be no other line of action for those who have serious consideration for the Bureau’s decision to promote a “general exchange of opinion on the points of disagreement”.

But—and this is the whole point—no task is more unpleasant, undesirable, and unacceptable to the liquidators than that of ascertaining our main differences on questions of theory, programme, tactics and organisation. All their subterfuges, distortions and abuse in connection with the Bureau’s resolution are solely designed to *obscure* its demand for a preliminary clarification of differences. Both Mr. L.S. and Mr. D. run ahead zealously: could we not somehow “unite” without “certificates” giving the ideological “service record” of those uniting? Could we not do without “quotations from old journals and newspapers”?— Mr. L. S. worries. Could we not stop recalling “the past”?— Mr. D. pleads. We understand them very

Battle for revolutionary theory is the key to a correct approach to both party building and work inside broad centrist electoral fronts.

The sectarian petty-bourgeois ‘left’ gets it all wrong again

[EPSR No843 05-03-96]

Scargill’s SLP looks well on the way to becoming the mass phenomenon of centrism which Marxist analysis in the *Review* has long been predicting must appear at a certain stage in the terminal revolutionary crisis of the imperialist system.

Sectarian groups of petty-bourgeois ‘revolutionaries’, more or less openly Trotskyite, like the CPGB(L), the HDG, the TUG, the various Socialist Alliances, the *Militant*, the SWP, etc, etc, are all making more or less nonsense of this phenomenon and of what to do about it.

The fake-‘left’ is in total confusion about what unity is, and where it comes from, – and about

how to build ‘the’ revolutionary party. The CPGB (*Leninists*) are one of the more openly entrust Trot groups, describing the SLP as representing

“the most important political opportunity for pro-communist party forces in at least a generation,”

whilst swearing that they are

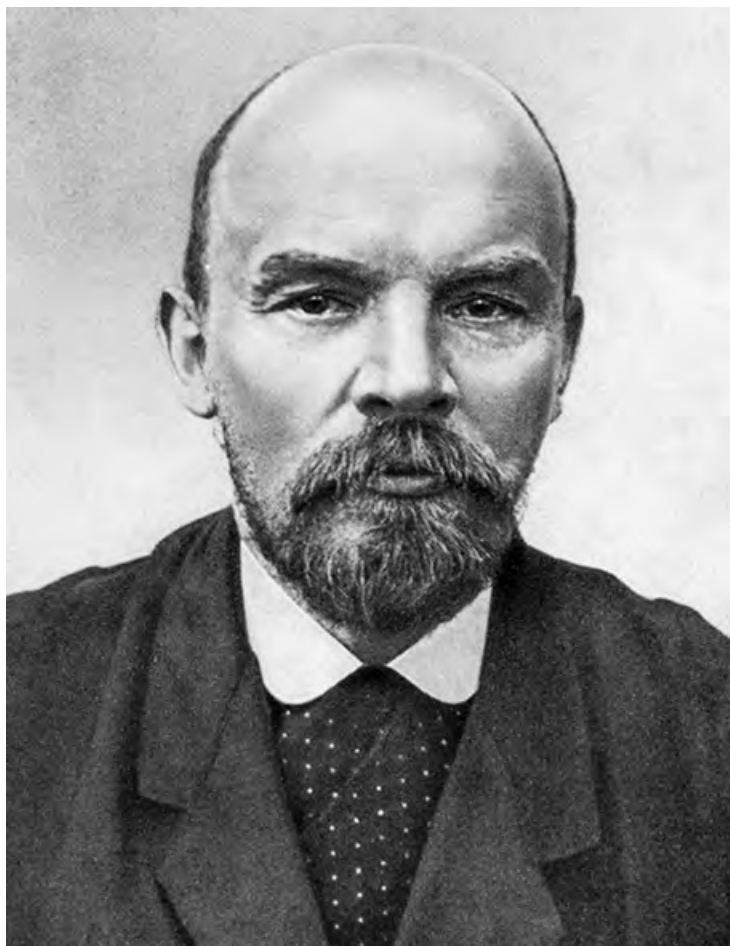
“out to build and strengthen the SLP, not to smash it up for our own narrow advantage.”

They are, however, “not in favour of unity for unity’s sake”, and they

“enter the field arguing for a reformed communist party, a revolutionary vanguard organisation of our class”.

This will be

“a unified revolutionary party with a single



well: there is nothing pleasant for Mr. L. S. in the recollections of articles about the “underground” (*Luch* No. 15 [101]), or for Mr. D. in recollections of the “fight-for-legality” slogan.

We shall not deny the liquidators the amnesty for the “errors of the past”, for which they plead. The past, as such, does not interest us; what does interest us is the work of today and tomorrow. As regards that work, we want to know whether the campaign against the “underground” conducted in the liquidationist press is to *continue*, whether they will *continue* to argue that the “three pillars”³³ are inapplicable at the present time, whether they will defend the distortion of the programme by the August bloc people³⁴ and so forth.

The clarification of these questions and of the degree to which we differ on them is, according to the Bureau’s resolution, a *precondition* to any progress towards unity, if we are not to accept “unity” in the liquidationist meaning of lumping together, without regard for principles, all who care to call themselves Social-Democrats.

We say: the organisation to be created as a result of unity should be based on such and such principles—acceptance of the old programme, a definite form of organisation, uncurtailed slogans,³⁵ resolute tactics, etc. But you immediately declare that this formulation of the programme, tactics and tasks of the organisation, is nothing but a “complete list of liquidators’ sins”. We are sorry for you, but neither we nor the Bureau know of any method of building new organisations other than by clarifying their programme, their tactics, and so forth.

We are guilty of a still more grievous sin, however. Not only have we proposed the conditions for the creation of an organisation, i.e., clarified the terms of peace, but we have, moreover, submitted these terms to the bar of the workers’ opinion.

We maintain that there is no other way of carrying out the Bureau’s decision than the one we have chosen.

The Bureau calls upon all those who profess to be Social-Democrats to clarify their differences as a preliminary step towards solving the problem of unity.

The resolution we published responded to the Bureau’s appeal by giving a “list” of views on the basic questions of programme, tactics and organisation, and by submitting our “list” to the workers, for their consideration. If the liquidators were to follow our example, we would have, in the more or less near future, the clearly formulated opinions of all parties.

But the liquidators, of course, will to the very last shun this path, for the simple reason that neither a precise formulation of their political views nor the submission of these views to the bar of the broad circles of the workers is in the interests of their group.

Under these circumstances they will inevitably strive to substitute for the definite “clarification of differences” demand by the Bureau, petty personal squabbles, distortions, and wilful misrepresentations.

Once more about I.S.B. and liquidators *Proletarskaya Pravda* No. 11 December 19, 1913

Trotsky, however, has never had any “physiognomy” at all; the only thing he does have is a habit of changing sides, of skipping from the liberals to the Marxists and back again, of mouthing scraps of catchwords and bombastic parrot phrases.

In *Borba* you will not find a *single* live word on any controversial issue.

This is incredible, but it is a fact.

The question of the “underground”? *Not a word.*

Does Trotsky share the views of Axelrod, Zasulich, F. D., L. S. (*Luch* No. 101) and so forth? *Not a murmur.*

The slogan of fighting for an open party? *Not a single word.*

The liberal utterances of the Yezhovs and other *Luchists* on strikes? The annulment of the programme on the national question? *Not a murmur.*

The utterances of L. Sedov and other *Luchists* against two of the “pillars”? *Not a murmur.* Trotsky assures us that he is in favour of combining immediate demands with ultimate aims, but there is not a word as to his attitude towards the liquidator method of effecting this “combination”!

Actually, under cover of high-sounding, empty, and obscure phrases that confuse the non-class-conscious workers, Trotsky is defending the liquidators by passing over in silence the question of the “underground”, by asserting that there is no liberal-labour policy in Russia, and the like.

Trotsky delivers a long lecture to the seven Duma deputies, headed by Chkheidze, instructing them how to repudiate the “underground” and the Party in a *more subtle manner*. This amusing lecture clearly points to the *further break-up* of the Seven. Buryanov has left them. They were unable to see eye to eye in their reply to Plekhanov. They are now oscillating between Dan and Trotsky, while Chkheidze is evidently exercising his diplomatic talents in an effort to paper over the new cracks.

And these near-Party people, who are unable to unite on their *own* “August” platform, try to deceive the workers with their shouts about “unity”! Vain efforts!

Unity means recognising the “old” and combating those who repudiate it. Unity means rallying the majority of the workers in Russia about decisions which have long been known, and which condemn liquidationism.

But the liquidators and Trotsky, the Seven and Trotsky, who tore up their own August bloc, who flouted all the decisions of the Party and dissociated themselves from the “underground” as well as from the organised workers, are the worst splitters. Fortunately, the workers have already realised this, and all class-conscious workers are creating their own *real* unity *against* the liquidator disrupters of unity.

Break-up of the ‘August’ bloc *Put Pravdy* No 37, March 15, 1914

The publicists’ alliance that we see today among the *leaders* of Narodism (Chernov, Rakitnikov and Sukhanov) and various Social-Democratic intellectualist factions that are either openly opposed to the “underground”, i.e., the workers’ party (the liquidators*, Dan, Martov and ChereIvanin) or else help these liquidationist *workerless groups* (Trotsky and Slier, Bazarov, Lunacharsky and Plekhanov), is *in fact* nothing more nor less than *an alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers.*

We regard Pravdism as the expression of the workers’ unity on the basis of genuine recognition of the “underground” and of definite decisions that co-ordinate and guide tactics in the old spirit (the decisions of January 1912 and of February and the summer of 1913).

It is a fact that this workers’ unity is built on the firm basis of integral, complete and, in principle, consistent decisions on *all* questions affecting the lives of the Marxist workers.

***Bourgeois intelligentsia’s methods of struggle* June 1914.**

Nevertheless, formally and outwardly, the Narodniks appear to be much more “united” than the Marxists are. There is no definite split among the Narodniks, no intense, stubborn, systematic and prolonged inner struggle among them. It seems, at first glance, as though they are all the time held together by certain common ties. In their literature one constantly comes across proud references to Narodnik “unity”, in contrast with the “Marxist” (and most often “Bolshevik”) “tendency towards discord and splits”.

Those who want to understand the meaning and significance of what is taking place in the working-class and socialist movements in Russia must ponder very, very carefully over this contraposing of “Marxist splits” and “Narodnik unity”.

Among us Marxists and near-Marxists there are also no few groups and grouplets which are practically almost independent of one another, and which sedulously preach “unity” (quite in the Narodnik spirit), and still more sedulously condemn “Marxist splits”.

What does it all mean? Are we to envy “Narodnik unity”? Are we to seek the reasons for this distinction in the pernicious qualities of “certain” “leaders” (a very widespread method) or in the Marxists’ pernicious tendency towards “dogmatism”, “intolerance”, and so forth?

Consider the facts. These tell us that the Narodniks are far more tolerant and conciliatory, that they are far more “united”, and that the abundance of groups among them does not lead to sharp splits. At the same time the facts tell us quite incontrovertibly that the Narodniks are politically *impotent*.

Strange, is it not? Are not the “conciliatoriness”, and all the other splendid spiritual qualities of the Narodniks merely *sterile things*?

That is exactly what they are—sterile! The “unity” of the varied intellectualist little groups is bought by the Narodniks at the price of their utter political impotence among the masses. And with us Marxists, too, it is the Trotskyists,⁴² the liquidators, the “conciliators”, and the “Tyszka-ites”,⁴³ those who shout loudest about group unity, who display *the same* intellectualist impotence.

This conclusion is that attempts to create “unity” by means of “agreements” or

“alliances” among intellectualist groups, which *in fact* express tendencies that are *injurious* to the working-class movement (Narodism, liquidationism, etc.), lead only to complete disintegration and impotence. Both Narodism and liquidationism have *proved* this by their lamentable example.

Only *in opposition* to these groups and grouplets (in a strenuous struggle, which is inevitable under bourgeois conditions and amidst a host of petty-bourgeois vacillations) is real unity building up among the working-class masses led by the majority of the class-conscious proletarians.

Naïve people will ask: How are we to distinguish the intellectualist groups which are causing damage to the working-class movement by disintegrating it and condemning it to impotence, from that group or groups which ideologically express the working-class movement, rally, unite and strengthen it? There are only two ways of distinguishing one from the other: theory and practical experience. It is necessary seriously to examine the theoretical content of such *trends of thought* as Narodism and liquidationism (the principal petty-bourgeois trends that are disintegrating the working-class movement). It is necessary to carefully study the practical experience of the mass working-class movement as a means of rallying the majority of class-conscious workers around integral and considered decisions.

He who gives close thought to the theory of Marxism and close attention to the practical experience of the last few years will realise that the elements of a genuine workers’ party are rallying in Russia *in spite* of the motley, noisy, and vociferous (but essentially futile and harmful) groups of Narodniks, liquidators, and so forth. Unity of the working class is emerging from the disintegration of these groups and their isolation from the proletariat.

Narodism and Liquidationism Proleterskaya Pravda No 12 December 20 1913

The revisionist and Trotskyist and reformist groups have been disintegrating rapidly over the last 10 years, helping to re-establish the correctness of Marxist-Leninist science. But only on the continued relentless exposure of non-Leninist muddleheadedness around the workers movement can this embryonic revival carry on developing.

Entryism into Scargill’s centrist movement misses the point, which is not to try to turn it into the revolutionary party (which would be impossible without exhaustively shaking up every vexed historical question of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice), but to support it as a broad electoral front where a revolutionary-socialist critique of imperialist crisis can be properly and usefully (for all concerned) argued for, and worked for in practice too, thus further helping clarify everyone’s understanding.

The CPGB’s wish to impose their own pet DIY ideas of “Bolshevik organisation” self-delusion on Scargill is just about the silliest irrelevance imaginable. Any broad centrist-movement development would properly steamroller over such inconsequential pedantry from “revolutionary” constitution-mongers.

But equally properly, a broad centrist movement could be engaged on issues of policy, strategy, and tactics against the parliamentary-imperialist status quo, which could be more or less helpful to a revolutionary education of the working class depending on how the arguments go.

The turn by a significant swathe of ‘left’ trade-unionism towards political centrism is irrelevant to the structural-discipline culture of a tightly-knit Leninist cadre party, but does place huge demands on the correctness of revolutionary theory in its very broadest sweep.

For example, a dramatically successful SLP could take everyone’s interests forward with a sound policy on Ireland, exposing Labour’s wretched bi-partisan toadying to British imperialist decadence. Such a policy development would benefit from grasping what is the international-balance-of-class-forces situation concerning Ireland, and what next feasible developments are there which might aid and encourage the worldwide anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle and understanding.

The *EPSR*’s Marxist-Leninist method aims to provide exactly this scientific analysis of all phenomena in the crisis of the world imperialist system and its repercussions internationally and reflections in class and national struggles, without which building the party of world socialist revolution is impossible, and making useful experiences or advances within broad centrist or soviet movements equally unlikely.

For the Trots to be telling Scargill’s centrist movement their profoundest wisdom on the need for “a single leadership, structure, and political line” but with “factions and organised trends” which would somehow nevertheless “fight in a disciplined and unified way” to create a “combat party of the class” is not just putting the cart before the horse in a big way but is all horsemanure anyway. A new well-supported Leninist cadre party may well eventually emerge again in Britain and the world partly via broad electoral-front developments around the SLP; but an agreed world view is essential first, and of that there is not only now not the slightest sign among the Trots and revisionists, but there never has been. Crucial failures to successfully elaborate Marxist-Leninist science had begun to sow ultimately fatal misunderstand-

ings in the international anti-imperialist struggle from the 1920s onwards. But re-analysing all the subsequent developments, identifying the mistakes, and resolving all the differences over them, has never been what the sectarian petty-bourgeois ‘revolutionaries’ have wanted, nor do they relish it now. Their long history of anti-Soviet and anti-communist opportunism makes them what they are and what they unfailingly always eventually manage to present themselves as being, – a philistine irrelevant poison in the workers movement. And that especially applies to their idiot pretence of knowing something about how a revolutionary cadre party of Leninist theory should be organised. The appalling backstabbing factional record of 57 varieties of Trotskyite sectarianism tells its own ridiculous story.

The way forward for anyone who wants to help get the party of Leninist revolutionary theory back on the move is to seek agreement about how the world is to be analysed from a scientific Marxist point of view. If a correct understanding of the inter-imperialist

trade-war economic crisis, of Labourism, Scargillism, the Middle East, Ireland, the former USSR, Chinese revisionism and its workers state, etc, etc, etc, etc, etc, can begin to be worked out, then the problems of leadership and organisational structures will remain minor issues. Lenin’s party was never disoriented by such matters. Post Lenin, they became huge difficulties in all directions because of mistakes in the revolutionary theoretical analysis of the world that began to be made by the Stalinist circles, and even worse by the Trotskyite circles.

The *EPSR*’s analysis is there to be shot at by allcomers, which is the only healthy way to proceed. It will stand or fall by whether or not it is able to survive the test of time, of practice. In other words, has the *Review*’s attempted Marxist interpretation of the world of the last 16 years begun to be able to correct its mistakes and to get things right? It is in doing this that ‘the’ revolutionary party is going to be built, not any other way.

Read Lenin. Support the *Review*. Reg Potts

CPGB bogus ‘Leninists’ run away from *Review* polemics

[*EPSR* No846 26-03-96]

The *Weekly Worker* paper of the ‘Leninist’ CPGB (deceased) faction’s strange quest for a ‘non-ideological or multanimous’ Party to unite ‘re-forged’ (their word) Communists has not surprisingly found the *EPSR* not to its taste.

One recent ‘communist press review’ attack purported to be an analysis of the lead article in *Review* 841 (Feb 20) which examined in detail, over a length of 6,000 words-plus, how right and ‘left’ critics in Britain of the Irish national-liberation struggle had been proved wrong (in their caricature of the IRA/Sinn Féin) by the ending of the ceasefire.

A 200-word snippet from that piece was quoted, in full or in part from 7 or 8 different paragraphs, including the statement that all & sundry, including bogus ‘Marxism’, had been exposed by the ceasefire’s ending as understanding nothing of the national-liberation struggle or of the international crisis of imperialism.

The 6,000 words of the *EPSR* lead go on to explain why and how this has been demonstrated, but all of this is simply ignored by *WW*, in favour of highlighting the more general criticisms of the Trotskyite petty-bourgeois mentality the piece contained.

These were rejected as requiring non-supporters of the *Review* “to agree with every dot and comma of the particular interpretation of world events”.

This is just flannel, or ‘ranting’

to quote a subsequent attack on the *EPSR* by the *WW* editor (see below). Why not just deal with what was said in *Review* 841 about how ending the ceasefire had exposed the ignorance of Trotskyites and other critics of the national-liberation struggle?

Only one issue raised with the Trots gets mentioned, – the way they repeat their view that the national-liberation struggle is a waste of time, is the wrong struggle, and can gain nothing for the real interests of the masses.

But then they simply fail to deal with all the *Review*’s argumentation about why these Trots attitudes are hopelessly wrong, and totally alien to a Marxist-Leninist approach to such situations.

Eighteen months ago, British ideology on the right and on the fake-‘left’ (petty-bourgeois ‘revolutionaries’) slighted the IRA’s ceasefire as either an admission of ‘defeat’, or a Sinn Féin class-collaborating ‘capitulation’, or an acceptance that the pursuit of national-liberation aims by guerrilla war against a fullscale British imperialist police-military dictatorship was ‘futile’, etc.

As the *Review*’s Leninist approach has been spelling out since the early 1980s, such class-hostile attitudes to the national-liberation struggle have simply shown appalling ignorance of a historical-materialist understanding of British imperialist decline and

the crisis of world imperialism, increasingly besieged by revolutionary conflict on class and national issues.

Since as early as the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty, London could not have made it more obvious that it wanted to get out of its civil-war repressive-war morass in Ireland, with the active encouragement of Washington and the EEC, with only one proviso that the retreat should not make too obvious the victory of the arms-in-hand revolutionary struggle by the nationalists. Hence the snail's-pace withdrawal programme. Hence the official propaganda attempts to still rubbish everything Sinn Féin and the IRA do even while steadily making concessions towards their ultimate basic reunification demand (i.e. an end to the colony of 'Northern Ireland' as it was, – and still constitutionally remains for the moment).

Simultaneously the complacent monopoly ruling-class participants in this whole peace process, particularly London, could not resist continuing trying to hoodwink the nationalists into settling for some propaganda humiliations themselves (such as prior decommissioning) or endless humiliating delays, etc.

The decision to temporarily suspend the ceasefire with the Docklands bombing operation put a stop to much of this nonsense. Now the entire imperialist camp is clamouring for a renewed ceasefire with no conditions attached (or looking askance) whatever. Just any ceasefire will do, and Sinn Féin will at last get the suddenly-hastily-arranged firm-start to all-party talks on a new constitutional arrangement for Ireland that the nationalists have been fighting for.

The *Review* piece slammed the *Workers Weekly* (*Weekly Worker* – *ed*) as typical of the defeatist Trot response to these new developments, not just quoting but actually reproducing more than 400 words (nearly half) of that issue's skinny lead article.

Although some headings were vaguely positive (as the *Review* faithfully reported), the *WW* article was relentlessly pessimistically defeatist and still scornful of the national-liberation struggle. It said imperialism was still winning every battle worldwide, and then spoke paragraph after paragraph about the Republicans' failure. To clarify the argument, let what they wrote be reproduced:

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, liberation struggles and hot spots throughout the world are being resolved in imperialism's favour.

The failure of Irish republicans to take any other course is a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state. It is this failure that has left republicans in the north facing monolithic op-

position, with all bourgeois parties singing with one voice, and no independent working class voice to be heard.

This failure has meant that it is not just the republican struggle upon which imperialism is wreaked its revenge. The British state has wielded its weapons of oppression, steeled in the north of Ireland, against the working class on its mainland. Troops against the miners in 1984-85, police tactics against anything from anti-poll tax demonstrators to anti-road and even anti-live animal export demonstrators. Repressive legislation, honed against revolutionaries in the Six Counties, has been brought home in the Criminal Justice Act.

It seems increasingly clear that this bomb and the IRA statement to end the ceasefire were part and parcel of the strategy of negotiations and commitment to the 'peace' process.

This was not a breakaway aimed at restarting the war against British imperialism.

Republicans in the north, left isolated by the lack of solidarity of workers in Britain, now see little alternative.

The ending of the ceasefire in these circumstances does not contradict the fact that what is taking place is an imperialist-brokered peace in the context of the US-dominated new world order. In many 'hot spots' around the world, the negative resolution of revolutionary situations have been accompanied by flashes of violence, contradictions and temporary 'setbacks'.

The basic solution remains the same. The working class of Ireland and the UK needs an independent revolutionary communist party of its own.

Though all struggle is for the moment directed towards what can only be an imperialist-brokered 'peace', the battle is far from over.

The new situation makes new demands and places new responsibilities on all revolutionaries. To take our common fight for liberation forward demands a unity capable of destroying once and for all the British imperialist state which keeps us all in chains. Revolutionaries in Britain and Ireland need to be organised for that task now.

And *Review* 841 reinterpreted this incoherent muddle in the following words:

'As these anti-communists see it, "imperialism has got the whip hand worldwide at the moment; the nationalist attempt to influence the historical outcome via pressure on the bourgeoisie is doomed; the Docklands bomb was just another part of this same hopeless peace process; and the only real way for Irish national-liberation interests to extricate themselves from a losing scenario is to join forces now with such revolutionary hotshots as the CPGB and go directly for a communist overthrow of imperialism in Britain and Ireland.'

A further 2,000 words pulled apart every aspect of the *WW* lead article from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, such as the following brief examples:

'The first crucial requirement is to grasp the nature of the epoch we are living in. Far from it being the time when everything is resolved in imperialism's favour, it is just the opposite, – the epoch of terminal imperialist crisis.

Purely temporarily, a brief 'new world order' period is taking place which gives a superficial appearance of US imperialism easily dominating every situation with its bullying 'unchallengeable' military and economic might.

But the immediate obvious reality of this 'order' is total unsatisfactory chaos, – and underneath it all, an inter-imperialist crisis of unprecedented proportions is relentlessly brewing, – as the more honest critical-realist outpourings of the bourgeoisie itself, of course, continu-

ously confirm see endless past *Reviews*). The artificial postwar inflationary boom and arms race can only result in eventual all-out trade war, markets collapse, and warmongering confrontation between all the great 'free-world' powers (and their various areas of stooge influence.)

The revisionist self-liquidation in the former Soviet Union is part of the crisis of bourgeois anti-Leninist ideology, the crisis of international class-collaboration, – not a crisis of anti-imperialist struggle. The Cold War 'balance of class forces' was always essentially a phony balance at root because the revisionist Moscow ideology no longer believed in anti-imperialist revolution as the essential way forward for civilisation (see *ILWP Books* vol 13 *Gorbachevism*).

Liquidating that colossal revisionist influence on the world (especially on these anti-communist CPGBers), exposing it as a 'Leninist' fraud (Gorbachev used to quote Lenin too, the posturing oaf), – was an essential step for helping revive international revolutionary science, a step which should have been fought for not through the Trot/Eurocommunist anti-Soviet anti-Leninist continuous treachery to the East European workers states in their difficulties, but through unconditional support for the proletarian dictatorships, only criticising (from a communist angle) Moscow's pro-world-collaboration delusions.

The examples these defeatists give of 'imperialist domination' are only superficially plausible, concealing the underlying anti-imperialist reality.

South Africa, for example, is currently a sad spectacle of bourgeois-nationalist delusions usurping the ANC's revolutionary defeat of apartheid-imperialism temporarily, but in no way able to detract from the colossal overall historical significance (for Africa and the world) of that final mass-movement triumph over monopoly-capitalist international tyranny. Reaction wanted to, and did, hold onto apartheid for as long as possible. Reaction only finally gave in when it could see that a deal with the ANC nationalists would be better than risking total communist mass revolutionary overthrow later on. So which direction is history heading for, – towards imperialist domination, or towards communist domination? Obviously, more towards revolution all the time.

So the anti-imperialism of the Irish national-liberation struggle is going with the grain of history, not against it. And only some superficial word play enables these bogus 'Leninists' to label Irish republicanism a 'failure' by identifying it as part of "a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state".

But what is failing the whole working class in Britain is its entire anti-communist past leadership, – Labour, TUC, Trots, Eurocommunists, and bogus 'lefts' of all descriptions, all of them complete philistines who only ever posture about 'Marxism' in order to kill it with revisionist distortion and demoralise the working class. And that is a failure much to be welcomed as opening the door at last to a serious revival of Leninist science, greatly in harmony with the revolutionary spirit with which Irish republicanism has triumphantly challenged British imperialism.

The fixed idea of these middle-class 'revolutionaries', – total socialist victory or nothing, – having been inappropriately applied to essential learning processes in the transformation of the old class-collaborating British working

class, – is then ludicrously incorrectly used as a measure of success in a purely national-liberation struggle. They are virtually saying that even if the peace process was a success from Sinn Féin's point of view, – a reunited Ireland, – it would be a failure.

This is irrelevant 'left' sectarianism gone barmy. All they are really hoping for, between the lines, is that the IRA will fight these petty-bourgeois 'lefts' war for them against British imperialism. They actually want the IRA and Sinn Féin to split in the hope of "restarting the war against British imperialism", war which obviously will not cease with the liquidation of the hated 'Northern Ireland' colony and Partition, but will aim only for the total actual military defeat of all British imperialism!

This is grotesque. Why don't these super-revolutionaries' start their own urban guerrilla warfare against the British imperialist state on their own frontline and give the IRA a hand?

This monstrous kibbutzing-in on someone else's fight by these CPGB freaks shows contempt for the subject and people's intelligence in both directions. Are they really telling the British working class to start urban guerrilla warfare against the British state in England now? In the circumstances of an as yet incompletely exposed full parliamentary bourgeois democracy system, this would certainly not be a classical Marxist-Leninist strategy, more like a stupid anarchist provocation. And the CPGB is presumably calling for no such thing, of course. But this unstated implication of 'Right on to the barricades now, lads' is slyly useful for adopting a grandiosely 'revolutionary' posture against the IRA: 'Oh, this Docklands bomb is just a way of getting back to the peace process. It's not the start of a real war against British imperialism'.

And such irrelevant Walter Mitty fantasies demonstrate that this CPGB rump is not talking seriously about the Irish question either. Yet again, it is just another vehicle for vet more petty-bourgeois subjective-'revolutionary' verbal diarrhoea. National-liberation struggle can be a limited anti-imperialist struggle, but a wholly legitimate one from a scientific Marxist-Leninist point of view in the right circumstances, and even one to be enthusiastically unconditionally supported in certain conditions, as being an important and even revolutionary blow against imperialism. Such is the IRA/Sinn Féin struggle (see *ILWP Books* vol 8 and countless past *Reviews*.)

It is simply meaningless verbal diarrhoea to pretend to deal with these arguments by describing them as just "Review insistence on agreement with every dot and comma of what they say". These are not dots and commas but a completely different world view from how the anti-communist Trots see things, – a Marxist-Leninist world view.

Against this polemic, and while refusing to answer any of its points, the *WW* counterposes a notion of "building Leninism" (deriding a *Review* slogan)

"which allows... a permanent interplay of contending ideas, – i.e. Lenin's insistence on freedom of criticism, unity in action".

Review 843 dealt with this very question at considerable length, quoting extensively directly from reproduced Lenin pages from



"Lefts" avoid polemics on concrete issues like the Irish struggle

four separate articles basically demolishing Trotsky and all anti-Bolsheviks for their hollow blather about 'unity' while always avoiding polemical conflict over crucial major differences in interpretation of world events relevant to the international class struggle, (which is exactly the stated *WW* attitude towards the *Review's* criticisms of it and other Trotskyite rags).

The colossal achievements of Lenin's entire political life revolve around his understanding that without agreement on correct revolutionary theory, there can be no successful revolutionary practice.

A revolutionary party leadership cannot be an eclectic dustbin of unresolved theoretical muddle and differences. This is a ludicrous anti-Marxist approach, – the essence of the collapse of the Third International to which tradition the *WW* 'Leninists' so offensively pretended to cling (while not knowing, or understanding, or believing a word of Moscow's line) to put down (without the need for argument) all those who were not part of the 'official' communist movement.

Bolshevism's greatest achievement, which made the successful revolution possible, was in routing the scores of muddle-headed anti-Marxist groups around the Russian workers revolutionary movement prior to October 1917. The entire existence of Marx, Engels, and Lenin basically revolved around polemically routing all the endless varieties of 'revolutionary socialist' nonsense which divided and held back the anti-capitalist

struggle. Just read their books. Frequently in prefaces, etc, they point out that work on more expository basic theory was again having to be interrupted in order to publish refutations, often book-length, against the latest revisionist nonsense. Building the revolutionary party in Britain is going to involve a great amount of polemical destruction of anti-Marxist nonsense about the world since 1917 (and before) from 57 varieties of Trotskyite, state-capitalist, and anarchist stupidity.

A week after the attempted *WW* put-down of the *Review*, its editor stepped into the fray via a letters-column dispute with *Open Polemic* to wish that her 'communist press review' column had not drawn attention to

"the little known and rather isolated *ILWP* organisation"

by quoting from the *Review* at such length from what she regarded as

"nothing more than a confused and illogical rant",

which

"did little to further our common struggle for a non-ideological or, as you say, a multaniomous Party".

Once again, not only no attempt to deal with the detailed Marxist criticism of the *WW* sectarian ignorance on the significance of the Irish (or any) national-liberation struggle, – but positive rejoicing that the last thing these 'communists' want is any theoretical clarification at all. No wonder they are so confused! No wonder their paper is such a triumph of 'non-ideology'. Reg Potts

Back-stabbing 'left' poseurs begin to exemplify SLP centrism. Struggle to develop real revolutionary theory must be pursued at all costs. SLP tactical manoeuvres miss the point.

[EPSR No849 16-04-96]

Sectarian factional fighting inside the newly-formed Socialist Labour Party of Arthur Scargill is quickly reproducing every bankrupt tendency of the long-failed British labour-movement 'left'.

"Bureaucratic manoeuvre" has prevented "two communists" from standing as SLP candidates in forthcoming local elections in Manchester, claims one posturing sect.

Supposedly, "shortage of funds" was the ostensible SLP reason for apparently first adopting but then changing its mind about these two would-be candidates, who possibly hail from the fake 'Leninist' CPGB stable. "Breach of procedure", and "overstretched resources" were alternative explanations offered.

But the real thinking by the current SLP regime in the Manchester region is alleged to have been let slip by a committee member outside the meeting with the reported comment: "We are not having communists coming in to do a job on the SLP".

According to the CPGB's *Workers Weekly* [actually the *Weekly Worker* – ed] paper, this whole problem with the SLP is to do with a group of members, in the past associated with another paper *Socialist Outlook*. The clear implication is that some kind of *SO* mafia is at work inside the SLP, denying

democratic rights to people from other sects.

SLP leading members Pat Sikorski, Caroline Sikorski, Roland Wood, and Brian Heron are named as having been 'Faction No 1' inside the *SO's* 'International Socialist Group' in a previous incarnation, subsequently transmogrified into the FISC (or Fourth International Supporters Caucus).

The CPGB claims that documents in its possession prove that this FISC have become an organised entryist faction into the SLP.

Among other things, these documents supposedly declare, in reports apparently prepared for the Trotskyite IEC-USFI (International Executive Committee of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International):

What is the nature, or character, of this party in the immediate to short term? It is a question which has a bearing on our reasons for continuing to identify with the International and all those who have participated in Corresponding Society discussions.

We regard the SLP as transitional – over a period of years – and as the next necessary step towards the kind of new party of the working class which we think is required.

The Socialist Labour Party is but the most important organisational expression of this trend thus far. We do not think it is a finished product, as we explain below.

Describing the SLP as transitional – as a party of the recomposition – does not however negate the view that, from the very beginning, it should endeavour to act as the new

party of the working class.

Neither does this view in any way negate the new approach we take to being members of the SLP. Yet, while the name could remain the same, it cannot be denied that if the best elements of the revolutionary left can for once get their bearings right there is enormous future potential for making a significant leap on the overall political character of a unitary party of the working class.

Beyond identifying the “best elements of the revolutionary left” and bearing in mind the approach to membership of the SLP which it is suggested we should take, realising the future potential of the party implies that the revolutionary left should organise, constructively, for that purpose. Does the SLP’s constitution, even with the democratic guarantees which have been incorporated, at present allow for such organisation?

Combined with a residue of Stalinism on the part of at least some of the party’s initial supporters and potential leaders, it was always unlikely that at this stage we would see the kind of constitution which we would have written ourselves.

For the time being then, we are posed with a delicate balancing act. Let us be clear. We have no interest in any stupid and irresponsible provocation and we should work within and respect the existing Constitution. We should investigate forms of organisation which both reflect that approach and are suited to our present needs •

Report presented to Usec

The Corresponding Society was established by former members of the International Socialist Group along with others, as a Marxist forum for the specific purpose of furthering the discussion on a new party. With the launch of the SLP the Society has dissolved. It was never conceived of as a USFI organisation in waiting, which is why a caucus was organised specifically for USFI supporters.

On the surface, it looks as if poor Arthur is getting a right Trot rogering before he has even started.

Analysing these antics, the CPGBers declare:

In the Roland Wood-presented report above, the comrades made a remarkable admission for a group of people who have made their name as the “doorkeepers” in the SLP, the most vociferous hounders of anyone they suspect of being supporters of other political tendencies.

In the very last paragraph of the report, they inform us that they intend to “investigate forms of organisation” which are appropriate to ‘working with’ and ‘respecting’ a constitution which explicitly bans those who “support a political organisation other than the party”. Coming from this political organisation, that is a remarkable admission.

In fact, the SLP has no constitution. It has a number of contributions on the constitution question, including a model for a bureaucratic monstrosity from Arthur Scargill. The Fisc has been instrumental in attempting to implement in practice the Scargill monolith and proscribe other political trends under the provision of its phantom clauses. The ‘appropriate’ form for the Fisc therefore has been – and is – an underground, secret faction, organised in blatant violation of the constitution they themselves are trying to shackle everyone else with.

Despite our defence of the Fisc against any threats of disciplinary action, it would be hard to think of an act of more monumental hypocrisy.

But as always about such centrist sectarianism, the really depressing thing is that all this handbags-at-five-paces stuff completely misses any Marxist scientific analysis of such problems, and leaves all the squabbling factions equally up to their necks entirely in the same old mire of philistine fake-‘left’ opportun-

ism from which they have just crawled out to join the SLP in the first place.

The nearest to the knuckle the scrapping gets is where the CPGB-ers claim that the ISG-ers prevented any discussion of adding revolutionary demands to draft SLP policy statements with the alleged comment that “there is no need to discuss theory since the back of the membership card contains all the economic theory the SLP needs.”

The CPGBers are right to declare “what nonsense” to such comments, but then what monumental hypocrites that makes the CPGB. Of all the petty bourgeoisie’s bogus ‘revolutionary’ groups, it is the CPGB which is currently in polemical deficit with the *Economic and Philosophic Science Review* on debated questions of theory more than any other.

To take just two of the latest examples, the *EPSR* contributed enormous analyses recently of the CPGB’s fundamental Marxist-Leninist ignorance on the national question specifically concerning Ireland and the defeat for British imperialism there. The only CPGB contribution to ‘theory’ on this occasion was to avoid replying to the *EPSR* by dismissing all the points as an “incoherent rant”, or whatever.

A subsequent *Review* took up an even more basic misconception of these bogus ‘Leninists’, namely that a Bolshevik Party is formed by unending “freedom of criticism” (i.e. never any agreement about anything), and that revolutionary unity consists of ‘joint action’.

To this lengthy polemic, quoting pages and pages from Lenin explaining that successful workers revolutionary unity can only be led by a specialist party of agreed and correct revolutionary theory (i.e. correct understanding of the current international balance of class forces and its dynamics), specifically taking the CPGB to task for its hopeless failure to grasp this point, – the CPGB again replied with total silence.

That there will be a very large number of monumental hypocrites of all kinds scumming around inside the SLP is no surprise at all, – all of them equally ignorant of and hostile to the first thing to do with Marxist-Leninist theory.

The SLP is potentially a classic centrist movement, – ‘revolutionary’ for appearances sake, but incorrigibly reformist-philistine and anti-Leninist in its very soul.

But a genuinely potential broad-front workers-movement political organisation nevertheless, – precisely the place to argue for real revolutionary theory and real revolutionary demands, provided they have been cor-

rectly understood in the first place, based on the only actual scientific body of knowledge of such matters, which is Marxism-Leninism. The battle against the opportunist ‘Marxists’ of the 57 Trot varieties needs to go on more intensely than ever, inside and outside the SLP.

The SLP itself has already automatically shown itself to be effortlessly centrist-philistine, postponing deeper debate on economic perspectives to the convening of specialist commissions later-on in order to have some sort of immediate policy document up and running by the time of the May 4 opening conference.

In terms of ‘Marxist philosophy’ which Scargill said would be the SLP’s guiding light, this attitude puts the cart entirely before the horse. What use are economic perspectives to the working class if they are wrong?

The whole point of Marxist-Leninist class struggle is precisely to give conscious realisation to necessary historical developments. The whole body of Marxism-Leninism, polemicising with impressionists and idealists of every description within the ‘revolutionary’ movement (such as the anarchists, reformists, syndicalists, revisionists of every description, etc), right down to the most subtle and complex dialectical-materialist interpretations of economic phenomena, etc, is of the polemical nature that it is because it is crucially important for would-be revolutionary leaderships to provide workers with a correct world view down to the most intricate theoretical questions in philosophy, economics, and everything. The working class under revolutionary leadership can not and does not deserve to become the ruling class unless and until it does surpass the bourgeoisie in all the main aspects of understanding the world correctly. It is just philistine idiocy to imply that a bit of a left policy plus loads of ‘revolutionary’ earnestness and

SLP needs revolutionary theory, but the bogus ‘Marxism’ of its Trot entrists is worse than useless, especially on Ireland and on building workers unity.

[*EPSR* No851 30-04-96]

The birth of a centrist Socialist Labour Party in Britain marks an important stage in the development of the imperialist crisis but also illustrates the continuing major difficulty facing the workers movement which is its traditional hostility to theory.

The SLP policy statements for this week’s inaugural conference all reflect this hesitancy to adopt a class-principled historical materialist philosophy on the question of capitalism versus socialism.

goodwill is all that workers need, – for now, for later, or for any time. Such an attitude betrays contempt for workers, but what is worse it betrays a contempt for theory.

The opposite to this attitude is not to find some smartarse who thinks he has already got things all worked out, right down to the last detail of practical programme, – an equally foolish illusion. The opposite is to say openly to the working class at all times what stage has been reached in working out economic perspectives, how difficult it is to get it right, where the gravest lack of understanding and continuing doubts still exist, – and above all to carry on working these things out in front of the working class, with full published polemics, and discussion meetings attended by all who want to make a serious contribution, and listened to by as many who want to turn up.

Marxist-Leninist science was arrived at by endless discussion and polemics with the whole world, but promulgated by a continuously self-selecting vanguard who had the principled discipline to be endlessly corrected by objective verification of all the understanding that was being striven for.

It was this which made Lenin’s the party of a new type which transformed human history. It is this which the entire ‘left’ should have been doing ever since but has failed to do. It is an attempt-approach towards this which has brought the Leninist comrades around the *Economic and Philosophic Science Review* such verifiable success on many complex questions of revolutionary theory for understanding all world developments over the past 16 years, published and on record, – alongside, of course, the mistakes and incomplete initial understandings whose correction after polemical struggle made the fuller picture possible. Build Leninism.

Adam Carr

It is encouraging that Arthur Scargill was confident enough to declare that the SLP’s understanding of the world should be based on Marxism, but it is not enough; and this remains the great serious problem facing the working class and all who genuinely want to halt what imperialist crisis is going to do to the planet and civilisation, and is already doing.

To really take economic, social, and political power off the capitalist class, the working class

must become the ruling class. A workers movement and its party of leadership will never develop the confidence to impose the dictatorship of the proletariat (to replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the only scientific reality about the essence of "parliamentary capitalist democracy") without total Marxist-Leninist mastery of every single issue facing modern society in every practical and intellectual discipline.

No one has such expertise, and it is going to have to be built. But it can only happen methodically; and that process cannot even begin on the larger scale needed until there is more widespread acceptance of some basic premises of Marxist-Leninist science, such as that without correct revolutionary theory, there can never be any hope of sustained successful revolutionary socialist practice; and that

"only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested" (Lenin);

and that the best international solidarity with any workers struggling anywhere is to continue the fight for the revolutionary overthrow of one's own ruling class; and so on for more than 100 genius-packed volumes of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, - 99.99% of which stays unknown to the British 'left', especially to most of its 'Marxist' left.

On every philosophical issue of life and society, on every question of economics and world perspectives, on every vexed matter of history and science, - the working class needs a party which grasps and gives leadership on these things better than anyone else can. Only then will the workers movement be completely ready and fit to lead the way to the socialist revolution, and temporarily become the new ruling class to carry through the transformation of society.

The SLP policy statements, particularly on the economic perspectives and international questions, have their heart in the right place but speak with very little authority.

On economic problems, for example, there is a correct and impassioned description of some of the capitalist system's more obvious current failings. But there is not even an attempted historical estimation of what point has been reached in civilisation's long process of social evolution and revolution, or why it has come about. On the contrary, the document keeps suggesting that capitalism could do better if it wanted to, and that the free-market economy does not have to work in

the anarchic way that it does.

And this instinctive reformist/class-compromising delusion leaves the SLP merely offering the working class more well-meaning pie-in-the-sky, albeit with a healthy and honest revolutionary/centrist commitment to direct-action class struggle, - of which the 1984-85 miners' strike was such a heroic and honourable example, a true milestone in British history.

But this still remains the theory that left pressure, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, will eventually topple capitalism. It is a daydream which partly fell apart in 1985, and which it will be difficult to persuade the working class to believe in next time round. It was an illusion of the reformist era, - a 'left' illusion.

The alternative necessary philosophy is not the silly putschism of the anarchists or the Angry Brigade, or the military training fantasies of survivalist groups. The alternative is a deeper scientific analysis of where imperialism's worsening economic and political crisis will drag mankind next, and what volcanic forces capitalism's coming failings will throw up for dealing with these even greater levels of destruction and alienation.

Like all good centrism, the SLP hints at a revolutionary preparedness to go all the way against capitalism via the extended route of direct-action protests, but hesitates to explain that revolutionary situations will be created by capitalism itself, and that revolutions will be necessary to resolve such situations.

All that is hinted at by the SLP is a willingness to give revolutionary leadership. What the working class needs is a full explanation of why, when, and how revolutionary leadership will be absolutely necessary for civilisation's survival and further

progress, and also how the preparation of the masses for revolution will not depend just on party agitation, no matter how brilliant, but will largely be carried out spontaneously by capitalism's own uncontrollable upheavals.

If 'left' pressure was the only route to revolution, there would never be many convinced revolutionaries about. If volcanic forces of capitalism's own crisis are seen as the unstoppable creator of revolutionary situations, then the whole workers movement could become convinced revolutionaries.

It is to Scargill's credit that he is the first major labour movement leader to declare that Blairism is the death of reformism. It is to the discredit of the labour movement's traditional hostility to theory that the naff notion of left pressure to produce a socialist revolution survives as the alternative to reformism.

It was the theory of left pressure which collapsed in the 1984-85 strike, not just the treacherous reformist illusions in the leadership of the Labour Party and the TUC. All three failures should have been removed together from workers' calculations about a socialist future.

The only certain guarantee then, as now, is the one which screams out from the whole of 20th century history, - that the sole ultimate result of allowing free-market forces under the hegemony of the monopoly-imperialist bourgeoisie any role at all in the direction of national and international economic development will be renewed trade-war, slump, and inter-imperialist war at some point, followed by a renewed avalanche of revolutionary communist upheaval even greater than that which flowed out of the 1914-18 and 1939-45 inter-imperialist wars.

The politically-motivated

attack on the mining industry for class-war reasons, and the monopoly profiteering reliance on the cheapest Third World fuel resources and/or a totally unplanned exhaustion of the most easily and readily-available fuel sources, - was best explained as symbolic of the even more destructive crisis of cut-throat competition, class and national conflict, brutal exploitation, and commercial-industrial collapse to come.

The NUM's denunciation of Thatcher's class-war agenda, and capitalism's monopoly-exploitation catastrophic perspectives in general, - was good.

A convinced analysis of eventual inter-imperialist trade war and armed conflict causing death and devastation to millions, caused by the insoluble tendency back towards market crashes, fascist-chauvinist (beggar-thy-neighbour) slump, and permanent mass unemployment, - would have been an even better reason for opposing Tory de-industrialisation and private-enterprise greed.

The NUM's 1984 capitalist perspective could have been rationalised by some opportunists, as it was, as being the "obvious market solution, as replacing feather-bedded trade-unionism with greater productivity and eventual greater prosperity for all, and as no more than the sovereignty of parliamentary democracy and the secret ballot, demanded in the situation of aggressive miners who thought they were a law unto themselves", etc.

The Marxist perspective on capitalist war, had it always been convincingly fought for by the labour movement, could hardly have been supported by anybody, - except bourgeois-imperialism's monopoly-finance capital circles themselves, who are not very numerous.



The final reactionary devastation caused by the ever-greater dominance of exclusive monopoly-finance interests is now even routinely denounced in sections of the capitalist press itself: [*cuttings omitted*]

An expanded description of how the cut-throat anarchy of free-market competition breeds only negative fear of takeover, mainly, – (including cost-cutting and downsizing to try, without risk, to make recorded profits temporarily seem more impressive to the stock markets,) – at a certain stage of the capitalist trade-crisis cycle in an epoch of ever-greater monopolisation, – would he a more useful scientific analysis of why socialist revolution should be on the agenda than the centrist/left-pressure understanding of history which the SLP has still not progressed from.

The worst mistake would be to suggest that arguments in support of the miners strike in 1984-85 could not have relied on a more far-sighted revolutionary perspective of imperialism's explosively destructive future for all, because it all lay so far ahead then.

In the first place, that would still be no excuse for continuing to leave the working class in the dark now about what imperialist crisis has in store, as SLP policy statements continue to do.

Secondly, such a suggestion would only reveal a profound contempt for theory and a profound contempt for the working class.

Only the highest development of understanding is good enough for the working class. Workers will readily respond to the most advanced and complex concepts, given the opportunity. They are on their way towards becoming the ruling class, the only possible way of ending world domination by the imperialist bourgeoisie. The idea that this profound leap in the affairs of human civilisation is going to be accomplished with no higher reasoning available than a *Daily Mirror* editorial betrays the most sick petty-bourgeois philistinism and defeatism. The greatest stupidity ever by aspiring 'revolutionary' sects is the notion that workers cannot respond to revolutionary leadership unless every pronouncement is translated into the most simple language.

Read the language of *Iskra* articles. Read the language of Lenin's greatest pamphlets. Read the language of the *Communist Manifesto*.

The SLP needs to explain that the coming slump-crisis and inter-imperialist trade war is caused by the anarchic over-creation of speculative investment capital, or finance capital. The boom in profit-hungry finance-

credit must necessarily eventually collapse, choking on the unemployable relative 'surplus' capital, dragging currencies and markets down with it.

Super-monopoly competition between rival national and international power blocs then really starts in earnest, imposing brutal decline on entire industries in different parts of the world (as it has already begun to do) with all of the devastating social and human consequences which that entails.

This free-market chaos is again brewing up warmongering chauvinist-envy and fascist-despair everywhere. Renewed arms race and inter-imperialist conflict is all that is left for capitalism.

The sensational decline in British imperialist strength is going to put Britain in the front line of revolutionary upheavals caused by the crisis.

These are vast historical issues for anyone to grasp hold of at any time, but as with all complex concepts, the ability for everyone to gain an endlessly deeper understanding of them, and to elaborate them further and more clearly, develops with the practice of using and explaining them constantly, and continually re-analysing them.

The sooner the SLP joins the fight for revolutionary theory, the better.

One thing hindering and hugely complicating any better developments inside the SLP is the number of anti-theory 'Marxist' philistines sneaking into its ranks. These middle-class sects have always given revolutionary understanding a bad name, and they have not got any better since joining the SLP. It will be the duty of genuine revolutionaries to expose these false 'revolutionary' postures inside the SLP in due course.

And one subject on which confusion is being continuously re-created from such sources, reinforcing the SLP's own theoretical hesitancy, for example, is Ireland.

The SLP statement on Ireland is helpful as far as it goes, calling for British imperialism's immediate withdrawal to enable Ireland to complete its national self-determination (i.e. reunification), ending the artificial gerrymandered British-controlled sectarian statelet which the Nationalist population (i.e. the Irish) have never accepted plus the immediate repatriation of all Irish political prisoners. It only significantly fails to specify the release of those prisoners, and solidarity with Irish nationalism's right to fight British imperialist interference in any way it chooses.

And how do 'revolutionary' entrists into the SLP from the Leninist CPGB faction, for

example, try to help develop the SLP's understanding? They don't. They try to hold it back with their 'revolutionary' sectarian nonsense that the IRA/Sinn Féin national-liberation struggle is a complete waste of time, doomed to defeat, and already defeated, – a conclusion they reach on the idiotic, self-regarding, anti-Marxist ground that socialist revolution, north and south, is the only real anti-imperialist fight going.

Such blind sectarian stupidity, – born of the psychotic, defeatist subjectivism of petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' individualism because of a history of frustrated isolation in a labour movement steeped in anti-theory philistinism, – has been exhaustively torn to shreds in many previous *Reviews* (see in particular *EPSR* 846, 841, and 840 of recent date), [see *EPSR Books on Ireland* Part 1-7 – ed] with never any attempt to answer one single point by the '*Weekly Worker*' which pretends to be so keen on polemical disputation.

Now the CPGB is back with yet more sectarian stupidity on Ireland, worse than ever; and with yet another peculiar attack on the *EPSR*, which again notes the venom of *EPSR* criticism, but again fails to reply to a single issue, either on their hopeless Ireland perspective, or on any other of their abysmally limited and incorrect outlook.

To lend weight to their anti-IRA sectarianism, the CPGBers trot out that veteran anti-communist individualist Eamonn McCann, giving his views full display without one word of dissent, criticism, or caution from the CPGB. If they publish this without reservation in the declared weekly newspaper of the CPGB, the views in it can fairly be taken as CPGB views.

These state, repeating earlier CPGB attitudes:

The armed struggle has been a total dead end. There was never any possibility of any return commensurate with the time, effort and sacrifice that was put into it. It could never work.

I do not believe there is some historical duty on British revolutionaries to pretend that the armed struggle viewed from Britain is different to the armed struggle viewed from Ireland. That is just nonsense. I am occasionally struck by how blithely those who wish to solidarise with the republican movement accept the deaths of innocent workers.

I am a Marxist. I have never been in favour of the armed struggle. It is an anathema to me that a small group of people set themselves up as the liberators of my class. I have never been too infected by attachment to the romantic forms of Irish nationalism. Yes, the IRA struggle grew organically out of the struggle of the masses but it wasn't the only development possible.

When the ceasefire was declared there was an air of triumphalism in and around the republican movement and a belief they were on a 'high road' to a united Ireland. There was a certain arrogance given what they perceived to be very powerful 'allies' – the Dublin government, the US and so on.

Of course, the reason why they formed this sort of alliance is rooted in their political nature. They lack any class perspective. Even so,

the triumphalism has faded: a certain disillusionment has set in. Impatience and discontent is expressing itself.

Among the rank and file there is a deeper disappointment and a feeling that they must re-examine how they got into this cul-de-sac.

This re-examination must involve facing some painful truths. You would have to be a fool not to understand that the strategy that was presented to them simply has not worked.

In reality, British imperialism has been driven to defeat in Ireland by the armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle of Sinn Féin and the IRA, an enforced snail's-pace withdrawal by Britain towards the ultimate abandonment and dismantling of its unviable colony (ludicrously, outrageously and provocatively called 'Northern Ireland' – no such country exists) which the Marxist-Leninist science of the *EPSR* has been chronicling in detail for over a dozen years.

That colonial retreat, based on the unviability any longer of British imperialism's world positions, continues to crawl towards Ireland's reunification and an important revolutionary triumph over all imperialist world reaction, not least through being achieved, arms in hand, a factor universally hated and feared by even those imperialist powers keenest to persuade Britain to accept defeat, even as the CPGB's incurable middle-class pessimism and blind sectarianism stumbles out these latest appallingly treacherous attacks on the Irish national-liberation struggle.

Far from being a 'dead end' failure, British capitalism's own press now openly admits that a concessions deal is going to be struck with the armed national-liberation struggle, exposing all London's previous face-saving hypocrisy over this issue as worthless, and that the only real stand imperialism is going to make will be against the moribund 'no surrender' intransigence of the dying British colonial epoch, deceitfully mislabelled 'unionism'.

The really remarkable thing about the bomb is that it has caused so little political damage either. The Prime Minister of course condemned it, and so do we all. But politicians seem prepared to live with this level of bombings for the time being, as they showed by giving a second reading yesterday to legislation which is designed to bring Sinn Féin into the negotiating process in just over seven weeks' time.

This is a remarkable cultural shift. It is less than three months since the end of the IRA ceasefire. That ceasefire was long regarded as the absolutely necessary pre-condition for political talks. Ministers spent months in 1994-95 refusing to make any kind of political move until the IRA said it was permanent.

But by that same token, no such moves would now be made either.

In fact, the reverse is the case. The political process goes busily on, even though Wednesday's bomb was a noisy reminder that the ceasefire isn't

there any more. IRA bombers are out there somewhere, ready to up the ante if they don't get what they want, yet all the signs are that this will not be necessary.

This is the right course for the Government to take. But it is obviously a dangerous one. If it is to succeed, the Government must place as few preconditions upon entry to the June 10 talks as possible. Participation in the planned May elections is one of them, and Sinn Féin seems increasingly likely to accept that, judging by Gerry Adams' most recent remarks. A renewed ceasefire is clearly, at that stage, another. But the Government seems far less exacting these days about what that might mean in practice. Yesterday's second reading of the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations Etc) Bill was conspicuous for Sir Patrick Mayhew's fancy footwork on the issue. Quizzed by Ian Paisley about whether he would accept a ceasefire only hours before talks were due to begin, Sir Patrick said that he would review the circumstances at the relevant time in their totality. In other words, yes.

Increasingly, the real question is not whether the Government and Sinn Féin will talk to each other, difficult though that is, since the chances are that in the end they will. The real issue is whether the two large Unionist parties will join such a transparently pragmatic process.

The infantile stupidity of that *Weekly Worker* pronouncement on Ireland is completed by the routine Trot imbecility that bourgeois nationalism is wrong because it isn't Marxist revolutionary socialism, – which is a level of reasoning on the complex national question which even Lenin's cat could have done better than.

It is tragic that the philistine ignorance of Marxism in the British labour movement is so bad that even the most basic A, B, C has to be constantly repeated; but one more time for the benefit of the CPGB, Marxism has never remotely adopted the position that a national-liberation struggle is only valid if led by a revolutionary communist party, as the *WW* argues:

revolutionaries in Ireland must pursue the main strategic demands of our programme – the total withdrawal of the British army, the dismantling of the northern Ireland state.

Thus, the fight must be conducted on an all-Ireland basis to organically link the struggle north and south with a revolutionary programme.

Nationalism fatally undermines this. The working class has the objective interest in this revolutionary perspective.

The protestant working class is of course pro-British. Yet they are worthy of more serious consideration.

What you see is an unwillingness to detach themselves from the state. The northern Ireland committee of the All Ireland Council of Trade Unions is literally in the pocket of the northern Ireland Office. But then, if you examine the finances of the TUC in London, you will find that a considerable proportion comes from the British government or from Europe.

The besetting sin of the bureaucracy is not sectarianism per se, but rather reformism. But one of the most interesting things about the protestant working class has been the inability of the Official Unionist Party and the

Orange Order to politically control it.

There are many complications here. In one sense, the proletarian belligerents of the Progressive Unionist Party and the 'socialistic' way it presents itself is not new at all. It is part of a tradition on the Shankill road, where it is concentrated.

Having said that, there is no doubt that the emergence of these new loyalist working class parties does reflect something that is happening in the working class generally. Systematic discrimination is no longer available as a viable option for the protestant community. In the past, this more or less guaranteed young protestant men work, but this simply does not exist anymore.

Socialists must make the argument against the PUP that in so far as they attempt to represent the distinct interests of the protestant section of the working class they are unable to represent the class at all. They are inviting the Shankill to compare itself with the Falls.

Not only is all this just wishful thinking, and a bit useless, but it is criminally harmful in that it is deliberately damaging to the astonishingly successful revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle that has already been heroically waged for 25 years by Sinn Féin and the IRA at the head of the best of all classes of Irish people in the Occupied Zone (and beyond) and is now on the verge of its conclusive triumph.

To stab a successful national-liberation struggle in the back was never part of anything remotely connected with Marxism-Leninism. Read Lenin's ecstatic welcome for even the blatantly putschist Easter Rising led by the most obviously individualistic romantic bourgeois-nationalists, in part.

Only psychotics with the most isolationist personality defects could declare such conceited irritation that Sinn Féin/IRA should have dared to fight a national-liberation war, – and yet still call themselves 'communists'. What a sick joke.

And what crass reasoning the *WW* comes up with as well. The British colony proletariat has obviously been shaken in its loyalty to Orange fascism, but how and why? Because of the defeated pounding that British imperialism has taken from the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation armed revolutionary struggle which it finds impossible to defeat in spite of every vicious and savage Nazi-repression punishment, intimidation, and brutality in the book. On this drive's own admissions, the British colony proletariat have still not broken from the imperialist state, however. Communist appeals, as such, obviously cannot break them, and no Marxist would ever conclude otherwise. Only further defeats for imperialism will deepen that process of alienation from a failed and discredited colonial mentality.

Complete the defeat of British colonial domination over part of Ireland, and then the revolutionary education of the whole proletariat by the failure of capi-

talism itself can be concluded. But to have not noticed that a worthwhile lead in the anti-imperialist struggle has already been taken by a successful national-liberation struggle in Ireland, is sectarianism gone barmy. And to actively oppose that struggle by pouring scorn on it, is just criminally insane for so-called 'communists'. Publishing this gibberish shows absolute contempt for Marxism and for the working class.

The latest *WW* attempted attack on *EPSR* is even more ludicrous, only repeating, and objecting to, the polemical language of *EPSR* criticisms, and ending with an appeal to join the CPGB in 'communist rapprochement' they are supposedly pioneering with *Open Polemic* and other Trots.

At enormous length, *EPSR* 843 has already explained to the CPGB the only Leninist understanding of unity, which is that major differences on revolutionary theory have to be clarified first, quoting from four different Lenin articles in considerable detail. The *WW* replies by dismissing all this as "incoherent rant", just as they won't reply to this critique by polemicising against its central arguments, and just as they have never responded to Marxist-Leninist criticism of them from *EPSR* comrades in nearly 16 years of exposing these CPGB frauds.

Newer dupes of *WW* need reminding that *EPSR* comrades offered rapprochement 16 years ago when they put the 'Leninist' under fire for refusing to call for the Polish workers-state proletarian dictatorship to clamp down on Solidarnosc. A mass meeting of followers was proposed to avoid a sterile unyielding clash between hard-bitten leading spokesmen. *EPSR* comrades turned up 20-strong to a pub in the Grays Inn Road. The 'Leninist' sent two closed-minds trusties to avoid any contamination for its followers.

Another problem is the CPGB continuing refusal to answer outstanding issues, such as what happened to their hypocritical "official communist" pose by which they treated any criticism of their 'Leninist' line with contempt if from outside the "official communist" movement, to which they still clung with maximum

humbag, – only to see the whole stinking revisionist mess collapse months later. These opportunist have still never accounted for the scorn they poured on *EPSR* comrades who knew that the fight for Marxism-Leninism would have to be pursued independently, outside the dying embrace of 'official communist' hopeless revisionism. The even sicker paradox is that it was the *EPSR* comrades who wanted to defend unconditionally the Polish proletarian dictatorship's clampdown on Solidarnosc CIA-Vatican counter-revolution, and the 'official communist' CPGBers who opportunistically refused to back the Polish workers state.

And what a joke the *WW*'s 'rapprochement' is anyway. Next to the latest anti-*EPSR* abuse is published the following-sectarian nonsense:

It is probably fair to say that relations between the majority 'Leninist' faction of the CPGB and the minority *Open Polemic* faction have reached a low ebb.

Now some comrades may argue that this is purely an 'internal' matter for the two factions to sort out – dirty linen should not be aired publicly in the pages of the *Weekly Worker*. On balance *OP* would disagree.

Firstly the Leninists, despite their protestations to the contrary, insist on imagining they are a party. Worse still, that they are the continuation of the Communist Party of Great Britain. You can see this self-delusion in their many pronouncements on the SLP. They really seem to imagine that their tiny Marxist circle can win the half-formed left social democratic SLP to that of a Bolshevik party. This would be a difficult enough task for a united front of communists to achieve, but for one tiny fragment of the communist movement to unilaterally embark on this task, however laudable, is stupidity borne of sectarian arrogance.

This self-delusion of 'party' is also reflected in their whole attitude to communist rapprochement. Instead of seeking forms of rapprochement that take cognisance of the current state of communist fragmentation, they stubbornly insist that all should join the CPGB.

The second self delusion concerns the so-called Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB. This has always been a purely Leninist forum – an undeclared faction. Yet the Leninists persist in the self-delusion that the PCC has some higher authority. It cannot be an oversight that the *OP* faction has never been invited or coopted onto the PCC despite some earlier cant by Jack Conrad about proportional representation on leading committees.

The third self-delusion stems directly from the first and second. It is simply this – the PCC believes that incoming participants of the rapprochement process will happily acquiesce to every whim and diktat of the self-proclaimed PCC. Imagining that the party already exists and that the PCC is the highest body of that party, the Leninist faction regularly engage in this kidology.

The whole concept of representational en-



try, as pioneered by *OP*, requires the utmost flexibility and sensitivity on the part of all participants. Ultimatums from on high are likely to yield very little. In fact they are almost certain to be counterproductive.

As Marxism-Leninism can easily explain, there can be no unity until all basic differences on revolutionary theory have been clarified, dealing with the real situations all round the international class struggle, such as Ireland, for example. Until agreement is reached on such issues, all talk of unity is just a silly posture, – blind sectarians disputing with other blind sectar-

SLP still reluctant to spell out its awareness of imperialist crisis and counter-revolution into a coherent theory, and practicable programme for how capitalism really can be replaced by socialism and a workers state. Anti-communist propaganda cannot be evaded, it must be exposed. It will be destroyed by workers' own experience as the crisis grows.

[EPSR No852 07-05-96]

The Socialist Labour Party has not been persuaded so far to expand upon its pledge to abolish capitalism (and introduce a just, planned, socialist society) by elaborating on the circumstances in which this will come about.

Arthur Scargill and his closest associates tried various explanations at the inaugural conference in London to say why a deeper analysis of capitalist crisis would be either speculative, or premature, or unnecessarily providing the hostile bourgeois media with ammunition to deride the SLP with.

But the glaring gap remains in the SLP's political armoury with which to appeal to the working class; and the excuses given for not telling workers more about what lies ahead just do not add up.

In one reply to debate, Scargill himself turned to the capitalist press present and announced that the SLP was well alert to the kind of threat represented by the undemocratic capitalist state such as wiped out Allende's SLP-type government in Chile in 1973 by military coup & economic sabotage.

The Italian delegate from Communist Refoundation won huge applause for his very loud condemnation of the threat to democratic socialist progress from reactionary capitalist state forces and his aggressive stance saying how CR is prepared to resist such reaction.

Scargill referred to Western imperialism's Gladio counter-revolutionary programme for Europe after 1945 under which the CIA and US military forces were prepared to topple any socialist regimes they could get away with

ians about sterile bureaucratic constitutionalism.

Not only can they not remotely approach a confident Marxist correct understanding of the situation in Ireland; not only can they not even grasp that such a correct understanding is possible and the only way forward; they can not even see that issues beyond their organisational squabbling, – objective world problems, – are the matters on which united Marxist-Leninist correct understanding will be built.

Build Leninism. AC

toppling, implying that the SLP would be ready to deal with any such threat.

So this explanation of SLP fear of making a deeper analysis of capitalist crisis does not make sense. If it is all right to make speeches denouncing capitalist state counter-revolutionary mentality and plans, it is even better to spell it out to the working class in print that the SLP pledge to abolish capitalism really does mean what it says, and that no capitalist state obstacles will be tolerated trying to prevent that abolition.

And of all political figures with credibility in the working class, Scargill above all is in a position to describe the reality of the bourgeois-dictatorship state in Britain which is basically determined never to allow any socialist threat to take power and abolish capitalism ever even to start its work, let alone finish it, and that was through the NUM's bitter experiences in the great 1984-85 miners strike against pit closures and the devastation of the coal industry, which was defeated in the end by the vicious onslaught of the courts, the police, the MI5 secret service, and the army to break the miners pickets, confiscate the NUM funds, and to beat up or jail as many strikers and supporters as was necessary to demoralise the movement, hand-in-hand with the Labour Party and TUC demoralisers.

But this SLP excuse about not talking in alarmist tones in order not to inflame bourgeois press criticism, still does not even deal with the real issues involved. The crucial part of not disarming the working class (by feeding them daft democratic illusions

about how easy it is going to be to abolish capitalism) is to prepare workers **politically** for what lies ahead, not organisationally in terms of self-defence mechanisms and legislative measures by which reactionary capitalist-state coups could be nipped in the bud, as important as it is to work these things out in advance and to get workers familiar with them.

The all-important political preparation centres on the scientific understanding of imperialist crisis. Far more needs to be said by the SLP about exactly how capitalism's ability to rule on, or to bludgeon or trick its way into survival, is going to start collapsing, – and why; – and how the working class is the only force in society which can possibly replace such degenerating decadence and failure, and become the new **ruling** class instead of the bourgeoisie.

The SLP needs to start taking its bold assertion of Marxist philosophy a bit more seriously. A major plank of Marx's science of history is the understanding that the era of the bourgeoisie will rise, prevail, and then fall, – to be replaced by the brief era of the working-class in power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that whereas capitalism spontaneously grew into power within feudalism before eventually seizing state control guided by all kinds of subjective-idealist delusions and half-truths about religion and democracy, etc, – the working class must take power consciously guided by the only philosophy of effective socialism and rational workers states, – dialectical materialism.

Without correct revolutionary theory, there can be no successful revolutionary practice, and the Leninist heart of that revolutionary theory is the analysis of how 20th century inter-imperialist conflict has brought ruling classes to the point of such defeat, division, and demoralisation that they can no longer rule on in the old way, and how the devastation of those market crashes, slumps, trade wars, and inter-imperialist conflicts has brought the proletariat to the point where it cannot go on any longer in the old way either, in company with large sections of the petty bourgeoisie as well.

The SLP leadership tried to dismiss the need for the party to get involved in any such analysis on other bogus grounds too, such as that perspectives like that about forthcoming imperialist crisis amount to pure speculation.

But such reservations can only be the basis for rejecting any particular specific form of words to describe the nature of imperialist crisis and the likely forms it will take. They cannot be an argument for making no analysis at all

about where capitalism is going.

Yet the SLP rejected specific amendments trying to find a form of words suitable for describing what struggles lie ahead for the working class, but made no effort at all to replace them with a more accurate or far-seeing analysis.

What is so noticeable about such an omission and such reluctance to even discuss the detail of such perspectives, merely dismissing them as not needed or as harmful, – is that Scargill himself made a large part of his deserved reputation as an outstanding working-class leader by his bold predictions around the 1984 miners' strike against pit closures that the ruling class was planning to virtually destroy the whole of the nationally-owned coal industry. Was that speculative? or sound leadership to prepare the miners and the working class for what the imperialist system in cut-throat competitive crisis had in store for the masses? The correct major point that the SLP now makes in its economic statement about the wholesale de-industrialisation that has hit British industry since 1984 provides the answer.

But how much better would it have been then if Scargill had been able to see even further into the future, and how much better it would be now if the SLP would take its analysis a little deeper.

The NUM strike partly failed because of the continuing belief then that a future Labour Government could restore the position for the nationalised coal industry and the miners, and that a reformist, class-collaborating boomtime Plan For Coal could be resumed, just like that, if everyone was willing.

These were deadly illusions, as Scargill himself now admits partially. And these illusions never wholly convinced all of the working class which came out in support of the miners that they were reliable or the right perspectives. By 1984, large sections of the working class were already beginning to lose faith totally in the Labour Party and the TUC, – a position which Scargill himself now endorses and says was correct then, – as opposed to his continuing delusions then.

Huge credit to Scargill for being big enough to admit all this, but it would be even more important to learn all of the rich lessons which this experience contains for the working class and the fight for socialism.

The struggle took a massive leap forward with the defeat of the 84-85 strike which turned into a vast learning process.

But the struggle would have been even further forward had the lessons about Labour's class-collaborating reform-



ist uselessness and the TUC's treacherousness been forced out earlier and used to strengthen the revolutionary combativeness and the self-reliance of the miners and the working class even more. The working class is stronger for being no longer in so complete a position to be fooled and betrayed by Labour. More farsightedness at the time of the 84-85 strike, accepting now as the SLP does, the validity of lessons which were already available then, – would have been enormously to workers' advantage.

Therefore, far from it being a question of speculation, the issue of knowing all of the class enemy's tricks or potential in advance is one of great importance to the working class. The further it examines what lies ahead, the less is the proletariat likely to be taken by surprise, hoodwinked, or betrayed.

By not discussing openly, in advance, the capitalist system's counter-revolutionary essence, it creates illusions in workers' minds that the problem of counter-revolution must therefore not be a very important one, or unlikely to be very relevant. Such illusions will leave SLP supporters dangerously disarmed.

By not discussing the likely outline of the imperialist world market's further crisis degeneration towards trade-war, slump, and shooting war, the working class is denied the most crucial part of its vital re-education in political philosophy, seeing the overthrow of capitalism as the necessary next step for civilisation to take in the interests of everyone.

If the appeal to the working class is left at the level of calling on them to fight for just a bit more justice for themselves, they are hardly being broken from the whole opportunist psychology of reformism, leaving them still prey to the next set of chancers to come along such as the populist chauvinists, or the anarchists, or the fascist-nationalists, or whatever.

Every shade of reformism, from rightwing Labour to the very 'leftest' of the most 'honest and sincere' leftwingers, is still not committing itself to much more than pie-in-the-sky jam-tomorrow promises. The essence of the eternal appeal of communism to workers is that it promises nothing less than the massive task, virtually unending, of reconstructing the whole of society in the interests of everyone, making creative work man's prime necessity, allowing people everywhere for the first time to live to work rather than having to work to live.

The SLP's minimum programme demands of better pay, fairer pensions, improved working conditions and social services, shorter hours, etc, are appropriate for challenging the ruling class's selfish exploitative greed with the humane and civilised rights of the working class, but they lack the vision with which to inspire workers to transform the SLP into the great revolutionary crusade that it needs to become.

It is good to quote James Connolly's gentle irony "Our demands most moderate are, we only want the Earth" because it emphasises the continuity in the British labour movement, from the start, of seeing the total contradiction between the interests of the capitalist owners and the interests of the workers. But irony can also betray a rather dilettante approach to the task of overthrowing capitalism, and there have been revolutionaries who have argued that a slightly blunter, more professional approach to the business of organising the revolution would be more reassuring. The necessary process of destroying capitalist state power and replacing it with workers state power is not so much saying that it 'wants' anything but rather asserting what crucial historical work remains to be done, and must now be done.

(Incidentally, there was a gross philistine contradiction in part of Scargill's reply to discussion,

rejecting amendments calling for more revolutionary theory, when he patronisingly sneered that modern British workers in struggle would just dismiss with ridicule learning about what one foreign revolutionary might have said to another in 1917. So why is what another foreign revolutionary said even before 1917 the sole prominent statement on the front of the SLP membership card? And what about all the evocation of Keir Hardie's achievements?)

And as for avoiding giving the capitalist press any ammunition to fire at the SLP with, the *Guardian* cynic certainly had a scoff at the notion of teaching the working class its revolutionary destiny, an obviously high-flown word which a printed, considered expression of the need for theory could easily avoid. But apart from jeering at the plainly sectarian-hysterical contributions to debate, where *Guardian* sarcasm really struck home was against platform unwillingness to go beyond superficial expositions of what is involved in the basically sound proposition to abolish capitalism, such as laughing at why white South Africans would want to come to a Scargillite Britain (a half-cocked shallow excuse for a very correct SLP stance on the obvious controls a workers-state Britain would have to keep on movements in and out of the country), or laughing at how long capitalist profits might hang around in the face of announced SLP intentions to double pensions, introduce full-pay retirement at 55, award massive pay increases all round, and reverse every single social-services and welfare cut or economy that has ever been heard of. And without explaining the obvious background of *Guardian* sarcasm which alone can possibly accompany a transition from capitalism to socialism in Britain, such minimum demands merely stated baldly can indeed only invite overwhelming ridicule from the current popular press. Far better, and inviting far less ridi-

cule, to begin now a much deeper explanation of exactly what the economic, social, and political conditions are going to be like when the need to build a workers state to replace the capitalist state finally comes irresistibly onto the agenda in a revolutionary crisis.

There is nothing speculative or fanciful about analysing the relentless drive towards all-out trade-war by the rival imperialist blocs. The capitalist press itself is frequently writing about very little else these days.

What needs to be added is what is to be the fate and opportunity of the working class in these situations. That is what the SLP should begin analysing and describing, – teaching the working class that it will be its task to stop this degenerate warmongering rot, and to build planned socialist workers states to replace the destructive decadent anarchy of the capitalist free market.

The current SLP perspective is merely for eternal 'left' reformist pressure, – to replace what went before, – which was just more eternal 'left' reformist pressure, – for there was always a 'left' wing promising to replace the right wing the day after tomorrow at the head of the Labour Party, – just as there is now, in fact, (led by Corbyn, Benn, Livingstone, Skinner, Abbott, Grant, etc) all still promising to force renewed 'left' policies back on the next Labour Government (like Clause IV, etc). The biggest danger of the SLP early sparks becoming a damp squib lie in trying to fob the working class off with just another diet of 'left' promises, plus the obligatory vow that this time, the new perpetual 'left' pressure is being vouchsafed by fresh leaders who will "never betray", etc. That they may well mean it is utterly irrelevant. A programme of perpetual 'left' pressure to bring socialism is a complete nonsense, a historical impossibility, even if promised by the saintliest of people. Capitalism will only be ended when state power is taken off the

capitalist ruling class.

The capitalist bourgeoisie's utter cynicism about 'democracy' cannot be stressed energetically enough. Everything is always in place in every 'free world' country to impose the most brutal of counter-revolutions such as the West engineered in Greece 1946, Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954, Indonesia 1965, Grenada 1982, Nicaragua 1986, Panama 1989, etc, etc, including Guyana, Congo-Kinshasa, Chad, Uganda, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and countless attempts against Cuba and against East Europe when workers states were being built there, and so on.

The Gladio plans to make sure there were never any socialist revolutions in West Europe were even more extensively plotted for and funded. And the place where the CIA has laid down the greatest number of long-term counter-revolutionary 'sleeping' agents?

In Britain itself, and probably by now in Germany too, plus Japan, – on the grounds that a communist revolution in, say, faraway Ghana or Egypt would be one thing to get alarmed about because of the bad propaganda effect it would have on the rest of the 'free world', especially the Third World in those cases. But imagine the probably irreparable damage to the reputation of capitalist democracy's virtues if the working masses of Britain, for example, should organise a successful socialist takeover. It would shatter free-market credibility worldwide for all time. There is no way that imperialist counter-revolution is going to allow any socialist programme to be introduced easily into a major country of the capitalist 'free world'. That is what NATO is all about, and has always been for the collective counter-revolutionary guarantee for imperialism. You have to be a complete imbecile to believe a) that the Soviet Union wanted militarily to conquer western Europe; or b) that NATO was set up to resist those non-existent conquest plans. The Gladio preparations were the very essence of the institution of NATO, and inseparable from it.

And what are the great Western democrats up to currently? Interfering ruthlessly in Russia's internal affairs by pouring billions of dollars in to help their stooge Yeltsin win June's presidential election, plus numberless skilled advisers and intriguers, and artificially arranging an endless procession of prominent 'free-world' leaders to visit Yeltsin to boost his credibility and prestige.

And if that does not look like working? There is virtual open admission in the capitalist press itself of close Western involvement in utterly cynical plans to

either rig the election results, or else get the elections called off completely. Just listen to how casually these sick machinations are being discussed. For 70 years, Soviet socialist achievements were systematically dismissed as worthless and undeserving of any consideration at all because of the supposed 'lack of democracy'. Now compare how priceless capitalist reaction's dis-achievements in Russia are considered to be, to such an extent that 'democracy' being ludicrously distorted or even completely suppressed is condoned in advance as being just a minor embarrassment for the West to get over:

A secret Kremlin poll conducted in mid-April showed that Yeltsin, at 10 per cent, is trailing Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov at 30 per cent, and the nationalist buffoon Vladimir Zhirinovskiy at 15 per cent. This has come as a shock to the President's entourage and there has been loose talk about falsifying the election results by up to 10 per cent. The panic is on.

[cutting edit - see original paper for full version]

According to a report in the *Boston Globe* in February, US defence analysts have been forecasting an attempt to postpone the elections. A growing number of intelligence officials are saying that, if Yeltsin's health or political popularity give them no other choice, the Russian President's entourage might postpone or manipulate the 16 June elections in the interests of personal survival,' the report said.

Calling off the election would put the international community in a quandary. It would rather have Yeltsin in the Kremlin, but such a flagrant departure from democratic procedures could hardly be condoned.

Yes, 'hardly', – but it might be condoned nevertheless, if thought necessary, and if Yeltsin's dictatorship over all television coverage and use of legal and illegal state funds for re-election fails to prevent the declared Communist Party candidate Zhyuganov from winning and delivering the greatest humiliation ever to the West's all-consuming propaganda ideology and principal religion, – anti-communism.

The biggest laugh capitalism has ever had at the expense of the working class is how gullible people have remained about 'democracy' in spite of the endless mountains of evidence available that everywhere it is nothing but a prop behind the non-stop propaganda rackets with which big business and the bourgeois state establishment perpetually fool the proletariat.

The disinformation stunts with which the ruling class bamboozle public opinion at crucial junctures quickly get forgotten, but they vitally control the mass and the 'democratic' response at key moments such as the non-

existent 'Gulf of Tonkin' incident, an entirely fictional Vietnamese patrol-boat attack on US Navy vessels which enabled US imperialism to launch its land war against the Vietnamese revolution; the deliberate falsehoods about Iraqi troops smashing babies to the floor to steal incubators out of Kuwait hospital; the lie that Iraq forces were then massing to invade Saudi Arabia when the exact opposite was the case; the continuing mysteries of the Berlin disco bomb, the Lockerbie air bomb, and the shooting of WPG Yvonne Fletcher to whip up justification for the NATO air blitz on Libya; the complete fabrications to justify the gunning down in cold blood of the three Irish nationalists in Gibraltar, and the endless cover-ups and dirty tricks to prevent the shoot-to-kill secret policy from being revealed by the Stalker investigation; the imaginary Indonesian communist 'coup' used by imperialism to engineer the butchery of tens of thousands of poor Communist Party supporters; the hypocritical campaign against Noriega, the CIA's own former drug-running stooge, to justify the invasion of Panama to halt its turn towards nationalist policies; etc, etc, etc, ad infinitum.

And what is the involvement of the West's black propaganda departments in today's pro-Yeltsin stunt of letting him (in debt to the West for \$20 billion) kick out 'British agents' as an election gimmick to show him as a 'strong independent Russian', – a racket immediately described by the capitalist press itself:

Before an election it is important to show the FSB is active. As the Russian proverb goes when talking about someone who is not doing his job well: "He is not catching mice." By catching a British spy, the FSB is showing that the Russian cat is not entirely asleep.

"The FSB is looking for a spy at any price," Oleg Gordievsky, the KGB defector now living in Britain, said last night. "A political gesture in the middle of an election campaign shows that Yeltsin is patriotic and wary about the West."

Not a day goes by now without it being possible to find some revelation in the capitalist press, somewhere or other, detailing past, present, or future anti-communist propaganda rackets to justify totally corrupt counter-revolutionary deeds by 'democracy', like this for example:

Vice-President Richard Nixon, soon to face off against John Kennedy in the November election, was a prime mover in securing the approval on March 17 that year of a covert action programme against Dr Castro.

Four months later, President Eisenhower suspended purchases of Cuban sugar. Like the full-scale embargo decreed the following year, this move was presented publicly as

retaliation for expropriations without adequate compensation.

Not so, according to Ambassador Bonsai. "The suspension of the sugar quota was a major element in the programme for the overthrow of Castro," he said. A programme which, according to Castro biographer Tad Szulc, "already constituted top-secret policy in March of 1959", just weeks after the revolution triumphed.

The removal from power of the Cuban leader remains the goal of the US embargo, which has been unilateral since the Organisation of American States (OAS) lifted sanctions in 1975.

This puts it in breach of a number of international treaties, not least article 19 of the OAS charter, which states: "No state may use or encourage the use of coercive measures of an economic or political character in order to force the sovereign will of another state and obtain from it advantages of any kind."

The United Nations General Assembly has repeatedly condemned the embargo as illegal, with the US supported only by client states such as Israel.

Pious statements about freeing Cuba from communist dictatorship beg a million questions about double standards.

During the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton's unsuccessful bid to win the key state of Florida included a surprise announcement of support for the "Cuban Democracy Bill", which had been cold-shouldered by President Bush as likely to alienate US allies.

This year, provoked by the shooting down by Cuban MiGs of two unarmed private planes piloted by exiles, Mr Clinton reversed his opposition to the even more draconian Helms-Burton Bill – now the Cuban Liberty and Solidarity Act – which aims to strangle foreign investment in the island.

Under the new law, US citizens will for the first time be able to sue foreign companies that buy, lease or benefit from properties expropriated by the communist government.

Leading trading partners of the United States with investments in Cuba, including the European Union, Canada and Mexico, have not surprisingly taken a dim view of this blatant attempt to legislate beyond US borders, and are trying – so far without success – to have it declared illegal under international law.

Washington seems largely unconcerned by the sharp reaction of some of its key allies.

The lavishly-funded all-powerful counter-revolutionary propaganda departments of the 'free world' powers have been waging non-stop total war against socialism and communism since the 1920s, and they will not stop now.

Scargill himself knows all about the vicious disinformation and subversive sabotage which tried to destroy the miners strike of 84-85 with tales of Libyan Gold, house-buying rackets for NUM officials, unaccounted suitcases full of money, etc, etc.

When the final story is told of the history of the greatest brainwashing experiment ever



Western propaganda endlessly tries to cover up or rubbish the achievements and gains of the workers states with lurid lies and fantastical "dissident" stories - and never reporting the positives like excellent health and welfare for the older population

conducted on society, people are going to be staggered at the astonishing lengths and unbelievably devious measures to which bourgeois ideology has resorted in its anti-communist dementia, – cascading its lies, confusion, and stunts throughout the film industry, television documentaries and plays, book publishing, the pop music industry, newspapers and magazines, civil rights stunts, prisoners-of-conscience gimmicks, Nobel Prize awards, refugee and other border provocations, dissident and émigré rackets, and above all the non-stop manipulation of the international news agencies to simply control people's thinking.

Even the very shoddiness and shallowness of some of these ruses nevertheless helps to rot brains and sow more confusion, such as a paltry new anti-China stunt launched over the weekend with a "sensational new literary masterpiece", the escape diary of a former prisoner in China with lots of crawling-through-mud and eating-maggots details just like Solzhenitsyn's *Ivan Denisovitch* trick, – this one with starving Chinese peasants boiling their own baby for food.

The timing, placing, and presentation of this piece bore all the hallmarks of a major new CIA propaganda drive against China.

The style is astonishing, – headlines all about Mao, mass starvation, full horror, 30 million dying of hunger, etc. When it comes to the actual book extract,

there is nothing about all this at all, just some completely fanciful anecdotes, presented as autobiographical fact, of a prisoner on the run trying to steal scraps of food and water from peasant carts and cottages, – and finding only corpses under the tarpaulin, or boiled babies inside the iron water pot, etc, etc, – all most graphically described in the most carefully-chosen punchy literary language.

To progress from this fiction to the slander of the Chinese workers state as some living-hell of a madhouse, the following pathetic emotional 'logic' is employed: It was not my one mouth, it was not my one stomach, and it was not my one life that was traumatised, but those of the entire race. The damage to a few people is perhaps not important; individuals are easily replaced. But harming the humanity of the great majority of the Chinese people, denying their self-expression, destroying their reasons for living, has lowered the human quality of all Chinese...

That they could, during the Great Cultural Revolution, prostrate themselves in unprecedented madness of worship at the feet of someone who was not unprecedentedly great and, under his banner, carry out self-flagellation in an extraordinary display of aberrant behaviour, was related to the fact that the fibre of their being had been seriously damaged several years earlier. As one traumatised organism, the country went mad.

What you don't get is a rational argument about what mistakes the Chinese workers state might have made on the way to its colos-

sal achievements of ripping this vast impoverished country out of total imperialist domination for 100 years up to 1949, and then

Trot muddle on racism conceals total confusion on 'democracy', on the practicalities and priorities for socialist revolution, and on what Lenin thought he was building for 7 years until his death in the USSR. Misunderstanding the SLP phenomenon asks for trouble.

[EPSR No853 14-05-96]

Sections of the left inside the Socialist Labour Party have accused Scargill's closest colleagues of opportunism over the question of immigration controls.

The *Weekly Worker* of the CPGB (resurrected) put it this way:

An amendment had been submitted to remove a vague phrase in the 'anti-racism' document to "re-examine in the cold light of day all existing immigration controls within the framework of establishing a humane and non-racist immigration system". The amendment was to replace this with "The SLP will scrap all immigration controls and the Asylum Bill".

Speaker after speaker rose in support of this amendment, saying that if capital can move freely, so should workers. Immigration laws were condemned for being racist but also anti-worker, as they controlled the movement of workers in order to ensure a regulated supply of cheap labour.

The laws were used against workers, not against the rich. Our movement is an international one and we should champion the rights of workers to live and work wherever they want. Many could not see how any socialist could argue against this right.

Basic democracy is not an abstract; it is something all workers need to champion. The liberation of humanity might be abstract to

transforming it into a leading world power with colossally high standards (compared to its Third World origins) of mass literacy, mass culture, health and social services, higher education, science and technology advance, industrial infrastructure, and highly creditable environmental awareness (panda protection, etc). What you get is a mentally sick self-abasement by an out-of-place individualist to feed the worst kind of yellow-peril racist phobia of the West in return for money and a bit of attention. The sole aim of such books and news coverage is to pollute Western minds.

Scargill tried to claim that it reflected a lack of faith in the working class to insist that the SLP should need to warn workers of every dirty trick that capitalist-state counter-revolution might get up to.

Just the opposite. It betrays a lack of faith in the working class, and contempt for its intelligence, for the SLP not to proceed to the highest possible level of understanding of the imperialist economic crisis, of its reactionary anti-democracy preparations, and above all of its foul history of anti-communist propaganda stunts, anti-worker provocations, and anti-national-liberation scares with which it has kept revolution at bay since the 1920s.

Build Leninism. RB

Brian Heron, but it is something that we dedicate our lives to by fighting for concrete democratic rights in the here and now. One can only presume that Brian thinks that self-determination for Ireland, Scotland and Wales is an abstract principle, in case the Scottish people, in some abstract world of Brian's, start a war against socialist England. Perhaps also a minimum wage is an abstract principle in some abstract world of Brian's, where socialism in Britain is surrounded by hostile forces and impoverished.

This is national socialism and reformism, concerned about how we create 'socialism' in Britain. Opposed to it is international socialism and revolution. This is about how workers throughout the world make revolution in their own country and make that revolution international and permanent.

Socialism cannot be built in one country: surely the Soviet Union, should teach us that much. Socialists are internationalists with the whole of humanity as their concern, not the government of Britain. If a revolution in Britain was isolated, it would try to defend itself against a hostile siege. This is not an immigration policy: it is about the urgency of spreading revolution or being defeated. What is important about this debate is the rank dishonesty of the ex-Socialist Outlook and Fourth International Supporters Caucus members who argued and voted against this amendment. The vote went to a count and for

the first time Pat Sikorski and Carolyn Sikorski on the platform also produced their cards to vote against the amendment. Others who voted against the amendment need to be won to a revolutionary position. But these comrades are quite well aware of the principled revolutionary position, yet argued against it out of sheer opportunism - unless of course they have flipped over against revolution.

The argument over immigration controls is well known in the revolutionary movement and in the Trotskyist Fourth International from which these comrades come. Their position is not only anti-Marxist but a travesty of the great revolutionary, Trotsky, and of Trotskyism in general.

This exercise in the art of “rap-prochement” for which the CPGB would like to become famous, is a bit of a muddle.

There were many good speeches against the amendment too, one of which by a comrade from the Indian sub-continent asked ↗

Owing to the constantly increasing concentration of tenant farming, Ireland steadily supplies its own surplus to the English labour market, and thus forces down wages and lowers the moral and material condition of the English working class.

And most important of all! Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the *ruling* nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the “poor whites” to the “niggers” in the former slave states of the USA. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the *English rule in Ireland*.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This *antagonism* is the *secret of the impotence of the English working class*, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.

But the evil does not stop here. It continues across the ocean. The antagonism between English and Irish is the hidden basis of the conflict between the United States and England. It makes any honest and serious co-operation between the working classes of the two countries impossible. It enables the governments of both countries, whenever they think fit, to break the edge off the social conflict by their mutual bullying, and, in case of need, by war with one another.

England, being the metropolis of capital, the power which has hitherto ruled the world market, is for the present the most important country for the workers' revolution, and moreover the only country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain degree of maturity. Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Workingmen's Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent.

Hence it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. And it is the special task of the Central Council in London to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that *for them* the *national emancipation of Ireland* is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the *first condition of their own social emancipation*.

Marx to S.Meyer and A.Vogt, April 9, 1870

The CPGB attitude is more a mixture of an abstract-idealist attack on racist prejudice as such, which is pure reformism, plus a statement in favour of international revolution as some kind of peculiar general principle. Their doubts about the FISC opportunism surrounding Scargill are widely shared. But idealist broadsides are not the answer.

The SLP has made its own curtsies towards international socialist revolution as a general principle. Its deliberate backwardness is in refusing to accept that an enormous development

what lay behind the assumption that workers anywhere would ever want to be immigrants anywhere else once the injustices and despair of the international monopoly-capitalist system were resolved by revolution.

This more deeply philosophical point raises doubts about what the superficially-correct ‘revolutionary internationalism’ of the *WW* really means.

When Marx dealt with the issue of race prejudice in England against Irish immigrants in the 19th century, he produced his well-known understanding that until national oppression and exploitation is ended, then the workers of oppressor and exploiter nations will themselves never achieve their own emancipation:

of ‘left’ pressure and parliamentary reformism, backed by endless single-issue direct-action campaigns, is virtually ignored by this CPGB report on the ‘revolutionary’ significance of this first conference, – in favour of challenging the SLP on matters which it got basically correct.

The SLP missed pointing out that immigration and its problems are a phenomenon of capitalist crisis and imperialist exploitation, but the CPGB do not explain this either.

What should have been said is that the solution to all racist/immigration problems everywhere can only come about through the defeat everywhere of the existing imperialist finance world order. On the way towards that ultimate international triumph of the socialist revolution, individual workers states will first make breakthroughs here and there, and will immediately need to establish total strict control over all movements in and out of the country as a guard against physical or financial counter-revolutionary disruption and sabotage.

People proposing that the first concern of an SLP workers state should be to “scrap all immigration controls” are not living in the real world.

Instant asylum for revolutionary allies from outside the country whenever they need it is the obvious requirement, but that was ignored by both the SLP and its CPGB critics, and it is not remotely dealt with by the notion “scrap all immigration controls”.

Immigration is decidedly not the aim of such political asylum. Just the opposite. Precisely what the host workers state needs more than anything else is for the revolutionaries given asylum to get back to the home territory they know as soon as possible to complete the anti-imperialist revolution there too, the only ↗

ultimate guarantee of everyone's emancipation.

The leap to a socialist world (‘international revolution’) in the CPGB argument (that eventually under world socialism there will be no countries or borders) amazingly leaves out the one crucial question posed in 1996, especially by the launch of the anti-theory SLP relying on vague ‘left’ pressure and parliamentary reformism, – which is how is the socialist revolution going to come about and how is it going to survive against international imperialist counter-revolution. Brusquely dismissing the SLP concern (that a socialist Britain might need to defend itself against a hostile siege) as “this is not an immigration policy” shows that the CPGB's concerns are even further removed from reality than are the SLP's.

But perhaps the saddest thing of all is the CPGB's shakiness on even the ABC of Marxist philosophy.

The notion of “basic democracy” has always been used by reaction precisely because it is just about the most abstract and misleading concept that could be formulated. And the idea that workers under capitalism want to go round “championing” this “basic democracy” is utterly stupefying coming from a supposedly ‘Leninist’ group. And the CPGB mean it too, calling for the ‘free movement of workers’ to be put on a par with the free movement of capital; calling on bourgeois democracy to stop biasing its immigration laws against workers; insisting on the rights of ethnic minorities against the operation of bourgeois state controls; etc.

The Marxist-Leninist approach was to use bourgeois democracy, when available, only in order to tell workers what a deliberately-conceived trap this ‘democracy’ was, not in order to tell them to “champion basic democracy”:

It is sheer mockery of the working and exploited people to speak of pure democracy, of democracy in general, of equality, freedom and universal rights when the workers and all working people are ill-fed, ill-clad, ruined and worn out not only as a result of capitalist wage slavery, but as a consequence of four years of predatory war, while the capitalists and profiteers remain in possession of the “property” usurped by them and the “ready-made” apparatus of state power. This is tantamount to trampling on the basic truths of Marxism which has taught the workers: you must take advantage of bourgeois democracy which, compared with feudalism, represents a great historical advance, but not for one minute must you forget the bourgeois character of this “democracy”, its historically conditional and limited character. Never share the “superstitious belief” in the “state” and never forget that the state even in the most democratic republic, and not only in a monarchy, is simply a machine for the suppression of one class by another.

The Scheidemanns and Kautskys speak about “pure democracy” and “democracy” in general for the purpose of deceiving the people and concealing from them the *bourgeois* character of *present-day* democracy.

These words are designed to conceal the truth, to conceal the fact that the means of production and political power remain in the hands of the exploiters, and that therefore real freedom and real equality for the exploited, that is, for the vast majority of the population, are out of the question. It is profitable and indispensable for the bourgeoisie to conceal from the people the *bourgeois* character of modern democracy, to picture it as democracy in general or “pure democracy”, and the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, repeating this, *in practice* abandon the standpoint of the proletariat and side with the bourgeoisie.

Marx and Engels in their last joint preface to the *Communist Manifesto* (in 1872)

considered it necessary specially to warn the workers that the proletariat cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made (that is, the bourgeois) state machine and wield it for its own purpose, that it must smash it, break it up. The renegade Kautsky, who has written a special pamphlet entitled *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, concealed from the workers this most important Marxist truth, utterly distorted Marxism.

Firstly, this argument employs the concepts of "democracy in general" and "dictatorship in general", without posing the question of the class concerned. This non-class or above-class presentation, which supposedly is popular, is an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, namely, its theory of class struggle, which socialists who have sided with the bourgeoisie recognise in words but disregard in practice. For in no civilised capitalist country does "democracy in general" exist; all that exists is bourgeois democracy, and it is not a question of "dictatorship in general", but of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, i.e., the proletariat, over its oppressors and exploiters, i.e., the bourgeoisie, in order to overcome the resistance offered by the exploiters in their fight to maintain their domination.

In explaining the class nature of bourgeois civilisation, bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system, all socialists have expressed the idea formulated with the greatest scientific precision by Marx and Engels, namely, that the most democratic bourgeois republic is no more than a machine for the suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie, for the suppression of the working people by a handful of capitalists.¹⁷⁵ There is not a single revolutionary, not a single Marxist among those now shouting against dictatorship and for democracy who has not sworn and vowed to the workers that he accepts this basic truth of socialism. But now, when the revolutionary proletariat is in a fighting mood and taking action to destroy this machine of oppression and to establish proletarian dictatorship, these traitors to socialism claim that the bourgeoisie have granted the working people "pure democracy", have abandoned resistance and are prepared to yield to the majority of the working people.

The bourgeoisie are compelled to be hypocritical and to describe as "popular government" or democracy in general, or pure democracy, the (*bourgeois*) democratic republic which is, in practice, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the exploiters over the working people. The Scheidemanns and Kautskys the Austerlitzes and Renners (and now, to our regret, with the help of Friedrich Adler) fall in line with this falsehood and hypocrisy. But Marxists, Communists, expose this hypocrisy, and tell the workers and the working people in general this frank and straightforward truth: the democratic republic, the Constituent Assembly, general elections, etc., are, in practice, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and for the emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital there is no other way but to replace this dictatorship with the *dictatorship of the proletariat*.

The dictatorship of the proletariat alone can emancipate humanity from the oppression of capital, from the lies, falsehood and hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy - democracy for the rich - and establish democracy for the poor, that is, make the blessings of democracy really accessible to the workers and poor peasants, whereas now (even in the most democratic - bourgeois - republic) the blessings of democracy are, in fact, inaccessible to the vast majority of working people.

Take, for example, freedom of assembly and freedom of the press. The Scheidemanns and Kautskys, the Austerlitzes and Renners assure the workers that the present elections to the Constituent Assembly in Germany and Austria are "democratic". That is a lie. In practice the capitalists, the exploiters, the landowners and the profiteers own 9/10 of the best meeting halls and 9/10 of the stocks of newsprint, printing presses, etc. The urban workers and the farm hands and day labourers are, in practice, debarred from democracy by the "sacred right of property" (guarded by the Kautskys and Renners, and now, to our regret, by Friedrich Adler as well) and by the bourgeois state apparatus, that is, bourgeois officials, bourgeois judges, and so on. The present "freedom of assembly and the press" in the "democratic" (bourgeois democratic) German republic is false and hypocritical, because in fact it is freedom for the rich to buy and bribe the press, freedom for the rich to befuddle the people with the venomous lies of the bourgeois press, freedom for the rich to keep as their "property" the landowners' mansions, the best buildings, etc. The dictatorship of the proletariat will take from the capitalists and hand over to the working people the landowners' mansions, the best buildings, printing-presses and the stocks of newsprint.

But this means replacing "universal", "pure" democracy by the "dictatorship of one class", scream the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, the Austerlitzes and Renners (together with their followers in other countries - the Gomperses, Hendersons, Renaudels, Vandervelde and Co.).

Wrong, we reply. This means replacing what in fact, is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (a dictatorship hypocritically cloaked in the forms of the democratic bourgeois republic) by the dictatorship of the proletariat. This means replacing democracy for the rich by democracy for the poor. This means replacing freedom of assembly and the press for the minority, for the exploiters, by freedom of assembly and the press for the majority of the population, for the working people. This means a gigantic, world-historic extension of democracy, its transformation from falsehood into truth, the liberation of humanity from the shackles of capital, which distorts and truncates any, even the most "democratic" and republican, bourgeois democracy. This means replacing the bourgeois state by the proletarian state, a replacement that is the sole way the state can eventually wither away altogether.

But why not reach this goal without the dictatorship of one class? Why not switch directly to "pure" democracy? So ask the hypocritical friends of the bourgeoisie or the naive petty bourgeois and philistines gulled by them.

And we reply: Because in any capitalist society the decisive say lies with either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat, while the small proprietors, inevitably, remain wavering, helpless, stupid dreamers of "pure", i.e., non-class or above-class, democracy. Because from a society in which one class oppresses another there is no way out other than through the dictatorship of the oppressed class. Because the proletariat alone is capable of defeating the bourgeoisie, of overthrowing them, being the sole class which capitalism has united and "schooled", and which is capable of drawing to its side the wavering mass of the working population with a petty-bourgeois way of life, of drawing them to its side or at least "neutralising" them. Because only mealy mouthed petty bourgeois and philistines can dream - deceiving thereby both themselves and the workers - of overthrowing capitalist oppression without a long and difficult process of *suppressing the resistance* of the exploiters.

From the point of view of bourgeois society, once there is "democracy", and once capitalist and proletarian alike take part in the voting, this is the "popular will", this is "equality" and all expression of the people's will. We know what an abominable fraud this talk is, which only serves as a cover for butchers and murderers like Ebert and Scheidemann. In bourgeois society, the mass of the working people are governed by the bourgeoisie with the help of more or less democratic forms. They are governed by a minority, the property owners, those who have a share in capitalist property and who have turned education and science, that supreme bulwark and flower of capitalist civilisation, into an instrument of exploitation, into a monopoly,

I would respectfully remind Mr. Kautsky, who has Marx and Engels off pat, of the following appraisal of the Paris Commune given by Engels from the point of view of... "pure democracy":

"Have these gentlemen" (the anti-authoritarians) "ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon - all of which are highly authoritarian means. And the victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted more than a day if it had not used the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Cannot we, on the contrary, blame it for having made too little use of that authority?"⁹⁹

Here is your "pure democracy"! How Engels would have ridiculed the vulgar petty bourgeois, the "Social-Democrat" (in the French sense of the forties and the general European sense of 1914-18), who took it into his head to talk about "pure democracy" in a class-divided society!

To sum up: Kautsky has in a most unparalleled manner distorted the concept dictatorship of the proletariat, and has turned Marx into a common liberal; that is, he himself has sunk to the level of a liberal who utters banal phrases about "pure democracy", embellishing and glossing over the class content of bourgeois democracy, and shrinking, above all, from the use of *revolutionary violence* by the oppressed class. By so "interpreting" the concept "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" as to expunge the revolutionary violence of the oppressed class against its oppressors, Kautsky has beaten the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx. The renegade Bernstein has proved to be a mere puppy compared with the renegade Kautsky.

If we are not to mock at common sense and history, it is obvious that we cannot speak of "pure democracy" as long as different classes exist; we call only speak of class democracy. (Let us say in parenthesis that "pure democracy" is not only an ignorant phrase, revealing a lack of understanding both of the class struggle and of the nature of the state, but also a thrice-empty phrase, since in communist society democracy will *wither away* in the process of changing and becoming a habit, but will never be "pure" democracy.)

"Pure democracy" is the mendacious phrase of a liberal who wants to fool the workers. History knows of bourgeois democracy which takes the place of feudalism, and of proletarian democracy which takes the place of bourgeois democracy.

Kautsky takes from Marxism what is acceptable to the liberals, to the bourgeoisie (the criticism of the Middle Ages, and the progressive historical role of capitalism in general and of capitalist democracy in particular), and discards, passes over in silence, glosses over all that in Marxism which is unacceptable to the bourgeoisie (the revolutionary violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for the latter's destruction). That is why Kautsky, by virtue of his objective position and irrespective of what his subjective convictions may be, inevitably proves to be a lackey of the bourgeoisie.

Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor. It is this truth which forms a most essential part of Marx's teaching, that Kautsky the "Marxist" has failed to understand. On this - the fundamental issue - Kautsky offers "delights" for the bourgeoisie instead of a scientific criticism of those conditions which make every bourgeois democracy a democracy for the rich.

Let us first remind the most learned Mr. Kautsky of the theoretical propositions of Marx and Engels which that pedant has so disgracefully "forgotten" (to please the bourgeoisie), and then explain the matter as popularly as possible.

Not only the ancient and feudal, but also "the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital" (Engels, in his work on the state).¹⁰¹ "As, therefore, the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is sheer nonsense to talk of a 'free people's state'; so long as the proletariat still

needs the state, it does not need it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist". (Engels, in his letter to Bebel, March 28, 1875). "In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy". (Engels, *Introduction to The Civil War in France* by Marx). Universal suffrage is "the gauge of the maturity of the working class. *It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state*". (Engels, in his work on the state.¹⁰² Mr. Kautsky very tediously chews over the cud in the first part of this proposition, which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. But the second part, which we have italicised and which is not acceptable to the bourgeoisie, the renegade Kautsky passes over in silence!) "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent and suppress (*ver- und zertreten*) the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business" (Marx, in his work on the Paris Commune, *The Civil War in France*).¹⁰⁴

Every one of these propositions, which are excellently known to the most learned Mr. Kautsky, is a slap in his face and lays bare his apostasy. Nowhere in his pamphlet does Kautsky reveal the slightest understanding of these truths. His whole pamphlet is a sheer mockery of Marxism!

Take the fundamental laws of modern states, take their administration, take freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or "equality of all citizens before the law", and you will see at every turn evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with which every honest and class conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a "violation of public order", and actually in case the exploited class "violates" its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner. Kautsky shamelessly embellishes bourgeois democracy and omits to mention, for instance, how the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie in America or Switzerland deal with workers on strike.

The wise and learned Kautsky keeps silent about these things! That learned politician does not realise that to remain silent on this matter is despicable. He prefers to tell the workers nursery tales of the kind that democracy means "protecting the minority". It is incredible, but it is a fact! In the year of our Lord 1918, in the fifth year of the world imperialist slaughter and the strangulation of internationalist minorities (i.e., those who have not despicably betrayed socialism; like the Renandels and Longuets, the Scheidermanns and Kautskys, the Hendersons and Webbs et al) in all "democracies" of the world, the learned Mr. Kautsky sweetly, very sweetly, sings the praises of "protection of the minority". Those who are interested may read this on page 15 of Kautsky's pamphlet. And on page 16 this learned ... individual tells you about the Whigs and Tories in England in the eighteenth century!

What wonderful erudition! What refilled servility to the bourgeoisie! What civilised belly-crawling before the capitalists and boot-licking! If I were Krupp or Scheidermann, or Clemenceau or Rebaudol, I would pay Mr. Kautsky millions, reward him with Judas kisses, praise him before the workers and urge "socialist unity" with "honourable" men like him. To write pamphlets against the dictatorship of the proletariat, to talk about the Whigs and Tories in England in the eighteenth century, to assert that democracy means "protecting the minority", and remain silent about pogroms against internationalists in the "democratic" republic of America - isn't this rendering lackey service to the bourgeoisie?

The learned Mr. Kautsky has "forgotten" - accidentally forgotten, probably - a "trifle", namely, that the ruling party in a bourgeois democracy extends the protection of the minority only to another bourgeois party, while the proletariat, on all serious, profound and fundamental issues, gets martial law or pogroms, instead of the "protection of the minority". *The more highly developed a democracy is, the more imminent are pogroms or civil war in connection with any profound political divergence which is dangerous to the bourgeoisie.* The learned Mr. Kautsky could have studied this "law" of bourgeois democracy in connection with the Dreyfus case¹⁰⁵ in republican France, with the lynching of Negroes and internationalists in the democratic republic of America, with the case of Ireland and Ulster in democratic Britain,¹⁰⁶ with the baiting of the Bolsheviks and the staging of pogroms against them in April 1917 in the democratic republic of Russia. I have purposely chosen examples not only from wartime but also from pre-war time, peacetime. But mealy-mouthed Mr. Kautsky prefers to shut his eyes to these facts of the twentieth century and instead to tell the workers wonderfully new, remarkably interesting, unusually edifying and incredibly important things about the Whigs and Tories of the eighteenth century!

Take the bourgeois parliament. Can it be that the learned Kautsky has never heard that the more highly democracy is developed, the more the bourgeois parliaments are subjected by the stock exchange and the bankers? This does not mean that we must not make use of bourgeois parliament (the Bolsheviks made better use of it than probably any other party in the world, for in 1912-14 we won the entire workers' curia in the Fourth Duma). But it does mean that only a liberal can forget the *historical limitations and conventional nature* of the bourgeois parliamentary system as Kautsky does. Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction

between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the "democracy" of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*. It is precisely this contradiction that is opening the eyes of the people to the rottenness, mendacity and hypocrisy of capitalism. It is this contradiction that the agitators and propagandists of socialism are constantly exposing to the people, *in order to prepare them for revolution*. And now that the era of revolution *has begun*, Kautsky turns his back upon it and begins to extol the charms of *moribund* bourgeois democracy.

Democracy and dictatorship 1918

First Congress of the Communist International, 1919

Second All-Russia trade union congress 1919

Proletarian revolution and the renegade Kautsky 1918

What sort of international society is the CPGB implying is possible where workers can move as freely as capital? What sort of international society is envisaged where workers have the same immigration and emigration rights as the rich?

This confusion is made worse by muddling pre-revolutionary reformist demands with the possibilities of social development under world communism, - casually tossing in a totally-disputed one line summary of 20th century history into the bargain, without a word of justification, - contentious matters which are precisely the subject for the really big debate awaiting the SLP, the CPGB, and the entire workers movement worldwide.

So what was the Soviet Union building until 1990? What is Cuba building at the moment? What is the basis of the hostility for 50 years between North and South Korea? Why does the anti-communist vilification of China continue throughout so many 'freeworld' agencies, splitting the US imperialist ruling class over tactics, etc? The statement:

'Socialism cannot be built in one country' has been a specious cover-up for much of the most opportunist anti-communist treachery in the whole history of working-class struggle for proletarian dictatorship science.

Socialism was being built in only one country under the leadership of Lenin himself until his death in 1924, as the slightest acquaintance with the 20 volumes of his writings after 1917 will confirm, and would have gone on being built in only one country under Lenin's leadership, had he lived, for an unknown number of years after that too. The world revolution was slow to spread because of the inherited backwardness and destruction of Russia, and the continued phenomenal expansion of world imperialist economic strength. Trotsky's sneer against 'socialism in one country' was a piece of monstrous anti-Soviet opportunism based on his 'permanent revolution' ultra-leftism which Lenin comprehensively rubbished under his general dismissal of Trotsky as a Menshevik windbag from 1905 onwards when this bureaucratic schematic posturing first appeared, (see *ILWP Books* vol 5 for

excerpts and a summary of the more than 600 pages of Lenin's writings against Trotsky).

Of course Stalinist revisionism eventually betrayed the completion of the world socialist revolution and the completion of building socialism in the USSR, but categorising this theoretical degeneration in the 1990s with some spurious posturing phrase that was immediately nonsense in the 1920s is just gibberish, especially after the massive expansion of the socialist camp after 1945, - and it just lets Stalinism off the hook, blocking the path to the important scholarship that needs doing on revisionist self-liquidation.

Such unthinking shallowness just plays into the hands of anti-communism and state-capitalism which are desperate to play down 'free-world' embarrassment at the astonishing economic and social deterioration in the former Soviet Union and East Europe since capitalism replaced what was being built there before without a capitalist class and a free market, and in Cold War hostility to imperialism, - that strange 73-years-long historical vacuum which apparently can be called anything but planned socialist construction, according to the CPGB now as well as the Trots.

In the light of the immense lack of seriousness and infantile sectarianism of this weird posturing then the incomprehensibility of the further remarks to 'Brian' (about a devolved Scotland's war on England; the minimum wage in impoverished and surrounded Britain; and national socialism) are perhaps not so strange.

The CPGB carry on with this muddle in their strategic manoeuvring towards the SLP. CPGBers trying to fight an incipient SLP proscription witch-hunt against them have pronounced themselves 'ex-CPGB' in order to stay within Scargill's ranks.

But their *Weekly Worker* paper's SLP conference report describes it as

"a rousing one for all revolutionaries involved, and should be a call to all those who have as yet not thrown themselves into this struggle for Party. The Party inevitably is not handed to us on a plate."

If this is a call to 'all' non-CPGB 'revolutionaries' to dissolve into the SLP and is not total humbug, then it must mean that all the CPGB have already gone in. Which

makes all the continued evidence all over the *Weekly Worker* of an ongoing CPGB slightly awkward. If it is a call to 'all' other CPGBers, it betrays a woeful lack of party discipline, and is hardly a recommendation of the CPGBers as the nucleus of a future Bolshevik Party in Britain, plus also earmarking the same aforementioned running down of CPGB activities in the *Weekly Worker* in the near future.

In addition, the phrase "the Party (cap P) is not handed to us on a plate" could hardly fail to alarm the people who founded the SLP.

This chaos over strategy and tactics is almost certainly not helped by basic confusion in the CPGB over historically assessing the SLP phenomenon correctly.

The chances of it being turned into 'the' revolutionary party were always very slim even when it was first unveiled, and have dwindled almost to absolute zero since then. Scargillism is a classic centrist movement, – revolution in words, reformist in deeds, – as the *EPSR* described it from the beginning.

But as such it is nevertheless still an enormously important development, encouragingly reflecting the ripening of imperialist crisis and the impossible strains now being put on orthodox reformism (Labour and the TUC) to still posture as the ↗

'opposition' to decaying British imperialism while naturally not offering a glimmer of encouragement any more to a serious socialist alternative because of the highly volatile conditions that are on the way.

The SLP needs supporting and polemicising with in the spirit of a broad front movement that will find it hard to avoid serious discussion about almost every aspect of the past and present struggle for socialism and against imperialism, – to the benefit of everyone, not least the SLP itself which needs to perform reasonably intelligently and competently in order to hold down the centrist slot that history has prepared for it. A wrong approach to the SLP will only result in continued naïve disappointment.

CPGB 'rapprochement' is not helped by its continuing refusal to polemicise with, and properly reply to, *EPSR* criticisms of profoundly incorrect *Weekly Worker* positions. This humbug of ignoring the *EPSR* comrades has gone on for 16 years, and has been particularly egregious in recent months of sustained *EPSR* criticism on a wide array of issues, all of them relevant to the SLP and the 'rapprochement' question. CPGB comrades with an ounce of gumption in them should begin to query this strange silence.

Build Leninism.

Adam Carr

SLP's birth remains a milestone of historical change but a poor signpost to the future. Scargill's route leads nowhere. Without theory, mass defeatism reigns supreme.

[*EPSR* No856 04-06-96]

Scargill's Socialist Labour Party has quickly established a bureaucratic club atmosphere throughout its branches, which is no great surprise.

This centrist phenomenon has drawn forth an interesting and encouraging response from the working class, explaining much about the historical epoch being entered into currently, but is still only attracting a preponderance of conservative-minded busybodies as cadres.

The ethos is left trade-unionism. Scargill has not changed a bit. But what is fascinating for serious students of the world socialist revolution is that the site at which Scargill is now doing his posturing **has** been shifted by events.

The whole political spectrum has been moved on, one or two spaces, by the rapid maturing of the greatest-ever crisis in capitalist history.

Illusions in 'democracy' and in parliamentary 'pressure' still prevail, however, – in spite of a growing contempt for all

parliamentary capitalist politics being one of the signs that people are becoming increasingly bitter about threats of insecurity which the monopoly-imperialist 'free market' system cannot stop constantly throwing up, and more aware of what a corrupt racket is the entire political, business, and social leadership of this country (and every major state of the 'free world').

Scargill's 'independent' left syndicalism has for the moment seemingly provided an adequate-enough rejoinder to Blairite Labour's total anti-socialist revisionism, as far as the average activist is concerned with a limited grasp of how the historical contradictions of imperialism's 'new world order' just keep on growing.

Militants of all descriptions have been shifted mightily by events into declaring Labourism as no longer providing any kind of answer for the problems of the working class. But they still have been shifted nowhere near enough to want *en masse* to

start challenging the 'left' tools themselves of popular democracy; – instant reformist solutions within the existing framework of things; a demagogic preoccupation with how things look; and tolerating conventional leadership charisma by deluding itself that the problem of opportunism is solved by just an ostentatious show of factionalism; etc.

Scargill has at last been forced to say that Labour is now no good for the working class, and has had the sense to immediately try building a party to replace Labour.

But in no way is it a party of a new type (in the famous words of the socialist movement in the Tsarist Empire which first actually abolished capitalism and its ruling class as the dominant force in society.)

The SLP is very much a party of the old type which will use every bureaucratic and demagogic trick in the book in order not just to keep its original founders firmly entrenched in the leadership (which is hardly a surprise; it would be astonishing if they did not act like this), – but to ensure that no fundamentally new thinking should clutter up or confuse Scargill's basic left-syndicalist aims.

This is centrism's crucial philistine defect, in general, and has proved to be the immediate great stumbling block in developing the SLP.

Workers have responded with open minds to the party's launch, as they were almost inevitably going to do. This is not a problem.

But routine trade-unionist mentality of all kinds has also immediately stepped forward to volunteer to man (and woman) the lifeboats.

United action in defence of its economic interests is the vital university of working-class ↗

The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the worker's learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events, to observe every other social class in all the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical, and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata, and groups of the population.

The worker must have a clear picture in his mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord and the priest, the high state official and the peasant, the student and the vagabond; he must know their strong and weak points; he must grasp the meaning of all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum camouflages its selfish strivings and its real "inner workings"; he must understand what interests are reflected by certain institutions and certain laws and how they are reflected.

It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures that follow close upon what is going on about us at a given moment; upon what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way; upon what finds expression in such and such events, in such and such statistics, in such and such court sentences, etc., etc. These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and fundamental condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.

Tsarism in 1903 was a whole panorama of international imperialist tyranny and trickery all under one roof. It was not necessary for Lenin to spell out in those passages the crucial requirement for working-class revolutionary consciousness to above-all be

political learning, and 'left' reformism has long provided such basic class conflict with a political perspective to go beyond the endless economic class compromise to the aim of 'abolishing capitalism', or Clause 4, in other words.

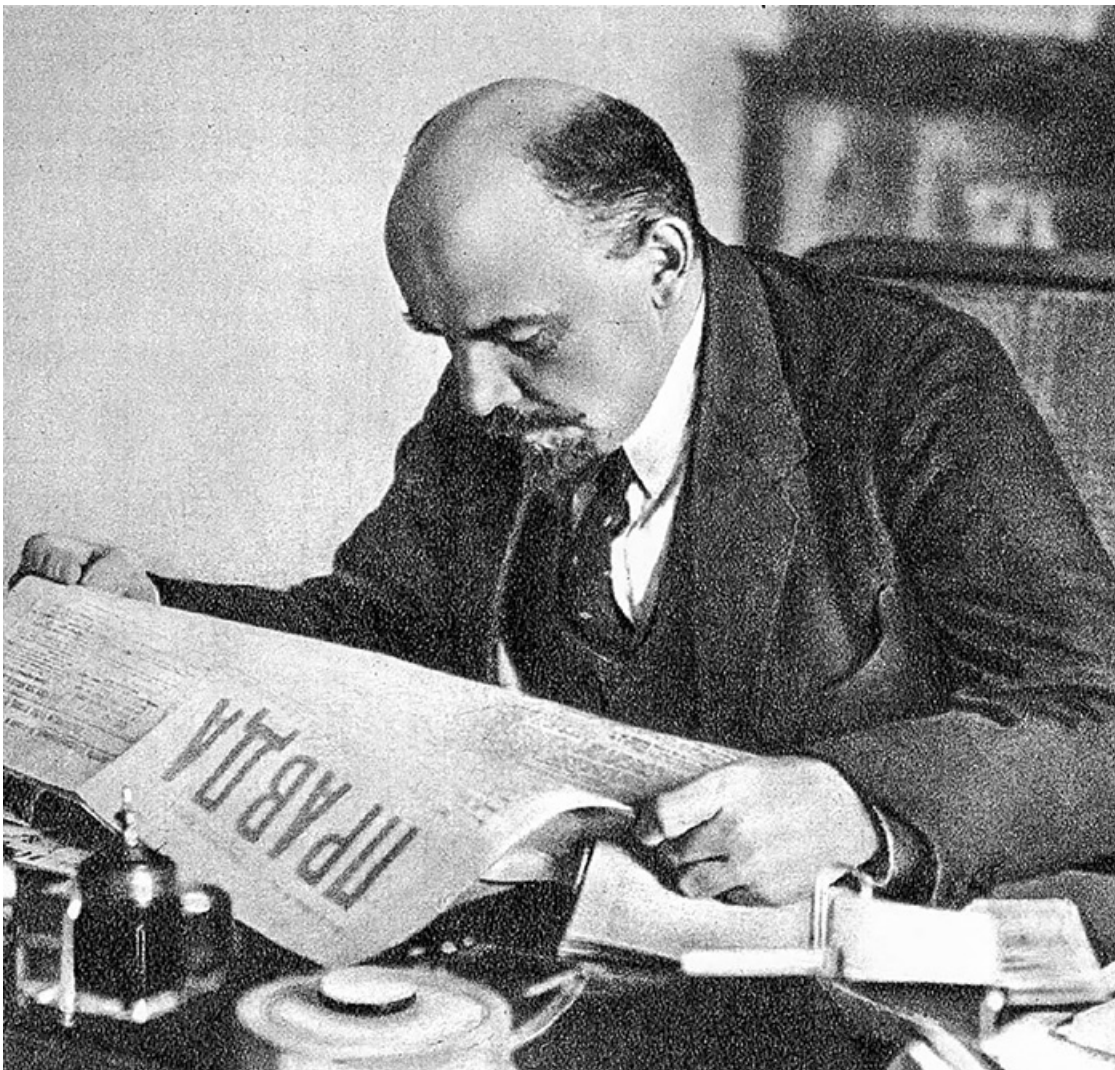
But even the most superficial 'Marxism', as Scargill has proclaimed the SLP to be following, requires an internationalist revolutionary perspective and an education programme which arms workers with a complete exposure of world imperialism's entire economic and political racket, both short-term and longterm.

The long detailed *EPSR* campaigns exposing the ultimate bankruptcy of dollar hegemony and international finance-capital's postwar credit boom; the endless tyrannies by the 'free world' leaders in the anti-communist Cold War that went with that boom; the viciousness of Third World exploitation by the West's 'free market forces'; the (limited) achievements of the socialist camp in social and economic reconstruction in the teeth of imperialist Cold War disruption and undermining; the inspiring hopes of future triumphs from the properly-understood real successes of anti-imperialist struggle around the world (e.g. Ireland, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, etc) at the moment of their advances; the continuous reanalysing of the setbacks to the international anti-imperialist struggle and the reasons for those failures or defeats (e.g. Chile, Grenada, the self-liquidation of CPSU revisionism, etc); – all of these issues and many more constitute the essential arena of the struggle for a full revolutionary consciousness for a workers movement which wants to build socialism.

This, of course, is the major theme of Lenin's *What is to be done*:

international in its grasp, as will similarly be clear to everyone now without further explanation.

What Lenin goes on to discuss, of course, is the essential role of a regular newspaper with which to constantly strive for the very latest (and therefore the very



highest) point of revolutionary theoretical assessment of the international balance of class forces, ignorance of which or failure to understand which must obviously make it impossible for any party to lead the working class to an ultimately successful struggle for socialism.

On these questions, the foundation of the SLP is already clearly an utterly doomed enterprise. Not only do they not have any ability or interest to give the working class a lead on all the topical events going on all around them, endlessly manipulated by the capitalist media to perpetually sow reactionary consciousness and prevent the faintest development of any revolutionary socialist consciousness. The SLP founders will clearly have no such understanding or capacity even when they do finally get round to publishing (or getting their NUJ contacts to publish) some sort of regular journal.

To grasp the need to agitate on all aspects of the international class struggle in order to build a successful socialist movement, you already have to be doing it. Lenin merely elaborated on and made more appropriate arrangements for (in Russia's specific 20th century circumstances) what was already Marxist philosophical practice, – explaining the consciousness and perspectives

of **all** of conflict-ridden capitalist society based on its past and present contradictory realities.

And because being determines consciousness, and not vice-versa, – the previous form of Scargill and his opportunist pals carries importance.

Scargill's previous political career was left-syndicalism loosely attached to reformist Labour; and while he has made some courageous apologies for misleading workers in the past, he did stick with the parliamentary illusions of 'left' Labourism for a remarkably long time.

Even more significantly, he has said virtually nothing about there being anything fundamentally suspect or deluded about that **form** of politics, – merely that it was mistaken in its trust, and has now been 'Betrayed'.

The people round Scargill have an even more dubious background, – ex-IMG types basically, it seems, who reneged on Trotskyite sectarianism's 'independent' posturing when it was overshadowed by the apparent entrism success of *Militant* Trotskyism, and sneaked into the Labour Party as well in a period which must have been approaching reformism's maximum putrescence and foul deception of the working class. What an inglorious bunch of dishonest crooks, one might almost be

tempted to say. Any newspaper of fearless scientific-socialist truth and farsighted revolutionary theory which they produce in the autumn is bound to come in for the closest-possible scrutiny.

More trial and error could conceivably lead the SLP crew to a greater awareness of the essence of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary socialist leadership; but on the form shown so far by Scargill's stung reaction to Blair's open revisionism, and his apologies for only belatedly seeing it coming, and the form shown by the ex-IMGers in getting even less across to the working class about the justification for their patchy record, – there is no great basis for expecting this to happen.

The entrenchment at annual conference and regionally of already solidly philistine cadres is therefore no great surprise. The echoing by SLP functionaries of Scargill's conference demagoguery that no English worker wants to hear about what one Russian revolutionary said to another in 1917 is infinitely more depressing than the NUM leader's complacent backwardness because they entirely lack Scargill's saving grace of at least having led one of the great anti-imperialist struggles in West Europe since 1945, – the 1984-85 miners strike against pit closures and speculative de-industrialisation by monopoly-

finance capital. In Scargill's case, his anti-theory philistinism could in certain circumstances just be overlooked as the mildly amusing idiosyncrasy of a formidable pragmatic syndicalist. In the case of the SLP minions, their philistine conceit is all there is.

This half-hearted centrist movement will, however, nevertheless be obliged to reflect something of the working class's feelings or its better interests on major political conflicts ahead, – whether it be colonial swindles, warmongering scandals, grotesque capitalist corruption, sickening 'Opposition' class-collaboration, the further savaging of the welfare state and working-class conditions, or whatever.

And while possibly occasionally giving a lead to workers on some exposure of ruling-class degeneracy or reactionariness, it will still be possible to enthusiastically back SLP campaigns therefore, and help other workers to develop deeper socialist consciousness.

Workers in general remain unconvinced about how deep is capitalism's crisis, and thus what outlines it must inevitably tend to follow ultimately. There is particular reluctance to believe that the system can ever quite crash down again the way it did in the 1930s after the 1929 Wall Street collapse.

One problem facing a revolutionary challenge to ailing British imperialism (and probably elsewhere too) is that US imperialism, in its unprecedented might and reach, has seemed to be able to pick up the pieces where a collapsing imperialist 'ally' has floundered, – and walk off with all the prizes as well as leaving a smooth non-revolutionary continuity behind it.

This, of course, is a temporary historical illusion only. In reality, the verdict is still awaited on how, for example, the wretched Palestinian nation fared after the chaotic retreat by British imperialism from its colonial role there had left everything in such an explosive mess.

Incredible volumes of US imperialist hand-outs and equally well-balanced military stoogery have been poured into the Zionist colonial enterprise, into Egypt and other potential Arab political volcanoes in the Near East, and into backing the reactionary feudal oil interests in the Middle East which hitherto had largely kept reaction or moderation successfully funded in the Arab and Muslim world.

But still the grotesque contradictions exist, – worse today than ever, – of an intolerable modern Western-Zionist colonisation right in the heart of the Arab nation, plus the permanent insult of, in reality, US imperialist domination of Arab oil wealth,

and therefore of Arab political and economic independence. The powerful forces of colonial liberation, national self-determination, and eventually socialist revolution will inevitably continue to push all Middle Eastern affairs towards the powder keg. Then, the apparent ability of world or US imperialism to keep Western monopoly-capitalist continuity going worldwide will be seen to be an illusion.

Even before another Great Crash or serious international revolutionary explosions shake up people's thinking about what history has in store, other factors could begin to play a role in reviving socialist consciousness such as the early return of a Labour Government which then begins to behave just as viciously in 'saving public funds' by reducing working-class living standards, cutting social services, and increasing workplace insecurity through bowing to 'unanswerable market forces', etc., quickly demonstrating that capitalism is the basic problem and not the Tory Government.

The limping centrist phenomenon might then, paradoxically, start to make more resolute progress, as might, even more peculiarly, a last-ditch 'left' revival inside Labour itself, with the Benns, Livingstones, and Skinners once more pretending that 'socialism has a chance again inside Labour'. The old forms of struggle do not die that quickly or easily. A stake through their heart might seem a not inappropriate metaphor for considering when these bloodsucking delusions affecting the working class will be ended. Most of the time, natural conservatism of people's instincts is frustrating but liveable with. On occasions, it is completely maddening. It is of vital importance for the revolutionary movement to learn absolute patience with historical developments always taking far longer than anticipated.

Another potential factor in helping to thaw out some socialist consciousness in workers' minds frozen up with Cold War anti-communism and counter-revolutionary cynicism could be developments in Ireland where the real decadent weakness of British imperialism (both absolutely and in its declining position in the world) is being made increasingly evident by the triumph of the Irish national-liberation struggle which bourgeois propaganda has been so desperate not to admit (and which the fake 'Marxists' in Britain from the CPGB to the Trots have helped keep hidden).

Further obvious retreats by Britain towards conceding Ireland's reunification (which it was a monstrous act of colonial tyranny to destroy in the first place

by the brutally-imposed Partition barbarism of 1921, gerrymandered onto artificial bits of six of Ulster's nine counties at bayonet point), – albeit at a continuing snail's pace just like the slow withdrawal preparations which have been stuttering forward inch by inch over the past 12 to 15 years, – will help remove further blinkers from British workers' understanding of the real world, thus negating still more of the Cold War anti-communism which has in the past helped make little imperialists out of all British workers, and always undermined any developments towards socialist consciousness.

The suspicion is hard to shake that one of left syndicalism's final harmful influences on British workers will be on the question of import controls and other Little-Englander similar failures of imagination to which 'left' Labourites have been so prone in the past. The SLP policy delusion that taking Britain out of the European Union will be a worthwhile antidote to some of the worse effects of monopoly-capitalist crisis is a sad instance of unreconstructed reformism still unchallenged in the thinking of the SLP founders, and it reflects a widespread prejudice, of course.

The pragmatic traditions of a successful imperialist country automatically suggest that if something is not working to advantage, then change it. In the long run, history works slightly differently. Monopoly-imperialist expansion will carry on being all-powerful, dominating the international economy. In or out of the EU, both the good and bad effects of ever-greater monopolisation will continue to totally influence the lives of everyone on earth. Only minor patterns in trade and legal matters will be affected by membership or non-membership of the EU, together with some possible loss of economic growth because of the self-fulfilling achievements of EU common market monopoly protectionism versus the US and Japanese imperialist blocs and against the rest of the world in general. The bad effects of monopolisation, loss of sovereignty, and German domination can only come to a head and be resolved for all Europeans, in or out of the Common Market, when the imperialist world markets themselves totter towards the crash.

At that point, everything must then be resolved about future history for all of Europe and for the rest of the world too, and Britain's membership or non-membership of the EU or the EMU or anything else at the time of the markets collapse, will be a minor past detail of total irrelevance. Looking at the problems of capitalist crisis in this reformist way by the SLP

can only serve one purpose, – to close workers' minds to the real problems facing mankind of the imperialist system heading for a worldwide bust-up, war, and revolution, – and what political consciousness needs to be prepared in the working class to meet this colossal historical upheaval as it approaches.

The SLP remains an appropriate broad-front political movement within which to argue out all these questions, but apart from the requirements of conventional formally-correct democratic behaviour, there seems little point in not continuing to challenge the SLP at every opportunity about its clear disservice to the working class by coming onto the scene as the new broom to sweep clean from all the old opportunist parliamentary dishonesty, yet keeping quiet about the one truly titanic mess hanging over workers and menacing their lives, – the explosive crisis of the capitalist system.

Every day, the bourgeois press itself tells of the omens: [*Cuttings on urban poverty worldwide*]

But every day, the SLP sleeps on, saying "We want no more truck with all that old revolutionary ↗

rubbish. It's all finished, dead, and buried, all that revolution stuff", and with this philistine ignorance which Scargill himself has set the pattern for, the SLP becomes not a new way forward for the working class but yet another new fake-'left' obstacle to progress. Its anti-theory complacency must be relentlessly challenged, – and the sick welfarist philosophy behind it, – 'We have the absolute right to be wrong', – even more so.

One great cause of defeatism among workers, the best weapon the ruling class has for keeping its dominance, is the prevailing episodic impressionism that "things just happen in life, just one after the other", and that the people who rule society "always find a way out of their problems".

A correct description of the historical process is the best and only way out of this blindness. It will give the working class the necessary confident understanding that capitalism is in crisis, and, no, the ruling class do not have a way out, and cannot possibly find one, short of World War III (which as a 'solution' would be the greatest revolutionary recruiter ever). Build Leninism. Joe Harper

The best programme is a correct analysis of modern world history, constantly brought right up to the minute, dissecting the dominant world imperialist crisis, and examining the history of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its further development, the only possible answer to that crisis. The CPGB programme falls far short of what is necessary.

[EPSR No864 30-07-96]

The renewed fears and confusion about 'world terrorism', following the TWA 800 and Atlanta Games bombs which have shattered American imperialist complacency, are a good point at which to re-analyse how ruling classes keep in power, and how the challenge to them grows.

The US domination over the world's television, broadcast, and printed news agencies will work flat out to try to play up universal apprehension about boundaryless international guerrilla-war activities, and petty-bourgeois complacency and irritation against the "disruption and danger by these mindless men of violence", etc, plus plenty of tastelessly over-publicised genuine tragedy about innocent victims, etc.

But the real aim is to pretend that American imperialism can easily cope with this 'isolated, degenerate evil', and to present the phenomenon as just a sick aberration with not even the slightest hint of historical justification or even superficial reasoning, as

well as having not the remotest chance of achieving anything against US power, or of ending up anything but totally crushed, – such is the image Washington needs to project of mastery power.

The historical reality is totally different, of course. Individual terrorists might be closed in on. Individual terrorists can even be widely despised. But at this dramatic stage in human history, American imperialism is beginning to have to face up to an international problem of potentially uncontrollable dimensions which even the bourgeois media are starting to describe as a 'virulent' phenomenon "eating away at the public life" of US power.

The threat to imperialist domination from the Middle East and Muslim countries alone is unfathomable and inevitably highly explosive, in more ways than one.

The Arab nations, for example, harbour an indescribable sense of hatred and grievance against the historic Western control of

their oil-rich region, crucial to current world development but which only ever reminds the Arab masses of their own humiliating powerlessness, both within their own countries against NATO-backed feudal reactionary stooges, and internationally against the virtual fulltime Western military occupation of their vital geographical region.

There is so much accumulated hatred for past and present Western persecution, exploitation, and injustice that the astonishing thing is how long it has taken for revolt to commence systematically damaging US, British, or French interests (in the main), and how little developed that still is, bad enough as it is becoming with the non-stop attacks on the West's Zionist-Occupation surrogates, and now land attacks on American forces to add to the terror attacks on aircraft and other property abroad.

But grow it will, and Washington's ability to do anything about it will look increasingly pathetic and fragile.

And that is only the Middle East. But American imperialist domineering is hated the world over, as are the shaming and destructive effects of all Western monopoly-capitalist exploitation and allied military bullying.

How much worse would it already be for the survival of Western domination if it was not for the tragic collapse of serious anti-imperialist ideology and struggle over much of the 'advanced' world in recent decades, highlighted

by the degeneracy of reformism, revisionism, and Trotskyism, and how they have played into the hands of the monopoly-capitalist ruling classes and the way that they hang onto power.

The first crucial ingredient is obviously keeping all the key controls in the bourgeoisie's own hands over the state's forces of law enforcement, education, and information.

The second crucial ingredient is to use this immense propaganda and persuasion power to keep workers divided about all important domestic and international issues by depriving them of as much knowledge and feeding them as much distortion and prejudice as necessary, and by picking on scapegoats, 'enemies within', or bogeymen to frighten people with or arouse their chauvinist bile.

Anti-communism has been the greatest reactionary triumph in all capitalist history, sowing divisive chaos and ignorance deep into the workers movement worldwide for generations over the nonstop grotesque disinformation put out by bourgeois propaganda about the achievements of the workers states.

Bias and prejudice due to anti-communism has so corrupted modern society, with the connivance of vast philistine sectors of so-called 'left' or 'progressive' opinion, that now not only has a 'Red Scare' rod been made for every protester's back, whether communist or not, but the average levels of performance in the

workers movement can no longer even grasp what keeps them divided, or what is the process for trying to rebuild some sort of anti-imperialist struggle and unity.

As endless quotations from Marxism-Leninism can verify if it is not just plainly self-evident, the only way towards ever-greater measures of unity is via ever greater measures of agreement about what has happened and is happening **in the world**, and what are the forces which can do something about it, and how is it to be done.

The last thing workers need to help them towards greater revolutionary unity is to hear endless subjective-idealist sectarianism about whether

"the practice of leader centralism in the guise of democratic centralism is incompatible with a multanimous party that is structured to ensure equality of opportunity in the independent collective elaboration and articulation of "ideas"

or whatever, - column after column of which pedantic academic nonsense appears regularly in the press of some "non-ideological" contenders for the role of revolutionary leadership.

What is needed is a fight to the finish, for example, to demonstrate whether or not it makes sense to demand that British imperialism should dismantle its colonial partition of Ireland, disarming every aspect of colonist society, before getting out, or just demand that British imperialism get out and leave civil war chaos behind it, causing the Irish even

more suffering from the British-bayonet-imposed colonial partition; and whether or not Marx's understanding of British workers putting chains on themselves by supporting British imperialist colonisation of Ireland required or anticipated British workers helping to overthrow imperialism in a socialist revolution in order to resolve their predicament, or whether it merely envisaged British workers agreeing to a British imperialist withdrawal from Ireland (for whatever reason or under whatever excuse) in order to help begin lifting imperialist domination from their own backs; and whether or not it infringed a proper appreciation of Irish workers' right to self-determination to call for British dismantling of its colonial partition before it left, or whether a truer respect for Irish rights would see British imperialism suddenly pull out without notice or preparation in utter chaos, with the colonial partition community still fully armed and organised, leaving Irish workers to face the civil-war mayhem to deal with "as they themselves decide", etc; - plus countless other matters which it would be helpful to clarify so that British workers could decide if they were being offered a worthwhile new lead or not, after the collapse and historical disgrace of Labour's "reformist" pretensions.

When workers can see a party which describes the actual world struggles to them in terms of what the immediate main reactionary imperialist enemy is, and



what might lead to its defeat in order to lead on towards even bigger and better defeats for imperialism subsequently and elsewhere as well, and then demonstrates that precisely this revolutionary view of history is what is working out, – then the workers' own revolutionary consciousness and determination will strengthen, building up ever greater unity and potential for unity.

No supposedly 'methodological' or 'organisational' aspect of theory, such as arguing that the launching of a polemic to settle disputed issues of political theory via a victory over other tendencies represents a 'vanguardist' approach, distinct from a supposedly 'Marxist-Leninist' approach which would polemicise in order to develop rapprochement among communists by "collectively resolving demarcations", can itself be satisfactorily sorted out except by implicit or explicit reference to actual historical disputes in the struggle for revolutionary leadership which saw Marxism or Leninism triumph over an actual revisionist or anti-scientific disaster.

The appeal to Leninist theory to demonstrate with chapter and verse that only historically proven or historically provable correct understanding is worth aiming for, is in general an appeal to the historical validity of the whole of Leninism for its accepted reference points.

It is because of this that anti-communists have increasingly begun to drop the usual pretence of being 'Leninists' in order to actually start challenging whether there was any historical value in Leninism at all, (the deceitful route that the degenerate philistine Gorbachev pursued, tolerated by the rest of the complacent bureaucracy, to dismantle the dictatorship of the proletariat and move from defending the Soviet workers state to destroying it).

Reconfirmation of every aspect of Marxism-Leninism as embodied by successful revolutionary history should be the permanent practice of every serious socialist movement.

Far from it being 'bad' to 'keep going on about Ireland or the Soviet Union' or whatever, – it is the only possible route back to a serious revolutionary party in Britain and the world.

Only in the course of making a sensible analysis of world history, – incorporating all that was proved correct in Marxist-Leninist theory by the whole experience of overthrowing imperialism and building workers states and the national-liberation movements – can any worthwhile statements be made at all about the present class struggle and how world social development should proceed henceforward.

In other words, all theory is merely concentrated human experience, and political theory is nothing but the historical record, variously distorted, ignored, or distilled correctly.

The real meat that all anti-communists truly want to chew on is a total challenge to Leninism itself, but many of the more discreet anti-communists (like more than half the British 'left') are still too uncertain and mealy-mouthed to come out with it openly.

What the petty-bourgeois fake-'left' hate about Leninism is its ruthless championing of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and its merciless assault on factionalising dilettantism.

It was Leninism which blitzed the 'pro-Soviet' rank-and-fileist Kronstadt revolt. It was Leninism which tore up the results to the post-October-1917 Constituent Assembly elections. It was Leninism which routed several 'national independence' revolts in the southern republics and elsewhere using implacable Soviet force. It was Leninism which decided to construct socialism inside Soviet boundaries on its own, in the absence of any spread of revolution into Europe. It was Leninism which re-introduced such free capitalist market measures as were necessary for economic expediency. It was Leninism which sought temporary peaceful coexistence deals with Western imperialism in order to give the USSR a bigger reconstruction breathing space before the next imperialist warmongering. It was Leninism which suppressed factionalising inside the ruling Communist Party because of the danger to the workers state security. It was Leninism which hired bourgeois experts at above average pay to help develop Soviet state and economic power. It was Leninism which granted concessions to imperialist monopolies to exploit Soviet resources which the USSR was in no position to exploit as successfully itself. It was Leninism which set up a powerful state security police. And so on, and so on.

All of these unavoidable historical developments, and scores more besides, were all subsequently attributed to Stalinism alone in additional bogus demoralising accusations which totally dominated the planet in the aftermath of Lenin's death as the Soviet workers state under its Bolshevik Revolution continued to flourish and strengthen, threatening the spectre of world communism as it developed.

The enormous actual revisionist damage inflicted by Stalinism was tragically bad enough. But the vain cultism, the paranoid suspicion, the bureaucratic fear to encourage ever wider and deeper

democratic involvement, and the arbitrary tyranny, which this defeatist retreat from Marxist-Leninist philosophy allowed to flourish, was in turn ludicrously embroidered upon by bourgeois anti-communism to further its real anti-Leninist aims.

Central to this greatest propaganda/disinformation coup in all history, – by the imperialist bourgeoisie or by any other challenged ruling class, – was the turncoat role of the Trotskyite and state-capitalist 'left' in the West.

Until decades of fundamental lies in basic Western education, greatly facilitated by the fake-'left' pursuing their bitter and vengeful anti-Soviet vilification path, – are unlearned, – then the generations of workers and intellectuals who fell for anti-communism will have continued to make a rod for their own backs.

The Soviet Union may be no more, – but there is only one dictatorship of the proletariat, only one basic form of the workers state and its security relations with the outside world, and only one basic form of socialist planned economic development and its essential social infrastructure. Condemn 70 years of Soviet workers state development (and East European development); and avoid (or hope to) having to comment on China, Cuba, and Vietnam, – and the whole historical fight against the imperialist free-market forces has been abandoned for all time.

There is no alternative to the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no alternative to the workers state and its difficult security with surrounding imperialism in the possibly short or long interregnum before the completion of the world socialist revolution. There is no alternative to planned socialist economic development plus its essential social infrastructure.

And in terms of its actual colossal unrepeatable impact on world history dominating the 20th century, there is no alternative to the experience of the Soviet workers state as the first great achievement running society without a free-market capitalist imperialist ruling class dominating society via its half-hidden dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Anti-communism remains massively powerful in the West, and that it rests on abysmal historical ignorance is reflected in the abysmally weak position which serious Marxist-Leninist philosophy also now commands under capitalism, its name and heritage ridiculed by such appallingly idiotic opportunism as represented by *Living Marxism*, by the Marxist Party, and previously by *Marxism Today*, etc, etc.

Scargill's launch of the Social-

ist Labour Party has been a reflection of the growing divergence between what the reality of proletarian exploitation and alienation remains under monopoly imperialism, and what petty bourgeois opportunism has been swept along into claiming about 'freemarket democracy' in the wake of the West's extraordinary coup in getting the USSR revisionist bureaucracy and its closest allies to capitulate to imperialist domination without further fight under the guise of "joining in building our common European home" and other such mind boggling gibberish.

But as most now agree, Scargill may have broken from the Labour Party but he has not remotely broken from Labourism, and his philistinism will never allow him to. Approaching the SLP in the confident expectation of being able to turn it into the revolutionary party was always a mistake, one likely to lead to unnecessary tactical errors.

Scargill's party is likely to become a centrist phenomenon at best, occasionally talking of socialist revolution and even of Marxism, but sticking in reality to the traditions, methods, and expectations of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and trade unionism.

But the SLP's launch has helped bring about a challenge to entrenched sectarianism around the 'left' of the labour movement, a slight thaw itself reflecting the colossal political upheavals demonstrated by the liquidation of revisionism and reformism but with their roots in the growing crisis of imperialism itself as inter-imperialist conflict and trade war began to overshadow even the Cold War in importance for specific bourgeois imperialist survival interests.

It has been a great step forward for parties and groups to take advantage of the changing climate to begin trying to clarify and maybe overcome their differences, but anti-communist prejudice remains the huge obstacle to rapid progress. It will have to be addressed and demolished, but this process cannot even begin under the barmy delusion that unity can be achieved by avoiding or suppressing differences. They can only be fought out to a conclusion.

Worthwhile joint political struggle can be continued in the meantime, but the quantity and quality of that activity will increase the greater the degree of genuine unity because more vexed questions have been resolved rather than swept under the carpet.

A seductive substitute for pressing on with clarifying all issues is to waste endless time debating the formal minutiae

of steps towards joint activity, – the same sort of boring trade-union legalism and constitution mongering with which Scargill's SLP bureaucracy has already tried to kill off political development inside his party.

It reflects a lack of confidence in discussing political perspectives, and above all a lack of confidence in the Leninist essence of political agitation and education, always proceeding from the very highest point of development of the international class struggle, meaning its very latest manifestations, analysing them as regularly and rapidly as possible in order to continuously confirm, extend, or correct the existing revolutionary world view.

Platforms, programmes, strategy, and tactics are all vital, and all require some formal attention. But what the working class is suffering from most desperately is the continuing complete confusion in the labour movement as a whole about how the current world scene is to be described and analysed in even the most general terms. Is it a period of firm US-controlled 'new world order', or is it a time of unprecedentedly colossal uncertainty and upheaval which could break out into total worldwide mayhem of trade-wars, market collapses, civil-wars, inter-imperialist wars, and revolutions at any moment?

Are the workers state successes for the last 80 years of this century just a sour sad wrong turning in history, best soon forgotten, or have they been the outlines of the obvious only future development for mankind which can tolerably function as planned socialist economies and societies without any need for uncontrollable capitalist market forces which have totally imposed their dominating brutality and destruction on the 20th century so far?

Is there such a phenomenon as 'stageism' which has prevented the world socialist revolution from already being completed because of a lack of permanent revolutionary boldness in human thinking, or is the overthrow of imperialist domination a long historical process going through many phases which reflects a steadily growing general level of world revolutionary consciousness, advancing via many paths and forms towards international rational Marxist-Leninist science, and which in the real world has been undermining imperialism's positions bit by bit, but always susceptible to dramatic leaps in leadership ability and understanding to take advantage of the continuing possibility of dramatic leaps in revolutionary advance here and there from time to time.?

The obvious way forward for deepening the investigation and

clarification of all these issues rests, as always, in specific cases. Argument and polemics are the only avenue for proceeding. Long before *Open Polemic* and rap-prochement were even thought of, *EPSR* comrades would regularly attempt to exchange publications with 'left' groups with a view to polemicising with them. The negative sectarian response was invariable. The CPGB now resists having political clarification introduced into a discussion on joint platforms, and prefers to spend three hours reinventing the wheel ('bourgeois elections can provide a tribune for revolutionary politics') rather than make a start to sorting out the huge political differences which leave the working class without a revolutionary programme beyond the existing 57 varieties of sectarian subjectivism. Needless to say, the CPGB of course refuses an exchange of publications with the *EPSR*.

Without exception, this sectarianism goes way back with every single group. All have been challenged at some time or other over such wretched opportunism as welcoming the CIA-Vatican counter-revolutionary stunt *Solidarnos*; joining the bourgeois chorus against the NUM in 1984-85 for a miners' strike ballot; falling for the Western propaganda stunt about a non-existent 'massacre' in Tienanmen Square; refusing to say a word about what became of the 'political revolution' when the endless undermining of the European workers states finally resulted in only counter-revolutionary reaction and not one jot of 'perfect rank-and-file socialism'; failing to grasp basic Marxist anti-colonial national-liberation positions on Ireland; etc, etc. All have avoided openly examining their mistakes and drawing conclusions from them, which is the crucial and only way for Leninist science to proceed.

The CPGB draft programme suffers from being insufficiently oriented towards the crisis of imperialism, which is the real character of the epoch, however grand sounding it is to term it "the epoch of revolutionary transition from capitalism to communism"; and insufficient attention to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the Marxist-Leninist description precisely of the transitional period between world capitalism and world communism, (not 'the international socialist revolution' as the transitional period, as circles close to the CPGB try to insist).

It is not enough to briefly dismiss past socialist revolution as always facing the danger of deformation and counter-revolution if the world socialist revolution did not spread, and that the victory

of socialist revolution in one or more countries could remain only partial.

Though true, it simply ignores the reality of the 20th century which is the huge conflict between the partial world socialist revolution and surrounding imperialism which has been the background to all struggle for socialism ever since, with the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Marxist-Leninist science fully and accurately predicted, as the crucial ingredient in that conflict, on which the whole of world attention has now been concentrated by bourgeois propaganda for 80 years.

What about the battles for proletarian dictatorship as they have been fought, as they have been responded to by Western middle-class ideology, and as they ought to have been fought?

The character of the epoch remains the crisis of world imperialism precisely because these are the live issues, totally determining what progress can be made in the world. Allende, the New Jewel Movement, the Sandinistas, and others, all failed to argue for or fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Where are they now? What happened to Gorbachev's USSR which abandoned the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has not happened to China, Vietnam, and Cuba who have also introduced some degree of capitalist market measures? Who is going to seize state power next in the world, and what is US imperialism going to do about it, – and therefore how should that power seizure be envisaged and accomplished?

All the real juice of an analysis of the modern world and what ways forward it offers are just ignored by the CPGB 'programme' as presumably too difficult to deal with. This, of course, flows from years of running away from polemics about their own past mistakes, – e. g. their refusal to back the Polish workers state against *Solidarnos*; their disgraceful hypocrisy in hiding behind the 'official communist' label for so long without having the slightest intention of really defending the East European set-up (unconditionally from counter-revolution while criticising its obvious weaknesses) and their refusal to comment on this once it suited them to pull out; their past attachment to dubious international theoretical gurus now mysteriously dropped without comment; etc, etc.

The CPGB is way behind the real struggle. It is in great need of much more political discussion. It is in even greater need of studying the work of the *Economic and Philosophic Science Review*.

A serious programme analysis of the world would begin as fol-

lows, taking in the main issues which have helped form modern consciousness and have brought the world to its present position, hardly any of which even gets mentioned in the CPGB's academic 'draft programme':

'The 'new world order' proclaimed by the American ruling class after the disintegration of the revisionist bureaucracy in the USSR and elsewhere, is just the old imperialist order staggering on ever deeper into an insoluble economic/war-mongering crisis.

The capitalist system and bourgeois ideology of all kinds, had never ceased to be to the dominating force on the planet. The socialist camp had been retreating from Marxist Leninist leadership for decades, and the undoubted might and influence of the workers states, potentially superior to that of the 'free world', had long been made impotent by the loss of communist philosophical perspectives.

Without a correct world view of imperialist crisis as the decisive factor in historical change, the colossal achievements of planned socialism began to be scorned even by its own bureaucrats.

Philistinely unable to grasp that the West's apparently inexhaustible affluence (for financing damaging anti-communist propaganda and provocations, and glitzy free-market boasting) would not last forever; the Moscow revisionists yearned to capitulate to private monopoly capital so as to lead an even quieter life than ever.

Before the 'free world' idiots had drawn up their ridiculous 'end of history' conclusions, the anti-Leninist bureaucracy had abandoned any further thought of a new inter-imperialist crisis breaking out any year now (damning capitalism once and for all).

These spontaneous class-collaborators were theoretically incapable of seeing the coming all-out three cornered war for supremacy between US, German, and Japanese imperialism, and instead dreamed of a Popular Front to end all Popular Fronts, – with imperialism itself, in a 'merger' of the two systems.

What US imperialism 'triumphed' over was not communism but the muddle headed opportunism of careerists like Gorbachev.

And what triggered this final liquidation of revisionism, whose path had been prepared for by half a century of anti-Leninist 'popular front' and 'peaceful road' confusion, – was in fact a new lurch in imperialism's crisis. There is indeed a 'new world order' of sorts, but it is the challenge to Washington's international supremacy by resurgent German and Japanese economic imperialism which is the essence of these dramatic changes.

Moscow had not been seriously seeking to overthrow imperialism for years. The Cold War arms race was far more importantly a vehicle enabling US imperialism to dominate the capitalist world than it was a 'shield' supposedly protecting Westerners from being murdered in their beds by rampant agents of international communism.

America's hysterical anti-communist crusading permitted McCarthy fascism to silence domestic critics of imperialist exploitation, boosted US monopoly capitalism's key armaments industry bringing in \$billions in worldwide export sales and advancing US technology at the taxpayers' expense, and provided an excuse for more than 200 colonial war actions by the West since 1945 to 'halt

the spread of communism', true, but mainly to maintain US imperialism's role of interfering international gendarme in the whole world's affairs; including continued military occupation rights in Germany and Japan.

But this Pax Americana ruling the planet since 1945 was also very costly, piling up ever huger US budget and foreign trade deficits from propping up an endless series of fascist-stooge regimes and military dictatorships on every continent (provided they were sufficiently anti-communist).

Paradoxically, it was under the arch Cold Warrior Ronald Reagan that these world domination bills finally threatened to bankrupt the US Treasury, so deals were struck with Gorbachev to slow down or cut out some of the more expensive but pointless aspects of the Cold War armaments race against the USSR.

The purpose of the economies and relegating some of the more tub-thumping 'evil empire' features of anti-communist crusading to the back burner, was to save the dollar from collapse and to free Washington's hands to prepare for serious all-out conflict against the true challenge to the USA's dominant influence in the world, – not from complacent, bureaucratic, revisionist, peaceful-coexistence-seeking Moscow but from the now resurgent and rampant economic imperialism of Germany and Japan whose immense finance-capital power was now beginning to overshadow America's.

It was as a by-product of this dramatic shift in the international balance of class and national forces that the careerist, opportunist, petty-bourgeois mentality of the CPSU cadres and leadership, delightedly embracing Washington's new soft-cop phase replacing the hard-cop threats of previous years, finally reached a qualitative turn in its slow degeneration from Marxist-Leninist philosophy and embraced Popular Front liquidationism totally.

Class-collaboration was always at the heart of this Stalinist policy in a defeatist search for bourgeois allies for the USSR, both in class forces within every domestic political struggle to isolate extreme reaction, and internationally to isolate fascist states such as German imperialism under Hitler, – but sought not as a temporary expedient tactic but as a new permanent class-collaborating order for the planet.

Not only was this illusion unattainable, it goes without saying, but it also implied ultimately a complete rejection of socialism by the Soviet bureaucracy itself.

The Marxist understanding of the class war essence of history was summed up by Lenin in his article *The Third International & its place in history*:

'Whoever has read Marx and has not understood that in capitalist society, at every acute moment, in every serious conflict of classes, the only thing possible is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat, has understood nothing of either Marx's economic or political doctrines.'

In the Spanish civil war, either the proletariat would have to set up a completely revolutionary dictatorship to harness the full potential mass might of the workers and peasants, – or else Franco and the fascist-putsch generals were bound to win.

But the revisionists abandoned Leninism, and tied the fate of the working class to that of petty-bourgeois par-

liamentary democracy by limiting the armed struggle to the 'defence of the (bourgeois) republic'.

This 'democratic' communist stance failed to win a single bourgeois state ally for Republican Spain (to counter the grotesque intervention by fascist Germany and Italy behind Franco) and could never provide the firm class leadership behind which the petty bourgeois masses can sometimes unite with the proletariat's stronger sense of purpose and resolve. Franco won easily, and the fascist blitzkrieg on the USSR two years later became inevitable.

The Soviet bureaucracy's simultaneous international 'peace' campaign similarly failed to halt the drive to inter-imperialist war (inherent in the insoluble capitalist economic crisis for worldwide trading and colonial hegemony); and only some neat last-minute footwork by Stalin in signing a non-aggression pact with Hitler (after the West had spurned an anti-fascist alliance with the USSR) avoided the Soviet Union having to fight the forces of warmongering imperialist crisis on its own. By turning Hitler West first (after the Munich agreement and other Anglo-Saxon conspiracies had initially attracted Hitler towards Eastern adventures, sacrificing Czechoslovakia, Austria, etc to the Third Reich's Nazi 'lebensraum' demands), – the USSR at least did end up in anti-fascist alliance with the West.

But that temporary expedient suiting both sides was farcically projected by Stalinism after 1945 into completely disarming myths about a 'peaceful road to socialism' and 'permanent peaceful competition between the two systems, capitalism and socialism' now being the way forward, which socialism's 'economic superiority' was bound to win because of capitalism's 'incurable slump' (see Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism* 1952, and *Bulletin* 641).

In other words, Third International revisionism was beginning to completely lose sight of the Marxist understanding that the world society could either be a bourgeois dictatorship or a proletarian dictatorship, but not both. One was bound to batter the other into the ground, and with Stalinism abandoning completely the aim of world socialist revolution, then revisionism's self-liquidation became only a matter of time unless Leninist philosophy could triumph again in the Third International.

Maoism flattered briefly but it was much closer to Stalin than Lenin on crucial questions of the fight for revolutionary theory, without which the world socialist revolution will not be completed. (See *ILWP Books* Volume 16). Peking quickly abandoned world revolutionary Marxist-Leninist leadership for nationalist-sectarian voluntarism.

The Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions heroically carried forward the revolutionary fight against imperialism, more tentatively followed elsewhere such as in Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Grenada, Angola, etc.

But as brilliant as these achievements were, there was still no challenge to Moscow's theoretical bankruptcy. Imperialism was being fought pragmatically, – not with leadership by a correct Marxist-Leninist philosophical world view, however.

As a result, Cuba's heroic internationalism in Angola, for example, routing the South African invasion forces, was marred by Havana's catastrophic endorsement of Allende's renewal of Popular Front nonsense in Chile in 1970 which predictably ended up in fascist

slaughter by 1973 because of revisionism's now reactionary ignorance of proletarian-dictatorship science, and even hostility to it. Similar disastrous theoretical confusion surrounded the brutal overthrow of the Grenadan revolution in 1983 (see *ILWP (EPSR) Books* vol 12).

With the lightweight bureaucratic philistine Gorbachev, this Third International retreat from Leninism reached its climax (see *ILWP (EPSR) Books*, volumes 11,13,17).

Naively convinced that world harmony was an instantly achievable goal through class-collaboration, Gorbachev bent over backwards further than any previous chief bureaucrat, and started trying to import and imitate some of the trivial superstructure of so-called 'capitalist democracy', ludicrously believing that Reagan's belated reluctant response to yet another Soviet 'peace' initiative meant that the imperialist and socialist systems could begin to merge together.

All that happened was that the dictatorship of the proletariat was finally buried politically as it already had been buried theoretically, and the Soviet workers state and planned economy began to be broken up for takeover by capitalist scrap-metal merchants.

Because of many decades of CPUS' retreats from Marxist-Leninist philosophy (see *ILWP (EPSR) Books* 3, 4, 6, and 7), the party's cadres were hopelessly all over the place in trying to resist Gorbachev's effective liquidationism.

His subjective-idealist devotion to propaganda miracles (such as 'a common European home', glasnost [openness], and an abstract perestroika [reconstruction] which remained in a perpetual muddle about what its final aims were) amounted in the end to a total capitulation merely to parliamentary cretinism, – the most trivial and ancient petty-bourgeois delusion imaginable.

Socialism can only be built in step with the conscious philosophical construction of a proletarian dictatorship under a leadership party of deliberately scientific Marxist Leninist revolutionary theory.

The Moscow bureaucracy was, in the finish, so far removed from a Marxist-Leninist world-revolutionary understanding that their spontaneous petty-bourgeois philistinism was completely hostile to the anti-imperialist essence of socialism.

The new mythology that socialism was defeated by capitalism is laughable. The potential greatness for a planned world economy under the dictatorship of the proletariat would put the 500-year epoch of bourgeois dictatorship greatness in world history as firmly in the shade as capitalism overshadowed the achievements of feudalism.

But the dictatorship of the proletariat was utterly betrayed by the cowardly vestiges of petty-bourgeois revisionism, worming their way back into the workers states because of a failure to carry forward the development of the revolutionary theory of Marxist-Leninist world leadership.

Despite the difficulties of relative economic backwardness, of being outnumbered, and of just having had to recover from the most devastating invasion-war in all history at the hands of German imperialism, the Soviet workers state was nevertheless able to match US imperialist nuclear encirclement threats blow for blow, eventually getting ahead in nuclear rocket potential and other weapons of advanced destructiveness.

And this ability to defend itself, after 70 years of socialist camp development, had grown steadily stronger over

the years, was not subject to boom and slump fluctuations, and was steadily increasing its sphere of influence over the planet. Soviet Russia had similarly risen to the challenge of Western imperialist aggression in the 1930s when Germany's fascist Third Reich was the threat.

The USSR and the socialist camp were brought down completely from within by a chronic failure of CPSU and Third International revolutionary philosophy to keep up with the world leadership obligations which had been thrust upon them.

In his 1920s work *Left-wing communism - an infantile disorder*, Lenin warned about the well-known dangers of ideological regression all the time that imperialism remained a powerful force on the planet:

'We in Russia are going through the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism, or the lower stage of communism. Classes have remained and will remain everywhere for years after the conquest of power by the proletariat.....Small commodity producers...must be re-educated and remoulded only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organisational work. They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere which permeates and corrupts the proletariat and causes constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternate moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralisation and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the organisational role of the proletariat (and that is its principle role) may be exercised correctly, successfully, victoriously. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle, - bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative, - against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force...Whoever weakens ever so little the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during the time of its dictatorship) actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.'

Lenin's description of how petty-bourgeois revolutionism joins with bourgeois reaction to deride the 'prolonged, slow, persistent struggle – bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative – by the proletarian dictatorship against the terrible force of the habits and traditions of the old society' is remarkably prophetic of the most decisive offensive against Leninism in modern history in support of Solidarnosc in Poland. The entire reformist, Trot, and Eurocommunist revisionist swamp joined forces with Reagan, Thatcher, the Vatican and the CIA to try to prevent the Polish workers state from reimposing centralised discipline over the Catholic revolt for bourgeois democracy (see *ILWP (EPSR) Books* 3, 4, & 7). Walesa's fascist worship of 'new order' capitalism in Japan, Sweden and Pilsudski Poland eventually caused a minority of the left swamp to jump off the Solidarnosc bandwagon. But, for example, *The Leninist* still refused to give unconditional support to the Polish workers state because these fair-weather fence-sitters feared further

'embarrassing difficulties' for Warsaw.

In a warning to the international working class of just how long and difficult would be the development of successful socialist states (especially in view of the frenzied disruption of the Soviet camp later by the fascist-imperialist blitz on the USSR by German, Italian & Japanese capitalism and their allies, followed by the US imperialist nuclear encirclement and \$billions Cold War propaganda subversion campaign, bribing dissidents etc.) Lenin adds:

'Under Soviet rule your proletarian party and ours will be invaded by a still larger number of bourgeois intellectuals. They will worm their way into the Soviets, the courts, and the administration, - for communism cannot be built otherwise than with the aid of the human material created by capitalism: and the bourgeois intellectuals cannot be expelled and destroyed, but must be vanquished, remoulded, assimilated and re-educated: - just as we must, in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty bourgeois prejudices at one stroke by a miracle at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, a resolution, a decree, - but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle

against mass petty bourgeois influences. Under Soviet rule these same problems...are arising anew within the Soviets, within the Soviet administration...Among the Soviet engineers, the Soviet school teachers and the privileged (the most highly skilled and best situated) workers in the Soviet factories, we observe a constant revival of absolutely all the negative traits peculiar to bourgeois parliamentarianism, - and we are conquering this evil, gradually, only by tireless constant, prolonged and persistent struggle, proletarian organisation and discipline.

Compared with these truly gigantic problems of re-educating, under the proletarian dictatorship, millions of peasants and small masters, hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals, of subordinating them all to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership, of vanquishing their bourgeois habits and traditions - compared with these gigantic problems it is childishly easy to establish under the rule of the bourgeoisie, in a bourgeois parliament, a really communist group of a real proletarian party.

Lenin - Left Wing Communism - an infantile disorder.

(to be continued). Build Leninism. RB

Failure to identify the epoch as one dominated by inter-imperialist conflict has kept the left divided by continuing chaos. The 'new world order' is a myth, and the collapse of revisionism has created far more opportunity than damage. Ultra-leftism's combination of relentless defeatism with wild revolutionary fantasies reveals petty-bourgeois subjectivism aplenty but nothing about the real world. Militant syndicalism still a wider problem than just round the SLP

[EPSR No868 27-08-96]

Continuing confusion over what stage has been reached in the crisis of the imperialist system and in the international class struggle is why the 'left' of the labour movement in Britain (and elsewhere) remains hopelessly split on everything.

What to do about the Labour Party; what the Liverpool dockers strike represents; what attitude to take to Scargill's Socialist Labour Party; what to make of the collapse of CPSU revisionism and the Soviet Union; how to regard the failed Trotskyite entryists; etc, etc, are complex questions still keeping workers in disarray.

A middle-class mentality of anti-communist defeatism and anti-Marxist philistinism lies at the heart of these difficulties. Large sections of the workers movement have been permanently cowed by decades of blistering anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda in ways that are sometimes hard to detect, espe-

cially when this retreat is covered up by an aggressive posture of ultra-leftism, - a widespread phenomenon resorted to by many more sects and tendencies than just the Trotskyists and state capitalists.

To fully overcome these weaknesses, the whole history of the anti-imperialist revolution worldwide from 1917 onwards is eventually going to have to be thoroughly reassessed and re-digested in unending open polemic and debate by the whole movement.

Until 70 years of anti-communist propaganda and petty-bourgeois cynicism and philistinism have been regurgitated and neutralised, the socialist cause will continue to remain on the run, - hounded and confused by middle-class ideological opportunism and muddle-headedness of all descriptions.

The route back towards at least nominal universal allegiance to

Marxist science, such as prevailed just before and after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, is best served by continuously systematically analysing the latest (i.e. highest) point of development of the worldwide conflict and balance of class and national forces which must of necessity always shed more light than ever on all anti-imperialist struggle that has gone before, and therefore provide ever-clearer guidance on what ought to happen next, - (provided, of course, that the analysis of the latest movement of class forces is correct, as seen from the vantage point of furthering the world socialist revolution).

The most widespread common current mistake remains the delusion that US imperialism really has been able to impose a powerful and intimidating 'new world order' for repressing the revolutionary movement, coupled with an undialectical estimation of the Soviet workers state's revisionist liquidation as a 'setback' for the working class.

The defeatism and incorrect perspectives on these questions gives rise to class-biased misunderstandings and unstable subjectivism on just about every other issue in the contemporary political world such as Ireland, Islamic fundamentalism, Blairism, the SLP, trade unionism, and the economy, etc.

A generally pessimistic outlook on how US imperialism is now supposedly able to impose a pacified settlement (i.e. a defeat) on every 'hot spot' of anti-imperialist struggle around the globe is frequently coupled with an ultra-left frenzy about "missed revolutionary opportunities" here, there, and everywhere.

Both attitudes spring from the same deep lack of confidence about the world socialist revolution which is basically influenced by middle-class experience of the colossal postwar economic boom in the West, unprecedented, and of the most phenomenal ideological onslaught in all history, sustained anti-communism on every cultural front, also unprecedented.

This is the fundamental class position of most modern 'Trotskyism' (any responsibility for this shallowness that is down to Trotsky's own much deeper but historically flawed philosophy is not addressed here) which has hitherto continued to see the need for some opportunist 'connection' with 1917 while accumulating more and more spontaneous hostility to the core of Leninism, - the science of proletarian dictatorship and all its vast historical implications (see last Review [in EPSR Books Vol 30 on Trotsky Part 3]).

The struggle in Ireland pro-

vides a classic illustration of how gloomy petty-bourgeois perspectives in Britain, for example, have alternately latched onto the national-liberation fight in a delirium about 'imminent full-scale socialist revolution' being possible, - only instantly to lapse back into the blackest vision of 'betrayal', 'defeat', and 'imperialist victory', etc, as soon as the frenetic subjectivism of their 'revolutionary analysis' proves wrong.

Socialist revolution is simply not what has been taking place in Ireland; and all of the current Trot demonising of Gerry Adams as 'selling out' in order to 'do a deal with British imperialism' so as to become a 'future Irish President', etc, reflects only on the subjective confusion of Sinn Féin's 'exposers' and misses all of the highly revealing and interesting developments in the actual conflict between petty-bourgeois nationalism and imperialism (see EPSR Books on Ireland Parts 1-7).

Maverick socialist revolutions in advance of or out of step with the general contemporary trend of the world revolution are not impossible, of course, as Cuba demonstrated. And the role of the subjective factor in finally making the revolution, once the revolutionary opportunity has arisen, is a crucial understanding of all who seriously try to grasp Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the vital part that revolutionary theory must play in the real emancipation of civilisation (from class-war turmoil).

Spontaneous upheavals which help to transform entire situations are also well understood, especially with regard to Ireland where Lenin properly trounced all his 'Marxist' rivals by his ecstatic welcome of the 1916 Easter Rising 'putsch' by petty-bourgeois nationalists which others denounced as a 'useless harmful diversion' but Lenin rejoiced in as an inspired act of heroism and defiance which indicated huge revolutionary trouble in store for British imperialism and which would help ferment it, and not just in Ireland.

But all of these considerations are simply irrelevant to the plain fact that most Trots have tried completely misleading their followers and all workers about what is actually happening in Ireland.

It has not been a socialist revolution from the start. It has been a national-liberation struggle. And while communists might have led it, and it would have been better if they had led it, and proper to take it uninterruptedly, as far as possible, into the socialist revolution if they had led it, - the leadership in reality was overwhelmingly captured by Provisional Sinn Féin, and a hugely important, influential, and

triumphant national-liberation struggle then ensued.

That is what has happened, which is the first thing for Marxist-Leninist science to get right. Secondly, it is precisely a Marxist-Leninist outlook which says that in this instance, national-liberation was no 'limitation' on the revolutionary struggle, that it was a clear and important triumph over imperialism in its context, and that the further 'revolutionary opportunity' to damage imperialism some more rests exactly with being able to see what a setback for all imperialism, and for British imperialism especially, this defeat in Ireland was and still is.

British imperialism may well be the coming weakest link in the imperialist chain, or one of them, just as Russia was in 1917 – but declining British imperialism managed to get out of an entire empire without being toppled directly by socialist revolution; and the long retreat from Ireland which began in the 1960s, has been further immunised against a revolutionary socialist takeover by having created tame Green Toryism in the South in an earlier epoch, by having cemented the Partitioned bit of Ireland into a constitutional part of the UK proper, and by having left in place there a **majority** population of the most rabid imperialist-minded British reactionaries imaginable.

To casually see an 'easy opportunity for socialist revolution' in these circumstances is evidence either of miraculous powers of dialectical materialist analysis which would have had even Marx and Lenin gasping with admiration, or else of extreme foolishness and lightmindedness.

Expressing this frustrated mania for 'socialist revolution at all costs' in its milder form of only seeing Ireland as a 'stepping stone to further revolutionary development' which Sinn Féin allegedly has sold out and undermined, in no way hides the petty-bourgeois class essence of this approach.

The objective circumstances of what is the likely outcome on the ground are still being ignored. The objective value of that national-liberation struggle for a serious longterm non-subjective

perspective on the world socialist revolution is missed entirely.

The only thing emerging from these situations is the frustrated impotence of middle-class 'revolutionary' dilettantism which has infected the affluent Western world like a plague ever since the Soviet proletarian dictatorship was established in 1917, and which was even more mightily reinforced after the establishment of proletarian dictatorship in China and East Europe following the 1945 debacle for imperialism's deliberately-created counter-revolutionary aggressive offensive, – but which has never once itself built an atom of 'socialism' anywhere, or remotely threatened to topple any bourgeois ruling class anywhere, or even run a model 'democratic' and 'efficient' party anywhere.

The daft cries of 'stageism' in these circumstances are just part of the same ultra-left 'revolutionary' fantasy, and not remotely attempting any serious further investigation of the progress of the actual national-liberation struggle.

The completion of Ireland's self-determination (following the partial independence conceded by British imperialism after the ferocious national-liberation war of 1918-1921) has never been off the historical agenda. It was Marx himself who first identified Irish bourgeois nationalism as destined to play a key role in the emancipation of the people of Ireland because of the continuing imperialist character of the relationship with England, because of the weakness of the reformist leadership of the English working class, because of the weakness of revolutionary socialism in the Irish working class, and because of the special difficulties created by the Orange colonial mentality in Ulster, later to become (partially) the partitioned-off Occupied Zone of Ireland, where the imperialist corruption of the working-class colonist population was a thousand times worse than the pro-imperialist corruption of the English working class.

Lenin summed up this situation in his May 1914 work *The right of nations to self-determination*:

At first Marx thought that Ireland would not be liberated by the national movement of the oppressed nation, but by the working-class movement of the oppressor nation. Marx did not make an Absolute of the national movement, knowing, as he did, that only the victory of the working class can bring about the complete liberation of all nationalities. It is impossible to estimate beforehand all the possible relations between the bourgeois liberation movements of the oppressed nations and the proletarian emancipation movement of the oppressor nation (the very problem which today makes the national question in Russia so difficult).

However, it so happened that the English working class fell under the influence of the liberals for a fairly long time, became an appendage to the liberals, and by adopting a liberal-labour policy left itself leaderless. The bourgeois liberation movement in Ireland grew stronger and assumed revolutionary forms. Marx reconsidered his view and corrected it. "What a misfortune it is for a nation to have subjugated another." The English working class will never be free until Ireland is

freed from the English yoke. Reaction in England is strengthened and fostered by the enslavement of Ireland (just as reaction in Russia is fostered by her enslavement of a number of nations!).

Things turned out differently. Both the Irish people and the English proletariat proved weak. Only now, through the sordid deals between the English Liberals and the Irish bourgeoisie, is the Irish problem being solved (the example of Ulster shows with what difficulty) through the land reform (with compensation) and Home Rule (not yet introduced). Well then? Does it follow that Marx and Engels were "Utopians", that they put forward "impracticable" national demands, or that they allowed themselves to be influenced by the Irish petty-bourgeois nationalists (for there is no doubt about the petty-bourgeois nature of the Fenian movement), etc.?

No. In the Irish question, too, Marx and Engels pursued a consistently proletarian policy, which really educated the masses in a spirit of democracy and socialism. Only such a policy could have saved both Ireland and England half a century of delay in introducing the necessary reforms, and prevented these reforms from being mutilated by the Liberals to please the reactionaries.

The right of nations to self-determination

No one wants a 'stage-ist' wait for the completion of Ireland's national-liberation before the decks are better cleared for the uninterrupted onward march to the socialist revolution in Britain and Ireland. It just happens to be the outcome of the actual historic international balance of class and national forces in this particular conflict, – as already well scientifically analysed by Marx and Lenin themselves. Why do 'Marxists' find it so difficult to accept that a situation described by Marx and Lenin should have been proved so accurate, and farsighted?

Ridiculing Adams for his alleged 'bourgeois glory' personal ambition is just pathetic and cheap. Would the same jeers apply to Bobby Sands, MP, in the same leadership with Adams, who starved himself to death (along with nine other Irish revolutionary nationalists of colossal courage and determination) in order to beat imperialism? Adams has served his time in concentration camps, under brutalising interrogation-arrests, and in active service of various kinds. These knee-jerk Trot reactions about 'Adams the sell-out traitor' once again only tell about the subjective mental mess of the ultra-'left' insulters, and provide no objective analysis at all about the actual conflict between Irish national-liberation and British imperialism.

Going through all the different moments and phases of the Irish national-liberation campaign to pick out this or that occasion when 'the revolutionary-socialist working-class character of the struggle had nearly gained the upper hand', etc, is equally unrewarding, – insulting to the tactical and strategic political and military revolutionary abilities of the IRA/Sinn Féin in so successfully leading the mass movement for so long, – and conceited about the would-be 'achievements' of armchair revolutionary socialists sitting safely on the sidelines in England. It is just silly sour grapes to doubt the enormously-respected leadership position which Sinn Féin and the IRA have

won on sheer merit, ability, intelligence, and dedicated hard work and sacrifice.

The reality and significance of the national-liberation victory in Ireland is missed because Trots are viewing it through the wrong historical perspective.

World imperialist crisis is the overall perspective, and British imperialist decline within that crisis provides the immediate arena for struggle. Let the subjective factors of revolutionary organisation, determination, and activism flourish as never before; but the objective conditions of the international balance and conflict of class and national forces remains the most powerful determinant of what progress can be made towards the world socialist revolution at any time.

Irish national-liberation has a chance because its own heroic and ferocious revolutionary fight has staggered unconfident and enfeebled British imperialism, and because it has suited daggers-drawn British imperialist rivals to let London bleed a bit by half-sympathising with Irish nationalism, and because some solution has been demanded before the armed revolutionary features of the struggle gained even more widespread international popular credibility as the way to battle against monopoly-capitalist interests of a colonial or neo-colonial character.

The victory will precisely be a re-united bourgeois Ireland at some stage, – but none the less a victory for all that, since the complete and reunified independence of Ireland was exactly what the foul skulduggery of Partition was determined to prevent for all time, in the brutal arm-twisting imposed by British imperialism (then still the world power) in 1921 on the threat of total annihilation of all Ireland, – establishing the fictitious 'Northern Ireland' as an inalienable constitutional part of the United Kingdom proper, permanently. The strength and skill of the political and military triumph of the IRA/Sinn Féin alone has put a stop to all that, – a colossal historical achievement.

By concentrating on the hold-ups to the final formal concession of eventual reunification of Ireland and the virtual dismantling of 'Northern Ireland', as a separate British country, as it used to be, – defeatist middle-class ideology has tried to make out a case for saying that since the Soviet Union's collapse, all anti-imperialist struggles, Ireland's included, have been doomed to 'hot-spot pacification' by the now almighty US-imperialist 'new world order'.

This is all complete fantasy. It is a mis-assessment of the always-phony 'Cold War balance' which never prevented US imperialism from doing 90% of the colonial skulduggery it wanted to get away with internationally, even before the USSR's liquidation by revisionism.

It totally misses the key role played by sharpening inter-imperialist crisis in the wretched class-collaboration deals made by US imperialism with Gorbachev & Co. And it applies to Ireland in a wholly mindless way an imaginary schema which is all wrong anyway, – the loss of the USSR not only having very little effect on the vast majority of world situations, but the demise of revisionism also being as much a positive development as the dismantling of the Soviet workers state was a negative one.

Despite the supposed Cold War threat of 'Soviet retaliation', Western imperialism carried out more than 200 acts of colonial war, armed counter-revolution, 'domestic' putsches, key lethal assassinations, murderous embargoes and blockades and the like, grotesque bribery and propaganda interventions in other countries affairs, etc, etc, etc, since 1945 – among them such major anti-communist and pro-imperialist operations as the defeat of the left in the Greek civil war; the bloody suppression of the Malaysian national-liberation movement; the prolonged French and American colonial wars against the peoples of Indochina; invasion and attempted occupation of the North Korean workers state; interference to prevent the communist liberation of the whole of China; countless onslaughts on national-liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including the assassination of such outstanding revolutionary leaders as Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral, etc; brutal repression of the Algerian independence war; massacre of the entire Indonesian communist party; crushing of the nationalist revolution in Iran in favour of the Shah; constant collusion to achieve the Zionist colonisation of Palestine; installation of the Saddam reactionary clique in Iraq; armed sabotage of the Arbenz revolution in Guatemala;

overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile; armed destruction of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua; overthrow invasion of the New Jewel revolution in Grenada; occupation of Panama to bring down Noriega nationalism; endless armed intervention against Dominican Republic and Haiti, and counter-revolutionary attempts against Cuba; criminal air-blitzes against Libya, Lebanon, Somalia, Egypt; outrageous endless counter-revolutionary subversion against East European workers states; etc, etc, etc, etc, for more than 200 such reactionary operations since World War II, – and all of this long before Gorbachev's liquidationist agreement with Reagan was even dreamed of.

Against this virtually endless catalogue of world wide Western counter-revolutionary tyranny which imperialism got away with before revisionism's final self-liquidation, – what **unusual** setbacks have been suffered since? The loss to Cuba of its economic trade with Russia (which nevertheless was only some less-than-totally-satisfactory defiance of an unchallenged complete US blockade anyway) is one obvious blow, as would be the notional loss of the previous Soviet commitment to defend Cuba and to supply arms, (although with Moscow's inaction over the not-unrelated and scot-free US imperialist counter-revolutionary savagery against Chile, Grenada, Nicaragua, and Panama, – it is less than certain that Khrushchev's 1963 threat to go to war with the USA over Cuba would ever have

been repeated). The unrestrained US military savaging of Iraq is another 'United Nations' aggression which the USSR might have acted to restrain, on a good day. Likewise the NATO aggression against the Serbs. But on both these issues, there must be some doubt that if US imperialism had been determined to go the whole hog anyway, the Soviet Union would then have intervened militarily. And to what great purpose, it must be asked, would the Soviet workers state have intervened in any case? – on behalf of reactionary Saddam nationalism and reactionary Serbian nationalism, neither of which was worth any positive support. Just to frustrate yet more US imperialist intrigues to add to the more-than 200 operations since WWII? Hardly likely, and hardly worth risking world nuclear war over.

The loss of the East European workers states, the increased isolation of the remaining socialist states, and the loss of the example of the Soviet workers state itself as the most outstanding living challenge to the 'indispensability' of free-market-forces-democracy and a world imperialist bourgeoisie, – are much more serious considerations.

But once again it must be asked, what has been lost in practice? Degenerated by revisionism, Moscow and Beijing had long since ceased any worthwhile co-operation as far as their influence on completing the world socialist revolution was concerned, the major issue facing civilisation. The workers states in East Europe were likewise utterly castrated

by revisionism and incapable or unwilling to do much for the cause of the socialist revolution internationally, – cheap books and travel apart.

And the Soviet example of planned socialism in action had always been unable to prevent the West from creating as much anti-communist propaganda out of Soviet misfortunes, mistakes or crimes, as inept revisionism was capable of deriving pro-communist propaganda from.

And how was the problem of revisionism, – that complete block on the revival internationally of the world revolutionary philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, – to be overcome anyway? It is nice to think that the Leninist struggles of the EPSR, for example, could have in time transformed themselves into the subjective party-building factor to change the whole of history. But hardly realistic. What in fact has happened is that moribund revisionism has finally pursued the logic of its essentially class-collaborating philosophy to its now-obvious conclusion, and liquidated itself, – dying the death that was its due because it refused or was incapable of coming back to revolutionary life.

The workers states perished too for the best reason of all, – as a living demonstration that the building of socialist society is either the most conscious rational act of the whole of civilisation requiring profound leadership and an unprecedented democratic mass involvement, or it is nothing.

With the degeneration of



Imperialism has waged non-stop repressive wars to maintain its world dominance like these "Rambo" style contras used for bloody undermining of the Nicaraguan revolution in the 1980s

revolutionary theory, the workers states themselves were doomed, – unfit to survive.

With the failure to identify the retreat from theory as the real crime of Stalinist revisionism, the fate of the remaining workers states must be regarded as still in the balance, – especially in the light of the continuing delay in the resumption of revolutionary socialist advance elsewhere on the planet, which might spark off a renewal of Marxist-Leninist science everywhere.

But what all this ‘gloom’ establishes, of course, is the possibility at last of clearing up the mass of confusion bequeathed by revisionism internationally, always impossible all the time that the Soviet workers state itself still survived, hopelessly crippled by theoretical leadership-degeneration, but still enough of a living achievement of what the dictatorship of the proletariat could create following the overthrow of the bourgeois ruling class, and what would still be worth repeating everywhere if possible, even in its enfeeblement.

With the Soviet workers state still in place, – such a colossal historic gain, – the dethronement of revisionism would always remain blocked by the natural human conservatism of fellow-travelling acolytes, apologists, and opportunists. With the lamed Soviet workers state no more, – and gone too (or disappearing) all its unthinking loyalist parties in the capitalist countries, – then the revival of Marxist-Leninist science can begin again on a far wider scale.

But apart from all this, the notion that the collapse of the Soviet Union had any direct deleterious effect on the Irish national-liberation struggle is a bit obscure anyway, (as some Trots argue in order to cement their view of universal defeats for anti-imperialism at the hands of the now unchallengeable US ‘new world order’).

Firstly, in most regions of the world, US imperialist behaviour is hardly much more aggressively brutal and offensive now than it was before; and certainly on Ireland, no Trot has yet been able to specify any date on which Washington’s attitude to the Irish national-liberation struggle is alleged to have taken a turn for the worse. On the contrary, most of the superficial evidence would suggest that American sympathy for Irish emancipation has grown faster and become more blatant in the last five years than ever before.

That is certainly how the beleaguered Orange colonists see it, – and Sinn Féin and the SDLP too, and Dublin.

Secondly, Moscow’s role in its last revisionist five years was

increasingly to identify itself internationally with every reactionary ‘anti-terrorist’ stunt got going by the West, signing deceitful imperialist ‘peaceful methods’ declaration after declaration. So how was the loss of that particular prop to imperialist reaction a blow to IRA/Sinn Féin?

At this point, these Trot-defeatist arguments spread wings and take off for never-never land. Worldwide pessimism is the answer. “It is not just in Ireland that imperialism has forced anti-imperialist struggles into retreat. The only gain for anti-apartheid in South Africa was to allow blacks to become bourgeois, and to have a black president at the head of an imperialist state. The PLO have been denied their rights in Palestine and fobbed off with a bantustan. With reactionary Islamic fundamentalists now in charge everywhere, there is no revolution at all any more. The former centres of anti-imperialist struggle have been pushed back further than the total reaction now taking Afghanistan back to the Middle Ages,” etc, etc.

Well, Islamic fundamentalism is certainly a reactionary ideology, and it is being manipulated by forces which bear not the remotest good will towards the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist revolution.

But all such matters need analysing in their dialectical motion, not statically. Why, where, and how did fundamentalism come in? Only by mouthing the most outspoken revolutionary promises of all, and the most thoroughgoing anti-imperialism of all, – in Iran in 1979 to rouse the down-trodden masses of South Tehran to oust the Shah and the hated Western imperialist domination by a total revolutionary upheaval before the slow-witted revisionist communist party saw the opportunity, seized the chance, and made a blistering socialist revolution out of the spontaneously developing uprising. And from such an understanding, it is utterly impossible to conclude that the tide of history is running in imperialism’s favour and against the world socialist revolution unless one’s head is stuck on back-to-front, upside-down, and lodged firmly up one’s own rectum anyway.

Fundamentalism is conducting a desperate race against time to try and hold back a rampaging spontaneous revolutionary ferment which is sweeping the entire Middle East (and further afield) in the light of the humiliating collapse into total paralysis and pro-Western toadyism of the previously dominant Arab and muslim bourgeois national-liberation movements, – all the way from Morocco to Pakistan and beyond.



American Army's way of interrogation.

The reality of revisionist delusions in a permanent peaceful coexistence path to socialism and building of a better society has been constantly reasserted by imperialism

Of course Hamas, Hizbollah, and Islamic Jihad are for a thoroughly reactionary ideology. But they mouth revolutionary fight (which puts Arafat’s degenerate bourgeois nationalism on the well-merited path to class-collaborating pro-imperialist oblivion) because they dare not leave the door open for all-out proletarian-dictatorship-communist revolution which is inevitably coming up the line fast. Does that make the Intifada and the rapid development of Arab guerrilla-war skills a victory for imperialism? Is the undermining of Arafatism a victory for imperialism?

To thus conclude is so incurably pessimistic that it is a wonder that these Trots can even bother getting out of bed in the morning any more. Clearly the world revolution continues on the march, endlessly temporarily held back and diverted here and there, – but relentlessly on the march everywhere.

The genuine Afghan tragedy was merely the Soviet revisionist tragedy in advance, possibly the saddest cost of all. But that was part of the insoluble problems created worldwide by revision-

ism, not strictly an aspect of the dialectical complications of the Middle East revolution. But even so, the greater historical driving force has even managed to have a bizarre final word in this sorry episode whereby some groups of fanatical Islamic fundamentalists, recruited for reactionary service in Afghanistan in the pay of Western imperialism, are now turning against that imperialist influence to demand some serious accommodating to certain Koranic ideals, – which nowhere are really possible because of the world imperialist economic trade-war crisis and the totally corrupt stooge existence lived by every pro-imperialist regime throughout the entire Arab and muslim world.

Islamic fundamentalism remains totally barmy, and in the wrong epoch by a feudal era or two. But equally barmy Puritanism made the great English Revolution of the 17th century. And Islamic fundamentalism will in the same way only be able to latch onto the direction history is taking anyway, and not significantly hold it back, in the great socialist revolution of the 20th and 21st

centuries. The class economics of capitalist production will decide which direction history can move in. And imperialist exploitation is already far too advanced throughout the Arab and muslim worlds to head off the proletarian socialist revolution now.

Fascism? Of course fascism is a danger. But tyrannical dictatorship in the service of imperialist reaction is nothing like the full description of what historically is meant by fascism. Such reactionary dictatorships are ten a penny throughout the imperialist world throughout the imperialist epoch. But there was only one real fascism, – the recourse by an advanced imperialist power, – the most advanced in some ways, – to extreme barbaric jingoistic militarism in order to settle accounts primarily with all rival imperialist powers. Islamic fundamentalism hardly fits the bill. It is a diverted Third World national-liberation movement. And far too late for any decisive longterm role in the imperialist epoch anyway. The Iranian ayatollocracy is already deep in crisis. Fundamentalism at best can only hold on for as long as it takes for the international communist revolution to get going again. Which will not be for very long. Everywhere that US imperialism now looks, there is growing spontaneous revolutionary trouble, – from Mexico to Korea, from Russia to southern Africa. Universally, communist revolutionary theory is what is lacking. Universally, it is the one thing that petty-bourgeois defeatist ultra-leftism is hopeless at. Build Leninism.

So subjectively dominant is this pessimism that even the overthrow of apartheid is described as a 'victory for imperialism' simply because the dismantling of this feudal-colonial bastion of monopoly-capitalist domination and reaction throughout the whole African continent, by the black national-liberation revolution did not carry through uninterruptedly into the socialist revolution, – "which is how we armchair socialists would have handled things" it is almost possible to hear being muttered. Can the ridiculous contradiction of defeatist petty-bourgeois conceit become more farcical? Of course the anti-feudal anti-colonial black liberation movement was bourgeois nationalist dominated. Of course a Leninist party, instead of the hopelessly revisionist SACP, might have been in a position to lead the liberation struggle straight on to the socialist revolution, which will clearly be needed to combat deepening capitalist crisis under the dictatorship of the white-dominated bourgeoisie. But still none of these considerations remotely turns the long-fought-

for overthrow of the apartheid regime (which Moscow revisionism did not in fact put itself out greatly to help) into a victory for imperialism and a defeat for revolution. And least of all as a result of the revisionist USSR's collapse, as the Trot-defeatists try to pretend.

The worst mistake of all of the pessimist 'left' middle class is the failure to grasp the crucial role which inter-imperialist crisis played in the steps which led to Moscow revisionism's final self-liquidation as the leadership of the Soviet workers state's revolutionary proletarian dictatorship, because this omission misled the international working class more than anything.

Fabulously affluently successful US imperialism, by far the greatest and wealthiest power in the history of the world, was just as internationally dominant before Gorbachev as after. And it was because Reagan's administration offered Moscow some important money-saving disarmament deals, and more friendly cooperation to replace the 'evil empire' demonisation, that Gorbachev & Co rolled onto their backs like tickled puppy dogs, instantly spouting such infamous nonsense as deals with the West to "build our common European home", signing anti-terrorist declarations, and introducing the counter-revolutionary glasnost and perestroika to deliberately dismantle the dictatorship of the proletariat to facilitate such international class-collaborating liquidationism.

But why did the Reaganauts make these dramatic offers (at Reykjavik, for example, which put Western reaction into total uproar) and which gained such an unexpected bonus of Soviet proletarian dictatorship's self-liquidation?

Not out of strength. On the contrary. The Washington proposals were made out of desperate weakness. The critical problem was the growing German and Japanese financial, economic, industrial, commercial, and political rivalry which was proving impossible for US imperialism to effectively fight against with sharpening trade war, all the time that the enormous unilateral cost of leading the 'Cold War 'containment' of communism was carried on with, full blast.

The 'world leadership' Cold War posturing had brought US imperialism colossal advantages in trade and political influence, getting half the world to finance the costly advanced armaments research and production which subsidised the lucrative leading position of US technology and science.

But still Germany and Japan had caught up and were by now

beginning to forge well ahead in certain crucial economic strengths and industrial developments. Only by cost savings on some of the more spectacular but expensively over-elaborate 'Western defence' measures, – and by creating a climate for sharper trade-war offensives against Germany and Japan (and others), – could US imperialism start trying to feel confident again about hanging onto its valuable world-leadership position. Hence the specific heavy rocketry disarmament deals. Hence the degree of limited reconciliation with the 'evil empire'. Continued international anti-communism remained the banner. But inter-imperialist trade war was fast becoming the real focus. This is where the real challenge to US imperialist world domination lay.

In missing this crucial development, ultra-left middle-class defeatism has disoriented itself completely. They get the Soviet liquidation wrong. They get US imperialism wrong. They get the character of the epoch wrong. They get all the consequent detailed situations wrong as well, like Ireland.

It is the endless divisions caused by all these confusions which keeps the socialist movement divided, rather than specific sectarian feuds, or particular demagogic individuals, or bans and proscriptions themselves as such. Scargill blocks *Militant*, the CPGB, and others, more out of the bad labour movement tradition of unresolved and unpolemised difficult questions than because he is personally politically backward and authoritarian. The whole of the 'left' is still in the same timid boat of only taking on board what they think they can handle comfortably.

The true spirit of Marxism-Leninism, – the ability (even eagerness) to publicly correct your own first thoughts when a better idea comes along, is still dormant.

It shows around the Liverpool docks dispute that plain speaking and open polemic are still far from commonplace, in that much of the attention by the 'left' is along the lines of an old-fashioned trade-union battle in the class-collaborative days of the boom where "a bit more solidarity, a bit more militancy, a bit more rank-and-fileist disrespect for current union leaderships, and a bit more independence from Labour Party electoral considerations, would still do the trick."

General developments in the capitalist crisis would raise doubts about this, however. The dockers employment in Liverpool looks a survival of the old closed-shop agreements where there was an element of the union stewards collectively disciplining

the workforce themselves, and controlling entry to it, in return for class-collaborative stable agreements with the employers, marked by periodic squabbling between them over obscure details of payments, hours, and conditions, etc. And it looks as if in step with the changed times, the employers are determined to wreck this relationship now, put an end to class-collaborative stable agreements, and drive for far greater and far more ruthless exploitation.

The real answer to all this only lies in new politics, not in fresh militancy along the old lines. The 1994-85 miners strike was an epic in trade-union fighting abilities and class solidarity, but from the start it was always going to be historically impossible to restore the boomtime 'Plan for coal' or a boomtime Labour Government to implement it; and the treachery to the strike from the TUC and the Labour Party quickly reinforced this turning-point lesson. The class-collaborative postwar boom period was coming to an end. Only prolonged imperialist crisis and new revolutionary politics now lay ahead.

This is likely to prove to be the outcome in Liverpool too, but collectively, the 'left' sects are avoiding saying so very loudly, if they are saying it at all. The silliest silence of all is from the SLP where Scargill still hesitates fully to grasp the greatest lesson of his political life, – that the class-collaboration days are over, and only revolution lies ahead. He formed the SLP because of the Labour Party's retreat even further from the class war than its purely decorative Clause IV promise of socialism, but now he does not know what to do with it.

Scargill remains stuck in 'left' reformism, and *Militant*'s 'Socialist Alliance' alternative remains stuck there with him, – putting out a 'militant'-sounding leaflet to dockers proclaiming 'new politics' and declaring the need for a "radically different way of organising society so that the many benefit and not the few", etc, – but still implying that an all-inclusive reorganisation on the left, plus more militancy around the dockers, will push back the employers and Blairism.

Obviously, there is an element of truth in this, – and a big new centrist political movement, – implying revolution in words but still strictly reformist in its actual perspectives, – will undoubtedly develop, and will undoubtedly be a useful step forward. But it will still be a million miles from the revolutionary understanding of imperialist crisis that the working class now desperately needs above all else. The employers and bourgeois parliamentary politics cannot be pushed back

to a renewed class-collaborating boom period. That is gone forever. Imperialist crisis, – and ever-sharper trade war and class war, – are the only future now, starting with a counter-revolutionary onslaught by the ruling class on workers labour conditions and

living standards and welfare-state provisions, and ending with a proletarian revolution to get rid of capitalism and the ruling class once and for all. And the working class needs telling about this **now**, the sooner the better.

Build Leninism. RB

Incorrect manoeuvres around the SLP reflect fake-'left' inability to make the right analysis of the world situation and the international class struggle, or to see themselves clearly without subjective delusions. Ultra-left anti-communism outside the SLP is a worse problem than manifestations of bureaucratic conservatism inside it. Shame on CPGB attempts to finger SLP members

[EPSR No875 15-10-96]

The concrete situation in Britain in 1996 will finally be decisive for what is 'correct' in the tactics, strategy, and programme for solving the crisis of imperialism through socialism under a workers state.

All the Marxist-Leninist scientific understanding from analysing all previous experiences in the class-war conflicts of the capitalist system is indispensable as a training for how to struggle now.

But very specific and unusual conditions apply in 1996, almost unique in the world generally and in Britain in particular.

Never has there been such a time of overwhelming insistent demand, from every social factor and indicator going, for a socialist solution to capitalism's problems, coupled with such utter bankruptcy and confusion in socialist understanding and preparation for what needs to be done.

General acceptance of any international voice of authority in the question of building socialism and resolving the crisis of imperialism is at an all-time low at the same moment that even simple reformist gestures in the direction of socialism, or spontaneous single-issue protests of that nature, are also filled with doubt and compromise.

The background to this unprecedented ferment of aroused expectations but hesitant uncertainty is the astonishing superficial upheaval of the demise of the Soviet workers state, still only just beginning to be digested in all its profound implications, – plus the apparent 'triumph of history' for the imperialist system, which it is becoming increasingly obvious is not only not all that it seems but is in fact the exact opposite of what it seems, – the ultimate explosive crisis of the imperialist system in reality.

The self-liquidation by the Soviet revisionist bureaucracy

has totally altered the world's perception of things, but the commonest assumption that it is a "blow to socialism" is the one thing which it will not turn out to be (see EPSR No 870) [also No 886 14-01-97 (see page 60)].

At the present stage of society's evolution, the productivity, profitability, and innovativeness of capitalist 'free market' anarchy will always exceed that of an economy and state of civilised planned benefits and development for all.

But at the end of the 20th century, the balance is tipping in the aspirations of people worldwide towards that civilised planned society of honest endeavour and sustainable worthwhile development for all, and away from the shallow and violent uncertainties of the glitzy get-rich-quick life of the capitalist rat-race.

Even as the largish minorities "get what they want" who can push and shove successfully in capitalist society, they soon discover that their triumphant reality is not quite what they wanted anyway, and seek out ever more escapism via drugs, drink, and exhibitionism.

The majorities in all capitalist countries who are never going to quite get the success that the free-market lifestyles tell them that they should want and that should be theirs, – are discovering that the triumph of the imperialist 'new world order' means continuing, or even worsening, exactly the same old exploitation racket that capitalism has always stood for.

Worse still, the anarchic chaos of inter-imperialist conflict now shows every sign of getting out of hand again yet once more this century, which has already twice before totally devastated everyone's aspirations by world wars for monopoly-capitalist supremacy of catastrophic death and destruction.

The 'new world order' meanwhile is demonstrating that far from having any control over these faint but menacing developments & inter-imperialist rivalries ahead, it is falling down continually on even the easiest tasks it sets itself, leaving vast areas of the world like Africa, the Middle East, and large parts of Asia and Latin America in perpetual strife and misery, and hopelessly failing to complete even the simplest operations.

American ruling-class power is at the heart of this paradox, – seemingly omnipotent by being by far the greatest concentration of economic, political, and military might world history has ever seen, and overwhelmingly dominant over its rivals at the same time, by an unprecedented distance, – but yet simultaneously economically challenged by ruthless trade-war competition in commerce, science and technology led by Germany and Japan which could bring the whole US imperialist edifice crashing down; and undermined in parallel by America's own unresolved internal class-war crises, and by the philosophical self-doubt which has been eating away at the American bourgeoisie ever since its defeat in Vietnam and its dim realisation that the future of the worlds masses will only flourish at the expense of the USA's present dominant position, and associated privileged existence.

Specifically in Britain, all this confusion has resulted in the astonishing superficial upheaval of Labour abandoning publicly any further thought of socialism of any kind, in favour of unfettered market capitalism, – just at the moment when the Tory ruling class party is becoming paralysed with doubt and fear over what it ought to do next for British imperialism's survival in the trade-war rat-race to come, now that its own power is so much diminished compared to its rivals and 'allies' in the Common Market and in Japan and the USA.

Within such chaos, the unending long-term requirement of building ever stronger cadre strengths, armed with the most advanced and exhaustive Marxist-Leninist theoretical understanding, always remains the constant starting point and major task.

But thereafter, all is unclear.

The revolutionary cadres will eventually be the party of leadership of the working class, obviously. But by what route will that position be reached?

Even the most posturing of all the middle-class fake 'revolutionary' groups and sects tend to hedge their bets these days about claiming to be **the** revolutionary party by adopting a "towards the refoundation of" phrase to

describe their party ambitions, or by more or less openly continuing their entryist tradition (into the Socialist Labour Party nowadays, as well as still into the Labour Party in some cases), or by trying to build up alliances in rivalry to Scargill's party.

And revolutionary understanding itself has partially possibly moved on a bit to grasping that constitutions, rule-books, and party cards are not remotely the essential attributes of building a consistent Marxist-Leninist influence on the working class. It is winning the battle of ideas itself which is 99.99% of the successful struggle. All organisational questions will then tend to resolve themselves quite easily, – as should tactics and strategy if the historical and dialectical-materialist science has been learned thoroughly enough.

The SLP has openly welcomed communists to join and build the party, – the SLP party, obviously.



Philosophical self-doubt has eaten away at US imperialist confidence ever since defeat in Vietnam

Plainly, the SLP is a hotch-potch coalition at this stage, dominated naturally by Scargill's clearly centrist ideology, – the odd revolutionary phrase or two about abolishing capitalism, and being for Marxism, and believing in the extra-parliamentary struggle as much as the parliamentary struggle, – and being for international ties with socialist Cuba, etc, etc, plus specific short-programme demands which would clearly be incompatible with the continuation of the capitalist system. Determinedly lacking is the slightest scrap of imperialist-crisis theory, which is the heart and soul of Marx's scientific

understanding, but which Scargill refuses to contemplate to avoid being labelled 'hysterical revolutionary' and to avoid all contamination with such, as he sees it; similarly absent is any Marxist theory about the state and the absolute need to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only serious proposal to put to serious-minded workers about how the secret capitalist police-state, guarding ruling-class interests at all costs, is to be dealt with, – likewise played down for fear of frightening workers or of being ridiculed.

Joining the SLP therefore, clearly means helping to build up a centrist party and centrist influence among workers in Britain and beyond.

In the present circumstances, it seems obvious that this is going to happen anyway, because of the almost starting-from-scratch-again situation the mass movement is in, with no author-

itative voice of revolutionary leadership heard anywhere. None of the remnants of the previous world communist and Trotskyist movements have even begun to resolve the complex theoretical questions which brought them down, and none of the petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' new tendencies has a clue either.

From the SLP's development, communists could gain a growing militant arena in which to struggle for deepening Marxist-Leninist theory while building the SLP, bringing workers from anti-socialism to socialism, and from disorganisation to organisation.

Much Marxist experience of centrism is of a reactionary diversion, brought into the workers movement precisely to hold back the advance of revolutionary understanding.

Lenin's August 1915 description from "*Socialism and War*" is plain enough:

Kautsky, who in 1912 signed the Basle Manifesto on taking revolutionary advantage of the impending war, is outdoing himself in justifying and embellishing social-chauvinism and, like Plekhanov, joins the bourgeoisie in ridiculing any thought of revolution and all steps towards the immediate revolutionary struggle.

The working class cannot play its world-revolutionary role unless it wages a ruthless struggle against this backsliding, spinelessness, subservience to opportunism, and unparalleled vulgarisation of the theories of Marxism. Kautskyism is not fortuitous; it is the social product of the contradictions within the Second International, a blend of loyalty to Marxism in word, and subordination to opportunism in deed.

This fundamental falseness of "Kautskyism" manifests itself in different ways in different countries. In Holland, Roland-Holst, while rejecting the idea of defending the fatherland, defends unity with the opportunists' party. In Russia, Trotsky, while rejecting this idea, also defends unity with the opportunist and chauvinist *Nasha Zarya* group. In Rumania, Rakovsky, while declaring war on opportunism as being responsible for the collapse of the International, is at the same time ready to recognise the legitimacy of the idea of defending the fatherland. All this is a manifestation of the evil which the Dutch Marxists (Gorter and Pannekoek) have called "passive radicalism", and which amounts to replacing revolutionary Marxism with eclecticism in theory, and servility to or impotence towards opportunism, in practice.

And Bolshevik attitudes to opportunism and philistine eclecticism replacing scientific Marxist theory were no less rugged in the earlier phases of the growth of the mass socialist movement in Russia alongside the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, etc.

But in that first flourishing of the age of socialist revolutions, the universal acceptability of Marxist theory was hardly even challenged in general, nor the idea of building the revolutionary party. The fight was mostly about exposing the revisionist distortions of Marxism from various incorrect leaderships which directly affected the mass movement, convincing workers that Lenin's correct interpretation and development of Marxism was proving itself in practice against all rival theories.

Temporarily, the current scene bears no such character of embryonic revolutionary consciousness bursting forth everywhere, thirsting for Marxist-Leninist leadership.

What is required at the mo-

ment is to redevelop the mass socialist movement while still maintaining the fight for revolutionary theory.

The launch of the SLP, representing the more militant aspirations of the labour movement which had been confused and pushed back by the weight and influence of the massive postwar anti-communist offensive and bourgeois class-collaborative propaganda, provides exactly this opportunity to assist the overall longterm cause of the working class, and to demonstrate in practice the greater usefulness of a Marxist-Leninist understanding of building the socialist revolution compared to the activities of opportunist dilettantes.

There is no confusion about the limitations of centrism either, or of the militant left reformism which has been Scargill's undoubtedly heroic record in the labour movement hitherto, fighting outstanding class-war battles in the real interests of all workers against the very essence of capitalist-class exploitation and

social domination. It is these very limitations which have led Scargill to make his unique explanations to the working class of his own painful learning process, a principled and not uncourageous development which no other failed 'left' Labour or TUC leader has ever remotely contemplated emulating. It would be infinitely more valuable if far more was analysed publicly about exactly what great historic lessons should be drawn from the magnificent failure of the 1984-85 strike epic to prevent the state-powered destruction of the mining industry; but Scargill's acceptance of his earlier misguided Labourism is an acknowledged constant living reminder of the superiority of scientific socialist theory.

For Marxism-Leninism, there is nothing new in having to, temporarily, go along with potentially centrist developments for the wider and longer-term benefit of the working-class cause. The Bolsheviks, for example, adopted exactly this policy towards the initial leadership of the Soviets after the February Revolution in 1917, realising that there was no way better to get across to workers the likely limitations of Menshevik and SR conduct of Soviet government than to support their 'Marxist' capture of office and see their 'revolutionary' pretensions lead to disaster. This obviously meant genuinely working to ensure that the Soviets did seize and consolidate the taking of power initially in the name of the development of the whole working class and its cause, giving the maximum possible leadership to workers that lay within the grasp of Bolsheviks within that development. This obviously means helping to 'invent' the Soviets as organs of state power, and to 'prop up' the Soviets, even though initially they clearly were vehicles only for Menshevik and SR centrist policies. The working class had to continue to be led through this Menshevik-SR Soviet power experience, and the best way for the Bolsheviks to lead this development was from in front.

Another historical comparison, similarly not remotely proof of anything in itself but usefully illustrative of some of the depths and complexities of the problem, was the widely-accepted attitude on the left in the heyday of Labour Party power that any left-Labour pretensions (such as from Benn's challenge to the existing leadership) would best be dealt with by trying to get such 'socialist' promises elected to office in government in order to conclusively demonstrate to the working class the emptiness of such 'reformist' militancy. Working for a Benn government might well have been a legitimate and even

necessary part of the working-class cause in such a period.

If it is the correct thing to do now, helping to build the SLP requires communists to give whatever leadership they can to this working class cause, inevitably preparing to have to put up with a degree of bureaucratic rightwing intriguing and routinism on the way, but in compensation getting invaluable hands-on practice in diplomacy, tactics, and strategy. In theory the SLP looked like an initiative to tentatively support. In practice, it has thrown up a number of new problems and considerations.

In now being forced to deal with them, the theoretical understanding of where the struggle is going and needs to go has been infinitely deepened and strengthened.

The SLP is part of a new mood among workers wishing to break out of the sectarian isolation into which all had been driven by imperialism's final phase of pre-crisis, boomtime triumphalism. Not only does it re-create opportunities to deal steadily with an ongoing workers movement. It also requires a leap up in the pragmatic grasp of how the cause of socialism might further develop.

Even with the Labour Party's first great opportunist assault on governmental power in the 1920s when already plainly branded as a bourgeois labour party as the epitome of imperialism-dominated social chauvinism, – Lenin nevertheless called on British communists, about to form a serious smallscale mass party themselves with already enough support to warrant the imprisonment of some of its leading agitators just five years later prior to the General Strike, to "help Henderson or Snowden to beat Lloyd George and Churchill" in order to "help the majority of the working class to convince themselves by their own experience" of Labour's treachery and the correctness of communism, – meaning helping Labour's election victory. (The idea of the electoral pact with Labour was the **second** option for the moment when a united Communist Party had actually been formed from the four weak groups which were coalescing to build the CP, – one with strict **conditions** for such a deal. The first idea was just for helping Labour get elected as necessary for the working class's own development, in spite of the imminent successful launching (and relatively largescale by our own 1996 measurements) of the Communist Party.)

Even with such a reactionary anti-communist fraud as Labour's major-party development, Marxist revolutionary science dictated a big tactical compromise.

The SLP's development is not remotely to be compared to Labour's reformist evolution as the 'reformist' saviour of the imperialist system from the threat of communist revolution in the periods following the two inter-imperialist world wars. It is not remotely describable as another bourgeois labour party, or as the Labour Party mark II. Nor is it remotely useful to describe the SLP as the product of the defeat of the working class by imperialism, and therefore as a purely negative phenomenon.

The SLP is the opening up of a new centrist arena of struggle so that the best ideas and practice can prove themselves to the working class. It is a coalition of disparate forces which it would be pointless to regard as having been brought together in order to fail to build the SLP. Success is the aim. The most successful party-building methods and ideas will prevail.

If those turn out to be Labour reformism mark II or demagogic centrism, or revolutionary socialist clarity, – those are the ideas which will gain ground inside the SLP, reflecting the level of maturity of the working class.

Political consciousness develops socially and organisationally, as well as by the direct conflict of rival theories and programme. To miss out on crucial developments in working-class politics could mean disaster or isolation for any sectarian aloofness.

The struggle to build a larger-scale workers party for socialism than has been open to communists hitherto will be its own reward, even if the SLP does end up being swamped by TUC Labourism mark II due to the historical situation being less advanced than has been anticipated.

The mentality of trade-unionism (petty-bourgeois class-collaborationism) will, of course, continue anyway, always needing to be combated by revolutionary consciousness. Eventually it is transformed into pro-revolutionary trade-unionism.

None of this potential broad-front SLP activity should involve revolutionary socialists in the slightest retreat from Marxist-Leninist understanding of imperialist crisis and the further developments of the international class struggle. Having views on the eventual revolutionary nature of the conflict, and the organisation expressions that will make necessary, is no barrier to the most genuine fight to take the working class forward at this stage of SLP-type development. The phenomenon is an aspect of the working-class movement itself, and although it would be pointless to deny the enormous influence and role that Scargill himself will play in SLP develop-

ment, there is no requirement to praise any particular way of putting things or style of leadership.

Equally there is no point in trying to win the battle for a Marxist-Leninist understanding of socialism within a broad-front organisation by manoeuvring for the exclusion of rightwing tendencies. The more elements that abandon TUC-Labour 'reformism' to take up the SLP's challenge to abolish capitalism, the better, – no matter how class-collaboratively conservative or anti-communist their thinking initially. In the end, communists have got to win a majority of the working class to something close to revolutionary-socialist consciousness, no matter how much backwardness they have to be brought forward. What better place to start than in the SLP.

At the same time, there need be no necessary insurmountable conflict between mistaken SLP policies (as far as things stand at present) and the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. All policies will sooner or later be argued at conference, or even in the SLP press. Once again such struggles, should be regarded as opportunities, not impositions, – all of course depending on how things progress further inside the SLP from their reasonably promising position at present, and in which direction.

Marxist-Leninist ideas only need embodying in a revolutionary party programme as their ultimate expression, but not necessarily for their earlier development. Marxist circles are well able to cope with that if the ideas being developed give correct leadership, if the polemics are genuine, and if their organisational expression is adequate for the task of clarification and further expansion. Philosophical understanding, the very heart of Marxism-Leninism, is impossible to conceal and hard to censor.

Some self-proclaimed revolutionary socialists insist that the SLP's constitutional ban on the affiliation of other parties within the SLP makes a struggle for Marxist ideas to prevail in the broad-front party impossible.

What they really mean, of course, is that they think the revolutionary takeover of the SLP is now impossible.

They were wrong to start with, – on two counts. First it was a completely silly idea that Scargillism would be launched and would immediately allow itself to be taken over by sectarian entrists.

What the Scargill tradition stands for in the workers movement pulls far more weight than any 'revolutionary' sect, and will continue to do so for some time yet.

Secondly, any such frustrated

affiliates would have been kidding themselves about their 'Leninist' revolutionary credentials anyway in the light of such a poor piece of analysis.

There could be any number of phony 'communists' or 'Marxists' inside the SLP. There need be no reason for there to be any good communists outside the SLP who want to be in it, and active in it.

There is no organisation in Britain at the moment that is able to act as a visible revolutionary party. There are some sizeable left sects like the SWP or like *Militant* were, but they are all hopelessly anti-communist through and through.

On the other hand, there exist publications of very considerable Marxist-Leninist achievement, but there is no visible revolutionary party yet to speak of attached to them.

All would-be Marxist-Leninist cadres could easily work within the SLP by simply abandoning any attempt to build a party within a party. Secret sectarian entryism owes more to Walter Mitty than Karl Marx, and it is hard to discern what is lost to Marxist-Leninist circles that is gained by a tiny sect posturing as a revolutionary party, especially posturing as **the** revolutionary party.

Party actions certainly should bring forward party development if there is any correct leadership; but Marxist circles can develop just successfully in just the same way, – and even more so if the leadership is better.

Analysing the world correctly and preparing working-class political intervention on the issues is the advantage of party building for cadre development as opposed to circle building for cadre development. If a 'revolutionary' group can achieve this outside the SLP, they should stay there and get on with it. If they cannot break out of circle work without joining the SLP, then they should abandon the 'revolutionary party' pretence and genuinely join in building the SLP.

In the absence of established factional rights within the SLP, it is senseless to conduct public propaganda and agitation for an anti-leadership platform at such an early stage of the party's development. It would make nonsense of all the above considerations, and it would be especially clumsy sectarianism in the light of the fraught initial history of the SLP, driven frantic by witch-hunting hysteria and entryist fears. By all means let like-minded SLP communists have a drink and chat together as often as is valuable for developing the strength and achievements of the SLP, but all public posturing as an alternative platform is just more self-delusion from the same Walter Mitty stable which envisaged taking

over the SLP as the revolutionary party to start with. It is all the wrong game, and all at the wrong time.

Given the SLP's origins and likely broad-front centrist development, it is probably inevitable that the day will come when a mass SLP might split between a less revolutionary tendency and a more revolutionary wing, – for example over the question of a future workers state and how the essential question of socialist construction, – the dictatorship of the proletariat, – is to be tackled. But such necessary factional struggles are a long way ahead at the moment. It makes no sense for now to insist on building the SLP in only one direction and down only one narrow path. All such approaches are just sectarian revolutionary fantasy, and have missed the point of the SLP's development entirely.

Contemptuous dismissals of 'liquidationism' provide no answer to the foregoing arguments. The CPGB has just attacked the IBT Spartists breakaway for "their deep entryist opportunist burrowing" into the SLP, and for "being drawn to the right in pursuit of power in the SLP", and for "the crass hypocrisy of this sterile little sect" for publicly liquidating in order to join the SLP "under instruction from North America", and for it remaining

"crystal clear...from the behaviour of their comrades in the SLP and from their own self-described clumsy designation of these people as IBT 'supporters', that the IBT continues to exist as an organised group in Britain".

This is a monstrous deliberate fingering of the IBT, every bit as bad as the McCarthyite informing and witch-hunting which the CPGB accuse the SLP of. None of the IBT's polemical criticism of the CPGB which the *Weekly Worker* has drawn attention to can remotely warrant the CPGB turning fink on the IBT. It looks as if the CPGB's hurt pride at being challenged over its SLP policy has caused the *Weekly Worker* to turn stool-pigeon.

This is a truly alarming development for all who have attempted a comradely polemical relationship with the *Weekly Worker*. What is really "WRETCHED" (the *WW* headline) is not the IBT's arguments for liquidation into the SLP but the CPGB's treacherous reply.

Fingering comrades for wanting to discuss a different approach to SLP work than the half-and-half measures the CPGB tried, would also indicate that the CPGB has now given up on its own attempted relationship with the SLP via the "comrades who have joined the SLP as a direct result of our call". This savage back-stabbing of the IBT seems to signal abandonment of *Weekly Worker* concern that "the witch

hunt in the SLP has been exclusively directed at purported CPGB ‘members and supporters’”. Turning fink on the IBT is just asking for trouble.

And all of this would seem to confirm that the CPGB was confused from the start about the SLP and got its tactics in a muddle. It would seem to confirm that there really was an illusion that the SLP could be taken over to become the revolutionary party, a daft analysis.

Analysing the world correctly remains the CPGB’s weak point, and as the *EPSR* has consistently, and in detail, tried to tell the CPGB, it is this failing which undermines its only really worthwhile attempted argument against the IBT in a whole page of abusive diatribe, namely that SLP activities leave unresolved “the central political question in Britain, the need to reforge a democratic centralist Communist Party”, i.e. a Leninist party.

As true as this is, it is completely irrelevant coming from the CPGB because the *Weekly Worker* gets so much wrong all the time. Trotskyite anti-communism predominates, and that makes the CPGB’s description of democratic centralism, –

“allowing the existence of different political trends and the right to form factions able to openly publicise their views”,

– a dubious place to launch the revolutionary party from. It sounds democratic. But in reality it is just an eclectic muddle. Sure, all opinions have to be considered. But then decisions have to be made and correct leadership has to be given.

All too often, the CPGB is just wrong about everything.

As the *EPSR* has regularly quoted from Lenin at the CPGB (albeit pointlessly because the CPGB centrally refuses to consider the *EPSR* worth reading, – so much for rapprochement), the **only** basis towards greater unity for communists (e.g. to allow the party to be rebuilt) is to **clarify** all disputed matters between communists, – i.e. who is right and who is wrong. Now, total agreement will always be impossible, of course. And any agreement at all, short-term, is going to be very hard to achieve.

But the problem is that there are such vast differences with the *Weekly Worker* (and especially with its majority Trot/anti-communist correspondents) and on such fundamental questions facing the world socialist revolution and the anti-imperialist struggle, – and there appears to be so little grasp at the CPGB of how crucially debilitating these divergent world views are, – that the zero progress on clarifying any of these issues makes the dream of a united major CP around the *Weekly Worker* look like wild fantasy.

In which case all of the earlier

arguments above about correct tactics towards the SLP in the light of the continuing weakness of the ‘revolutionary’ ‘left’ become precisely relevant. But even if still incorrect from the CPGB viewpoint, informing on the IBT in this way only gives added doubt that a sufficient degree of communist political maturity even remotely exists yet in Britain for combining into a successful united Communist Party, especially one based on the CPGB’s self-publicising and self-aggrandising claims.

The spiteful sectarianism of this petty-bourgeois subjective reply from the CPGB is by no means the first suggestion that FISC-baiting may foolishly have caused more trouble than it was worth in the manoeuvres around the SLP’s launch. If, right from the start, CPGB conceit was already adamant that formal abandonment of independent CPGB recruitment for a while was completely out of the question, then this consideration will be wasted on the *Weekly Worker*. But for others, the SLP’s constitution was more daft than anything, – an unnecessary self-inflicted limitation on the SLP’s ability to grow in numbers and to grow in political maturity able easily to deal with the increased numbers of anti-communist Trotskyite sectarians which might have come its way with a different constitution in place. But the anti-affiliation rules were not seen as insuperable barriers for communists to be able to work within the SLP, invited as they were to do so.

At least part of the problem with alleged FISC witch-hunting was caused by ill-thought-out CPGB tactics and strategy, as argued above. Given the circumstances, the CPGB were asking for trouble with the way they went about their interest in working with the SLP. It was clearly the intention to joyfully meet this trouble head-on, – presumably with a view to defeating it, or damning the SLP in the attempt. Again, this is looking like a not-well-thought-out move. Now the CPGB is breeding a “down with the SLP” attitude. Is this so smart?

The IBT may well be the worst Spart/Trot creeps that ever breathed (in a hot contest which has all 57 varieties simultaneously in first position) but the CPGB attack on them gets the worst of both worlds. They **are** attacked for what might in fact be a clever tactical understanding, given the condition of the ‘revolutionary left’ in Britain. They are **not** attacked for ultra-left Trotskyite posturing and anti-communist defeatism, the grotesque subjective psychosis of their former parent body.

Similarly, the *Weekly Worker* blocks in dubious solidarity with

the SWP and *Militant* in denouncing the SLP’s rather fancifully-alleged “McCarthyism”. But the independent existence of the SWP and *Militant* has been nothing but the most outrageous anti-communist opportunism. These truly ‘wretched’ sects are led by the most appalling subjective petty-bourgeois mentality imaginable. With encouragement, enough good communists within the SLP’s ranks could easily sort out these treacherous counter-revolutionary ‘lefts’. It is no great surprise or concern, that Scargill’s founding group decided not to bother, and to leave them outside instead.

Bans and proscriptions remain the weakest option for dealing with demented anti-communist and anti-party trouble makers. But there is no way that they

The fight for Marxist-Leninist scientific understanding is still at a very low ebb in British society, not helped, of course, by the continuing benighted antics of the British fake-‘left’

[*EPSR* No876 22-10-96]

[...]Blair’s ‘family values’ harangue is an insult to the masses whose families largely get broken up (undoubtedly contributing greatly to social difficulties) because of economic and social deprivation, and because alienation and exploitation at the hands of the ruthless capitalist jobs market (damaging the diligent and the feckless alike, the skilled and the less experienced similarly) is the only wretched aspiration they can possibly have in life. Get the capitalist system off people’s backs, you imbecile Blair, and then humanity and family values can start to flourish universally.

Where all this Blairite, RC, and Widow Lawrentian moralising is leading to, of course, is to a beefed up fascist clamp-down on everyone and everything. The schoolteachers’ spokesmen were straight in, insisting on “discipline, discipline, and more discipline, and let’s really dish it out from now on”, etc, etc. Which is fine for immediately getting through the week at Comprehensive Sinkhole X but totally useless for any nobler or more far reaching purpose. For that, something new has to be held out to about half the working class which will never be able to aspire to anything better in their lives than a permanently insecure existence in and out of the capitalist jobs market, with never any real perspectives or satisfaction from such exploitation drudgery, or really brilliant rewards either.

The something new is a planned socialist society for everybody, of course. But the anti-communist crusading against the Soviet experience goes on relentlessly, naturally, denouncing

should be the end of the world. It is the weakness of SLP politics that is likely to cause the real worry. And on that score, once again it is the even greater weakness of the CPGB’s own politics on some issues (Ireland, the workers states, the Soviet Union, South Africa, the ‘new world order’, etc) which is as big a problem. The CPGB has been bold with its rapprochement initiative. All credit to it. But it needs to try harder to actually listen to what people say rather than to just give them a hearing. Analyse yet again the latest news from Ireland, for example. Further imperialist retreats ahead. Reunification of Ireland in the faint distance. Build Leninism. Spread the *EPSR*, the only possible source of Marxist-Leninist leadership for the moment. Joe Harper

Stalin’s weaknesses and mistakes for the ten thousandth time, but in the process making reconsideration of planned socialism’s incomparable advantages over capitalist anarchy still undiscussable, of course.

Every posturing bourgeois creep in the business is always at this, from publishers and academics to film-makers, broadcasters, and journalists. But what is ludicrously sad is how the ultra-left still tolerate so much anti-communist ignorant prejudice in their Trotskyite ranks.

A key to this problem is not just the widespread anti-Soviet opportunist ignorance which prevails, but the possibly even more disastrous basic misunderstanding of what Marxist-Leninist scientific socialism is all about.

The CPGB’s *Weekly Worker* continues posturing mightily about its credentials as the nucleus of the ‘revolutionary party’ of the future, but it continues wavering all over the place on the very fundamentals of both a correct world view and a correct Marxist method, and yet seems determined to make itself immune to criticism on either count, in spite of all its protestations about ‘rapprochement’ and an ‘open struggle between various tendencies’.

Lenin is quoted on the need for open polemics within the struggle for correct communist leadership, but the whole point of Bolshevism is misunderstood, which was to establish which line was the right one and to then move on, freely admitting one’s own mistakes and learning the lessons from them, but insisting that others’ mistakes be driven out by the correct line as well, al-

lowing factional differences to be kept incubating only in the event of new developments occurring which warranted reopening of old issues, and only to the extent that the incubated differences were not totally incompatible with the correct line of the party anyway, making sure the party was not held back by divisive factionalising or unnecessary picking at old wounds. Lenin was for unity, but believed that the split was the only way to get there, – unity needing to be based solely on fundamental agreement about the world. He wanted to drive out Menshevik nonsense, not embrace it to death.

All of such Leninist approaches certainly required decisions to be made sooner or later. The *Weekly Worker's* problem is that half its polemics just go on endlessly about purely formal and contentless aspects of communist struggle, round and round in circles. The other half which more usefully dispute actual developments in the international class and national struggle (from whose progress alone, real lessons about a correct world view and correct Marxist methods can be learned), – are likewise left to just drift on, or are even suppressed.

To give an example, a major challenge has been made in the *EPSR* and in letters to the *Weekly Worker* on the defeatist outlook of the CPGB, particularly over Ireland, South Africa, and the Middle East where the US imperialist New World Order is said to have been scoring endless victories over revolutionary and national-liberation struggle.

The question of a correct perspective on the world is the most crucial ingredient of all struggle for revolutionary theory, without which a successful revolutionary party will never be built. But *Weekly Worker* replies to this polemic have been all over the place, full of daft mistakes and contradictions.

Yet quietly in the *WW's* news coverage and commentary, the line on the IRA's alleged sell-out and capitulation to US imperialism has gradually been toned down, but without any acknowledgement that this was happening because mistakes had been made previously. And at the same time, further polemics on this dispute from *EPSR* comrades have been not printed, especially when highlighting major gaffes by the CPGB as outlined in the following letter the *Weekly Worker* chose not to publish:

‘In reply to the Ted Jaszynski letter of Sept 19, the eventual imperialist support for the black bourgeois-nationalist revolution in South Africa was obviously to avoid an even worse overthrow of apartheid (a great feudal-colonial bastion for reaction throughout Africa which the West had backed solidly) by possibly

communist revolution. But eventually being forced to give in over apartheid was a defeat for the world imperialist system and reaction, not a victory for imperialism at all.

Once the inevitability of national-liberation had been accepted by the West, there was no chance that conditions for an immediate socialist revolution would be allowed to develop (i.e. could not be avoided for the present).

The Ford piece of June 20 which started this argument made no mention at all of “a great victory for the South African masses”, and you have only introduced these words on Sept 19 because you cannot defend Ford's formulation which was wholly defeatist, labelling South Africa's national-liberation, alongside the IRA, as “a victim of the US-dominated New World Order – i.e. the **negative** resolution of revolutionary situations” where imperialism is “**imposing** a ‘democratic’ and ‘peaceful’ settlement” (original emphases and commas).

That lays the whole stress on a non-existent socialist revolution and the clever ‘triumph’ of US imperialism in avoiding it. It is historically bankrupt for missing the whole point which is that in the end, against all the previous vicious imperialist support for the apartheid regime, – open and covert, trading and financial, technological and military, cultural and diplomatic, etc., – revolutionary struggle defeated apartheid and to that extent defeated the imperialist system.

Thus in broad historical terms, the overthrow of apartheid was a defeat for imperialism, not a victory.

And your problem is that you do not understand the epoch you are living in. You are philosophically defeatist, not just misleadingly inaccurate. And nowhere was this more revealed than in TJ's astonishing gaffe in his Aug 29 letter, about which *WW's* subsequent silence speaks eloquently about your seriousness.

This authoritatively asserted that “previous thorns in imperialism's flesh are gradually being brought to book”.

One of the named ‘victims’, the scarcely stable or formidable Saddamist apology for bourgeois nationalism, had within days administered one of the worst humiliations to US imperialism ever, physically wiping out two entire CIA agency networks of hundreds of traitorous Iraqi operatives which had cost hundreds of millions of dollars and five years effort by the might of US imperialism to put in place, and winning such universal sympathy that Washington's alliances in the region were left in ruins.

The key to this debacle was the character of the epoch, – splits in the crisis-ridden imperialist camp, and the ultimately irresistible rise of the revolutionary East, the historical forces which will eventually clinch the triumph of the world socialist revolution (see the lengthy analysis in *Economic and Philosophic Science Reviews* 870 & 871 or Lenin's ‘*Better Fewer, But Better*’ and the mistaken West European orientation of the CPGB's draft programme), and which push Saddamist and Islamic-fundamentalist reaction to successfully antagonise US imperialism.

Is it not time that your hopelessly defeatist and incorrect world view was gradually brought to book? Do you feel no responsibility at all for such glaring mistakes in your paper, misleading the working class?

You will also be proved dismally incorrect about Ireland too. British imperialism's ludicrous ‘Northern Ireland’ colonial anachronism is finished, defeated by revolutionary national-liberation

struggle, however slowly and gradually the doors are opened to Ireland's reunification. You are indeed being fooled by the present appearances of London dictating terms to Sinn Féin. The significant historical negotiations were on the walls of Derry where the Apprentice Boys colonialism was prevented from marching. Drumcree was the false signal, to defuse more Orange diehard reaction. Keep watching.

The self-liquidation by unreformable revisionism which opened the door to the destruction of the Soviet workers state by counter-revolution, was obviously a contradictory development, – a tragedy but in the end part of the necessary deck-clearing if millions of workers worldwide were to be freed from their loyalty to the USSR which sadly also meant their loyalty to the grotesque class-collaboration with imperialism and the anti-revolutionary corruption of Marxist-Leninist theory which the CPSU represented finally, via its gradual decades-long bureaucratic stupefaction.

Outrage at anti-communism and anti-Soviet slander in no way contradicts positive views that the anti-revolutionary CPSU leadership had by 1990 become more of an obstacle to world socialist developments than the continued existence of the Soviet workers state was a benefit. The “enormous leap forward in revolutionary struggle worldwide” was a description of forthcoming developments made possible by revisionism's disintegration, not of something that is supposed to have happened already, as you imply. Your confusion is self-inflicted.▶

A fortnight after not printing or commenting on that letter, *WW* slipped the following paragraph into its front-page item on the sensational humiliation of British imperialism from the national-liberation struggle's double bombing of the Lisburn Barracks HQ of the colonial power:

The IRA's bomb in the Six Counties stole the Tories' thunder. With the ‘peace process’ clearly off the rails, all the rhetoric against ‘men of violence’ could not hide the fact that Major's tough talking has failed to bring any results for imperialism, even in this arena.

Now this is a remarkable change of language from *WW's* original June 20 position ridiculing the IRA's “peace bomb” in Manchester as part of a desperate plea by the “isolated revolutionary nationalist movement”

in which

“Gerry Adams wants the best deal he can get, – under an imperialist-brokered settlement”.

And “hardly surprisingly” because of this isolation,

“the IRA cannot see any end to the war in the Six Counties and has become a victim of the US-dominated new world order i.e. the negative resolution of revolutionary situations.... imposing a... settlement” (original emphases).

But no acknowledgement as to why this dramatic change in the line.

The suspicion grows that as well as a catastrophic inability to face up to a bad mistake it has made, the *Weekly Worker's* bizarre reading of Lenin's open polemics as meaning unstructured eclecticism, – allowing as many views to be put forward as can get into the

paper, – has resulted in one CPGB voice fundamentally contradicting another voice in the same issue.

In an editorial ‘letters’ piece in the eternal empty rigmarole with the RDG and ISG refugees from the SWP, the Oct 10 *WW* stated the following astonishing nonsense:

The comrade is irked. Apparently, because both the ISG and the RDG “share a state capitalist view of the former USSR”, they “should be in a more advanced state of rapprochement”. Why? Surely at root the rapprochement process must be about Party and programme, not this or that understanding of the USSR. Organisations built on common-denominator politics do not lead revolutions; they split.

Craig asks the ISG comrades: “How (could you) consider unity with the non-state capitalist CPGB and not talk to the RDG?” Well, comrade, maybe the ISG leadership had a better understanding of Partyism than you display in your article. Perhaps they understood that the process was not about labels or ideologies, but, fundamentally, what we all as revolutionaries understand by democratic centralism and Party.

And yet in the very same issue of *WW*, and addressed to the very same state-capitalist counter-revolutionary mentality, it is correctly insisted that fundamental differences in world view are absolutely crucial to whether communist unity is even remotely to be considered:

The latest issue of *Socialist Worker* fails quite miserably to address the real issues raised by the Afghan catastrophe. Hardly surprisingly though, as it refuses to recognise that there was even a revolution in Afghanistan in 1978. For it, all that happened in that year was that a “group of army officers staged a coup and put the party in power”. Worse still, if we are to believe *Socialist Worker*, the effect of this “coup” was actually to “increase poverty in many parts of the country. That drove many of the poorest peasants to ally with their old landlords in rising against the regime in the name of Islam” (October 5).

From such a reading you would get the distinct impression that it was the revolution of 1978 which was responsible for the subsequent war and bloodshed, not the brutal imperialist-backed counter-revolutionary forces. Indeed, the SWP seems quite keen to provide ‘excuses’ for the Islamic counter-revolution. Thus, we are told that

“When the Russian troops left the country the war had created incredible suffering”

– if only the Red Army had not intervened, things would have turned out OK, we presume. As for US imperialism, we are blandly told that it made

“much of the plight of Afghanistan while the Russians were there”.

Weasel words which exonerate the bloody role of US imperialism.

Still, we should not be surprised. Unfortunately, *Socialist Worker* has a history of playing the reluctant cheerleader of Islamic counter-revolution. We saw this over Iran, where the SWP actually supported the bloody Khomeini regime on the grounds that it was ‘anti-imperialist’ (or, at least, ‘anti-US’).

The SWP is consistent in that it cannot bring itself to condemn the Taliban as “reactionary” either. Which is a bit curious really, as the February 1987 edition of *Socialist Review* stated that a mujahadeen victory

“would probably produce a reactionary fundamentalist government well to the right of Khomeini”

- the same edition, of course, called for a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The SWP was not alone, it has to be said. The Revolutionary Communist Party's now defunct *The Next Step* argued along similar grounds, saying that Soviet withdrawal was necessary, as it enabled the US to use

"the Afghanistan conflict to gain a foothold in Central Asia" (February 26 1987).

Workers Power also replicated these specious views.

Revolutionaries who cannot tell a revolution from counter-revolution, or are afraid to label reactionaries for what they are, will mislead the working class, if not sabotage the revolution itself unless they are capable of openly correcting these mistakes.

And an article on Afghanistan in the previous Oct 3 *WW* issue declaimed outright counter-revolutionary anathema on groups for getting it wrong, and not even on anything as important as the USSR, a position on which is fundamental to all questions of revolution or counter-revolution, but merely on the more obscure Afghan question:

In 1989 *The Leninist* described those leftists who saw a Soviet withdrawal as the best condition for the Afghan working class to assert itself as being blind to reality. In 1989, *The Leninist* said:

"The blood of Afghan progressives is not only on the hands of the mujahedin, the imperialists and Gorbachev. It is on the hands of the RCP, the SWP, the Euro-communists and all those who refused to defend the Afghan revolution. You are all guilty and we shall make sure that the working class never forgets your crime."

In cases such as these, communists are loathe to be proved correct. The mutilated body of Mohammed Najibullah serves as a bloody reminder of your betrayals.

This same piece, incidentally, also

contained one of the most public and barefaced non-apologies for a serious political mistake that has ever had the nerve to be published:

As *The Leninist*, precursor of the *Weekly Worker*, said in issue No2, the Soviet intervention

"represented the extinguishing of the flame of the revolution" and that if it was not recognised as such "the revolution will either have to suffer major amputations or face death" (Spring 1982).

Yet, paradoxically, the Soviet intervention shored up the length of time the PDPA government survived.

With the Soviet pull-out in 1989, it was clear the PDPA would not survive, yet many including the US Secretary of State – thought its collapse would be imminent. That the Najibullah government survived nearly four years was testimony to the support in the cities for many of the changes the revolution had delivered.

So in 1980 workers are agitated worldwide to oppose any Soviet intervention to rescue Afghan revolutionary progress from imminent throttling at birth by overwhelming CIA-backed counter-revolutionary subversion massively from Pakistan by the most reactionary tribal and religiously-benighted forces imaginable. It was catastrophically wrong advice. But by 1989, and still by 1996 in this CPGB review article, no explanation is forthcoming about what lessons have been learned by the *Weekly Worker* from this colossal mistake.

Certainly the CPGB was by 1989 in a position to correct its earlier mis-analysis, and to denounce others for the same mistake it had originally committed. But

what lessons had been learned about the CPGB's faulty methods, or faulty world view, or faulty estimation of the epoch we are in, or complete misunderstanding of the Soviet workers state, tinged probably with their own milder version of Euro-communist anti-Sovietism and anti-communism? Would not those important conclusions, if ever they were drawn, be equally as important to reproduce now, or write down now for the first time if that would be the case?

On the earlier CPGB insistence to RDG that party and programme principles were far more decisive for communist unity than agreeing with each other about what the world looked like, an attempt may be made to claim that Lenin's "*One Step Forward*" epic recording the birth of the Bolshevik tendency was all about the principles of party rules, and nothing else. This, of course, is a common and complete misconception. The fiercest split was certainly over the definition of party membership, but embodied in that conflict was the whole spirit of Lenin's understanding of all the vexed political questions also argued about at that Congress such as the class role of the peasantry, the problem of Great Russian chauvinism, the decisive role of a single-minded party organ as the main organiser and educator of the party, and the crucial question of a professional revolutionary organisation reaching agreed decisions

and acting upon them versus a loose federation of independent individuals and dilettante groups who could basically do what they liked without any organisational control or discipline and yet could still claim as decisive a say in the party's affairs and direction as they could muster.

All were matters hurtling towards a need for decisive resolution by the main group of Leninist revolutionaries who were already massively active and influential in Russian revolutionary affairs precisely by virtue of their agreement on the Leninist world view, already so distinct from that of Martov, Plekhanov, Trotsky and the rest, and within a few years to become so completely hostile to the rest of the RSDLP's social-chauvinist, or social-pacifist, or conciliatory positions, leaving the Bolsheviks completely uniquely identified in the minds of the workers of Russia. Have these indecisive purely formal wrangles around the CPGB's as yet amorphous and empty rapprochement activities remotely this urgent and decisive character of the RSDLP Second Congress?

No, there are not only no strands with anything like a Leninist coherence, but there is not even the vaguest agreement on what it means for a party to have a united world view, or how important it is.

There is even a doubt that the CPGB itself has got one. No, for the moment, this *Weekly Worker* rapprochement is just going

Western counter-revolutionary subversion, backing tribal Mujahadin reactionaries destroyed a new secure socialist future being developed for Afghanistan's children with Soviet aid



round in aimless circles, going nowhere fast.

Once more by way of example, interesting developments on Ireland are yet again being ignored by *WW*. All the signs are still towards an international political deal which will effectively put a constitutional stop to the former existence of the British 'Northern Ireland' colony, already *de facto* dead, and buried, – the Orange-fascist supremacy and the 'legal and eternal' Partition abandoned for ever, and Ireland's reunification only now a matter of time and demography, – a massive revolutionary triumph over imperialism, arms in hand, by national liberation forces, exactly as the *EPSR* has described it all along, and not remotely a victory for imperialism as the CPGB dilettantes describe it.

Major's Bournemouth speech curiously promised legislation ↗

on decommissioning in the autumn. How could that happen without a serious all-Ireland political settlement? And this hint was followed by the sudden Unionist backing down to allow discussion on a new deal to precede decommissioning wrangles. And all of this followed the IRA's devastating Lisburn bomb which utterly humiliated British imperialism and its colonial occupation once again.

Let the British bourgeois press, so bitterly hostile to the armed national-liberation struggle, itself recount the signs:

SENIOR Government sources last night welcomed a "significant breakthrough" in the Ulster talks process, when David Trimble's Ulster Unionists reached agreement with the nationalist SDLP on the terms for an agenda.

The deal, which has eluded the parties for four months, means that substantive negotiations on the prov-

ince's future can finally begin

The joint UUP/SDLP proposals are close to what George Mitchell, President Clinton's special adviser and the talks' chairman, proposed at the start of the year.

They suggest a full plenary session of the talks will open without the decommissioning of weapons dominating the agenda. This has now been downgraded to the second item, and significantly makes provision for "mechanisms necessary to enable further progress to be made on decommissioning alongside negotiations".

The move has delighted all parties in the talks except Ian Paisley's DUP and the UK Unionists led by Robert McCartney. "It means decommissioning will never take place, they will talk and talk but nothing will be done about it," said a party source. "They are paving the way for Sinn Féin's entry into the talks."

At the weekend the Progressive Unionist Party spokesman David Ervine, who is associated with the Ulster Volunteer Force, warned that rapid progress in the talks was the

only hope of maintaining the loyalist ceasefire.

Marjorie Mowlam, shadow Northern Ireland secretary, also held a meeting yesterday with 12 loyalist inmates of the Maze prison in a further sign that loyalists will maintain their ceasefire. UVF and UFF inmates earlier told their political representatives they supported the view that the ceasefire should hold.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, said: "There are increasing signs of hope that we will get now into the substantive business.

In a speech to supporters in north Belfast, Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams said the key to another IRA ceasefire lay in John Major's hands.

If the *EPSR* is wrong about Ireland, a major rethink on the epoch would be required. If *WW* is wrong, it must do the same.

Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice. Keep struggling to build Leninism.

Douglas Bell

All arguments for making 'defeat the Tories' the priority are false. The SLP's arrival has changed all political perspectives. Voting Labour is now a dead working-class illusion. Fake-'left' gets the SLP wrong too. CPGB again avoids the issues. The possible historical role of centrism is not denied by supposed infringement of the 'rights' of communist members, or by individual disappointment with the SLP's progress. SLP weaknesses can be fought without separate-development organisations challenging the constitution by revolt. Correct policies, not scandal revelations, are the best contribution to the SLP. CPGB again gets nationalism wrong. And without correct revolutionary theory, all boasts of correct revolutionary organisation are just blather. Interpreting the current world struggle is the basis of Marxist-Leninist science, provided mistakes are admitted, corrected, and learned from, – and not covered up in the way the CPGB avoids embarrassment, over Ireland, etc. The *EPSR*'s line, by contrast, stands firm.

[*EPSR* No879 12-11-96]

The emergence of the Socialist Labour Party is a new departure in the political evolution of the workers movement in Britain which is still being hopelessly misunderstood by left and right.

The more conservative minded, even including SLP members, see the party as a new ginger group which can keep poking the Labour Party from the left until the Blairites and TUC either seriously fight Toryism or else 'totally expose themselves' to the working

class as useless.

This mechanical notion of 'pressure' from the left has been completely discredited by history now, and the birth of the SLP at long last, is there to prove it. Clause IV was always the wretched delusion by which a seriously bourgeois Labour Party kept generations of working-class 'lefts' continuously hooked with the eventual promise of 'socialism'.

The vestiges of this class-col-

laborative cautiousness still echo even inside the SLP on the 'left', still insisting that a defeat of the Tories by the Labour Party at the next General Election remains the crucial priority for the workers movement.

Arguments put forward for this about needing to prevent the 'total demoralisation of workers by Tory victories', about needing to halt the privatised wrecking of the previous welfare-state Britain, and about needing to provide more Labour treachery evidence so that the SLP can grow, etc, – are all gibberish, – all disproved by the facts. They all fail to grasp the real significance of the SLP's foundation.

What has been shattered by the SLP's arrival is the monolith that was the federal Labour Party, the labour and trade-union movement's overwhelmingly dominant expression and representation, – and with it has been shattered the illusion that the working class had in Labour.

That illusion will only be shattered once in history. Maybe 90% of the remnant pieces for the moment remain loyal to Labour and the TUC's current line, but it is clearly only a question of time before the working-class drift away from the Blair/Monks embrace of a total pro-business, pro-capitalist, pro-class-collaboration tack is completed.

On all the various arguments raised for making the defeat of the Tories the most vital thing in the run-up to the next General Election, the worst step to take to deal with any of them would be to start resurrecting the idea that the Labour Party can any longer be seen as representing the hopes and aspirations of the working class in any way, shape, or form.

Breathing life back into the Labour Party's credibility in the minds of class-conscious workers

would be to try to turn history backwards, to completely misunderstand what an epoch-making breakthrough has been the actual foundation of the SLP, and to try to undermine the importance and influence of that achievement for all workers.

The SDP once claimed to have broken the mould. They were wrong, they were merely advance Blairites. It is the SLP which has broken the mould of 20th century British politics once and for all. It will stay broken. Leave it there. British imperialism can never now revive its former international and inter-imperialist greatness. It is doomed to be one of the new weakest links in the imperialist chain which is plunging headlong towards the greatest economic-crash and slump-crisis of its entire history. With no revival of British imperialism's former super-profits in sight gained from exploiting half the world, there will never again be any chance of reviving a bribed and instinctively pro-imperialist working class such as the old pro-Labour working class. Voting Labour at the next or any future election is just going to be a pointless sighing after past illusions. The message of socialism and the class struggle, as now represented by the Socialist Labour Party in the eyes of workers, is the only way ahead now, – regardless of whether the Labour Party is in government or opposition.

As well as conservative-minded failures to grasp the importance of the SLP, most of the ultra-left Trotskyite anti-Soviet swamp is suffering from grotesque subjective muddleheadedness too, including some 'communist' posturers who claim to be supporters of the SLP.

Their problem lies in only seeing a historical slot to the left

of Labour for rebuilding 'the' communist party, and regarding anything that is not that as 'Labour Party Mark II', as the *Weekly Worker's* 'SLP column' (!) again[st] derided the SLP this week, (Nov 7).

EPSR 877 reprinted the history of the CPGB's confusion over how to regard the SLP, correcting these comrades' misleading pretence that they had never suffered from the illusion that the SLP ought to be and could be taken over as 'the' revolutionary party.

Instead of dealing with this exposure of the CPGB's muddle, the latest *Weekly Worker* has instead opted for more ridicule of the EPSR's line, adding to the previous week's evasions of EPSR criticisms as "ludicrous" and "profoundly foolish", etc. The realities of the SLP and of communist understanding within it, which the EPSR has argued for, mostly get ignored.

Weekly Worker has just laughed at the idea that Marxist circles can genuinely support and help build the SLP while keeping alive their communist understanding of imperialist crisis and the international class struggle without needing to organise a separate party-within-a-party inside the SLP or needing to organise a 'left opposition' Revolutionary Platform.

WW sneers at the idea of Leninists in the SLP meeting informally with the aim of "developing the strength and achievements of the SLP" by the usual Marxist route of strengthening cadres via clarifying revolutionary understanding, and pretends that such informal liaison (via joint reading, personal contacts and discussion, etc, which the EPSR has described as "having a drink and a chat") betrays the "trivial" nature of the EPSR's Marxist-Leninist understanding. They know better.

The issue is, what is 'communist organisation' and 'communist understanding' all about?

The *Weekly Worker* insists that anything less than a separate communist organisation inside the SLP, identified as such, will mean that Marxists within the SLP will have liquidated themselves into individual nothingness.

Once again, the *Weekly Worker* knows better, or should do. It is simply deluding itself that nothing useful happens in and around the SLP that has not originated in the *Weekly Worker* or the so-called Revolutionary Platform of the SLP. This is subjective posturing, masquerading as "communist leadership" gone barmy.

This petty-bourgeois individualism, reeking of Trotsky's "everything is rotten" defeatism, regards anything SLP beyond *Weekly Worker* or Revolutionary

Platform involvement as

"anti-democratic", "anti-communist", "McCarthyite", "they wish to atomise us", "wrecking", "sectarian", "to the glory and edification (sic!) of the leadership", "loathsome little life forms in the SLP", "the slimy invertebrates of the SLP right", "little confidence in struggle and militancy", "great confidence in the scheming and manoeuvring of the various bureaucracies", "like flies unto shit, witch hunters attract all manner of embittered failures, would be sadists, and sectarian misfits. The Fascites readily welcomed the Stalin Society into the SLP.", "oscillation between the iron grip of bureaucratic control and the opposition emerging from advanced workers",

etc etc, – all that from just one issue (Nov 7) of the *Weekly Worker*.

Clearly their insistence on separate communist organisation within the SLP implies nothing well-meaning towards the rest of the SLP which is not *Weekly Worker* or Revolutionary Platform-oriented. Clearly they are not agitating about 'communist organisation' at all in this context. They are simply attacking the SLP and all it stands for if it will not meet the CPGB's demands about their 'rights' to join the SLP and organise separately within it. Clearly, they are merely expressing a whole attitude towards the SLP as such.

Well, they are just hopelessly muddled on this question. It is a monumental piece of mis-analysis. They are simply ignoring the whole question of what the development of SLP centrism means to the historic evolving struggle of the working class in Britain, in order to keep on screeching aggressively that they are the revolutionary party and that that is all that matters, *ad nauseam*.

A final assertion in their latest rant sums up both attitudes perfectly, – their contempt for the SLP as developed beyond the reach of the *Weekly Worker* or the Revolutionary Platform, and their grandiose delusions about their own achievements and importance:

"Why should individual left members campaign for parliamentary candidates in a party which won't even print their letters? But there are 100 reasons why organised revolutionaries should campaign for SLP candidates, in the full knowledge that **organised** revolutionary politics inside the SLP (meaning their influence) is building for the class."

Personal frustration with centrism's defects does not gainsay the potential important historical role of the SLP, neither does any predominance of trade-union-minded syndicalism or left-reformism at any stage. The above statement rejects this understanding, however, in favour of a full frontal challenge to the existing SLP on any and every pretext.

This effectively advocates non-cooperation with the development of the SLP by everyone unless the CPGB demands are met for the 'right' to separate organisation inside the SLP, a different matter entirely from how members' enthusiasm can wane

when things go wrong.

In other words, all or nothing. Either the SLP capitulates to the CPGB's demands, or else the SLP will be written off and denounced with maximum vilification as nothing but Labour Party Mark II.

Now this attitude possibly rates heroically on any national charts that exist about 'Successful ultimatumism', but it is very poor politics.

Regardless of the enormous frustration that *Socialist News* is apparently not yet prepared to publish alternative opinions to policies the SLP leadership or *Socialist News* has adopted or publicised, the SLP is an important political phenomenon which needs analysing objectively, irrespective of thwarted subjective wishes or ambitions.

The SLP is looking certain to become what it was always bound to be if it got off the ground at all, – a major successful centrist movement, – an unprecedented development in the evolution of the class struggle in Britain in the new circumstances of the traditional labour and trade union movement party (the Labour Party) visibly self-destructing in the face of history's greatest-ever delusion that the capitalist free-market has solved all problems for all time, and that communist revolution is now permanently dead and buried everywhere, with the imperialist 'new world order' totally triumphant, etc.

In these conditions, the SLP's birth is a dramatic development, presaging a truly mass movement of socialist parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle which will transform the political life of the working class and the trade-union movement, – regardless of whether the CPGB capture the leadership of the SLP or not, which is frankly a farcical prospect.

In which case, the above outlined *Weekly Worker* Revolutionary Platform stance is just missing the point so spectacularly that it really is hard to know whether to laugh or cry.

That the SLP may become a "larger scale workers party for socialism than has been open to communists hitherto" in all of history in Britain, is indeed an interesting advance, to put it mildly. The *Weekly Worker's* sneers at this again betray their amazing subjective conceit about their own importance as 'the' revolutionary party, and their lack of any real interest in what actually happens to the working class and where its political evolution takes it. The *Weekly Worker* feels comfortable in this isolated fantasyland because of the volume of petty-bourgeois individualism which supports their "everything is rotten" sectarianism and

defeatism.

Their response to this point that they cannot see the wood for the trees, – that they may miss an entire centrist development because they think they have exposed some FISC skulduggery, – is more jeering against an EPSR sell-out "to defend the moderates against the loony left", i.e. to join the rightwing Labour Party Mark II bureaucracy.

Once again, – wrong charge, wrong epoch, wrong identification. The EPSR's clearly-stated aim has been to win as much support as possible for Marxist-Leninist understanding **within** the SLP, not against it or in 'left opposition' to it. That means **accepting** the SLP's conditions and **building** it, – while working **within** the SLP's democratic limitations to change what needs changing, as far and as fast as possible. It is to this end that the EPSR has collaborated with *Weekly Worker* supporters **in their own and the SLP's interest**. This attitude is now being ridiculed and traduced because the CPGB has made a monumental tactical and political-understanding mistake, and is thrashing out in all directions.

Anti-Marxist SLP errors and bureaucratic rightwing nonsense, missing opportunities to build the SLP's socialist and anti-imperialist influence in the working class, will continue to be attacked as they have always been. The reputation of thugs like Goss will continue to be used against them. The CPGB is just kidding itself that only thanks to its interventions are backward features of the SLP's development being taken up.

But what is emerging in this *Weekly Worker* line is a note of moralising self-righteousness, another sure sign of petty-bourgeois subjectivism. The CPGB has plenty of rotten skeletons in its cupboard, both in personal conduct, and particularly importantly in its political record of mistakes which have caused the working class great damage.

All of this is simply a diversion from the important issue of correctly analysing the class-political reality of the SLP and its further development. Not only has the CPGB got this hopelessly wrong, but their methods indicated that they will continue to misread the situation.

The latest *Weekly Worker* makes a big fuss about its claimed role in exposing Goss's violent past (which in fact was already known to everyone), and the idiosyncrasies of the Stalin Society (likewise), claiming that such exposures are the key to political wisdom and correct revolutionary perspectives. It is nonsense. Debunking particular individuals supporting the SLP proves noth-

ing and is likely to achieve very little. It betrays only the gross sectarian subjectivism of the CPGB to pretend that such 'revelations' will lead to the triumph of the Revolutionary Platform or the downfall of the SLP.

It is *Weekly Worker* political mistakes elsewhere in the same issue that are the decisive question, – particularly so, as, not for the first time, they push a line even less advanced than the SLP's.

Weekly Worker has noticed the glaring contradiction between items on regional Celtic nationalism in *Socialist News* No 1 and No 2, – for a Scottish 'independent' parliament, but against one for Wales.

Remarkably, however, the *Weekly Worker* manages to get its criticism of both articles completely wrong, demonstrating that on the all-important matter of providing better political leadership than anyone else around the SLP can manage, it is just out of its depth.

The critique of the Scotland piece misses the crucial point that *Socialist News* is advocating a bourgeois parliament for Scotland, effectively stating that another bourgeois government is needed for the militant Scottish working class at the next General Election, while the general SLP line is that no such bourgeois government is needed for the less militant English working class next time, – an SLP government sensibly being the only thing worth advocating or needing advocating.

In *Socialist News* No 1, Jim McDaid argues for a separate Scottish parliament (with "effective legislative powers" which would "re-energise the Scottish economy" with a huge public investment programme), – a dream pioneered by the SNP, for this would clearly still be a capitalist parliament "from which the fight for a socialist future among the Scottish people could be pursued", – so presumably the assumption is that this first independent Scottish parliament would have an SNP, Labour, or Tory majority.

So in effect, *Socialist News* is saying that for the further progress of Scottish workers interests, another bourgeois parliament has to be gone through first.

But that is not what *SN* is saying for workers in Britain as a whole. The editorial correctly states that the widespread argument that we need another Labour Government (to get rid of the Tories at the next election) is incorrect. It asserts that New Labour is a pro-capitalist fraud that workers can be persuaded to see through immediately, without putting Blair in office first, which is exactly right.

So why are workers in Scotland

thought to be more stupid? The SNP has been around for donkeys years, and in local government for donkeys years, and represented in parliament. New Labour is far more of a novelty.

And if public-opinion support is the issue, the SNP runs at about 2%, while New Labour runs at nearly 50%.

Plus which workers in Scotland have always been the most militant and perceptive sectors of the working class.

They need another bourgeois parliament in Scotland like they need a hole in the head. The SNP are screaming pro-capitalist pro-imperialist middle class on the make.

Denounce them and their reactionary nationalism now, and tell workers in Scotland the truth, – that only the socialist transformation to abolish capitalism in Britain is going to be a scrap of help in solving the burdens of imperialist economic decline in Britain, losing out to the ruthless international trade-war competition which will impose world slump conditions on every country eventually.

Socialism is the only way forward for every country, Scotland included.

Because of its own wretched capitulation to Scottish nationalism, the *Weekly Worker* fails to make any of these points. It chides McDaid for failing to "raise the need for a voluntary union of the peoples of Britain", for failing to "call for self-determination", and for failing to call for the right of the Scottish people to "freely determine their own future through a constituent assembly", which is, of course, another deceitful institution of bankrupt bourgeois democracy. No mention of McDaid failing to call for a workers state and a Socialist Labour government in Britain, of course, which is what is crucially wrong with this nationalist nonsense.

In *Socialist News* No 2, Dave Proctor correctly dismisses the idea of a separate bourgeois parliament for Wales as any kind of step forward. Correctly, he states that a Socialist Labour government is the only aim required at this stage.

Great progress. But what do these mighty 'revolutionaries' at *Weekly Worker* make of it? Amazingly (or perhaps not), Proctor is denounced for his "traditional maximalist reformist idea of a Socialist Labour government in Britain".

The SLP, brought into being "to abolish capitalism and replace it with a socialist system", is well to the left of these *Weekly Worker* 'revolutionaries' on this question.

Above all else, it is these glaring weaknesses in the CPGB's political understanding which

make their entire position on the SLP such a disaster.

Even with what passes for revolutionary theory in the CPGB, – their tactics towards the SLP and their general political estimate of its development would have been disastrously incorrect.

But the problem with the CPGB is that their struggles for Marxism-Leninism are totally consumed by petty-bourgeois ultra-left posturing born of the whole rotten epoch of anti-Sovietism and anti-communism in the West, from which their origins in the miserable revisionist liquidationism of the old CPGB in no way protect them. Muck-raking about the SLP's failings is utterly redundant when the *Weekly Worker's* general political grasp is even more suspect than the SLP's.

It becomes just empty moralising.

Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice, and the tiny misguided CPGB's insistence on formal open revolutionary organisation (allegedly, but not in practice, of course) in everything it does is just nonsensical organisational fetishism.

Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice, – which means there can be no revolutionary organisation either, if the CPGB comrades still do not get the point. In other words, their insistence on openly organising within the SLP is just producing a nonsense, and can only produce a nonsense, because they have no revolutionary theory, meaning no correct understanding of the world.

Even more peculiarly, the CPGB's style with polemics is just to ignore all their opponent's main points, or just ignore criticism altogether. So much for their self-promoted 'openness' and 'rapprochement'.

In two massive replies to *EPSR* comments, major points such as their mistake that the SLP is a negative phenomenon, born of imperialist defeat of the working class; their mistake that the SLP's 'rightist bureaucracy' want it to fail; their mistake that the SLP is Labour Party Mark II; their refusal to understand centrism, or address it; their failure to grasp that Scargillism is bound to be the major characteristic of the SLP; their confusion about whether centrism can remain centrism if the 'left' excludes the right wing; their daft aim of taking over the SLP as 'the' revolutionary party (see *EPSR* 877 for *Weekly Worker* February quotes); their substitute mistake of promoting a 'left Opposition' in place of the failed takeover, via a formalised Revolutionary Platform; – were just ignored, or just 'replied to' by dogged assertions that any

retreat from separate communist organisation amounted to liquidationism.

Those *EPSR* comments sent to *Weekly Worker* on Oct 16 and eventually part-published by them, originally read as follows:

'The SLP's development is not remotely to be compared to Labour's reformist evolution as the saviour of the imperialist system from the threat of communist revolution in the periods following the two inter-imperialist world wars. It is not remotely describable as another bourgeois labour party, or as the Labour Party mark II. Nor is it remotely useful to describe the SLP as the product of the defeat of the working class by imperialism, and therefore as a purely negative phenomenon.

The SLP is the opening up of a new centrist arena of struggle where the best ideas and practice can prove themselves to the working class. It is a coalition of disparate forces which it would be pointless to regard as having been brought together in order to **fail** to build the SLP. Success is the aim. The most successful party-building methods and ideas will prevail. If those turn out to be Labour reformism mark II, or demagogic centrist, or revolutionary socialist clarity, – those are the ideas which will gain ground inside the SLP, reflecting the level of maturity of the working class.

Political consciousness develops socially and organisationally, as well as by the direct conflict of rival theories and programme. To miss out on crucial developments in working-class politics could mean disaster or isolation for any sectarian aloofness.

The struggle to build a larger-scale workers party for socialism than has been open to communists hitherto will be its own reward, even if the SLP does end up being swamped by TUC Labourism mark II due to the historical situation being less advanced than has been anticipated. The mentality of trade-unionism (petty-bourgeois, class-collaborationism) will, of course, continue anyway, always needing to be combated by revolutionary consciousness. Eventually it is transformed into pro-revolutionary trade-unionism.

None of this potential broad-front SLP activity should involve revolutionary socialists in the slightest retreat from Marxist-Leninist understanding of imperialist crisis and the further developments of the international class struggle. Having views on the eventual revolutionary nature of the conflict, and the organisation expressions that will make necessary, is no barrier to the most genuine fight to take the working class forward at this stage of SLP-type development. The phenomenon is an aspect of the working-class movement itself, and although it would be pointless to deny the enormous influence and role that Scargill himself will play in SLP development, there is no requirement to praise any particular way of putting things or style of leadership.

Equally there is no point in trying to win the battle for a Marxist-Leninist understanding of socialism within a broad-front organisation by manoeuvring for the exclusion of rightwing tendencies. The more elements that abandon TUC-Labour 'reformism' to take up the SLP's challenge to abolish capitalism, the better, – no matter how class-collaboratively conservative or anti-communist their thinking initially. In the end, communists have got to win a majority of the working class to something close to

revolutionary-socialist consciousness, no matter from how much backwardness they have to be brought forward. What better place to start than in the SLP.

At the same time, there need be no necessary insurmountable conflict between mistaken SLP policies (as far as things stand at present) and the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. All policies will sooner or later be argued at conference, or even in the SLP press.

Once again such struggles should be regarded as opportunities, not impositions, – all of course depending on how things progress further inside the SLP from their reasonably promising position at present, and in which direction.

Marxist-Leninist ideas only need embodying in a revolutionary party programme as their ultimate expression, but not necessarily for their earlier development. Marxist circles are well able to cope with that if the ideas being developed give correct leadership, if the polemics are genuine, and if their organisational expression is adequate for the task of clarification and further expansion.

Philosophical understanding, the very heart of Marxism-Leninism, is impossible to conceal and hard to censor.

Some self-proclaimed revolutionary socialists insist that the SLP's constitutional ban on the affiliation of other parties within the SLP makes a struggle for Marxist ideas to prevail in the broad-front party impossible.

What they really mean, of course, is that they think the revolutionary takeover of the SLP is now impossible.

They were wrong to start with, – on two counts. First it was a completely silly idea that Scargillism would be launched and would immediately allow itself to be taken over by sectarian entryists. What the Scargill tradition stands for in the workers movement pulls far more weight than any revolutionary sect, and will continue to do so for some time yet. Secondly, any such frustrated affiliates would have been kidding themselves about their 'Leninist' revolutionary credentials anyway in the light of such a poor piece of analysis.

There could be any number of phony 'communists' or 'Marxists' inside the SLP. There need be no reason for there to be any good communists outside the SLP who want to be in it, and active in it.

There is no organisation in Britain at the moment that is able to act as a visible revolutionary party. There are some sizeable left sects like the SWP or like *Militant* were, but they are all hopelessly anti-communist through and through.

On the other hand, there exist publications of very considerable Marxist-Leninist achievement, but there is no visible revolutionary party yet to speak of attached to them.

All would-be Marxist-Leninist cadres could easily work within the SLP by simply abandoning any attempt to build a party within a party. Secret sectarian entryism owes more to Walter Mitty than Karl Marx, and it is hard to discern what is lost to Marxist-Leninist circles that is gained by a tiny sect posturing as a revolutionary party, especially posturing as **the** revolutionary party.

Party actions certainly should bring forward party development if there is any correct leadership; but Marxist circles can develop just as successfully in just the same way, – and even more so if the leadership is better.

Analysing the world correctly, and preparing working-class political intervention on the issues, is the advantage of party building for cadre development as opposed to circle building for cadre de-

velopment. If a 'revolutionary' group can achieve this outside the SLP, they should stay there and get on with it. If they cannot break out of circle work without joining the SLP, then they should abandon the 'revolutionary party' pretence and genuinely join in building the SLP.

In the absence of established factional rights within the SLP, it is senseless to conduct public propaganda and agitation for an anti-leadership platform at such an early stage of the party's development. It would make nonsense of all the above considerations, and it would be especially clumsy sectarianism in the light of the fraught initial history of the SLP, driven frantic by witch-hunting hysteria and entryist fears.

By all means let like-minded SLP communists have a drink and chat together as often as is valuable for developing the strength and achievements of the SLP, but all public posturing as an alternative platform is just more self-delusion from the same Walter Mitty stable which envisaged taking over the SLP as the revolutionary party to start with. It is all the wrong game, and all at the wrong time.

Given the SLP's origins and likely broad-front centrist development, it is probably inevitable that the day will come when a mass SLP might split between a less revolutionary tendency and a more revolutionary wing, – for example over the question of a future workers state and how the essential question of socialist construction, – the dictatorship of the proletariat, – is to be tackled. But such necessary factional struggles are a long way ahead at the moment. It makes no sense for now to insist on building the SLP in only one direction and down only one narrow path.

All such approaches are just sectarian revolutionary fantasy, and have missed the point of the SLP's development entirely.

Contemptuous dismissals of 'liquidationism' provide no answer to the foregoing arguments. The CPGB has just attacked the IBT Spartists breakaway for "their deep entryist opportunist burrowing" into the SLP, and for "being drawn to the right in pursuit of power in the SLP", and for "the crass hypocrisy of this sterile little sect" for publicly liquidating in order to join the SLP "under instruction from North America", and for it remaining

"crystal clear...from the behaviour of their comrades in the SLP and from [their own self-described] clumsy designation of these people as IBT 'supporters', that the IBT continues to exist as an organised group in Britain".

This is a monstrous deliberate fingering of the IBT, every bit as bad as the McCarthyan informing and witch-hunting which the CPGB accuse the SLP of. None of the IBT's polemical criticism of the CPGB which the *Weekly Worker* has drawn attention to can remotely warrant the CPGB turning fink on the IBT. It looks as if the CPGB's hurt pride at being challenged over its SLP policy has caused the *Weekly Worker* to turn stool-pigeon.

This is a truly alarming development for all who have attempted a comradely polemical relationship with the *Weekly Worker*. What is really "WRETCHED" (the *WW* headline) is not the IBT's arguments for liquidation into the SLP but the CPGB's treacherous reply.

Fingering comrades for wanting to discuss a different approach to SLP work than the half-and-half measures the CPGB tried, would also indicate that the CPGB has now given up on its own attempted relationship with the SLP via the "comrades who have joined the SLP

as a direct result of our call". This savage back-stabbing of the IBT seems to signal abandonment of *Weekly Worker* concern that "the witch hunt in the SLP has been exclusively directed at purported CPGB 'members and supporters'". Turning fink on the IBT is just asking for trouble.

And all of this would seem to confirm that the CPGB was confused from the start about the SLP and got its tactics in a muddle. It would seem to confirm that there really was an illusion that the SLP could be taken over to become **the** revolutionary party, a daft analysis.'

Still, the *Weekly Worker* refuses to address the lengthy detailed remarks they made in February about turning the SLP into 'the' revolutionary party, CPGB vintage. (see *EPSR* 877).

And still the *Weekly Worker* fails to address what the SLP actually is, and what its further development might be, other than the indirect implications of their hostile sniping attitude to SLP struggles which echoes their February stance that the SLP will be "stillborn" and become just "one more barrier to socialism" if the 'revolutionary ideas' that the CPGB promote do not become SLP policy.

Just pouring scorn on the *EPSR*'s understanding instead of debating it seriously, will merely see the *Weekly Worker* comrades digging themselves into an even deeper hole.

But, of course, the *Weekly Worker* refuses to exchange publications with the *EPSR* for being "not the sort of paper the CPGB is interested in". Oh dear, more proud posturing leaving subjective pomposity stuck out on a limb. And their exposed 'rapprochement' racket makes this sectarian isolation crystal clear.

The CPGB is for 'rapprochement' where it can encourage a huge eclectic stew made up of other sectarians who also don't mind going round in endless abstract circles about largely formal questions of democratic structures, regroupment processes, organisational and programmatic fetishism, and very little serious objective discussion about what is actually happening in the world, on which alone the crucial questions of the epoch we live in, and the perspectives ahead of us, can be resolved.

In particular, this CPGB posturing just drops polemics like a hot brick when the cut and thrust of debate comes too close to revealing bad mistakes which the *Weekly Worker* has made in the actual poor leadership it gives to workers in spite of all its insistent claims to being 'the' revolutionary party nucleus.

All summer, the *EPSR* has been challenging *Weekly Worker* about its defeatism over the Irish national-liberation struggle (which insisted that Adams had sold out and that the IRA was now only letting off 'peace' bombs

to try to win a few more scraps off victorious imperialism), and its defeatism over its epochal perspective that the imperialist 'new world order' was systematically crushing all anti-imperialist struggle everywhere.

The last comment sent to *Weekly Worker* on October 20 for their own publication if they wanted it, again looks like it has gone the same way as the previous letter in the series, sent on September 25 but not published (see *EPSR* 876), – swallowed up in all the 'openness' which prevails at the CPGB. It read:

‘What has happened to the IRA’s “peace” bombs? Have you run out of inverted commas?’

What has happened to your June 20 characterisation of the IRA as

“a victim of the US-dominated New World Order - i.e. the negative resolution” of “hot-spots”

where imperialism is

“imposing a ‘democratic’ and ‘peaceful’ settlement”

on the Irish national-liberation struggle?

Without a word of explanation, you slyly slip into your Oct 10 front page the following:

“The IRA’s bomb in the Six Counties stole the Tories’ thunder. With the ‘peace process’ clearly off the rails, all the rhetoric against ‘men of violence’ could not hide the fact that Major’s tough talking has failed to bring any results for imperialism, even in this arena.” (original commas).

Surely this indicates that at least a minor shift in the international balance of class and national forces involved in imperialism's crisis has taken place between June 20 and Oct 10, if not a very major one as most independent-minded observers of your muddled hopping-around would agree is signalled?

Is it really possible to train confident knowledgeable communist cadres with such light-minded inconsistency from their main published organiser and educator?

As Lenin explained in *Left-wing Communism*, communist wisdom does not rest on avoiding making mistakes. It arises from being capable of recognising your mistakes, and correcting them easily and quickly. A leadership which cannot admit to being wrong, and learn how it came about, is unlikely to start getting things mostly right.

Another astonishing gaffe you failed to deal with came in your Aug 29 letters reply which declared that

“previous thorns in imperialism’s flesh are gradually being brought to book”

and named Saddam's Iraq regime as one of these 'victims' of New World Order defeats, just days before a Saddam coup wiped out hundreds of CIA counter-revolutionary agents in Iraq which the CIA had spent five years and hundreds of millions of dollars in training, – humiliating US imperialism to the whole world's satisfaction.

And yet to appear is a letter sent Sept 25 examining this startling evidence that you are being hopelessly misled by your incorrect characterisation of the period of history we are in, as obviously are your readers. You clearly have a serious subjective-idealist problem in coping with mistakes, which gravely challenges your Marxist-Leninist credentials, let alone your revolutionary leadership credentials.



Not all Afghan peasants were opposed to the 1980s Najibullah revolution and many joined willingly, despite now the infamous Western subversion laying a trap for the Soviet intervention in its support, by recruiting backward anti-communist elements in the mujaheddin tribal areas

Your Oct 3 Afghan article was classic self-incrimination.

Disarmingly, you admit that at the start of the 1979 USSR intervention, your publication said that this

“represented the extinguishing of the flame of the revolution” and that “the revolution will either have to suffer major amputations or face death”.

Then you casually add in your 1996 review:

“Paradoxically the Soviet intervention shored up the length of time the PDPA government survived”,

but then not one further word about how you could have got things so wrong, or what lessons you drew from such a terrible mistake.

You first try to turn workers against the Soviet intervention as being bad for revolutionary progress in Afghanistan. Later you accept that intervention was a good thing, and denounced the fake-‘left’ who cheered the 1989 Soviet withdrawal as having

“the blood of Afghan progressives on the hands of the RCP, the SWP, the Eurocommunists, etc. You are all guilty and we shall make sure that the working class never forgets your crime.”

Good stuff, but a word or two about what you misinterpreted in 1980 would be even more useful to communist cadre training.

All of what needs to be done on this Afghan issue by a serious leadership is covered up by the inane use of the word “paradoxically” to cover your confusion. There is no paradox involved. You were just plain wrong.

Far from learning any lessons at all, your new confusion over what epoch we are in is again now misleading workers about what is going on and what ought to be going on, especially over Ireland and the crisis of imperialism.²

But why print challenging stuff like that when the *Weekly Worker* can be bulged out with another long RDG rigmarole about a dual-power federal constitution?

The *EPSR* is not unwilling to debate the role of programme and what should be in it. But the best programme, as 1917 proved, is the ability of a revolutionary leadership to reorientate the struggle on an almost daily basis.

The Marxist-Leninist experience for being able to do that

successfully, is gained from the constant battle to interpret the world correctly in a regular publication which becomes the party’s organiser (see *What Is To Be Done*). If you get it wrong about what is happening in Ireland, go as deeply as possible into why the misanalysis was made, what has not been understood about the fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist science which set up such a mistake. The same party struggle should take place over all other mistakes, – over the tactical gaffe towards the SLP, for example; and most importantly over the *Weekly Worker*’s wrong assessment of the Soviet revisionist liquidation and its implications; over the defeatism towards US imperialism’s bogus ‘new world order’; over the national question in Britain; over where the decisive completion of the world socialist revolution will take place; etc, etc.

Getting all these things wrong as the CPGB regularly does, means that an enormous amount more of polemical struggle is going to be needed before the Marxist-Leninist wisdom to write the definitive communist party programme is going to appear. But tragically, the *Weekly Worker* looks like seeking to avoid such polemical struggle on the things it gets wrong.

The *EPSR*’s struggle for Marxist-Leninist science, on the other hand, continues to go from strength to strength, – continuing its themes of the deepening crisis of imperialism; the steadily mounting revolt by anti-imperialism worldwide; the ever-sharpening inter-imperialist conflict; the threat of imminent all-out trade war and a markets collapse; the significance of the emergence of the SLP; and on a more minor but very special question, the continuation of British imperialism’s snail’s-pace withdrawal from its moribund colonised parts of Ireland, falsely and monstrously partitioned off by 1921 bayonets

and Downing Street’s threat of all-out war to destroy Ireland, – the so-called ‘Northern Ireland’.

The *EPSR* will have to learn some gigantic new lessons if it has misunderstood the situation in Ireland, but for the moment, all the evidence worth considering points steadily still in the direction of some fudged cobbled-together ‘settlement’ which will effectively signify that the old hated ‘Northern Ireland’ monstrosity will no longer continue in the old way, and will begin to be dismantled in favour of a snail’s-pace reunification of Ireland. In other words, what is still being negotiated is a victory for the IRA/Sinn Féin national-liberation struggle and a humiliating defeat for British imperialism and its 1921 colonial outrage.

And the *EPSR* will continue, as always, to pursue its analysis to give leadership to the working class and correct orientation to the whole of anti-imperialist struggle, backing its judgment until proved wrong. Only by such methods will a new revolutionary leadership in Britain eventually be built.

Rhetoric continues against the “men of violence”, but the fine print suggests that the real men of violence, the British imperialists, are getting down to further serious discussions with Sinn Féin, the SDLP, Dublin, the American Irish lobby, and the nationalist community in general about finding some settlement mechanisms which will enable the old ‘Northern Ireland’ to at last be abandoned but without sparking off a bloody last-ditch UDI by the fascist-thug dreg-remnants of the old colonial ‘loyalist’ and ‘unionist’ order.

All the information comes from bourgeois publications, which was how much of Marxism-Leninism worked things out in the first place. But it needs interpreting.

When the bourgeois claque

announced on Nov 4 that the IRA was “rethinking its use of violence”, it did not mean that the whole Western World had fallen for the twaddle printed in the *Weekly Worker*, but that a new deal was in the offing with Sinn Féin for further progress towards the settlement.

Other capitalist press snippets confirmed this:

The Northern Ireland political development minister, Michael Ancram, welcomed the Ulster Unionists’ agreement with the nationalist SDLP on a five-point agenda, which cleared the way for negotiations to begin.

At the centre of the discussions was a report prepared earlier this year by the US senator George Mitchell, who headed an international commission. It proposed decommissioning in parallel with substantive negotiations involving all sides and the British and Irish governments.

But the debate could drag on because of differences between David Trimble’s Ulster Unionists and the Rev Ian Paisley’s hardline Democratic Unionist Party. Mr Paisley claims decommissioning has been sidelined.

Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, which has links with the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Freedom Fighters, welcomed the movement in the talks. Senior loyalists also confirmed the progress had eased pressure on their ceasefire.

But Robert McCartney, leader of the UK Unionist party, threatened to leave the talks, claiming they were “to the utter detriment of the pro-union people”.

THE Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, yesterday tried to draw a veil across reports that he is working with the Government – through the Social and Democratic Labour Party leader, John Hume – on a basis for a new IRA ceasefire.

“The least said sometimes on these matters the better,” said Mr Adams of a report that the Government is to publish a statement outlining its conditions for admitting Sinn Féin to all-party talks in the event of a new ceasefire.

But the Democratic Unionist leader, Ian Paisley, said: “My information is that the civil servants from both the

Irish government and the British government, at the highest level, have been having negotiations indirectly with Gerry Adams through John Hume."

Asked whether the DUP would stay in the talks if Sinn Fein was included he said: "I wouldn't think so."

But diehard 'unionism' is being squeezed out anyway, and the miraculous triumph of the national-liberation struggle by the tiny abandoned Irish community locked in behind the Partition barbed wire of 1921, will be completed, a colossal world-historic victory over imperialism

The SLP 'left opposition' is a stunt by an "alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers" (Lenin). The anti-Marxist subjective idealism of these middle-class sects now calls Scargill 'Stalin' in its demented dislike of a workers movement speaking with authority. These same petty-bourgeois fake-'lefts' were at work against the 1984-85 miners' strike supporting the MI5 bogus 'democratic rights' campaign to undermine the class strength of the picket-line with an individual ballot. This 'left unity' posturing wants the SLP disrupted by opening its doors to organised factions from the SWP and *Militant* who have always poured out more hatred of the workers states than the big bourgeoisie. Such 'unity' of the 'left' swamp would destroy the SLP. Boot it out.

[EPSR No882 03-12-96]

The 'left opposition' mentality, which is trying a take-over on the Socialist Labour Party, represents exactly the same class forces as the anti-communist and anti-Soviet swamp of the Cold War era.

They are dilettante stooges of an individualist philosophy which poses ultra-left because it knows that capitalist society is indefensible, but which fears workers-movement authority even more.

This would-be 'left opposition' is pushing its campaign to hysterical levels against the SLP, alleging "constitutional conspiracy" in its latest headline screech, because it sees workers turning to Scargill's party *en masse*.

The self-righteous tone of this latest onslaught, – denouncing the SLP leadership for "barefaced lying", "Scargill dictatorship", "bureaucratic manipulation", "anti-democratic straightjacket", "cowering the comrades", etc, – reveals its petty-bourgeois class hostility to the SLP's success.

The same note was struck when the CPGB Trots, typical of this anti-SLP swamp, sided with the MI5 provocation against the 1984

for revolutionary struggle, arms in hand. But this is the message, of course, which the bourgeois establishment (and the *Weekly Worker* defeatists, for some strange reason) do not want the people to grasp, which is why the confusion-mongering and propaganda deceptions must go on at all costs.

It is the job of Marxist-Leninist science to cut through all this nonsense smokescreening to explain what is really happening in the world of imperialist crisis.

Build Leninism.
Douglas Bell

NUM strike, declaring "the miners should have balloted".

The correct instinct of using working-class strength to picket out the rest of the coalfields in a class war against the Tory state and bourgeoisie, was incomprehensible to these middle-class day-tripper 'lefts'.

The individual ballot paper, to be filled in isolation, surrounded by all the influences of bourgeois society from TV, radio, press, pulpit, and the individual struggle for survival, – automatically seems natural to these fake-'lefts' class instincts.

They are identical to the "intellectualist factions" and "workerless groups" led by Trotsky, Martov, Plekhanov, etc, denounced by Lenin (see quotes below) as nothing more than "an alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers".

In idealistic terms, they pretend to be for socialism. In materialist practice, they cannot accept the organised discipline of a real workers movement.

Their abusive campaign against Scargill & Co is not remotely in the interests of socialism, the

working class, or the SLP. On many issues such as Ireland, voting Labour, the imperialist crisis, immigration controls, etc, the SLP has a more 'revolutionary' line than the more backward attitudes to be found in the 'left' swamp, which includes such anti-theory philistines, anti-Soviet groups, and demented anti-communists as *Militant* and the SWP, in whose favour the SLP is also being urged to abandon its workers-party constitution.

These sects exist solely to represent petty-bourgeois opportunism, – class instincts utterly hostile to the interests of a workers state building socialism in Britain.

There are serious alternative positions on programme, strategy, and tactics which can be argued, – and do get argued, – within the SLP to reach a clearer perspective on how capitalism really will be abolished in Britain. This is a matter for comradesly collective struggle to create better leadership and inspiration for workers.

But this petty-bourgeois 'left opposition' is by its class position incurably defeatist, and cynically sneers at all such perspectives on imperialist crisis.

Their whole secret agenda is for manipulative attacks on Scargill & Co, mostly mounting purely formal, bureaucratic, pettifogging campaigns with a moralising tone about how the SLP goes about building its party.

Endless insane rigmaroles go on about how this SLP cannot be seen as "Scargill's party" but "belongs to the whole working class"; about how the SLP founders should not be allowed to have the constitution they wanted to build the party with; and about how that constitution is now being "lied about" and "manoeuvred".

There is no hint of class solidarity with the SLP workers movement by this petty-bourgeois 'left', and all talk of 'unity' and 'openness' is a hoax.

When a CPGB member of this 'left opposition' was asked by Scargill about its shallow 'alternative revolutionary platform', the response was

"I demand that anything you have to say to me be put in writing".

When a 'left oppositionist' was asked by his branch to explain his campaigning on behalf of the CPGB agenda for the SLP, he could only reply with evasions and abuse.

This is the real conspiracy, – minds racing to think of something to say, – anything, – to avoid getting caught out. No 'open' and frank political discussion about the CPGB's agenda for the SLP because the one thing it clearly cannot be, and is not meant to be, is 'open' despite all the *Weekly Worker's* fatuous

claims (see last week's *Review*).

The class essence of this 'politics' is petty bourgeois manoeuvring for a take-over. As such it is totally alien to the interests of socialism, the working class, and the SLP. Workers should have no compunction or hesitation in routing it from the SLP.

And it is clear that this now needs to be done organisationally as well as politically.

This 'left' swamp agenda, orchestrated within the SLP by the CPGB and its stooges, aims to destroy attempts by Scargill & Co to build a disciplined workers movement akin to the 1984-85 miners strike and its support within the working class.

With the maximum hypocrisy expected of middle-class self-righteousness, the latest onslaught is headlined "*Constitutional Conspiracy*" (by these complete conspirators who boast about defying the SLP constitution in order to organise the CPGB secretly within the SLP, but who always deny CPGB membership when challenged), and contains the following destructive abuse:

President Arthur Scargill coolly informs public rallies that his draft constitution is no draft, but binding law. It was "adopted" by the membership at the inaugural conference of May 4, he maintains. The Fiscites make exactly the same mendacious claim.

For the SLP this is a matter of the greatest significance. The draft constitution is being used to straightjacket the SLP politically and organisationally. Nevertheless the ham-fisted way in which it is being done shows how fragile the leadership considers its hold over the SLP. Bureaucratic manipulation and barefaced lying are not signs of strength, but profound weakness.

Scargill's draft constitution – both the December 1995 and the May 1996 version – plagiarises the Labour Party electoralist-reformist model.

Perhaps the main distinguishing feature between the Scargill draft and old Labour is the Bonapartist powers it enshrines for the president. Comrade Scargill as a personality is a big asset for the SLP. However, like Ferdinand Lassalle and Joseph Stalin, he seems to entertain the ambition of becoming a worker-dictator.

Expect gerrymandering and underhand manoeuvring. Correspondence will be lost in the post or mislaid. Branches will be closed, forgotten or not recognised. Resolutions will be ruled out of order or referred to the NEC. Two dozen different constitutional 'amendments' from two dozen different branches will allow the NEC to divide and rule by arranging it that what they find most detestable be talked off the agenda. In all likelihood the NEC will have in reserve their own batch of amendments and will encourage others to submit their own amendments to soak up time.

On these two short subsections pivots the whole system of witch hunting and fear. They have been used to void and cower comrades. They are used to justify anti-communism and the imposition of a bureaucratic regime.

The pretence that these CPGB stooges sincerely wish to support the SLP is so laughable that none but the most naive and backward workers could be fooled by it. At this stage, the SLP is unalterably identified with the initiative of Scargill and his closest colleagues. The notion that they built this party in order than it should **not**

have the sort of constitution and unity which they intended for it is so bizarre as to question the sanity of the 'left opposition'.

In fact Trots are not mad, they are just inveterate parasites on the international workers movement, growing fat in the decades after 1917 in the more affluent Western countries by enabling petty-bourgeois 'lefts' to posture their 'revolutionary' determination (hammer & sickle symbols, singing the *Internationale*, etc) but without the need to defend or argue for the difficult decisions the Soviet workers state had to take, or declare unconditional solidarity with the Soviet workers state still, when things went wrong or mistakes were made.

Trotskyism's own record of achievement in building a workers state and socialism? Obviously perfectly unblemished, – because they have never won the support of the working class ever, anywhere on earth, for building a workers state and socialism.

And the record of the 'alternative leaderships' they have put up everywhere as 'left oppositions' to genuine workers parties? Wrong analysis after wrong analysis, mistaken perspective after mistaken perspective, organisational catastrophe after organisational catastrophe, personal scandal after personal scandal, – for decades, in country after country.

But it is all unrecorded, of course, for who cares what the political record is of these 57 varieties of petty-bourgeois 'left' sectarianism?

It is the history of the development of the Soviet workers state, of Peoples China, of the Vietnam Revolution, of Socialist Cuba, etc, which occupies the history books.

The ludicrous mistakes made by 'left opposition' pronouncements from 57 varieties of anti-communist 'left' posturing since 1917, falling for every imperialist stunt going against the workers states, are all conveniently forgotten.

This "*alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers*" (Lenin), headed by Trotsky, Martov, and Plekhanov to try to prevent a mass workers party from being built by the Bolsheviks, – is up to its age-old tricks again now, against the SLP.

Every week, fresh abuse against the "authoritarian leadership" of Scargill & Co. Every week, instant amnesia about the clown-like 'leadership' utterances of the 57 varieties, trying to give an 'alternative analysis' of the world and what to do about it.

The CPGB's record of irresponsible stupidity and light-mindedness is particularly familiar to *Review* readers because *EPSR* has been making a special study of these 'communist' Trot mounte-

banks.

All year, they vacillate from one catastrophically incorrect political pronouncement to another, and then back again, – never ever offering to account to the working class for this criminal light-mindedness.

The problem is not that any analysis can be mistaken. The problem is that when wrong, this "*alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers*" simply walks away from the laughable mess created by its attempts to give 'revolutionary leadership' to workers, and hopes that no one will remember their previous fatuous pronouncements while they get on with the next self-righteous pontification.

The problem is not that the stooges supporting these 57 varieties of "intellectualist factions", and "workerless groups" ranged against the SLP, cannot be forced to admit occasionally that their sectarian 'alternative leaderships' have got things wrong.

The problem is that mistake after mistake does not make the slightest difference to a petty-bourgeois class position which is subjectively dominated entirely by its own individual self-righteousness, and which, if it can see the SLP as a serious workers party at all, – hates what it sees.

Despite crass mistake after mistake in their attempted 'revolutionary' analysis of the world which fronts for their middle-class emotional defeatism and philistine ignorance, this 'left' "*alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers*", (led by Trotsky, Martov, and Plekhanov against the rise of the Bolshevik workers party, and by the modern 57 varieties against the rise of the SLP workers party) – never remotely considers that it might be wrong about anything.

Its self-righteousness is all-consuming. It is a ferociously defensive **class** position, petty bourgeois in origin but infecting many individualist-minded workers, which will not be persuaded about the incorrectness of its understanding and actions no matter how much success the genuine workers party has amongst the working class.

Lenin's conclusion (see quotes below) was that these intellectualist sects, these self-righteous individualists, and these irresponsible light-minded opportunist dilettantes were poison to the workers movement and should not be united with, or given factional rights, at any price.

It is Leninist politics, therefore, to not only rout this "*alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers*" politically, but to rout them organisationally too, – right out of the SLP.

Their non-stop conspiratorial undermining of the SLP makes

working hard to build up the SLP's influence a complete mockery, a waste of time.

No serious workers party should entertain such fakers in its ranks.

Consider the latest disruption campaign against the SLP, launched by these light-minded hypocrites.

Not content with charging the SLP leadership with "constitutional conspiracy" for applying its own constitution forbidding the organisation of any other party within the ranks of the SLP, yet secretly manoeuvring **themselves** precisely to create the only 'constitutional conspiracy', – these illegitimate and bad-faith entryists then have the cheek to openly advertise their new disruptive campaign against the SLP:

The Scargill constitution must be challenged lock, stock and barrel at the May 1997 congress. There must certainly be a fight to ensure that all votes at this first constitutional congress are by a simple majority.

Nevertheless if that fails then the left must be ready to concentrate its fire at a single strategic point. Remember, for Constituency Socialist Labour Parties of 1,000 members or less it is one amendment to the constitution and nothing more (see clause six, sub-sections six and 11).

Therefore as many Constituency Socialist Labour Parties as possible must be won to submit a standard constitutional amendment to replace the MacDonaldite clause two, subsections four and five.

Subsection four needs to be replaced with the simple formulation: "All working class and progressive organisations are eligible to affiliate to the party".

The left needs to coordinate its plans, actions and forces at the highest level. We are a minority. But we are an influential and large minority that on certain issues is surely capable of winning a majority, perhaps even the two-thirds majority which is necessary under the Scargill constitution in order to overturn a chair's ruling.

The maximum number of delegates must be secured. That means carefully marshalling our supporters into "constitutionally recognised" CSLPs. Leave in place ad hoc regional bodies to oversee the general election campaign and for joint discussion and mutual aid.

Take the initiative. Move quickly. Come together above; regroup below.

Workers who thought they were joining and helping to build the Scargillist SLP should take note. They might be joining and helping to build the Trotskyite CPGB instead.

The dishonesty is truly amazing. Countless times, CPGB stooges have been challenged that their mistaken tactics towards the SLP flowed from their weird fantasy that the SLP could be turned into **the** revolutionary party, ie a larger version of their own opportunist sect. It has always been disingenuously denied. But the anxious urgency of the above campaign is clearly inspired by one ambition only, – to take over and control as much of the SLP as possible as quickly as possible.

The claimed wish to "build the SLP" is even further exposed for the fraud it is by a final rallying call to the forces of 'left opposi-

tion' light against the forces of SLP darkness:

Of course such a victory is only possible if we overcome petty sectarianism, factional exclusiveness and localise heads-down timidity. Unity is urgently needed. Division is reactionary and serves only the right.

Not unity with the SLP, of course, and certainly not the overcoming of CPGB factionalism, exclusive or otherwise.

This is unity **against** the SLP which is recognised as the majority but is insolently called "the right" by these shallow middle-class parasites.

And this is to overcome the "factional exclusiveness" of the SLP majority itself, somehow now regarded as a trouble-making faction against itself.

These destructive entryists clearly hate everything that the actual Socialist Labour Party itself stands for, the party as everyone knows it, as founded by Arthur Scargill and his close colleagues.

But no individualist stooge of the CPGB is ever going to admit this.

The SLP must fight for clarity about the 'left opposition's' real aims and class sentiments, instinctively hostile to the disciplined workers-state implications about a new mass workers party launched on the basis of the 1984-85 class-war struggle of the miners and their working-class support groups.

"Division is reactionary" – mouth these frauds with maximum humbug, – except, of course, for division against the basic proletarian spirit and politics of the 1984 strike, now brought up to date by Scargill's frank acceptance that a Labour Government is now the last thing workers need, – and was equally delusory in 1984, it must now be admitted.

"Division is reactionary" – (the phrase itself is reactionary and undialectical because it deliberately conceals the priceless importance of the split from non-Marxist fake-leftism, the split which was the making of the Bolshevik Party, – see Lenin quotes) – except, of course, the division and destruction of the SLP itself.

This specious nonsense-phrase sums up the entire position of this "*alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers*".

Everything is a pose, a shallow fraud, – their parasitic entry into the SLP; the rapprochement of all the 'lefts'; their 'world view' which they simply forget about or double-back on every time it goes wrong; and the verbal diarrhoea of their 'programme' and the endless, pointless, abstract arguments about a 'dual-power federal constitution' and about 'leader centralism versus democratic centralism', and the like.

Another attack on the SLP printed this week by these phony 'SLP supporters' maligns an SLP candidate in a Leicester City ward by-election, polling Thursday.

It charges Leicester SLP with sectarianism for not making an electoral pact with *Militant* Labour, and contrasts the SLP candidate unfavourably with the ML candidate opposing him.

The pretence of the piece is that electoral agreement by all 57 'left' varieties to avoid standing against each other would maximise the 'challenge to capitalism', etc.

In other words, it is another plank in the CPGB 'revolutionary platform' hidden agenda to drag the SLP back into the anti-communist 'left' swamp so that it should disappear without trace, leaving the eternal world of intellectualist factions and workerless groups undisturbed.

Once again, the wordy posturing is everything, – posing and dissembling to cover up their own hypocritical behaviour and to fool workers about the real class positions of these fake-'lefts'.

Take the following specious humbug, posing as highflown sentiments:

Ideas need to be organised openly for all to evaluate if they are to take our class towards the science necessary to transform the whole of society.

This is in reply to the Leicester SLP candidate's argument that serious communist socialists who believe that the final process of abolishing capitalism will be a revolutionary one, can work for socialism democratically, properly, and successfully within the constitution of the SLP without deliberately disrupting it by organising a party within a party.

To this, the standard reply of the CPGB hidden agenda, – parroted by all their stooges in identical words, as are their amendments to the constitution and their condemnation of Scargill's 'mendacity' about the SLP having a constitution, – is repeated that 'revolutionaries must not allow themselves to be covered into the straight-jacket of atomised individuals' etc.

Then follows the above ringing declaration about 'openness' being crucial if the working class is ever to be convinced about the argument for socialism. So would the CPGB entryists into the SLP canvass on the doorstep saying: "I want you to vote for the SLP because its president is a liar, its executive is mendacious, its constitution is Bonapartist to allow Scargill to become worker-dictator just like Joseph Stalin, and its conference is a completely undemocratic stunt of gerrymandering and manoeuvring to make sure that witch-hunting and fear prevails and nothing gets discussed that will challenge

the rightwing anti-communist bureaucracy"?

No they would not. These CPGB entryists clearly plan to canvass for the SLP's socialism concealing their real thoughts about it, just as their hoped-for anti-Scargill allies in *Militant* Labour used to canvass for the Labour Party's 'socialism', concealing their real thoughts about that.

And what good did that bit of bogus "open organisation of ideas" do for the working class or for socialism?

This other branch of fake 'revolutionaries', ML, another part of the "alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers", – helped prop up the Labour Party's incurably reactionary bourgeois essence for years by providing it with a fake-'left' wing to carry on fooling the working class with.

Round these 'revolutionaries' would go, diligently working in their constituencies for the return to Parliament of a Janner, or a Hattersley, or a Foot, or a Healey, or a Kinnock, or a Blair, or a Prescott, etc., – telling the workers on the doorstep it was for 'socialism', all because of their own hidden fantasy-agenda that one day, these self-styled petty bourgeois 'revolutionary' socialists would triumph inside Labour.

Now that these middle-class ultra-left sects have been booted out from posturing inside Labour, they have turned their attentions onto the attempt to build a genuine workers party for socialism, the SLP, (which has emerged from the final reactionary self-assertion of the rotten bourgeois essence of the Labour Party), – some entering it, some hovering outside demanding electoral pacts or a coalition, or legal entryism, etc.

Workers do not want to be fooled by this middle-class anti-Leninist nonsense about "let all the 'lefts' get together". The entire record of *Militant* stinks of anti-communism and pro-imperialist opportunism, like their refusal to demand defeat of Thatcher's imperialist-colonialist aggression in the Falklands War; and their blocking with so-called "protestant workers" (meaning the exploited dupes of dying British colonialism) to oppose the legitimate Irish national-liberation struggle to free the Occupied Zone of Ireland from British imperialist police-military dictatorship; to say nothing of their instant enthusiasm for every Cold War anti-Soviet stunt going.

Militant have expressed contempt for every workers state that has ever struggled to build socialism – so that they could avoid having to defend anything that was attacked by imperialist propaganda. In this cowardly way, they could keep their "spotless

Trotskyist banner" for continuing their entryism within the system, – which culminated, of course, in the phenomenon of Derek Hatton. What a star. What an achievement. Tommy Sheridan, you're on next. Jimmy Reid, the CPGB's former idol, is getting a bit past it.

The CPGB's hidden agenda to drag the SLP into the proposed 'left' swamp of amalgamated Trotskyite sects is just about the most nonsensical, destructive and reactionary proposal to keep anti-communism alive in the workers movement that can be imagined.

Turf all these CPGBers and their stooges straight out of the SLP.

They have demonstrated themselves to be an incurable obstacle of petty-bourgeois individualism to the building of a successful workers party. Their 'revolutionary socialism' is a complete posture, and their whole lives are eaten up with their self-righteous moralising hypocrisy about their 'rights' etc, and their self-comforting subjective-idealist distortions of 'Marxism'.

Should not all of this have been obvious before the attempt began to help build the SLP alongside these fake-'lefts', met within the SLP's ranks?.

Clearly so, but the lessons ↗

That is exactly what they are – sterile! The "unity" of the varied intellectualist little groups is bought by the Narodniks at the price of their utter political impotence among the masses. And with us Marxists, too, it is the Trotskyists,⁴⁴ the liquidators, the "conciliators", and the "Tyszkas-ites",⁴⁵ those who shout loudest about group unity, who display *the same* intellectualist impotence.

This conclusion is that attempts to create "unity" by means of "agreements" or "alliances" among intellectualist groups, which *in fact* express tendencies which are *injurious* to the working-class movement (Narodism, liquidationism, etc), lead only to complete disintegration and impotence. Both Narodism and liquidationism have *proved* this by their lamentable example.

Only *in opposition* to these groups and grouplets (in a strenuous struggle, which is inevitable under bourgeois conditions and amidst a host of petty-bourgeois vacillations) is real unity building up among the working-class masses led by the majority of the class-conscious proletarians.

Naïve people will ask: How are we to distinguish the intellectualist groups which are causing damage to the working-class movement by disintegrating it and condemning it to impotence, from that group or groups which ideologically express the working-class movement, rally, unite and strengthen it? There are only two ways of distinguishing one from the other: theory and practical experience. It is necessary seriously to examine the theoretical content of such *trends of thought* as Narodism and liquidationism (the principal petty-bourgeois trends that are disintegrating the working-class movement). It is necessary to carefully study the practical experience of the mass working-class movement as a means of rallying the majority of class-conscious workers around integral and considered decisions.

He who gives close thought to the theory of Marxism and close attention to the practical experience of the last few years will realise that the elements of a genuine workers' party are rallying in Russia *in spite* of the motley, noisy, and vociferous (but essentially futile and harmful) groups of Narodniks, liquidators, and so forth. Unity of the working class is emerging from the disintegration of these groups and their isolation from the proletariat.

Narodism and Liquidationism Proletarskaya Pravda No. 12, December 20, 1913

Trotsky, however, has never had any "physiognomy" at all; the only thing he does have is a habit of changing sides, of skipping from the liberals to the Marxists and back again, of mouthing scraps of catchwords and bombastic parrot phrases. In *Borba* you will not find a *single* live word on any controversial issue.

This is incredible, but it is a fact. The question of the "underground"? *Not a word.*

Does Trotsky share the views of Axelrod, Zaslulich, F. D., L. S. (*Luch* No. 101) and so forth? *Not a murmur.*

The slogan of fighting for an open party? *Not a single word.*

The liberal utterances of the Yezhovs and other *Luchists* on strikes? The annulment of the programme on the national question? *Not a murmur.*

from Leninist science (below) are one thing when remembered and understood from the book, but a lesson a million times more powerfully grasped when learned and reaffirmed in the course of living struggle.

All the best knowledge of Marxist-Leninist science comes from the application of that understanding to modern history where the behaviour and movement of all class forces re-asserts in a new way the essential dialectical-materialist explanation of such historical phenomena in society and the economy.

In addition, the practice of combating this "alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers" has helped achieve a more serious and involved estimation of the SLP phenomenon and what to do about it. Human activation and motivation cannot be taken ready-made from off the shelf and worn like a new hat.

All self-development, or even self-recycling, has to be fought for.

The battle to expose this petty-bourgeois entryist and swamp-amalgamation nonsense has been well worthwhile, and reflects enormous credit on all who have supported the work of the *EPSR*. Build Leninism.

JH



The utterances of L. Sedov and other Luchists *against* two of the “pillars”? *Not a murmur.*

Trotsky assures us that he is in favour of combining immediate demands with ultimate aims, but there is not a word as to his attitude towards the liquidator method of effecting this “combination”!

Actually, under cover of high-sounding, empty, and obscure phrases that confuse the non-class-conscious workers, Trotsky is defending the liquidators by passing over in silence the question of the “underground”, by asserting that there is no liberal-labour policy in Russia, and the like.

And these near-Party people, who are unable to unite on their own “August” platform, try to deceive the workers with their shouts about “unity”! Vain efforts! Unity means recognising the “old” and combating those who repudiate it. Unity means rallying the majority of the workers in Russia about decisions which have long been known, and which condemn liquidationism.

But the liquidators and Trotsky, the Seven and Trotsky, who tore up their own August bloc, who flouted all the decisions of the Party and dissociated themselves from the “underground” as well as from the organised workers, are the worst splitters. Fortunately, the workers have already realised this, and all class-conscious workers are creating their own *real* unity *against* the liquidator disruptors of unity. *Break up the August Bloc Put Pravdy* No37 March 15 1916

‘In a petty-bourgeois country, which is passing through a historical period of bourgeois reconstruction, it is *inevitable* that a motley assortment of intellectuals should join the workers, and that these intellectuals should attempt to form all kinds of groups, adventurist in character in the sense referred to above.

Proof is provided by the history of the last decade (1904-14), which is most eventful and significant.

During these ten years members of these groups have displayed the most helpless, most pitiful, most ludicrous vacillation on serious questions of tactics and organisation, and have shown their *utter inability* to create trends with roots among the masses.

Now Plekhanov has begun to repeat—with the liquidators, with Bogdanov and the rest—phrases about the unity of “all trends”. We emphatically condemn this line, which should be relentlessly combated.

Nowhere in the world do the workers’ parties unite groups of intellectuals and “trends”; they unite *workers* on the following terms: (1) recognition and application of definite Marxist decisions on questions of tactics and organisation; (2) submission of the minority of class-conscious workers to the majority.

Witless people may abuse the Pravdist and call them factionalists, splitters, and so forth, but these phrases and abuse will not/wipe out the unity of the workers.... *Adventurism Rabochy* No. 7, June 9, 1914

But— and this is the whole point—no task is more unpleasant, undesirable, and

unacceptable to the liquidators than that of ascertaining our main differences on questions of theory, programme, tactics and organisation. All their subterfuges, distortions and abuse in connection with the Bureau’s resolution are solely designed to *obscure* its demand (or a preliminary clarification of differences).

We say: the organisation to be created as a result of unity should be based on such and such principles—acceptance of the old programme, a definite form of organisation, uncurtailed slogans, resolute tactics, etc. But you immediately declare that this formulation of the programme, tactics and tasks of the organisation, is nothing but a “complete list of liquidators’ sins”. We are sorry for you, but neither we nor the Bureau know of any method of building new organisations other than by clarifying their programme, their tactics, and so forth.

We are guilty of a still more grievous sin, however. Not only have we proposed the conditions for the creation of an organisation, i. e., clarified the terms of peace, but we have, moreover, submitted these terms to the bar of the workers’ opinion.

But the liquidators, of course, will to the very last shun this path, for the simple reason that neither a precise formulation of their political views nor the submission of these views to the bar of the broad circles of the workers is in the interests of their group. Under these circumstances they will inevitably strive to substitute for the definite “clarification of differences” demanded by the Bureau, petty personal squabbles, distortions, and wilful misrepresentations.

Once more about I.S.B. and liquidators Proletarskaya Pravda No.11 December 19, 1919

The publicists’ alliance that we see today among the *leaders* of Narodisn (Chornov, Rakitnikov and Sukhanov) and various Social-Democratic intellectualist factions that are either openly opposed to the “underground”, i.e., the workers’ party (the liquidators* Dan, Martov and Cherevanin) or else help these liquidationist *workerless* groups (Trotsky and Sher, Bazarov, Lunacharsky and Plekhanov), is *in fact* nothing more nor less than *an alliance of bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers*. We regard Pravdism as the expression of the workers’ unity on the basis of genuine recognition of the “underground” and of definite decisions that co-ordinate and guide tactics in the old spirit (the decisions of January 1912 and of February and the summer of 1913).

It is a fact that this workers’ unity is built on the firm basis of integral, complete and, in principle, consistent decisions on all questions affecting the lives of the Marxist workers.

Bourgeois intelligentsia’s methods of struggle June 1914

The dead hand of CPSU revisionism needed to be buried along with all anti-Leninist CP influence everywhere. The unique and brilliant achievements of the Soviet workers state had become too muddled a counterbalance to imperialism under Gorbachev’s philistine confusion, which compounded Stalin’s theoretical mistakes. Only the USSR’s self-inflicted breakdown could free the world’s masses for the new revolutionary challenge to imperialism that was needed. The same imperialist crisis which made the new challenge necessary, also made the revisionist breakdown possible.

[EPSR No886 14-01-97]

It is now becoming obvious that the astonishing self-liquidation by the revisionist bureaucracy of the CPSU was clearly a necessary prelude to the enormous leap forward in revolutionary struggle worldwide that lies ahead. Workers, now freed from the dead hand of international class-collaborative delusions emanating from the USSR and its huge fraternity of ‘official’ Communist Parties around the planet, need to respond to the sharpening of the inter-imperialist trade-war crisis, which was a crucial part of that revisionist collapse.

For decades the Soviet Union had been becoming an increas-

ingly reluctant “counterbalance to imperialism”. It was a role it had always played more notionally than in practice, and Western imperialist aggression and domination had been allowed to get away with more than 200 acts of colonial war, military coups, counter-revolutions, armed subversion, and the like, killing tens of millions of national-liberation fighters and communist revolutionaries in Greece, Korea, Vietnam, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Kenya, Cyprus, Aden, the Congo, Chile, Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama, Angola, Mozambique, Afghani-

stan, Ethiopia, etc, etc, – with the Soviet “counterbalance” frequently nowhere to be seen, or else too much of a background gesture or too small to be effective.

The overall historical record of the Soviet workers state, of course, remains an unparalleled achievement in the development of civilisation, – the first country ever to appear on the international stage acting not in order to exploit other peoples, but on the contrary, in order to try to help them emerge out of colonial tutelage, to industrialise, and to train and educate themselves.

Huge assistance was given to the Chinese revolution. Massive arms were given to Vietnam. Millions of doctors, teachers, engineers, scientists, etc, were trained from Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the USSR at Soviet expense. Socialist-bloc trade was frequently conducted to the detriment of the Soviet Union, especially in oil and other raw materials which were invariably supplied at less than world market prices.

Cuba, for example, was always generously subsidised by the USSR. Living standards were invariably higher in East Europe than in the Soviet Union itself; and inside the USSR, the Baltic republics, for example, always enjoyed higher living standards than Russia proper. Not one rouble of investment or trade was ever advanced by the Soviet workers state with the aim of economic exploitation of other peoples.

But the counterbalance to imperialism became more and more theoretically muddled towards the end, conducting operations or responding to events with less and less conviction about the future of the anti-imperialist struggle and the world socialist revolution.

This degeneration was a long time in the making, and cumulative. It arose from a combination of conservatism and inadequacy, (both subjective and objective, over the difficult problems facing the international revolution in the 1920s and 1930s, threatened by resurgent and rearming imperialism), plus self-satisfied complacency that the Soviet workers state and the planned economy had nevertheless survived against all the odds, and by the 1950s and 1960s was achieving formidable ‘superpower’ world status.

The triumphant bureaucracy compounded this incipient stagnation by embracing completely incorrect ‘developments’ of Marxist-Leninist theory. These were Stalinism’s truly great crimes.

The colossal triumph of the Soviet workers state during the 20th century’s second great inter-imperialist war in holding Japanese imperialism at bay in the

Far East, and wiping out German imperialism in Europe, after the entire ‘free West’ had been utterly subjugated by the immense might of Nazi blitzkrieg, – a series of staggering military successes for the USSR unprecedented in all history, and a triumph of economic and political organisation to match, – achievements as significant and epoch-making as the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution itself, – obliged US, British, and French imperialism to form a real alliance with the Soviet Union. This bred vain revisionist hopes, already inherent in the failed and misleading Popular Front policy in the Spanish civil war of the 1930s, that the ‘better aspects’ of ‘free world’ civilisation might be won to a permanent ‘peaceful co-existence’ with workers states of planned socialism, acting against the supposedly ‘harmful and maverick elements of imperialist aggression’ such as Nazi Germany and fascism in general.

This fearful nonsense absolving the vicious imperialist system as a whole of its monstrous history of colonial exploitation crimes so as to nail the new savagery by Germany, Japan, etc, – then flowered into such permanent barminess as the ‘peaceful road to socialism’ illusion, the notion of perpetual peaceful coexistence internationally, and the delusion that the expanding camp of planned socialism would gradually capture the world market from imperialist exploitation, which would then begin contracting and dying **as opposed to needing to be overthrown by revolution everywhere** [1952: *Economic Problems of Socialism* – J V Stalin].

This revisionist wishful thinking was hugely popular worldwide, and in particular of course in the Soviet Union. This comfortable USSR ideological decay was in effect becoming unreformable because of the very success of the Soviet workers state.

It can now be seen that only some farcical self-inflicted damage to the USSR itself was ever going to cut short the enormous moribund influence of the CPSU on the workers movements of the world. All the time that the Soviet Union itself was still there, a colossal triumph of history as the world’s first workers state, – then the grip of revisionism would remain hard-to-impossible to overcome.

The trade-war conflict of inter-imperialist crisis, sharpening steadily throughout the 1970s and 1980s, would eventually make such a break with revisionism’s anti-revolutionary international class-collaborationism imperative. And it was the main motive force of 20th century history, – inter-imperialist crisis itself, – which pushed revisionism’s

dead hand out of the way, via Gorbachev’s amazing torrent of self-liquidating fantasies at the end of the 1980s.

Paradoxically, it was the Reagan administration, which for years had been spitting the most hair-raising fire and blood at the “evil empire” that had been heard in a long time, which was obliged (due to crippling budget deficits caused by murderous trade-war competition from Germany and Japan) to offer a new period, and a new level, of détente to the Soviet Union. The Gorbachevite bureaucracy could hardly conceal its delight at such an unexpected turnaround, seeming to fulfil all of its revisionist dreams, letting it retreat further than ever from its uncomfortable “counter-balance to imperialism” role, and making possible new gimmicks for tackling continuing Soviet economic development problems, trumpeting glasnost and perestroika.

These, of course, were fairly empty gestures in the absence, almost total by now, of the one ideology always necessary to the further advance towards communism and which alone will be able to take civilisation there, – the ever deeper grasp of the world revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism, which must become the earnestly wanted and fought-for philosophy of all mankind, and without which no society will ever be reached where work becomes man’s **prime necessity**, and where the state (force and compulsion in adult human affairs) can at last begin to wither away.

But what Gorbachevite revisionist fantasies did require in order for glasnost and perestroika to look and sound good was a measure of relaxation of the state structure of the Soviet workers state, – the dictatorship of the proletariat, centred on the CPSU as the sole and constitutional ruling party. Gorbachev abandoned it, thinking to become the greatest hero of Soviet history. Still obviously surrounded by world bourgeois-imperialist influences and bribery/subversion, the Soviet workers state and planned economy immediately began to be totally undermined. Gorbachev instead became the most despised booby in history, – the complete philistine.

The CPSU bureaucracy disintegrated completely, theoretically bankrupt; and deprived of even the pretence of Marxist-Leninist leadership any more, the Soviet workers state itself was left completely rudderless, as was bound to happen. The most wretched opportunism took over, virtually effortlessly.

Imperialist crisis, therefore, sharpening rapidly in recent years, has begun to create the need for the renewed socialist-

revolutionary advance of civilisation, and has also indirectly made possible the means, – by indirectly sweeping aside the totally inadequate revisionist “counter-balance to imperialism” standing in the way of that renewed revolutionary advance.

Sharpening imperialist crisis pushed the Reagan administration first down the road of screeching “evil-empire” accelerated warmongering threats, the old tried and tested Cold War route to firmer US imperialist domination of the rest of the planet by cajoling or bullying its imperialist ‘allies’ to support and help pay for the hegemony of American military technology (and therefore all technology), American political influence, and thereby American commercial sway. Such had been the postwar ‘anti-communist crusade’ means to US imperialist world domination.

But having failed once to prevent Germany and Japan from re-emerging as renewed threats to American international economic and political leadership, the simplistic ‘evil empire’ rhetorical revival was only likely to saddle the USA with even more costly ‘imperialist gendarme’ burdens such as the Star Wars threat, but with still no end to the ruthless relentless commercial challenge from Germany and Japan to virtually undermine the US economy and its worldwide influences.

So, having first rattled Soviet bureaucratic complacency with its “evil empire” rhetoric, the Reagan administration now delighted Gorbachevism by switching to a détente-agreement approach, intending to reduce the budget-cost burdens of the USA’s imperialist-world leadership, play down the ‘communist threat’ to it, and concentrate America’s efforts much more on the real threat to US world hegemony, – the deadly economic rivalry from Germany and Japan and all its other imperialist ‘allies’.

Thus imperialist crisis so shook up the old phony “counter-balance to imperialism” situation that it fell apart completely, first staggering reluctantly through the increasingly difficult war in Afghanistan which US imperialist intervention deliberately hotted up alarmingly, – and then tripping just as unconvincingly, compassless, and perspectiveless into glasnost and perestroika, and the dismantling of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the crucial revolutionary role of which was fatally not understood by revisionist theoretical bankruptcy.

The Soviet Union’s self-destruction obviously caused huge concern to anti-imperialists all round the world, but in retrospect, the situation is much more



Soviet aid helped the Vietnamese to victory, here storming Saigon's presidential palace

easily grasped and digested. The USSR was a colossal triumph as the world's first workers state of planned economic development, social progress, and international friendship, demonstrating how the world can do without capitalist market anarchy and imperialist exploiters. But the combination of the Soviet internal philosophical deterioration plus the failure of the world socialist revolution to sweep forward on a wide enough basis and in such a way as to take up the banner of Marxist-Leninist science and carry it further forward, left the USSR in steadily increasing complacent stagnation, unreformable from within due to its success.

Its record of achievement will remain a service to mankind for all time. But having fallen behind the necessary philosophical world developments, and its influence still being so vast on the international working class, the incipient revolutionary circumstances were bound to arrive when the negative influences worldwide of communist party revisionism began outweighing the advantages of continued Soviet Union existence. Gorbachevism can now begin to be seen as a welcome and unsurprising end to a terminal condition of revisionist self-inflicted harm which was threatening to start doing positive damage to the anti-imperialist movement (instead of mostly negative damage by omissions hitherto) with such confused stunts as joint declarations with US imperialism against "international terrorism", etc. Seemingly unresponsive any longer to the needs of the international anti-imperialist struggle, and having abandoned Afghanistan, for example, to a brutal reactionary fate at the

hands of US-inspired tribal/feudal primitivism (still going on murderously and destructively to this day), the world's first great example of workers state development was coming to the end of its useful life.

Many perceived reactionary consequences of the USSR's liquidation are in fact just a continuation of the return to ultra-rightwing fundamentalism in Western imperialism (which preceded Gorbachev) in step with deepening worries over monopoly-capitalist trade war and inter-imperialist cutthroat competition, a conservative response typified by Reagan and Thatcher. This anti-welfare/cost-cutting harshness will continue as capitalist-state policy for as long as national-chauvinist envy gets away with blaming foreign competition and international bureaucratic unfairness for any particular country's poor trade-war performance, and until the catastrophic worldwide dimensions of the imperialist system's difficulties resurrect the question of "is it not capitalism itself, and its destructive anarchy, which is really responsible for the growing crisis burdens on mankind in the 'free world'?"

Many other supposed adverse international results of Soviet revisionism's demise are in fact entirely imaginary as analysed in past polemics exposing petty-bourgeois ultra-leftist defeatism for describing both the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, and the snail's-pace reunification-process British colonialism has been forced into in Ireland, as 'victories for imperialism' instead of victories for national-liberation revolutionary struggle.

Revisionism elsewhere has

admittedly shown signs of becoming even more confused and volatile as a result of the CPSU debacle; but as Moscow's influence on Cuba or North Korea was never going to push them back towards Leninism anyway, then at least the theoretical possibility is opened up now that obviously increased imperialist pressure, – or renewed revolutionary advances internationally as a result of Moscow's dead hand being removed, – might just have that effect.

As for US imperialism's supposed 'new-world-order' renewed strength in dictating to the whole world now, – all past *EPS Reviews* have continuously exposed just the exact opposite of this, – the ever-deepening confusion, conflict, and crisis within the imperialist camp, dragging the entire imperialist system ever closer towards a renewal of warmongering, slump-ridden, fascist chaos and insoluble economic crisis, including especially the catastrophic decline and fall of Washington hegemony, with all the unprecedented consequences of disruption and dislocation that this will bring, exactly because of the overwhelmingly dominant role that the USA has previously come to play due to the incurable anarchic unevenness of development and brutal injustice of the 'free market' system. To describe this sordid unstable mess as an effective 'new imperialist world order' is to reveal the most naive lack of historical awareness imaginable.

In this light of chronic imperialist instability, the supposed "loss of an alternative centre for non-imperialist countries and national-liberation movements to look to" in the USSR, has to be completely reversed. It is

encouragement to revolutionary struggle which is now absolutely vital, not encouragement to domestic and international class-collaboration which Moscow had been ladling out for decades. Right up until Gorbachev's final self-destruction, Soviet policy was still being defended by Communist Parties worldwide. For the revolutionary overthrow of imperialism, in the long run the loss of such an anti-Leninist "alternative centre" for the national-liberation and anti-imperialist movements will be seen as necessary.

Throughout its existence and after its demise, the great problem with how the role of the world's first workers state was received and analysed was from people looking to the USSR to demonstrate some point or other which reflected mostly on the subjective condition of the people looking and their needs, but told little of Soviet reality and its historic achievements.

Millions flocked into communist parties everywhere inspired with ideals of a Soviet Union steadily growing in perfection, and a Bolshevik leadership gaining all the time in flawless wisdom. These illusions were a tragic disaster.

Millions more remained cynically sceptical, tragically neutralised by the ferocious anti-communist propaganda onslaught by bourgeois ideology from seeing any great historic triumph at all against imperialist reaction by the Soviet workers state. A few thousand left sectarians turned savagely against the USSR, denouncing it for not being the perfect socialist revolution and the instant hammer of all imperialism immediately, worldwide. This sour subjectivism was a total disaster.

What Soviet developments needed was what they never got, – unconditional support in the face of all the bourgeois attacks of every kind which were heaped upon the USSR, but sympathetic criticism of the mistakes which began to be made, in particular the revisionist weaknesses which began to creep into the CPSU's grasp of Marxist-Leninist scientific theory.

The clever Trotsky's denunciations of Stalinist "counter-revolution" were an utter catastrophe for the international working class, from the 1920s onwards, reaching their insane peak when they resulted in widespread sectarian hostility to the Cuban socialist revolution of the 1960s, (aided by the Soviet "counter-revolution"); or soured international solidarity with the heroic Afghan revolutionary-attempts to overcome US-financed tribal-feudal backwardness and barbarism in the 1980s; or when they demoralised workers everywhere by

announcing imminent German imperialist victory over “Hitler’s twin-star Stalin” during the second great inter-imperialist war period; etc.

The state-capitalist denunciation of the Soviet workers state as a new bureaucratic bourgeoisie, exploiting the working class in the USSR and internationally, was even worse destructive biliousness for subjective sectarian petty-bourgeois to inflict on unsuspecting workers. A halving of living standards, and appalling suffering from mass unemployment, uncontrollable crime and corruption, and a near breakdown of all welfare-state social services were inflicted on the bewildered Soviet public when capitalism and the exploitation of workers really was re-introduced into Soviet territory in the 1990s.

And what happened to the supposed new “state-capitalist Soviet ruling caste” (the CPSU, 18-million strong by the 1980s) after Gorbachev? Presumably, all 18 million just stuck up a sign saying “private capitalist” and carried on as before? No, 99.99% of them are now powerless victimised workers or else unemployed, and all suffering along with the rest of the Soviet people.

And what happened to Gorbachev? Presumably as the top boss of state-capitalism going private, he would have ended up as the top privateer? Even as Western imperialism’s greatest-ever stooge, he has ended up as a bit of an outcast, apparently backed only by free-world handouts.

And completely unexplained is the greatest mystery of all: Why would the Soviet state-capitalist bourgeoisie want to become a private capitalist bourgeoisie anyway, even if they all made it safely onto the changed gravy-trains (instead of 99.99% of them falling off)? All of history has demonstrated that power is the real turn-on for the privileged, not an extra dacha, or an extra limousine, or an extra breakfast, which is all that changing from state-capitalist bosses to private capitalist bosses would have meant. And power, the sweetest thing of all according to most great figures of history, is the one thing the Soviet bureaucracy was almost certain to have to give up or to compromise over if they switched from being state-capitalist bosses to private capitalist bosses under a free-market bourgeois-democracy system (as in fact has happened).

So were these the most stupid ‘evil exploiting capitalist bosses’ in all history? Or just maybe, perhaps, they were not state-capitalist bosses at all, ever.

Another range of attacks on the Soviet workers state came from the semi-anarchic school of ‘rank-and-file socialism’, summed

up in all its appalling reactionary self-delusion and treachery by the Solidarnosc racket, entirely organised and financed by the CIA and the Vatican with looted Banco Ambrosiano mafia funds, whose fictional ‘10 million members’ were the idol of fake-‘lefts’ the world over, which ended up dismantling the Polish workers-state gains and installing the near-fascist Walesa as president, stooge-in-chief for Western imperialist interests. Such ‘rank-and-file socialism’ has never believed in a powerful state of proletarian dictatorship as the main essential teaching of all Marxist-Leninist science (see *EPS Review* 867) and has never done anything anywhere but play into the hands of counter-revolution.

The mass democratic involvement in the running of the state was one of the most powerful features of the Soviet Union’s development, seen at its best during the German Nazi imperialist onslaught which saw virtually half the armed nation ranged in front of the Wehrmacht, and the other half armed as partisans behind the German lines. No commissars were shot, – only imperialist exploiters, and many millions of them.

But party and soviet democracy were thwarted from any steps towards full flourishing by the wretched theoretical limitations of the CPSU leadership after Lenin. Marxism-Leninism is a practical world-revolutionary philosophy or it is nothing, vitally depending on a full grasp of the very latest front-line developments in the anti-imperialist struggle everywhere, constantly reinterpreting the changing international balance of class forces and advancing the most perceptive analysis of it, or drying up completely.

The Soviet workers state taught ‘dialectical materialism’ to every student, and made possible tens of thousands of solidarity groups of Soviet citizens with all those in anti-imperialist struggle the world over.

But the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist cutting edge was largely absent from all these activities. Scientific anti-imperialist struggle was never given up-to-date polemical teaching, actively analysing every latest class-war and inter-imperialist war development with a view to advancing the most effective communist policy possible, and actively engaging the mass Soviet democracy education in all those international revolutionary struggles. Marxism-Leninism became just known as ‘dia-mat’, – an arid desiccated school subject about as entertaining and vital as learning Latin irregular verbs. It was still a workers state pursuing democratic socialism and mass

involvement, but the theoretical blindness and smug complacency of the CPSU leadership turned all this into aimless dross by the end, a society without a driving philosophy (which had to be world socialist revolution, or nothing), – a pushover for a really determined opportunist philistine like Gorbachev.

The answer to all the pointless wishful-thinking questions of ‘could it have all been better; could it have turned out differently?’ is a clear No. Whatever atrocious mistakes or arbitrary crimes are eventually proven against the leadership after Lenin, the CPSU and the Soviet state always overwhelmingly went with the always clearcut party majority. Whatever character is ever assigned to the performance, achievements, and omissions of that leadership, that will be a fairly accurate reflection of the level of culture of which the Soviet revolution was capable in the period after Lenin.

Stalin easily defeated Trotsky on all the disputed matters between them, and fully deserved to. His central core of long-serving Bolsheviks was always far closer to Leninism than Trotsky had ever been. A textual comparison between Stalin’s ‘*Foundations of Leninism*’, ‘*October Revolution and Tactics of Russian Communists*’, and ‘*Problems of Leninism*’, and Trotsky’s rival books similarly published in the USSR between 1923 and 1926 including ‘*The New Course*’, the new *Preface to ‘The Year 1905*’, and ‘*The Year 1917*’, etc, demonstrates that it was no contest. Stalin won hands down, and it is no surprise that at the 13th Party Conference before Lenin died, and at the 13th Congress (where Lenin’s ‘*Testament*’ was read to the delegates) and the 5th Congress of the Comintern later (spring and summer) in 1924, Stalin’s line won all the votes overwhelmingly against Trotsky’s line.

The Soviet workers state of planned socialism that the world got for 70 years of the mid 20th century, achieving an astonishing unprecedented impact on civilisation, was about the best the world could anticipate given the prevailing conditions and difficulties. The tragic relapse back into revisionism by the acknowledged leadership of the international revolutionary movement was not the first time this had happened to Marxism-Leninism; and when first Bernstein, and then Kautsky, led the International into exactly these revisionist disasters, there were far less unnerving circumstances facing them than that which afflicted the Third International leadership after Lenin.

The challenge to the validity of trying to build socialism at all in Soviet Russia isolated from world

revolution, is best answered by Lenin himself in his articles “*Our foreign and domestic position and party tasks*” (1920); *Speech at plenary session of Moscow Soviet* (Nov 1922); “*On co-operation*” (Jan 1923); “*Better fewer, but better*” (March 1923).

Far too much criticism of the USSR has been based on its supposed failures as the vehicle for progressing the completion of the world socialist revolution, which was a hazy concept at best, and was not in the forefront of Lenin’s mature mind, as the above quotes indicate. Far too little estimation has been given to the Soviet Union as the world’s first workers state, an actual historical place and event of real complex living millions, all coming from a most difficult background, but achieving miracles.

The more gruesome crimes of Soviet history are still a painful puzzle such as the Show Trials and the largescale purges, but the extent of German imperialist subversive agencies’ penetration is still not fully revealed, and the colossal sophisticated ability of the CIA to undermine regime after regime around the world should cause hesitation in condemning the Soviet socialist-baby with its contaminated political bathwater.

Many alleged Soviet ‘atrocities’ are just pure slander. The real tragedy for the small Caucasus Chechen nation, one of the minority of 180 Soviet nationalities which was never fully reconciled to proletarian-dictatorship rule, especially under Russian or Soviet leadership, came not from their temporary deportation during the German Nazi imperialist invasion to avoid them collaborating with the Occupation. It only became a bloody catastrophe when so-called ‘freedom’ was restored to Soviet lands after 1990. Then the Chechens started to suffer racial discrimination in Moscow, e.g., for the first time ever, – and to feel so seriously neglected by the new regime of petty-bourgeois wretchedness in Moscow that full independence was immediately demanded, – and naively expected. The Chechens got the shock of their lives, and their entire country destroyed all around them, massacring nearly 50,000 and totally wrecking their impressive Soviet capital Grozny and all their remarkable Soviet-era social advances, none of which had existed in such tribal areas pre-Bolshevism. The Chechens had always skirmished with Moscow power in the USSR, – but never had fullscale war been declared, or any major military operations been required at all to keep relations moving on slowly but surely. Only anti-communist ‘freedom’ brought the Chechens such untold humiliation, suffer-

ing, damage, and despair.

The same favourable comparison in the effects of the USSR versus restored capitalist 'democracy' will be observable in every aspect of state involvement in human affairs.

Identifying the theoretical degeneration in the Soviet leadership after Lenin as the real crime of Soviet history while rejecting the glib 'materialist' explanations for the decline (in too much state-capitalist profiteering; too many bureaucratic comforts; too little rank-and-file democracy; too much leadership-centralism; etc, etc,) is not being idealist, implying Stalin & Co just 'went bad' with no material cause or in a complete vacuum of influential international conditions. There were obvious domestic and world material and ideological pressures pushing the bureaucracy towards a defeatist complacency and nervousness which then turned into revisionist self-justification.

But the workers-state philosophy required fully conscious rational leadership to deliberately take it ever further and deeper into all-round mastery of the whole of Marxist-Leninist science, – as every future socialist-state development always will require (and the remaining present ones do today), – ultimately involving the whole country in such advanced political development, – and courting stagnant redundancy if such a theoretical uninterrupted revolution was not embraced. The Soviet leadership after Lenin simply failed to grasp this understanding. The whole world of anti-communist ideology, from academic right to fake ultra-left, has obviously failed to grasp this even more abysmally. It is the work for the revolutionary socialist future, for which the world's first workers state was a heroic and magnificent start, well able to inspire the whole rest of history ahead.

Build Leninism. RB

“Left” posturing made even worse temporarily by CPSU revisionist liquidation and counter-revolutionary disintegration of Soviet state. Labour Party abandoning of socialist pretensions adds to problems which should not be ignored

[EPSR No892 25-02-97]

[...The] trick of 'left' posturing by basically reactionary petty-bourgeois, exposed in Lenin's "*Leftwing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*" which paid particular attention to backwardness in British political life at the time, – is temporarily even more of a problem currently because of the huge amount of confusion thrown up by the self-liquidation of CPSU revisionism and the counter-revolutionary disintegration of the Soviet workers state, and by the parallel open abandonment of any remaining pretensions to socialism by the Labour Party.

It is a mistake to just ignore it. The CPSU partly ended up completely theoretically paralysed in its understanding of Leninist science due to this Communist Party habit everywhere of trying to deal with unjustified criticism, and even with merely difficult questions which really needed some discussion, – by just ignoring them.

This fatal complacency eventually ended up in complete bureaucratic lifelessness as far as a Marxist-Leninist **revolutionary** understanding of reality was concerned.

Workers need to understand why right-moving opportunism, which was developing a hatred for socialist revolution, continued to posture for years as *Marxism To-*

day in order to continue bamboozling workers. Or why the 'Euro-communists' around Hobsbawm needed to invent the "disappearance of the industrial working-class in Britain" to justify their revisionist anti-communism, and why these trivial CPGB relics of that revisionist opportunism dismiss the working class today as "generally cowed and lacking in courage", and building the SLP as an "admission of their defeat", allegedly, but yet still want to posture as the born-again old International Communist Party.

Without such struggles, the workers party cannot grow in theoretical stature or its grasp of history. The party of the working class needs to be able to answer every question about every aspect of society better than anyone else can. And the necessary scientific specialists for this will be attracted when the workers party can explain every aspect of modern political history of the world economic crisis, and class and national conflict, better than anyone else.

There is no ready-formed knowledge to provide all these answers. It is going to have to be built up by the workers party in constant aggressive theoretical and practical political struggle on all questions facing society, based of course on the already proven value of the basic philosophical

understanding of Marxism-Leninism.

The SLP's reluctance to spread its wings into wider theoretical debate about the way forward for socialism based on a correct interpretation of the history of the masses struggle so far against imperialist exploitation and domination, is a weakness.

The right-wing never cease pouring out nonsense against the history of communism and about why and how the Soviet workers state went into self-liquidation. Television documentaries, radio broadcasts, and books are pouring out faster than ever to try to drive the final stake through the heart of the Marxist-Leninist scientific philosophy of the true emancipation of the working class and thereby of all mankind.

The inevitable 'free market' in bourgeois ideology variously suggests, – in different major propaganda outbursts in this last week alone, – that a) the Star Wars arms race broke the back of the Soviet planned-welfare economy; or b) the sheer envy of the West's better-off consumer goods finally drove the Soviet people to demand some 'get rich quick' instant gratification for themselves; or c) the non-stop subversive Western broadcasts to the workers states eventually exposed the propaganda lies that were used by the bureaucracy to manipulate mass opinion, ↗

The history of the working-class movement in all countries shows that the better-situated strata of the working class respond to the ideas of socialism more rapidly and more easily. From among these come, in the main, the advanced workers that every working-class movement brings to the fore, those who can win the confidence of the labouring masses, who devote themselves entirely to the education and organisation of the proletariat, who accept socialism consciously, and who even elaborate independent socialist theories. Every viable working-class movement has brought to the fore such working-class leaders, its own Proudhons, Vaillants, Weitlings, and Bebel. And our Russian working-class movement promises not to lag behind the European movement in this respect. At a time when educated society is losing interest in honest, illegal literature, an impassioned desire for knowledge and for socialism is growing among the workers, real heroes are coming to the fore from amongst the workers, who, despite their wretched living conditions, despite the stultifying penal servitude of factory labour, possess so much character and will-power that they study, study, study, and turn themselves into conscious Social-Democrats—"the working-class intelligentsia." This "working-class intelligentsia" already exists in Russia, and we must make every effort to ensure that its ranks are regularly reinforced, that its lofty mental requirements are met and that leaders of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party come from its ranks. The newspaper that wants to become the organ of all Russian Social-Democrats must, therefore, be at the level of the advanced workers; not only must it not lower its level artificially, but, on the contrary, it must raise it constantly, it must follow up all the tactical, political, and theoretical problems of world Social-Democracy. Only then will the demands of the working-class intelligentsia be met, and it itself will take the cause of the Russian workers and, *consequently*, the cause of the Russian revolution, into its own hands.

After the numerically small stratum of advanced workers comes the broad stratum of average workers. These workers, too, strive ardently for socialism, participate in workers' study circles, read socialist newspapers and books, participate in agitation, and differ from the preceding stratum only in that they cannot become fully independent leaders of the Social-Democratic working-class movement. The average worker will not understand some of the articles in a newspaper that aims to be the organ of the Party, he will not be able to get a full grasp of an intricate theoretical or practical problem. This does not at all mean that the newspaper must lower itself to the level of the mass of its readers. The newspaper, on the contrary, must raise their level and help promote advanced workers from the middle stratum of workers. Such workers, absorbed by local practical work and interested mainly in the events of the working-class movement and the immediate problems of agitation, should connect their every act with thoughts of the entire Russian

causing a 'revolution'.

No amount of discussion articles in *Socialist News* or elsewhere will provide rapid answers to this enormous historical confusion, or completely satisfactory answers ever, even in the long term.

But a mighty struggle to understand these complex historical events more fully is the only obvious way to set about these difficulties, – which matter a great deal because bourgeois-fed ideological chaos is, and always has been, the ruling class's one great weapon for keeping the working masses controlled and relatively docile by never being able to unite all together on one clear understanding of what is wrong with modern society, what went wrong in the history of the struggle to change it, and what needs to be done next.

The workers party must tackle all these questions and more, and to an ever greater depth of clarity and understanding, – for all workers. The idea of deliberately limiting the coverage of *Socialist News* to suit the level of the workers it is catering for, was certainly not how the Bolshevik Party envisaged its tasks faced with the even greater difficulty of a largely illiterate Russian proletariat, as Lenin explained in 1899 in *A retrograde trend in Russian Social-Democracy* (in which the term Social Democrat stands for Communist, the RSDLP being the eventual Bolshevik Party):

working-class movement, its historical task, and the ultimate goal of socialism, so that the newspaper, the mass of whose readers are average workers, must connect socialism and the political struggle with every local and narrow question.

Lastly, behind the stratum of average workers comes the mass that constitutes the lower strata of the proletariat. It is quite possible that a socialist newspaper will be completely or well-nigh incomprehensible to them (even in Western Europe the number of Social-Democratic voters is much larger than the number of readers of Social-Democratic newspapers), but it would be absurd to conclude from this that the newspaper of the Social-Democrats should adapt itself to the lowest possible level of the workers. The only thing that follows from this is that different forms of agitation and propaganda must be brought to bear on these strata—pamphlets written in more popular language, oral agitation, and chiefly—leaflets on local events. The Social-Democrats should not confine themselves even to this; it is quite possible that the first steps towards arousing the consciousness of the lower strata of the workers will have to take the form of legal educational activities. It is very important for the *Party* to make use of this activity, guide it in the direction in which it is most needed, send out legal workers to plough up virgin fields that can later be planted by Social-Democratic agitators. Agitation among the lower strata of the workers should, of course, provide the widest field for the personal qualities of the agitator and the peculiarities of the locality, the trade concerned, etc. “Tactics and agitation must not be confused,” says Kautsky in his book against Bernstein. “Agitational methods must be adapted to individual and local conditions. Every agitator must be allowed to select those methods of agitation that he has at his disposal. One agitator may create the greatest impression by his enthusiasm, another by his biting sarcasm, a third by his ability to adduce a large number of instances, etc. While being adapted to the agitator, agitation must also be adapted to the public. The agitator must speak so that he will be understood; he must take as a starting-point something well known to his listeners. All this is self-evident and is not merely applicable to agitation conducted among the peasantry. One has to talk to cabmen differently than to sailors, and to sailors differently than to printers. Agitation must be *individualised*, but our *tactics*, our political activity must be *uniform*” (S. 2-3). These words from a leading representative of Social-Democratic theory contain a superb assessment of agitation as part of the general activity of the party. These words show how unfounded are the fears of those who think that the formation of a revolutionary party conducting a political struggle will interfere with agitation, will push it into the background and curtail the freedom of the agitators. On the contrary, only an organised party can carry out widespread agitation, provide the necessary guidance (and material) for agitators on all economic and political questions, make use of every local agitational success for the instruction of all Russian workers, and send agitators to those places and into that milieu where they can work with the greatest success. It is only in an organised party that people possessing the capacities for work as agitators will be able to dedicate themselves wholly to this task—to the advantage both of agitation and of the other aspects of Social-Democratic work. From this it can be seen that whoever forgets political agitation and propaganda on account of the economic struggle, whoever forgets the necessity of organising the working-class movement into the struggle of a political party, will, aside from everything else, deprive himself of even an opportunity of successfully and steadily attracting the lower strata of the proletariat to the working-class cause.

However, such an exaggeration of one side of our activities to the detriment of the others, even the urge to throw overboard the other aspects, is fraught with still graver consequences for the Russian working-class movement. The lower strata of the proletariat may even become demoralised by such calumnies as that the founders of Russian Social-Democracy only want to use the workers to overthrow the autocracy, by invitations to confine themselves to the restoration of holidays and to craft unions, with no concern for the final aims of socialism and the immediate tasks of the political struggle. Such workers may (and will) always be ensnared by the bait of any sops offered by the government or the bourgeoisie. The lower strata of the proletariat, the very undeveloped workers, might, under the influence of the preaching of *Rabochaya Mysl*, fall victim to the bourgeois and profoundly reactionary idea that the worker cannot and should not interest himself in anything but increased wages and the restoration of holidays (“the interests of the moment”); that the working people can and should conduct the workers’ struggle by their own efforts alone, by their own “private initiative,” and not attempt to combine it with socialism; that they should not strive to turn the working-class movement into the essential, advanced cause of all mankind. We repeat, the most undeveloped workers might be demoralised by such an idea, but we are confident that the advanced Russian workers, those who guide the workers’ study circles and all Social-Democratic activity, those who today fill our prisons and places of exile—from Archangel Gubernia to Eastern Siberia—that those workers will reject such a theory with indignation! To reduce the entire movement to the interests of the moment means to speculate on the backward condition of the workers, means to cater to their worst inclinations. It means artificially to break the link between the working-class movement and socialism, between the fully defined political strivings of the advanced workers and the spontaneous manifestations of protest on the part of the masses. Hence, the attempt of *Rabochaya Mysl* to introduce a special trend merits particular attention and calls for a vigorous protest. As long as *Rabochaya Mysl*, adapting itself, apparently, to the lower strata of the proletariat, assiduously avoided the question of the ultimate goal of socialism and the political struggle, with no declaration of its special trend, many Social-Democrats only shook their heads, hoping that with the development and extension of their work

the members of the *Rabochaya Mysl* group would come to rid themselves of their narrowness. However, when people who, until now, have performed the useful work of a preparatory class clutch at fashionable opportunist theories and begin to deafen the ears of Europe with announcements about intending to put the whole of Russian Social-Democracy into the preparatory class for many years (if not for ever), when, in other words, people who have, until now, been labouring usefully over a barrel of honey begin “in full view of the public” to pour ladles of tar into it, then it is time for us to set ourselves decisively against this retrograde trend!

There is still one other question left for us to examine, probably the most important one, namely, how such a retrograde trend in Russian Social-Democracy is to be explained. In our opinion it is not to be explained solely by the personal qualities of the *Rabochaya Mysl* editors or by the influence of the fashionable Bernsteinism alone. We hold that it is to be explained mainly by the peculiarities in the historical development of Russian Social-Democracy, which gave rise to—and had temporarily to give rise to—a narrow understanding of working-class socialism.

In the eighties and at the beginning of the nineties, when Social-Democrats initiated their practical work in Russia, they were confronted firstly with the *Narodnaya Volya*, which charged them with departing from the political struggle that had been inherited from the Russian revolutionary movement, and with which the Social-Democrats carried on a persistent polemic. Secondly, they were confronted with the Russian liberal circles, which were also dissatisfied with the turn taken by the revolutionary movement—from the *Narodnaya Volya* trend to Social-Democracy. The twofold polemic centred round the question of politics. In their struggle against the narrow conceptions of the *Narodnaya Volya* adherents, who reduced politics to conspiracy-making, the Social-Democrats could be led to, and did at times, declare themselves against politics in general (in view of the then prevailing narrow conception of politics). On the other hand, the Social-Democrats often heard, in the liberal and radical *salons* of bourgeois “society,” regrets that the revolutionaries had abandoned terror; people who were mortally afraid for their own skins and at a decisive moment failed to give support to the heroes who struck blows at the autocracy, these people hypocritically accused the Social-Democrats of political indifferentism and yearned for the rebirth of a party that would pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them.

Naturally, the Social-Democrats conceived a hatred for such people and their phrases, and they turned to the more mundane but more serious work of propaganda among the factory proletariat. At first it was inevitable that this work should have a narrow character and should be embodied in the narrow declarations of some Social-Democrats. This narrowness, however, did not frighten those Social-Democrats who had not in the least forgotten the broad historical aims of the Russian working-class movement. What matters it if the *words* of the Social-Democrats sometimes have a narrow meaning when *their deeds* cover a broad field. They do not give themselves up to useless conspiracies, they do not hob-nob with the Balalaikins¹¹ of bourgeois liberalism, but they go to that class which alone is the real revolutionary class and assist in the development of its forces! They believed that this narrowness would disappear of its own accord with each step that broadened Social-Democratic propaganda. And this, to a considerable degree, is what has happened. From propaganda they began to go over to widespread agitation. Widespread agitation, naturally, brought to the forefront a growing number of class-conscious advanced workers; revolutionary organisations began to take form (the St. Petersburg, Kiev, and other Leagues of Struggle, the Jewish Workers’ Union). These organisations naturally tended to merge and, eventually, they succeeded: they united and laid the foundations of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. It would seem that the old narrowness would then have been left without any basis and that it would be completely cast aside. But things turned out differently: the spread of their agitation brought the Social-Democrats into contact with the lower, less developed strata of the proletariat; to attract these strata it was necessary for the agitator to be able to adapt himself to the lowest level of understanding, he was taught to put the “demands and interests of the given moment” in the foreground and to push back the broad ideals of socialism and the political struggle. The fragmentary, amateur nature of Social-Democratic work; the extremely weak connections between the study circles in the different cities, between the Russian Social-Democrats and their comrades abroad who possessed a profounder knowledge and a richer revolutionary experience, as well as a wider political horizon, naturally led to a gross exaggeration of this (*absolutely essential*) aspect of Social-Democratic activity, which could bring some individuals to lose sight of the other aspects, especially since with every reverse the most developed workers and intellectuals were wrenched from the ranks of the struggling army, so that sound revolutionary traditions and continuity could not as yet be evolved. It is in this extreme exaggeration of one aspect of Social-Democratic work that we see the chief cause of the sad retreat from the ideals of Russian Social-Democracy. Add to this, enthusiasm over a fashionable book, ignorance of the history of the Russian revolutionary movement, and a childish claim to originality - and you have all the elements that go to make up “the retrograde trend in Russian Social-Democracy.”

We shall, therefore, have to deal in greater detail with the question of the relation of the advanced strata of the proletariat to the less advanced, and the significance of Social-Democratic work among these two sections.

On the question of these non-stop propaganda broadcasts and books against the former Soviet Union, a clearer understanding is emerging all the time, but it

can only continue doing so by constant reappraisal and discussion, and the workers party ought to be taking the lead in such activity, routing the Trots with

their silly and treacherous “a total tragedy” nonsense, and the more subtle bourgeois ideologues with their more detailed, and endlessly varied, specific ‘explanations’ of what actually ‘went wrong’ and why.

If the workers party does not answer these questions, the working class will remain confused, and still subject to the grip of reactionary anti-communist ideology.

The claim that the CIA-financed and organised, non-stop, subversive broadcasts into East Europe from the Western countries and from specially-built propaganda stations like Radio Free Europe, eventually exposed Soviet propaganda lies and unleashed a ‘revolution’ for ‘freedom’ is obvious nonsense as the major explanation of the CPSU’s self-destruction as the ruling party; but it does usefully draw attention to some of the contributory factors which eventually laid revisionism low.

That such propaganda could topple a workers-state government that did not want to be toppled is plainly daft.

The Soviet Union was subjected to a total avalanche of subversion and propaganda from the day it was born, and easily survived such destructive irritation through far worse times than were present in the USSR by the 1980s. But the flaws in Soviet practice which such hostile broadcasts did expose were telltale for other far more important reasons.

Two areas of propaganda, for example, which Western broad-
The Petersburg Soviet in 1917

casts were able to score points over were 1) the Soviet bureaucracy’s long-ingrained disusedness to facing up openly to its own mistakes; and 2) its equally naïve and unconfident habit (as well as unnecessary) of deliberately depicting general conditions in the advanced Western countries as worse than they actually were in terms of economic development and living standards, (instead of concentrating on the deeper unsatisfactoriness of exploited and insecure life under capitalism.)

Both weaknesses flowed from specific theoretical defects of Stalinism. The awkwardness in dealing with mistakes was lifelong from the role of being a stalwart party leader, outstandingly loyal to Leninism and clearest about its essential scientific perspectives on party and state building, but never himself remotely approaching the abilities of, say, Lenin as an original theoretical analyst, and therefore uncomfortable with what Lenin himself described as one of the greatest challenges of philosophical leadership, the ability to face up to one’s own mistakes and to learn from them.

This weakness in Stalin, the best of the Bolshevik leaders, was a genuine ‘historical tragedy’.

The nonsense of over-exaggerating the picture of the difficulties of life under capitalism in the West, (which is intolerable enough just from the alienation and rotten corruption of a whole system of exploitation and profiteering, plus the insecurity and shallow culture of unreliable boom-and-slump uncertainty, periodically interrupted by the

even greater catastrophe of inter-imperialist trade-war and shooting war), – flowed even more tragically out of the conceited false position Stalin allowed himself to be placed in of being himself a ‘great leader’ alongside Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

He added little to original Marxist-Leninist science, and one of his more pathetic attempts to do so led directly to the catastrophe of Western life being painted artificially black when just telling the truth would have painted it black enough for a Soviet population brought up under communist international revolutionary philosophy.

This was Stalin’s revision of Marxism-Leninism on whether the imperialist economic system could continue to expand internally and develop externally even in the period of its general historical decline (faced with a rising number of workers states) and period of greatest-ever humiliation over the disasters of its inter-imperialist world wars and the appalling aftermath of exaggerated fascist-imperialist aggression.

Stalin fatuously declared that imperialist economic development was now at an end after WWII (see *Economic problems of socialism* 1952), and that only decline and stagnation could now follow (see EPSR No886) [See p60 - see also EPSR Book Vol 21 *Unanswered Polemics against Stalinism*].

This was utter gibberish, but it was taken as gospel truth because of the artificial position Stalin’s long and successful guidance of the leadership of the Soviet work-

ers state had placed him in.

The result was widespread Soviet insistence that ordinary life in Britain, for example, was collapsing back towards Dickensian levels of poverty and suffering and collapse, and for a long time, nothing could convince Soviet propaganda to deal with and explain the contrary reality.

Not dealing with the contrary reality of temporarily re-expanding imperialist economic inventiveness, development, and growth in the favoured Western countries led in part to the catastrophic Gorbachev mentality which went to pieces under the late 1980s rapprochement and thaw which gave irrefutable evidence of far higher living standards for favoured countries in the West, and sent Gorbachev’s shallow opportunist brain into a tailspin, seeking to blame ‘socialist failure’ for these discrepancies, and seeking to copy and borrow capitalist market methods and inspiration to help ‘put things right’.

It did not need it. What was needed was a mature understanding of how imperialism continues to expand even more frenetically than ever in the run-up to its next great international crisis of warmongering mayhem and murderous slump.

Bureaucratic socialist economic management certainly could have done with more flexibility and imagination, and another shake-up, or more of a shake-up than ever. But the really dangerous stagnation was in the now disastrously weak grasp of basic Marxist-Leninist world revolu-



tionary understanding by the entire revisionist CPSU leadership. And on this subject, Gorbachev had not even a clue what was being discussed. He simply did not understand that Marxist-Leninist science was about a historical revolution in which the further development of civilisation would absolutely require the replacement of the bourgeoisie as the world ruling class by the proletariat, thus ending the history of class-dominated society once and for all.

The other alternative bourgeois ideological 'explanations' for the CPSU liquidation also contained partial truths, but which again only made useful sense if treated as factors in a much profounder picture which the West wants to keep hidden, – the eminently curable failures in the Marxist-Leninist scientific philosophy of historical change, without which correct guidance no workers state could stay the course of building a lasting socialist society superior to capitalist society and destined to outlive it. The economic and political despair from the prospect of being forced to match Star Wars expenditure was really only a failure of Moscow's philosophical understanding, as was any supposed inability to keep Soviet people happy on the consumer goods front.

The real point about imperialist warmongering is that it will unfailingly only eventually be turned seriously against rival imperialist powers, when an

imperialist bourgeoisie's survival is really a matter of life or death. Star Wars could much more easily have bankrupted US imperialism, or the whole of imperialism, rather than bankrupting the USSR.

The 'consumer goods envy' explanation for the CPSU's self-liquidation is just a joke. Very minor market, management, or trading reforms could have solved some of whatever serious 'problems' there really were. But much more importantly, better philosophical understanding of the historic contradiction between capitalist-exploitation glitz and socialist welfare security would have solved such 'problems' even better.

"You cannot eat socialism" as the late Deng Xiao Ping was allegedly fond of saying, but you can notice that better-off bourgeois imperialism feeds its fat face unhealthily out of the exploitation of the Third World billions, while those same billions sampling capitalist 'freedom' and market anarchy 'enjoy' still criminally tyrannous and impoverished exploitation circumstances, and conditions of unhealthy penury which had long been left far behind in the formerly equally backward Tsarist Russia.

Leaderships which think that things should be measured in consumer-goods now rather than in longer-term perspectives, are decidedly unmarxist, and a worry. Build Leninism. RB

Initial stages of SLP centrism still encouraging for opening up possibilities for revolutionary theory to be discussed on a broader scale in the workers movement and without restrictions on examining past revisionist mistakes like those in past pro-Soviet groups or compromising any perspectives

[EPSR No896 25-03-97]

[...]chaos in the Trot ranks sheds light on some remaining doubts in Leninist circles about the worthwhileness of building the SLP, even if it does not yet quite signal the definitive death of petty bourgeois ultra-leftism in the workers movement, or even its temporary demise.

The CPGB's muddled demoralisation nevertheless might reflect something from its disastrous conflict with the *EPSR* over the past 12 months over the correct historical interpretation of the SLP phenomenon.

Socialist Labour continues to flourish along broad centrist lines, not excluding elements of revolutionary understanding within its ranks and its achievements, and still looks poised to become a major historical movement reviving the mass struggle

for socialism in Britain.

This is exactly what the *EPSR* hoped the SLP could become, making possible a fight for Marxist-Leninist understanding within the workers movement on a far broader basis than had been possible before, – for anyone.

The SLP could be heading for a role even better than that ever played by any of the West European communist parties when they were in their prime, seriously battling for a socialist critique of capitalist degeneracy and with every intention of carrying out a revolutionary transformation of society.

And historical developments have potentially thrust the SLP beyond the old revisionist folly of tail-ending Labour and Labourism (see below). They have also made it possible for the broad SLP

movement to discuss scientifically the mistakes made by revisionism in the workers states in the past, something which was never possible in the broad pro-Soviet workers movement previously. At one time, only daft adulation of Moscow was possible. Subsequently, only the most defeatist anti-communist sneering opportunism was possible under the Eurocommunist Gorbachevite period.

A broad workers party dedicated to socialism which allows communists to loyally participate, gives the possibility for Marxist science to be discussed and understood on a far wider scale than has been possible for decades in the workers movement in Britain, and elsewhere in the West. The strength and practice of Leninist understanding can only grow stronger under such circumstances.

And some of the SLP's own policies are in themselves halfway towards a revolutionary advance for the workers in Britain, such as the policy on Ireland which can scarcely be faulted from a Leninist point of view, and is streets ahead of any Trot group or any other party in Britain.

No aspect of the SLP's development has remotely imposed any limitation on the *EPSR*'s view of the world, or laid it open to a weakening of its thinking.

Just the opposite. In the course of polemicising against fake 'Marxist' posturing around the SLP phenomenon, the *EPSR* has had more dramatic, noted, and influential successes than in any other such concentrated period, or ever in direct political conflict with anti-Leninist Trots.

Nor has the *EPSR*'s international revolutionary perspective retreated one millimetre. In the course of polemicising with anti-SLP Trots, typical petty bourgeois defeatism, – about the US 'New World Order' imposing itself on all anti-imperialist struggles everywhere, and about the IRA having sold out to a US-imposed bogus 'peace', meaning complete capitulation, – was more thoroughly trounced by the *EPSR* than any Trot nonsense has ever been – by anyone.

Likewise, Cuba and the Chinese workers states have been defended along more comprehensive and aggressive Leninist lines than any Marxist theoretical journal could ever have done, whether or not it supported the development of the SLP.

The development of a centrist movement and what to do about it has been a long-running understanding of the *EPSR*. Active supporting intervention has always been the theoretical understanding put forward. At last it has become possible for the *EPSR* to recommend its readers to give

active support to real centrism finally appearing, – the SLP.

And the whole point of a Leninist theoretical journal's very existence is so as to be able at some point to become part of a mass workers party in order to fight for a correct world view for practical political application.

The evolution of the SLP's policies is a challenge to everyone. The better they can be made, and the better the recruitment to the SLP and the better its political work, the better it will be all round for the working class.

Only on the question of building a Leninist party as such can the SLP's development and the *EPSR*'s involvement in it be thought of even remotely as a 'diversion', – and without the slightest conviction even then.

But in examining the case that the fight for Leninism might be damaged in some way, what emerges is that not enough thought has been given to exactly what historical obstacles lie in the way of a Marxist-Leninist revival in a mass workers party in Britain, and how they might be overcome; and also to what comfortable conservative routines, isolation, and understandings might need to be shaken up to allow Leninist theoretical work and practices an opening back into mass struggles.

The alleged contradiction in Leninist support for SLP party building is an illusion of logical straightline thinking undialectically grasped. The qualities for further developing Leninism can only be expanded in practical mass party struggles and experiences at some point.

EPSR supporters continue to express their perplexity over how Leninism can carry on being fought for while full backing is being declared at the same time for building the SLP.

And since Marxist science is adamant that a Leninist leadership is essential before the working class can make the revolutionary leap to becoming the new ruling class, it is concluded that it is therefore incorrect for the *EPSR* to urge workers to join the SLP.

The *Review* has described Socialist Labour as a centrist movement in embryo, capable of reviving mass agitation for a socialist solution to capitalist crisis and building up mass anti-imperialist struggle on a whole range of issues, and capable of becoming the arena within which arguments which lie ahead about complex questions of revolutionary programme, strategy, and tactics might take place.

Now this understanding is obviously speculative. The SLP may not turn out like that at all.

How speculative?. Discussion could obviously go on endlessly, and probably pointlessly. But

allowance must be made for the peculiarities of the historical period we are in, and the even more pronounced peculiarities of working-class history in Britain.

The fight for Marxist-Leninist theory has never before in history gone from such apparent all-conquering positions of strength (at the height of the power of the Soviet-Chinese socialist camp), – to such total scorned isolation (as the *EPSR* has had to experience during the last ten years). And the working class in Britain has never faced such superficially forbidding perspectives in modern times as in the immediate recent past (after the self-liquidation of the CPSU leadership, Thatcher's legal straitjacket on trade-union struggle, the collapse of the CPGB and other 'left' groups, and the deliberate open destruction of Clause IV by Blairism).

In such circumstances where there is not even any pretend mass fight for socialism any more, even along Labour-TUC reformist lines, – then new and unexpected political formations might well have to be anticipated.

Scargill has a genuine record of anti-imperialist working-class leadership; his proposed break-up of the longstanding Labour-TUC Reformist federation is a major development, one well signposted, and capable of great success; his clear stated aim to "abolish capitalism" could not be better put for what he thinks he is building; and the SLP's commitment to extra-parliamentary struggle could not be more eye-catching, more important, or more believable.

Socialist Labour is a new phenomenon. A new understanding is therefore called for.

Clearly, a Marxist analysis of the SLP must remain consistent with all previous proven Leninist science.

But the only arguments attempting to prove *EPSR* inconsistency turn out to be false, – Aunt Sallies to be knocked down by those who set them up. The *EPSR* has never stated that the SLP is or would become the Leninist party. Now, accepting for argument's sake that the *EPSR*'s speculative analysis might be false about what further developments, useful to the evolution of working-class political experience in Britain towards the socialist revolution, might flow from the SLP phenomenon, – nevertheless, what harm is supposed to ensue from the *EPSR* encouraging workers to see the SLP as a positive development, and to join in that development without any illusions.?

The suggestion is that the *EPSR* would weaken its appeal to workers; would confuse itself; and has already started to do so.

The *Review* has begun to miss

out on analysing world events since its preoccupation with the SLP, it is alleged. This challenge has surfaced after publication of the latest two *Reviews*, 894 and 895.

894 was almost wholly dedicated to an enormous review of the current position of the Chinese workers state in the world, – in the light of grotesquely ill-informed and poisonous slanders, from Trot 'left' and reactionary right alike, about China in the wake of Deng's death.

895 placed the Albanian developments in a world-historic context, and reviewed many of the most significant latest developments in the inter-imperialist conflict for world hegemony, the essential framework for all Marxist understanding, etc.

Can we not have specific criticisms of how those *Reviews* supposedly fell down on their task?

The *EPSR* can only survive and thrive on genuine class conflict. But vague arguments about 'missing important world developments' are a bit hard to grapple with. What has been missed? What has been got wrong? Where can the *EPSR* turn for a better analysis?

No answer to these questions is likely to be forthcoming, which takes the argument back into a completely circular one that because of the *EPSR*'s mis-analysis of the SLP, it will start to get other things wrong; which things?; well, the SLP, for example.

So in the end, everything comes back to a speculative argument about what the SLP actually already is and what it might become, – and what confusion the *EPSR* is self-evidently lumbering itself with by following an 'incorrect' analysis of the SLP.

First, what positive developments is the *EPSR* suggesting might be achieved by supporting Socialist Labour's evolution for the general benefit of working-class consciousness and political advance in the direction of the eventual socialist revolution led by Leninist leadership science.?

Leninism is the scientific philosophy of workers class struggle towards the socialist revolution and the abolition of capitalism.

The more deeply involved the struggle for Leninist science is in the purposeful fight of workers towards consciousness of the need for the total socialist transformation of rotting capitalist society and a rotting capitalist world, the better will that Leninist science flourish and the wider and faster will its influence grow.

The *EPSR* has been constantly full of new understandings about progressive developments in and around Socialist Labour. It has taken a leading polemical role in the arguments against Trotskyite

delusions about the SLP phenomenon and against Trotskyite fears and sabotage of the SLP.

The Trots are terrified of a new and better Communist Party emerging than the working class in Britain has ever had before. The *EPSR* would generally regard this as a step in the right direction.

Once again, it would be appreciated if the criticism now being levelled at the *Review* could be more specific about what damage has supposedly been done to workers understanding by the *EPSR* polemics against Trotskyism on this subject.

It is obvious that Socialist Labour has nowhere near yet approached such difficult questions as the future for a workers state in Britain, or the dictatorship of the proletariat; or alternatively what other perspectives are being considered for an SLP government's relationship to the capitalist class (in all its massive extra-parliamentary power and influence, and clear counter-revolutionary intentions and plans) once the start has been made to the 'abolition of capitalism'.

But why is it felt necessary to criticise the SLP along the lines that it is, allegedly, virtually exclusively concentrating on trying to achieve socialism via bourgeois elections, and in particular pinning all its hopes on the introduction of PR (proportional representation) in order to get there.? And why is it necessary to charge the *EPSR* with almost equal responsibility (guilt by association) for these illusions?

EPSR 895 could not have spelled it out more bluntly what a colossal hoax the whole business of parliamentary elections was under the capitalist system. *EPSR* 893 specifically ridiculed any fraudulent claims being made about how PR might permit a more effective challenge to capitalist corruption. Only abolishing capitalism will do that, – and there is no notion at all that the SLP itself has any illusions otherwise, and certainly none that cannot be argued against by more far-seeing members of the SLP.

The accusation is made that the SLP wants to re-encourage the working class in favour of having illusions in bourgeois parliamentary elections when the working class itself is steadily abandoning such illusions.

There is no evidence for this at all. The brief statement on the *Socialist News* front page election issue clearly states:

"The SLP believes in direct action, whether it be community, industrial or ecological, to confront the evils of our dangerous, divided society and contaminated environment.

"We also believe in seeking local authority and parliamentary representation for our principles and policies. We're serious about the struggle for Socialism, which is why we've taken this challenge on."

This is a more advanced political understanding than what is contained in the statement:

"Standing candidates against the anti-working-class Labour Party is merely a useful tactic".

Nowhere has the SLP ever remotely made any such declaration, now ascribed to it by critics, that standing candidates is the sole way to achieve socialism.

Exactly the opposite. The SLP's first-ever policy statement could not have been more explicit.

After listing its minimum-programme economic demands for the wholesale return to public ownership of everything stolen by privatisation; for complete new public transport and integrated energy policies; for an immediate 4-day week and retirement at 55 without loss of a penny's pay; for a 2/3rds national minimum wage and abolition of all VAT; for slashing the military budget and taxing the rich; for all students on automatic minimum national wage; etc, etc, the current (and only) SLP policy document declares:

"These policies, though, - however effective, - can but ameliorate the destructiveness of the present system.

The only way we can permanently resolve our economic and political crisis is by changing that system.

To do this, our Party must be able to galvanise mass opposition to injustice, inequality, and environmental destruction, and build the fight for Socialism.

Today, radical opposition in Britain is symbolised not by the Labour and trade union movement but by the groupings such as those which defeated the Poll Tax, the anti-motorway and animal rights bodies, Greenpeace and other anti-nuclear campaigners, and those fighting against opencast mining.

These are now the voice of protest and direct action, reminding us that **only through direct, including industrial, action and defiance of unjust laws can we achieve real advance**, whilst a moribund New Labour and trade union hierarchy pleads with citizens to accept and submit to those laws.

The environmental and community activists are, inevitably, 'single purpose' with no clear general political perspective, but they are challenging the system.

Socialist Labour must make clear that it is prepared to be at the heart of extra-parliamentary action, - necessary to bring about change. It must fight alongside the single issue campaigns, but at the same time must be prepared to challenge for seats in both local and national elections.

This involves responsibility, in a situation of ongoing struggle, for constructive economic policies in the short-term, alongside political strategies in the longer term, - including direct action, - which will resolve Britain's economic injustices by creating a Socialist society.'

To suggest that the SLP has ever believed that "standing candidates is the sole way to achieve socialism" is just ignorant nonsense.

Now certainly the SLP does not constantly raise the spectre of the tragedy of Allende in Chile to remind itself of the limitations of electoral bourgeois politics, – but does it need to?

Is it really being suggested that the NUM comrades who are at the heart of the SLP's foundation,

failed to notice how the undeclared power of the bourgeois state dictatorship effectively wiped out the 1984-85 miners strike by using illegal military violence, subversion, and other terror tactics?

Has the move finally to break from class-compromised Labour to build the independent SLP to “abolish capitalism” really been made in complete naïve ignorance of the counter-revolutionary might of the ruling-class’s capitalist state dictatorship?

It reveals a contemptuous attitude to the NUM comrades to suggest such gullibility.

It makes much more sense to assume that the SLP has every intention of resuming the class struggle against capitalist crisis from where the 1984-85 miners strike left off, but this time having overcome by bitter experience its illusions then in the possibility of a returned Labour Government directly challenging capitalist crisis conditions; or righting the legislative and police-state wrongs done to workers under the previous Tory administration.

The Leninist understanding that the EPSR has so diligently and successfully fought for over the past 18 years can only be ‘wasted’ or ‘dissipated’ if as a theoretical journal it now begins to get **everything** wrong in the wake of declaring support for building the SLP.

Pro-SLP partisanship could put potential readers off in theory who cannot be bothered with patiently going through a centrist phase of development in the struggle for a mass party of socialist transformation.

But in practice the EPSR’s pro-SLP partisanship is winning new readers for its clear Leninist analysis not only on all the conflicts surrounding the SLP’s evolution, but also on the background of world affairs analysed from a Marxist revolutionary perspective, staunchly supporting all the workers states’ experiences so far this century, – in direct opposition to **all** anti-communist detractions, criticism, and cynicism.

The EPSR’s outlook has not changed, but there was never any way that such a fight for the role of Marxist-Leninist theory was ever going to eventually influence the dominant thinking of the entire workers movement without going through any number of intermediate stages of practical political development. Where the mass struggle takes the working class, the EPSR’s analysis was always bound to follow and lead, all the time assessing and reassessing the latest developments such as in the miners strike, the anti-poll tax campaign, the emergence of the SLP, etc., – trying to bring out what important

new lessons were being gained all the time, confirming Leninist science, all the time taking advantage of practical experience in such battles.

If and when developments in the SLP start to become a huge disappointment, start to compromise completely self-destructively on the aim of building for a total socialist transformation in Britain (and the world), then the time will come for the EPSR to declare this loud and clear*.

There is no question of the EPSR having ceased to be a completely independent publication. Challenging it with past remarks that it would give up that independence if a movement of superior Leninist understanding suddenly came onto the scene and started doing the EPSR’s work better than the EPSR itself could do it, – has missed the point entirely. The SLP is not even regarded as a movement of any kind of Leninist understanding as such, let alone a movement of Leninist understanding superior to what the EPSR has battled to achieve over 18 years constant struggle, taking on all comers with its theoretical analysis of all modern class-war history at its highest point of development, the current latest events and perceptions.

The SLP is a mass party of action for socialism open to all workers, not a centre for Leninist theory at all. The EPSR will continue to take on all-comers, openly seeking to continue influencing the whole world as widely as possible.

How far the further evolution of the SLP might or might not embrace consciously a deeper involvement with Marxist theory is impossible for anyone to predict accurately, but if centrist developments of one kind or another are destined to play a significant historical role in Britain’s particular anti-theory conditions and traditions, and in the curious historical circumstances of the late 90s, then not all arguments for a more consciously Marxist theoretical approach are always going to be in vain.

Circumstances will always differ. The Chinese socialist revolution was not remotely achieved in the same way as the Bolshevik Revolution, or by anything like similar paths of Marxist science asserting itself. The Cuban revolution’s path was different again.

On different occasions, the Bolsheviks themselves tried to broaden the fight for successful revolutionary leadership in the direction of the Mensheviks at a couple of points, of the Mezhraiontsy at another, and of the anarchists and Left SRs at yet another moment.

Tactics must remain endlessly flexible, that is the only Marxist

* See later developments Part 3

principle involved.

A tactical blueprint to meet every possible situation would obviously be a contradiction in terms from the Marxist point of view. So to quote Marxism on an SLP situation would always be impossible.

But what needs doing is to ↗

In the sense mentioned above, a certain “reactionism” in the trade unions is inevitable under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Not to understand this means a complete failure to understand the fundamental conditions of the transition from capitalism to socialism. It would be egregious folly to fear this “reactionism” or to try to evade or leap over it, for it would mean fearing that function of the proletarian vanguard which consists in training, educating, enlightening and drawing into the new life the most backward strata and masses of the working class and the peasantry. On the other hand, it would be a still graver error to postpone the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat until a time when there will not be a single worker with a narrow-minded craft outlook, or with craft and craft-union prejudices. The art of politics (and the Communist’s correct understanding of his tasks) consists in correctly gauging the conditions and the moment when the vanguard of the proletariat can successfully assume power, when it is able—during and after the seizure of power—to win adequate support from sufficiently broad strata of the working class and of the non-proletarian working masses, and when it is able thereafter to maintain, consolidate and extend its rule by educating, training and attracting ever broader masses of the working people.

Further. In countries more advanced than Russia, a certain reactionism in the trade unions has been and was bound to be manifested in a far greater measure than in our country. Our Mensheviks found support in the trade unions (and to some extent still do so in a small number of unions), as a result of the latter’s craft narrow-mindedness, craft selfishness and opportunism. The Mensheviks of the West have acquired a much firmer footing in the trade unions; there the *craft-union, narrow-minded, selfish, case-hardened, covetous, and petty-bourgeois “labour aristocracy”, imperialist-minded, and imperialist-corrupted*, has developed into a much stronger section than in our country. That is incontestable.

We are waging a struggle against the “labour aristocracy” in the name of the masses of the workers and in order to win them over to our side; we are waging the struggle against the opportunist and social-chauvinist leaders in order to win the working class over to our side. It would be absurd to forget this most elementary and most self-evident truth. Yet it is this very absurdity that the German “Left” Communists perpetrate when, *because* of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the trade union *top leadership*, they jump to the conclusion that... we must withdraw from the trade unions, refuse to work in them, and create new and *artificial* forms of labour organisation! This is so unpardonable a blunder that it is tantamount to the greatest service Communists could render the bourgeoisie. Like all the opportunist, social-chauvinist, and Kautskyite trade union leaders, our Mensheviks are nothing but “agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement” (as we have always said the Mensheviks are), or “labour lieutenants of the capitalist class”, to use the splendid and profoundly true expression of the followers of Daniel De Leon in America. To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labour aristocrats, or “workers who have become completely bourgeois” (cf. Engels’s letter to Marx in 1858 about the British workers²⁸).

This ridiculous “theory” that Communists should not work in reactionary trade unions reveals with the utmost clarity the frivolous attitude of the “Left” Communists towards the question of influencing the “masses”, and their misuse of clamour about the “masses”. If you want to help the “masses” and win the sympathy and support of the “masses”, you should not fear difficulties, or pinpricks, chicanery, insults and persecution from the “leaders” (who, being opportunists and social-chauvinists, are in most cases directly or indirectly connected with the bourgeoisie and the police), but must absolutely work *wherever the masses are to be found*. You must be capable of any sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles, in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently in those institutions, societies and associations—even the most reactionary—in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found.

It is sad to see people who no doubt consider themselves Marxists, and want to be Marxists, forget the fundamental truths of Marxism. This is what Engels—who, like Marx, was one of those rarest of authors whose every sentence in every one of their fundamental works contains a remarkably profound content—wrote in 1874, against the manifesto of the thirty-three Blanquist Communards: “We are Communists’ [the Blanquist Communards wrote in their manifesto], ‘because we want to attain our goal without stopping at intermediate stations, without any compromises, which only postpone the day of victory and prolong the period of slavery.’

“The German Communists are Communists because, through all the intermediate stations and all compromises created, not by them but by the course of historical development, they clearly perceive and constantly pursue the final aim—the abolition of classes and the creation of a society in which there will no longer be private ownership of land or of the means of production. The thirty-three Blanquists are Communists just because they imagine that, merely because

they want to skip the intermediate stations and compromises, the matter is settled, and if it begins' in the next few days—which they take for granted—and they take over power, communism will be introduced' the day after tomorrow. If that is not immediately possible, they are not Communists.

"What childish innocence it is to present one's own impatience as a theoretically convincing argument!" (Frederick Engels, "Programme of the Blanquist Communards.")

Of course, to very young and inexperienced revolutionaries, as well as to petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of even very respectable age and great experience, it seems extremely "dangerous", incomprehensible and wrong to "permit compromises". Many sophists (being unusually or excessively "experienced" politicians) reason exactly in the same way as the British leaders of opportunism mentioned by Comrade Lansbury: "If the Bolsheviks are permitted a certain compromise, why should we not be permitted any kind of compromise?" However, proletarians schooled in numerous strikes (to take only this manifestation of the class struggle) usually assimilate in admirable fashion the very profound truth (philosophical, historical, political and psychological) expounded by Engels. Every proletarian has been through strikes and has experienced "compromises" with the hated oppressors and exploiters, when the workers have had to return to work either without having achieved anything or else agreeing to only a partial satisfaction of their demands. Every proletarian—as a result of the conditions of the mass struggle and the acute intensification of class antagonisms be lives among—sees the difference between a compromise enforced by objective conditions (such as lack of strike funds, no outside support, starvation and exhaustion)—a compromise which in no way minimises the revolutionary devotion and readiness to carry on the struggle on the part of the workers who have agreed to such a compromise—and, on the other hand, a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to objective causes their self-interest (strike-breakers also enter into "compromises"!), their cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists, and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops, and sometimes to flattery from the capitalists. (The history of the British labour movement provides a very large number of instances of such treacherous compromises by British trade union leaders, but, in one form or another, almost all workers in all countries have witnessed the same sort of thing.)

Of course, in politics, where it is sometimes a matter of extremely complex relations—national and international—between classes and parties, very many cases will arise that will be much more difficult than the question of a legitimate "compromise" in a strike or a treacherous "compromise" by a strike-breaker, treacherous leader, etc. It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule ("No compromises!") to suit all cases. One must use one's own brains and be able to find one's bearings in each particular instance.

Left wing communism – an infantile disorder

The *EPSR's* proud record is the guarantee that it is not selling out or suddenly completely losing its wits; and it is a bit shameful to imply it, just on suspicions that the SLP might fail to achieve anything for working-class socialist development, especially with so little polemical debate on the matter (which has always been the lifeblood of the *EPSR's* Leninist progress). It is an odd notion that partial criticism, out of the blue, is suddenly much more powerful than the entire body of collective Leninist knowledge and achievement built up by the *EPSR* over 18 years, – especially when there has been no exhaustive polemical conflict over the disputed points, – or any conflict at all.

Weaknesses in the SLP's leadership and evolution are easy to find, but no amount of such point-scoring obliterates the fact that the SLP is attracting more and more workers to a party-building break from Labour and the TUC which has adopted a socialist programme far in advance of any mass workers movement since the heyday of the Communist Party (and even better than that, as far as the early plantings of seeds of revisionist illusions to come in the CP were concerned.)

A combative involvement with the 'left' of the SLP has certainly

resulted in insults to the *EPSR*, and police-fingering by Trot anti-communists. But the *EPSR* has gained enormously in prestige from this conflict.

And saying that the CPGB was always known to be a bunch of reactionary Trots takes no-one further forward. By polemically engaging these anti-communists, the *EPSR* has re-demonstrated in living practice the absolute worth of Lenin's conclusions 85 years ago about 'bourgeois intellectuals directed against the workers' concerning such 'lefts' as Martov, Plekhanov, and Trotsky.

Now a whole living movement really knows about these things, – as opposed to one or two people 'knowing' these things well enough to occasionally reproduce Lenin quotes about them.

The conclusion about the CPGB bogus 'Leninist' faction is hardly news to the *EPSR* which has been routing this sect regularly in polemics throughout the past 18 years. But sorting out the 'left rapprochement' posturing in the wake of the CPSU self-liquidation, the destruction of Clause IV, and the launching of the SLP, was a necessary major undertaking, successfully carried out in theory and practice by the *EPSR* and its supporters in a display of unspoken discipline in practice, guided only by common adherence to

Leninist scientific understanding, – a far superior demonstration to the worthwhileness of uniting on theory (rather than on formal rulebooks, constitutions, programmes, and the like which go with the organisation of all these so-called 'Marxist parties') than is any amount of mere assertion about the effectiveness of *EPSR* informality, (or formlessness).

Under its present leadership, the *EPSR* is actually steadily build-

ing a case for Marxist-Leninist theoretical power at the head of the workers movement. Alternative leaderships so far on offer would be likely to be out of their depth on the whole range of *EPSR* achievements. Much more live discussion is needed, where a thousand times more can be said and debated in a limited time than can be achieved by writing everything out in longhand.

Build Leninism. RB

Only united struggle can yield practical progress: and clarifying the historical science of anti-imperialism is the only way to unity. Endless speculative talking shops not the answer. Fake 'Marxist' posturing on Europe exposes academic Trot opportunism yet again helping out monopoly-imperialism with its propaganda. Trot disruption (of the SLP) by net-surfing Brie-eaters only impresses the wrong class of people, – posturing dilettantes. Indisciplined anarchy by Trot sectarians makes successful party-building impossible, and has a history of total disaster for the working class.

[*EPSR* No907 10-06-97]

The importance of Marxism's historical-materialist science to the working-class cause of socialist revolution has again been made clear by the sick bourgeois logic of the SLP's Trotskyite 'Opposition'.

With sly 'innocent reason', the professional sectarian agitators behind the expelled entryist stooges from *Workers Power* and *Weekly Worker* have published another propaganda blitz justifying a dissident 'conference for democracy in the SLP'.

Every argument tries a bogus intellectual approach in the pretence that 'mere academic differences' are all that divides Socialist Labour from its ultra-left would-be wreckers.

But few workers are likely to be fooled. This attempt to subvert the SLP is in fact a bitter class struggle by individualist petty-bourgeois anarchy against the interests of a disciplined mass workers movement.

With slimy tabloid gloss, the *Weekly Worker* first pretends that the split with the entryists is merely about whether SLP members should be allowed to hold discussions on broader political questions than just the latest Socialist Labour policy pronouncements, implying that SLP members are barred from such discussions.

In particular, SLP members are supposed to "have no right to voice their positions to non-members".

This is just insane fiction. It is Goebbelsian in its style and dimensions. 'If you think you can

help your situation by lying, then you might just as well tell crazy big lies' – Goebbels.

The purpose of this deceitful nonsense is to make it out that the Trot entryists from *Workers Power* and *Weekly Worker* have been expelled merely for political discussions inside the SLP on a wider basis than strict repetition of party manifesto statements.

But the expulsions, of course, have absolutely nothing to do with the breadth of discussions inside the SLP. As individuals, Socialist Labour members can discuss what they like with anyone, anywhere. The entryist agents of *Workers Power* and the *Weekly Worker* have been shown the door because of a deliberate manipulative campaign to impose their own middle-class anarchic constitution onto the Socialist Labour Party.

To wreck the SLP's unitary constitution and replace it with a hopelessly indisciplined umbrella organisation in which every one of 57 varieties of sectarian Trot factions could recruit SLP members for their own separate Trot party (*Workers Power*, CPGB, *Militant*, etc), – these entryist stooges (for the professional political lobby of middle-class 'left' posturing) have attempted total disruption of the SLP through lies.

They lied in signing their application forms to join the SLP in the first place, which pledge all to "abide by the SLP constitution".

They lied when setting up campaign groups inside the SLP which

pretended to be 'just for discussion' and willing to 'meanwhile accept the SLP constitution and its policy decisions'.

In reality, a 'left Opposition' was being built around the 'Revolutionary Platform', wholly directed from behind the scenes by professional Trot politicians outside the SLP, who remain relentlessly determined to break the SLP from its constitution, or to just wreck the SLP if the constitution cannot be changed.

The Trot entryists lied when feigning innocence on the question of how bogus 'SLP' factionalising gave out leaflets with CPGB agency phone and website numbers only.

They lied again in failing to explain how the wording for attacks on Scargill through SLP branches was identical to a form of wording put up by outside Trot newspaper propaganda sheets professionally published by rival Trot parties to the SLP.

These exposed entryist stooges are lying again when pretending now that they have never had the reasons for their expulsion explained to them, and that they still do not know what they are.

Now they are lying in every paragraph of this latest 'sweetly reasoned' propaganda blitz, making out that it is the SLP which is causing all the difficulty by denying all normal human discussion to SLP members.

Slithering from one completely irrelevant observation to the next, this latest *Weekly Worker* idiocy tries to claim that the existence of New Labour campaign groups such as *Tribune*, *Red Pepper*, *Socialist Organiser*, etc, in which even non-Labour members can read about New Labour policy discussions currently going on, – leads to the following conclusion:

Tapping the words 'Labour Party' into the internet brings up a Labour links page. There you can find a website for *Labour Left Briefing*, *Labour Reform*, *Socialist Organiser*, *Tribune*, *Red Pepper* – on it goes. Discussion papers from the Labour Party are available to me, a non-member.

Clearly it is quite natural, normal, and healthy for a campaign in the labour movement to express its ideas, both within the organisation it is campaigning in and to the labour movement in general.

This is why the forthcoming conference to launch a campaign for SLP democracy will consider a motion for an open journal for democracy in the SLP and for socialism in the workers movement – a campaign of SLP members with a public face. There has never been any suggestion by any of the SLP members proposing such a campaign or such a journal that it be anything other than a campaign focused on the SLP, its development and its politics. Of and within the SLP, yes, but also as a forum for discussion on the way forward for the working class.

Yes, but a campaign already inflicted unconstitutionally from within the SLP by concealed Trot entryists from already-organised political parties who wish to exploit the SLP's much bigger membership.

And a campaign to unilaterally decide to publish an 'SLP' journal in anarchic rivalry to the official SLP newspaper which the official and elected leadership of the SLP has already been publishing.

The comparison with New Labour is the sickest humbug imaginable.

The Labour Party is a bourgeois party of capitalist government which has held office on behalf of the British imperialist system no less than nine times since 1924.

As these Trots understand perfectly well, it would be a vastly different thing for a party believing in the joke of bourgeois 'press freedom' to try imposing a complete gag on its members' 'freedom of expression' (although not an impossible fascist step for New Labour to take at some future time, judging by the paranoid total surveillance that is now being maintained on every Labour MP's utterances).

Major capitalist parties like New Labour clearly have an interest in promoting the fraudulent 'press freedom' ideology of the bourgeoisie's hidden dictatorship over politics, opinion, and the economy in Britain (and every other 'free' country).

A workers party is in a completely different position and aiming for a completely different world.

Its unity is the only weapon the working class can aspire to which would give it superiority over the bourgeoisie. In fact, the only force in history which is capable of ever toppling the bourgeoisie from economic, social, and political power is the united strength of the working class.

All ideas flood over, through, and around the working class whether anyone likes it or not.

Building a united disciplined SLP on a unitary basis has got nothing whatever to do with who discusses what with whom, or any connection with the breadth of ideas in members' heads.

It is solely a question of how Socialist Labour acts as a party of leadership and a party of scientific theory.

The crucial ideas for any aspect of socialist advance are those which prove themselves in practice.

To put ideas into practice as a party, there has to be an agreed party discipline.

The unitary party is a fundamental notion of Marxism-Leninism. The SLP could not possibly have developed at all without constitutional rules, and its constitution was established and put into operation with the overwhelming support of the vast majority of party members.

Arguments by those who did not like the way it was done, carried to the point of refusing to accept the authority of the party's

constitution or of its elected NEC and its detailed constitutional authority, – amount to instant anarchy and an impossible breach of basic scientific disciplines providing the only way of creating a successful socialist advance. If a unitary constitution cannot be put into operation because of deliberate unconstitutional sabotage, then there never will be any way of knowing if the unitary party is the best way forward or not.

Similarly there would be no way of knowing if tactical decisions by the NEC, on how best to fight the general election, were correct or not if a different way of fighting the election was imposed on the party by arbitrary decision of rogue branches subverted by deliberately sabotaging Trot entryists.

The argument of middle-class anarchy (that an indisciplined umbrella organisation of all the 57 Trot varieties, plus a few dozen more sects as well, of other persuasions, – would be the best way to build a successful socialist party) is one for the 57 varieties to demonstrate by their own actions.

Let them form such a party, and let it completely outgrow the SLP and lead the working class to socialism.

Why don't they do it? Because these petty-bourgeois parties of sectarian individualism can never be anything else other than parasites on the backs of the working class when posturing that 'socialism' is their aim.

The SLP is the potential mass workers party for the building of socialism. These Trots have to be on its back or they will be nowhere.

There will be plenty of open discussion around the SLP. Its inaugural conference and inaugural congress were nothing but open discussion.

Its newspaper has already reflected different opinions on many matters; and open debates within the party, continuing into the party newspaper as well, are a matter of course.

But it is for the SLP to decide when and how to conduct such political conflict, – not for organised Trotskyite outsiders to impose their own preconceived agendas on the SLP. It is for the NEC to "administer the business and affairs" of the party as it thinks fit, and for congress to pass a verdict on any decision of the NEC, – not some arbitrary 'conference' called by scabs and dissidents, manipulated by outside professional anti-SLP agitators.

But there will be crucial differences (in how the SLP handles future broad party discussions) to how Trotskyite middle-class anarchy envisages such normal

essential activities.

A serious socialist party must reach conclusions **for action** as soon as a clear-enough line is acceptable to a clear-enough majority of the party, (or NEC, acting for the party on smaller issues, in between congresses).

If a needed new policy decision is not put into action in a disciplined all-party manner at some point, then scientific progress will never be possible. Only in practice can the correctness of a policy be demonstrated or disproved.

The Trotskyite swamp of concealed petty-bourgeois individualism never reaches disciplined conclusions on anything, – which is why there are always at least 57 varieties of Trotskyism at each others' throats all the time.

The only thing they are always all agreed on, – is never to reach any disciplined conclusions for disciplined united action, and to oppose any organisation in the workers movement which does believe in such unitary discipline.

Which is why they are all united on one thing only at present, – to bring down the SLP, or to totally take it over to degenerate it into the umbrella swamp of their wildest dreams.

Theirs is a fundamental philosophical howler, – a mistake of utterly reactionary proportions.

The Trots live the existence that encouraging endless rival ideas (- all mutually incompatible as is proved by there never being any less than 57 varieties of Trotskyism (and similar anti-Marxist outlooks) on offer at any time throughout the history of the working class struggle for socialism), – is the way to socialist progress.

Marxism, on the other hand, has always explained that a Tower of Babel is the natural, losing, unscientific order of things in the anti-imperialist struggle, – which is why it never triumphs. Hot air fails.

The serious and difficult aim should be not to encourage more cacophony, which is there anyway, – but to bring arguments to an agreed conclusion for united action.

As Marx declared, gently ridiculing all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, –

"philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it."

In other words, down with the endless gasbaggery of the Trotskyite swamp, – as typified by this shallow *Weekly Worker* amalgam of lying hypocrisy.

Countless previous *EPS Reviews* have made detailed analyses (of how this indisciplined hot-air swamp of self-righteous individualist conceit has had these Trots celebrating 'rapprochement' and

the 'path to unity' for ages and ages, filled with interminable logic-chopping wrangles over lengthy rival 'party programmes' and completely abstract polemics over 'the ideal party structure', etc.) – scientifically predicting they could not possibly succeed.

Socialists can only eventually be united by agreement on how to interpret the current international balance of class forces in all important particulars around the world, and on how the perspective for further development looks. Only on real practical issues of the international class struggle can socialists eventually demonstrate that they are in agreement with each other. Purely abstract debates about the ideal party programme or the ideal party structure are most likely to be nothing but displays of armchair-socialist individualist conceit, – Walter Mitty replacing the practical revolutionary scientific experience of Marx, Engels, and Lenin (always only abstracted from real-life class struggles.)

EPSR scientifically predicted that this Tower of Babel 'rap-prochement' path to 'unity' could only collapse in disaster.

As reported in previous *Reviews*, the *Weekly Worker* of recent weeks has been providing chapter and verse on this total disaster. Nothing is left whatever of 'rap-prochement' after several years of hot-air mongering.

But here is the latest *Weekly Worker* hell-bent on trying to inflict this 'rapprochement' menagerie onto the SLP:

Comrades are asking, 'but what sort of socialism are you talking about?' This is precisely the point. There is no suggestion that the proposed journal only express one view on what socialism is. It should debate things out openly and be an example of the sort of dem-

ocratic culture and publication we are trying to win the whole party over to.

Now, discussions on 'what is socialism' are of course great fun, necessary for human development, and politically what we all like to do.

But equally, of course, it is a vast speculative subject which only the next 1,000 years of civilisation's history are going to answer adequately.

The first task is the abolition of capitalism, because of the obvious crisis-ridden damage it has been doing to society throughout the 20th century, but we are not remotely close to being able to achieve even that yet.

And one of the reasons why the working class in the West has never yet had the chance to build socialism is precisely because of the divisions in the workers movement **deliberately** manufactured by bourgeois ideological influences and sabotage of all kinds.

No disciplined united party has ever been yet built in the West to lead the working class to take power and carry out the social revolution of making the whole people the sole 'owners' of all the wealth and productive economic power of the country so that it can all be re-planned for much more rational use and development.

Turning *Socialist News* into an endless fantasy-rigmarole of as many different versions of 'what is socialism' (or 'what ought to be socialism') as there are party members, – which can only be resolved **in practice** over the next 1,000 years, – would be another disastrous step on the way to creating yet another party which was going to remain forever disunited and incapable of leading the

working class to the abolition of capitalism

Practical political programme, strategy, and tactics of the international class struggle against the forces of economic, political, military, and ideological bourgeois-imperialism are the questions to resolve to build a **united** party, – united on what is the best line on the inter-imperialist trade war, its internal rivalries in the European Union and elsewhere, and its external rivalries against Cuba, China, and other anti-imperialist struggles in the Middle East, etc; united on which forces to support in the incipient class war in the former Soviet Union; united on policy towards nationalist struggles against imperialism such as Ireland; united on tactics towards the Labour Party and the trade union movement; etc, etc, etc.

All are matters on which endless debate can certainly continue, but all are **most crucially** matters on which a disciplined SLP policy can be arrived at and then put **into practice** to learn by from experience, – to find out if the party has been getting it right about Europe, or Ireland, or the Labour 'lefts', or the SLP's internal structure, or anything else.

These Trotskyite frauds merely want an endless talking shop, and basically an anti-communist talking shop as well, where they can badmouth the experience of workers-state development in the 20th century to their heart's content, – damning the colossal achievements of 70 years socialist development in the Soviet Union out of sight; ridiculing the epoch-making achievements of the Chinese workers state in

Cuba's anti-imperialist defiance saw it aid multiple struggles and especially Angola's defence against apartheid South Africa's counter-revolution

transforming the life and prospects for one quarter of mankind previously at the very bottom of the pile of poverty, ignorance, and endless human catastrophe; patronisingly dismissing Cuba's monumentally-important defiance of US imperialism through 38 years of sabotage and blockade as 'the socialism of shared poverty'; etc, etc.

But it is these **practical** developments which have dominated 20th century history, totally obsessing the imperialist bourgeoisie into how they can present any planned economic achievements in a bad light; how they can totally misrepresent the good social order maintained by the workers states; how they could keep up the Cold War arms-race hysteria by insane lies and provocations about 'imminent Red invasion' etc; how they could inundate the Third World with dollar aid to selected tyrants to 'keep out communist subversion and the domino effect', etc; and wipe out potential new workers states by terror assassinations or armed subversion by CIA-financed and organised stooges as in Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, Chile, Guatemala, etc, etc, – or by direct invasion as in Panama, Grenada, Dominican Republic, Haiti, etc.

And it is these **practical** developments which have been for 99% of the world's proletariat since 1917 the basically sound material about what is socialism, – full employment; full and endless education opportunities; total democratic housing programme; national plans for economic development at the centre of all production and research; comprehensive social development



(sports, cinema, music, theatre, book publishing, etc); non-exploitative international aid and solidarity; etc, etc.

True there needs to be enormous re-education and research on how incorrect theory (on further development in the pursuit of anti-imperialist struggle) failed to become the eventual **material** force (when enthusiastically adopted by the mass of the people) to drive the Soviet workers state ever onwards to better and better things.

But defeatist Trotskyite subjective-idealism is hardly going to re-establish the correct philosophy of historical materialism, grasping the incurable terminal crisis of the imperialist system, resolvable only by revolutionary understanding within which a correct revolutionary perspective from Moscow could have created the material force (the whole of world communism thinking and acting together) to complete the international abolition of capitalist imperialism.

So this Trot-saboteur invitation to the SLP to completely abandon all its development achievements, and to join these sectarian subjective-idealists in their ivory tower of perpetual abstract discussions on 'what is socialism', is one which 99.99% of workers will hopefully pour scorn on.

These middle-class dilettantes, posing with their Brie cheese and Bordeaux wines around their expensive net-surfing hobbies, keeping up their links with their fellow petty-bourgeois in New Labour, – "which was nice", – need exposing and keeping in permanent quarantine as far as their influence on working-class politics is concerned.

Above all they need to be ridiculed into the public stocks for their naive attempts at providing workers with theoretical political leadership to develop a correct world view.

Their past imbecilities proclaiming the invincibility of the US imperialist 'new world order' just at moments when it has been tottering towards renewed collapse (such as over Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Ireland, etc) have been well chronicled, (see countless previous *Reviews*).

Now their always suspect philosophical line on Europe has stumbled closer than ever towards complete academic barminess.

These CPGB Trots have derided SLP policy on the EU as 'Europhobia' for advocating a workers Britain getting out of this monopoly-imperialist club.

Stressing how subtle they are, the Trots claim it would be more Marxist to not simply oppose the ever-greater monopolisation processes and regional-imperi-

alist-amalgamation processes of contemporary capitalism which are inevitable anyway, – but to call instead for workers revolutionary unity across frontiers to overthrow the whole European Union bourgeois ruling class all together.

Now part of the method behind this thinking is not un-Marxist, of course. A comparison would be with the Bolshevik policy of not refusing call-up as a way of opposing the 1914-18 imperialist war, but of going along with conscription in order to keep with the vast mass of the proletariat in their experience and suffering, – in order to turn the soldiers' units into revolutionary Soviets.

Similarly, the Bolshevik national perspective was not to urge Russia's withdrawal from the hated war as such, but to urge the revolutionary overthrow of Russia's ruling class for inflicting such a rotten war on the people, – and to simultaneously urge the masses of every other combatant country to overthrow their ruling classes as well.

But this Trot adaptation of Leninism on policy towards the modern EU also bears telltale signs influencing it of Trotsky's notorious bureaucratic-idealist disaster of urging the workers of Russia and Europe to strive only for the Socialist United States of Europe and to not bother with the overthrow of the ruling class in any individual country to build socialism there.

Lenin humiliated Trotsky and other idealist dilettantes on this point, and the masses followed the Bolsheviks to open up a completely new era in human history in October 1917. The S.U.S.E was a purely programmatic abstraction, Lenin scorned, which could only act as a completely pointless diversion from the revolutionary work in hand for all workers, striving to alter the balance of class power domestically (based on internationalist anti-imperialist understanding) in order to overthrow their own ruling class first. The S.U.S.E would just be a purely theoretical distraction which could invite more argument, doubt, and hostility in Russia as everywhere else, rather than help forge greater class unity to topple the ruling establishment.

This 'modern' Trot reasoning also strays far too close to actually **advocating** imperialist unification in Europe, which can only be utterly misleading to the working class, and is thoroughly reactionary:

The *Guardian* was in no doubt:

"There is absolutely no chance that the Euro will come into force as planned. The choice is between the most blatant fudging of the criteria for entry, a rewriting of the Maastricht terms to suit the French socialists, delay to ensure that coun-

tries qualify as originally stipulated, or a total collapse" (June 2).

Some might be tempted to find this a source of comfort, if not a case for rejoicing. The "total collapse" of the Emu is certainly the aim of Le Pen's Front National in France. The number one election issue for the FN was the preservation of the French nation, which according to FN propaganda is threatened with extinction at the hands of a European 'superstate'. For Le Pen this is such a determining issue that he even called for FN supporters to vote for a 'left' candidate - including those of the French Communist Party - where there was no FN candidate, on the eminently logical grounds that the Socialist Party/Communist Party are a little less 'pro-European' than the mainstream parties of the right.

This conjures up the odd, if not disturbing, spectacle of fascists voting for 'communists'.

In many respects, Le Pen's tactical orientation - the embrace of the viper - to the PCF when it comes to Europe says far more about the 'communists' than about the fascists. True, the PCF has not adopted the undiluted national socialism of the Socialist Labour Party leadership, with its calls for Britain to 'get out' of Europe. But the PCF long ago abandoned even the ritualised vestiges of international socialism and Marxism-Leninism. Headless, the PCF leadership does not see European integration as the basis for socialism but only as the saviour of its backward looking Utopian vision of 'friendly' social democratic capitalism.

Communists reject out of hand the 'Maastrichtophilia' of Kohl and Chirac, the "Europhobia" of the SLP's policy documents, or the timid "wait-and-see-ism" of the so-called "European left". We positively welcome the inexorable coming together of Europe, and the world, into a common economy - this can only objectively advance the cause of real, scientific socialism. Therefore, the erosion of the nation state is something we view with pleasure.

Kohl, Chirac and co want to see a Europe of bankers, businessmen, state bureaucrats and 'experts', which rules over the working class. We want, on the other hand, a democratic Europe.'

Lenin ridiculed such nonsense, explaining that pointless speculation about the possible advantages for political struggle, arising out of hopefully 'democratic' temporary capitalist international cooperation, – also carried with it the much more serious danger of completely fooling the working class into a lapse of understanding that ↗

all inter-imperialist relations United States of Europe—if accompanied by the revolutionary overthrow of the three most reactionary monarchies in Europe, headed by the Russian—is quite invulnerable as a political slogan, there still remains the highly important question of its economic content and significance. From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the "advanced" and "civilised" colonial powers—a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary.

Britain, France and Germany have invested capital abroad to the value of no less than 70,000 million rubles. The business of securing "legitimate" profits from this tidy sum—these exceed 3,000 million rubles annually— is carried out by the national committees of the millionaires, known as governments, which are equipped with armies and navies and which provide the sons and brothers of the millionaires with jobs in the colonies and semi-colonies as viceroys, consuls, ambassadors, officials of all kinds, clergymen, and other leeches.

That is how the plunder of about a thousand million of the earth's population by a handful of Great Powers is organised in the epoch of the highest development of capitalism. No other organisation is possible under capitalism. Renounce colonies, "spheres of influence", and the export of capital? To think that it is possible means coming down to the level of some snivelling parson who every Sunday preaches to the rich on the lofty principles of Christianity and advises them to give the poor, well, if not millions, at least several hundred rubles yearly.

A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis and no other principle of division are possible except force. A multi-millionaire cannot share the "national income" of a capitalist country with anyone otherwise than "in proportion

are essentially only warmongering conflict relations, and can be nothing else.

It is the maturing of capitalism's monopolisation and inter-imperialist war crisis which is the 'basis for socialism' according to Marxism-Leninism, not 'European integration', the proposals for which are purely a by-product of economic globalisation, and proposals destined to be the arena for growing trade-war crisis rather than a project for easy and successful fulfilment, in anyone's terms.

Again it can be argued that in some of its general effects, the consequences of ever-greater economic globalisation could be said to help prepare the ground politically, socially, and psychologically for a greater socialist understanding of civilisation's necessary cooperative fate under international proletarian revolution.

But is it really only the problem with 'Kohl, Chirac, & Co' that they "want to see a Europe of bankers, businessmen, state bureaucrats, and experts"?

Whatever happened to brute imperialist force as the only serious bargaining power under the capitalist system?, – and the 'free world's' only final answer to socialist revolt?

Lenin saw this question of monopoly-capitalist mergers and rivalries far differently.

The style of colonial exploitation has changed dramatically since 1915, and many details of the international balance of class forces are now far out of date, including some whole aspects on the cut-throat competition for world domination.

But the essential science of irreconcilable contradiction being the ever-mounting catastrophe of monopoly imperialism, surely remains the only sane way to view present world upheavals:

But while the slogan of a republican United States of Europe—if accompanied by the revolutionary overthrow of the three most reactionary monarchies in Europe, headed by the Russian—is quite invulnerable as a political slogan, there still remains the highly important question of its economic content and significance. From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the "advanced" and "civilised" colonial powers—a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary.

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A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis and no other principle of division are possible except force. A multi-millionaire cannot share the "national income" of a capitalist country with anyone otherwise than "in proportion

to the capital invested" (with a bonus thrown in, so that the biggest capital may receive more than its share). Capitalism is private ownership of the means of production, and anarchy in production. To advocate a "just" division of income on such a basis is sheer Proudhonism, stupid philistinism. No division can be effected otherwise than in "proportion to strength", and strength changes with the course of economic development. Following 1871, the rate of Germany's accession of strength was three or four times as rapid as that of Britain and France, and of Japan about ten times as rapid as Russia's. There is and there can be no other way of testing the real might of a capitalist state than by war.

War does not contradict the fundamentals of private property—on the contrary, it is a direct and inevitable outcome of those fundamentals. Under capitalism the smooth economic growth of individual enterprises or individual states is impossible. Under capitalism, there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics.

Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists...but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America, who have been badly done out of their share by the present partition of colonies, and the increase of whose might during the last fifty years has been immeasurably more rapid than that of backward and monarchist Europe, now turning senile. Compared with the United States of America, Europe as a whole denotes economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a United States of Europe would signify an organisation of reaction to retard America's more rapid development. The times when the cause of democracy and socialism was associated only with Europe alone have gone for ever.

A United States of the World (not of Europe alone) is the state form of the unification and freedom of nations which we associate with socialism—until the time when the complete victory of communism brings about the total disappearance of the state, including the democratic. As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others. Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone. After expropriating the capitalists and organising their own socialist production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise *against* the rest of the world—the capitalist world—attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states. The political form of a society wherein the proletariat is victorious in overthrowing the bourgeoisie will be a democratic republic, which will more and more concentrate the forces of the proletariat of a given nation or nations, in the struggle against states that have not yet gone over to socialism. The abolition of classes is impossible without a dictatorship of the oppressed class, of the proletariat. A free union of nations in socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states.

It is for these reasons and after repeated discussions at the conference of R.S.D.L.P. groups abroad, and following that conference, that the Central Organ's editors have come to the conclusion that the slogan for a United States of Europe is an erroneous one.

Slogan for a United States of Europe Social-Demokrat No. 44, August 23, 1915

Surely these Trot imbeciles have missed the point entirely, and surely they have abandoned Marxist science entirely in their eruption of revisionist dilettantism?

In trying hard to be so 'Marxist', these ultra-left posturers are in danger of ending up the keenest Europhiles of all.

This is just plain silly, and nothing whatever to do with analysing the most favourable revolutionary strategy for the working class to destroy the capitalist state in the epoch of monopoly imperialism.

It is this petty-bourgeois intellectual posing which causes these Trot opportunists to score cheap debating points against the SLP's entirely imaginary 'national socialism'.

Socialist Labour is advocating an anti-imperialist policy towards Europe, and at the same time

urging an international socialist outlook on the working class. The manifesto states this clearly.

The Trots 'national socialist' jibe in fact sneers at Lenin's scientific grasp that the capitalist states are likely to topple separately at first, and that workers should fix their sights on that great opportunity.

If the SLP develops its understanding along these lines*, – with the overthrow of capitalism as the main emphasis rather than a withdrawal from any particular imperialist lash-up as a cure for anything, regarding withdrawal merely as an electoral answer to argue against bourgeois delusions in the 'advantages' of more imperialist takeovers and 'harmonisation' supposedly on offer, – then SLP policy will be heading in the right direction. Build Leninism.

*It did not however – see later development eg in *EPSR* No 994

Reformism is worse than dead but, without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary advance to socialism. The understanding of unalterable faults in the international imperialist free-market structure is crucial to the ability to develop a serious political-education programme for the working class. Single-issue campaigns and sectarian activity can be a cover for outright hostility to comprehensive scientific-socialist theory. Much New Labour reaction has been prepared under a 'politically correct' cover. The SLP should raise its sights.

[*EPSR* No915 25-08-97]

The greatest problem facing workers everywhere is lack of leadership, and this in turn is the result of a steady degeneration in theoretical understanding of capitalist crisis since earlier this century.

A correct scientific assessment of the imperialist system's insoluble contradictions has nothing to do with crisis-mongering or wishing catastrophe on the world in order to get a revolutionary political response.

Grasping the general pattern of inter-imperialist conflict due to the uncontrollably destabilising effects of private monopolies accumulating vast inflationary-capital 'surpluses' anarchically, – is far from being an 'academic' question.

Not a single phenomenon on earth can be analysed sensibly, shorn of the realisation that the great imperialist powers must inevitably sooner or later dictate a new period of devastating international strife and suffering.

The idea of pressing ahead with 'socialist' or 'anti-capitalist' struggles while in the meantime keeping an 'open mind' on whether the imperialist system is going to collapse or not, is just a giant debilitating delusion.

A purely reformist mentality is bound to predominate before long. Life will be lived in the name of 'small victories' here and there, or of 'changes' forced on capitalism which will make it 'more tolerable' or even 'better' for surviving under.

And in no time at all, entirely conservative attitudes to 'keep this going at all costs' or 'preserve that at least' will begin to prevail on matters of previous government welfare concessions or on issues of organisation or campaigning within the labour and trade-union movement.

At that point, the door slides open easily for a drift to the negative syndicalism of the import-controls kind and Little Englander chauvinism; of the

jobs-demarcation inter-union disputes; of racial tensions; and of the completely reactionary 'anti-scrouter' outlook so disgracefully evident in New Labour's 'welfare-to-work' sanctimonious gimmickry, or in Clare Short's monstrous insensitivity towards the wretched people of Montserrat.

But don't just blame New Labour's leading opportunist reptiles themselves for all this reactionary degeneracy. It all flows ultimately from the benighted stagnancy of only ever thinking about the world in a completely non-revolutionary way.

But the key to the never-ending pattern of evolutionary change mixed with revolutionary leaps is grasping the nature of the revolutionary leap, especially in something as complex and as consciousness-driven as the history of social change.

The short record of the 20th century is one of epoch-shattering revolutionary achievements eventually stifled temporarily by the illusory appearance of 'more safe' and 'more secure' supposed 'advances' made by 'reformism' under capitalism.

The welfare concessions made by the imperialist powers, masking the real and unchangeably vicious workings of the capitalist system in the raw, will obviously be completely misleading and misunderstood unless placed in the clear context of the terrifying jolt given to the imperialist bourgeoisie by the 20th century's history-making revolutions.

But it is only the firm grasp of Marxist scientific theory which makes such an analysis possible, and then keeps in sight the absolute primacy of revolutionary transformation where the decisive longterm international pattern of social change is concerned.

Anti-theory philistinism mingles inseparably with material changes to make its appeal through humanity's lowest com-

mon denominator, – a complacent wish for comfort, or at least not too much discomfort or ‘unnecessary agitation’, etc.

An ‘improving’ status-quo is reformist thinking’s greatest foundation.

An economic crash would help disturb the ground. But thereafter, only 150 volumes of Marxist-Leninist philosophical and historical materialism will be of any use.

If in doubt, ask MI5 who still keep voluminous files on any left in Britain remotely suspectable of having ever had a grasp of revolutionary theory of any kind, as has just been revealed.

But the British labour movement traditionally has a dismal record in its attitude to theory. Its early indifference to world-revolutionary perspectives based on the pragmatic advances of the trade-unionist and reformist epochs was later cemented by decades of glib Stalinist revisionist plodding or by even more glib anti-communism, frequently disguised with the thin veneer of Trotskyism or other ultra-leftist posturing.

This philistinism has always decided to keep an ‘open mind’ about a serious Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the broadest patterns of 20th century history, – meanwhile getting on with entryist careerism up the Labour Party or the trade unions, or winning bourgeois media publicity through endless bogus ‘exposures’ of the ‘counter-revolutionary Soviet camp’ (but mostly laughably missing the actual Gorbachev counter-revolutionary betrayal when it finally came, or even supporting it as a ‘progressive’ development.)

Any ‘open mind’ about anything had long since been forgotten in such an all-round Niagara of opportunism, – revisionist, reformist, or anti-communist.

A close companion of this anti-theory philistine tradition, and often effectively masking it, – has been a wide variety of narrow-minded sectarianism.

This again helps fail to give proper leadership to the working class by permitting intense concentration on sectional interests, or on a few limited issues, while giving the appearance of complete dedication to the all-out fight.

Exclusive concentration on ‘the’ party, – to the point of refusing to publicly polemicise with rival versions of ‘the’ party, or even allow members to hold private discussions with other ‘faiths’ or even exchange newspapers with them, – is one infamous form of this sectarianism, notorious among Trotskyism’s 57 varieties.

But other shapes adopted by philistinism, to hide itself in sect-like activities, are even more insidious such as all single-issue

protests around a specific trade-union struggle, or individual injustice cases, or particularly offensive new laws, or one special aspect of imperialist tyranny such as nuclear weapons, etc.

The correctness, or usefulness, or even necessity of such fights is not the question here. What needs stressing is the easy popularity of such struggles precisely because they avoid participants having to get involved in the major historical problems of revolutionary theory, and often deliberately promote themselves on an anti-theory basis. ‘No politics here’ is the frequent daft shout in many such campaigns, – smart when evading Trotskyite sectarian squabbling, but foolish when preventing scientific socialist lessons from being drawn from the struggle in hand, crucial for that struggle’s further and better success.

Worse than these specific single-issue fights for encouraging anti-theory philistinism have been the generic ‘liberation’ struggles on behalf of women, gays, blacks, etc, which have all consciously sought out a ‘minorities’ culture, deliberately preventing any all-embracing involvement, and even more confusingly have insisted that the fight could be won whether capitalism goes or stays, and that such a victory would be the real ‘revolution’, or the real ‘liberation’.

This is all nonsense, of course. Prejudice, discrimination, and unequal treatment is, of course, intolerable, and it must be bitterly felt. But ‘liberation’ through such single-issue struggles is a nonsensical illusion.

The capitalist **system** and its culture is the great repressor and exploiter, even though sometimes completely invisible behind seemingly ‘pure’ racism, sexism, or homophobia, etc.

But capitalism it is, and capitalism alone, – which **controls** ultimately the creation of **all** culture in modern society. And only when the capitalist **system** ceases to corrupt human behaviour and thinking will it become possible to begin the **complete** eradication once and for all of such barbaric backwardness from civilisation as racist, sexist, or homophobic prejudices, or any other immature discriminatory attitudes towards any minorities whatever, merely for being themselves.

And **everyone**, of course, for all kinds of reasons, has a serious historical interest in getting rid of the capitalist system.

Tragically, the frequently sectarian, and often sociologically nonsensical, single-issue campaigning by such ‘liberation’ fronts actually helps philistine ignorance in society reinforce itself sometimes, rather than help

break it down.

Now, specific campaign demands in themselves are obviously the norm in any form of human struggle, at any stage of the revolutionary process. The difficulty being identified here is the perspective within which these demands are framed.

And it is not just a problem if single-issue fights are merely projected without any reference at all to the overall longer-term perspectives for getting rid of the capitalist system itself, in its entirety.

The disaster is the deliberate philistine **substitution** of one-off ‘liberation’ fights for the socialist revolution as a whole, which is viewed with dismissive or cynical contempt.

And it is a real disaster, which will not be resolved until widespread Marxist clarity is able to clear up all this ideological confusion surrounding all the protest movements.

The ‘unity’ of all campaigners against aspects of capitalist society can be called for until the end of time but it could never succeed in unifying.

Only on one basis is any worthwhile unity ever possible on any subject, and that is the unity of correct scientific understanding of the matters in hand, including the crucial questions of how society actually works, and even more crucially how it is going to develop in the immediate and longer-term future.

“Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice” Marxism-Leninism explains. Meaning that until the historic class struggle is fully understood, successful intervention in that class struggle that will lead to lasting victory is impossible.

Specific campaign demands will continue to arise spontaneously. What should always then be fought for is the correct revolutionary perspective within which to frame these demands so that they should cease to be single-issue delusions, whether ‘won’ or ‘lost’.

The demands remain campaigns for ‘reforms’. And some may even be ‘won’, resulting in real and worthwhile changes. And many will take part usefully neither knowing or caring about what political perspectives have been discussed as the context for the particular struggle.

But the really important achievement of such battles is when they are precisely fought out to the background of the struggle for correct perspectives on the overthrow of capitalism as a whole, illustrating or illuminating that fight in ways vastly more significant than that single battle itself, even when won and as vital as such victories obviously are.

The great miners strike of 1984-85 taught many magnificent lessons about working class struggle but the most crucial understanding it established was of the impossibility of ever returning to the illusions of a programmable boom period of Labour ‘interventionist’ government, implying public democratic control over the economy while it remained essentially capitalist and free-market oriented.

‘Reformism’ was effectively sunk by the 1984-85 strike. And the vital lessons of all of that would have been far more decisively learned had all the concerns of that struggle been taken in alongside a tradition of all-the-time politically testing every major working-class experience for what new light it could throw up on the longer-term perspectives for getting rid of capitalism altogether by, in effect, the social revolution.

And that scientific mentality can only flourish as a result of the deliberate pursuit of the Marxist-Leninist socialist philosophy.

It is only when a comprehensive historical understanding starts to develop that real leadership can begin to be constructed in the working class.

And the most important constant function for this leadership is, straightforwardly enough, to constantly give a new lead to workers whenever new political situations arise, which is basically all the time.

The working class will eventually become the mightiest force in society, giving a lead to all workers by hand or brain, when it has supported the growth of a leadership which can quickly provide a correct new rallying cry at every new turn in the international class struggle, or get close enough to the right understanding that any details not immediately perfectly understood can soon be corrected by the first experiences of taking the fresh assessment of things into practice via political campaigning, and discovering in practice that some nuances or other, or even major planks of a platform, have not been quite in place.

For the working class, its political leadership which is going to take it to socialism must begin to be in a position to answer every question on behalf of workers that comes up in society and in international conflict. A successful working class political leadership must eventually embrace the best wisdom on every subject on earth, or at least have access to it via sympathetic independent intellectuals and scientists or industrialists.

Only when inspired with such comprehensive and understanding leadership will the working class begin not merely to become

suspicious of, or scorn, the domination by bourgeois ideology, but also start wanting to actively expel ruling class influence out of every aspect of society by entirely overthrowing the ruling class itself, the complete social revolution.

Single-issue economic demands will never get there by themselves. At some stage, the working class is going to have to feel that the old society and its entire culture simply cannot continue in the old way any more, and should feel that the workers themselves should become the new 'ruling class', one which after a temporary dominance will be able to get rid of all ruling classes for ever.

But such thinking can never develop until a working-class leadership develops which will be capable of providing a sound lead for all workers on every matter, involving the whole working class in that struggle for correct theory, and beginning the long process of the final complete emancipation of the working class via universal higher education, obliterating 'mental' and 'manual' labour categories, and freeing everyone so much from necessary drudgery that all will have the time and inclination to pursue for pleasure new specialisation after specialisation, new career after new career, etc.

Specifically, the SLP needs to press on confidently in thinking about itself as the best and only trustworthy educator of the working class.

It needs to aim for more and more authoritative comment on every new international situation as it arises, and on every contentious domestic issue in the news as and when it happens, such as up-to-date commentary on the GCSE results and their implications and education questions in general; the drugs issue; the scabby Labour Government behaviour on every subject; the latest developments in the transport and environmental crisis; the disgraceful treatment of the Montserrat islanders; the unnerving finance-capital turmoil in the southeast Asian 'tiger' economies; the dramatic further retreats by British imperialism from its untenable positions in Occupation of northeast Ireland; the ridiculous nonsense of the Millennium Dome; the emerging irrelevance of the devolution diversion in the face of government turmoil everywhere in the bourgeois-capitalist free-market system, made even more pointed by the scandal of careerism and opportunist corruption riddling the present government party in Scotland; etc, etc.

The SLP is obviously at present limited by its material possibilities of getting publications out, and getting statements circulated

in face of media censorship.

But the real worry is that the SLP is not yet routinely thinking in terms of providing its own complete political education to its membership. There are numerous avenues and methods for developing discussion of SLP positions, but few of them are being utilised. The suspected biggest problem is the traditional one of a lack of confidence or farsightedness to even think in terms of a complete and independent SLP philosophy on everything, issue by issue, day by day, to give real leadership to the working class

And the key to the problem of developing such confidence is having the sound scientific understanding of society's future development to start with so that most issues are fully understood almost as soon as they have happened.

Imperialism's crisis of impossibly contradictory rival capital 'surpluses' grinds relentlessly on towards renewed inter-imperialist trade war followed by political conflict.

And endless stream of further evidence is supplied by the capitalist media themselves, and provides an inexhaustible source of educational material for the workers party that is going to lead the class to the building of socialism.

One of the current latest scandals is the continuing imperialist arms race, including the systematic ongoing build-up of nuclear arsenals.

Why? Because the imperialists know better than anyone what

endless political and economic crises their aggressive and exploitative system staggers into routinely, and they also know from history how these great periodic inter-imperialist confrontations for world trade and financial hegemony and domination usually end up:

THE United States is engaged in a massive secret programme to build a new generation of nuclear weapons, according to an internal US government document revealed yesterday. The document, a copy of which has been passed to the *Guardian*, exposes Washington to accusations that America has embarked on the design and development of new warheads using simulated detonations to evade the terms of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Among the weapons involved is the w-88 Trident missile, backbone of Britain's nuclear deterrent, which is being modernised to such an extent that the improved model will amount to a new "Trident II".

The 300-page document — obtained by a physicist formerly of the secret Los Alamos nuclear laboratory — unveils a weapons programme which is, says Dr Matthew McKinzie, bigger than at the height of the cold war. The programme envisages growth by \$4 billion (£2.5 billion) a year, compared with the equivalent of \$3.7 billion during the cold war.

The Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan, nicknamed the Green Book, is an internal report compiled by the energy department, which manages and maintains the nuclear arsenal. It was declassified and obtained by Dr McKinzie's Washington-based arms control monitoring group, the Natural Resources Defence Council, which is suing the government for breach of the test ban treaty.

"What we have is a massive nuclear programme," Dr McKinzie said, "which is a great deal larger than at the height of the cold war — which in the present security situation is staggering."

The document shows the energy department and navy secretly underpinning work on new prototypes for nuclear weapons, and on improvements to existing warheads, two of which are the W-76 and W-88 missiles, fitted to the Trident submarine.

Dr McKinzie said yesterday that the report shows the US government aiming to get round the test ban treaty by developing new weapons systems which do not need underground testing.

Robert Bell, the director of arms control at the national security council, said last year that the effect of the test ban treaty was "to rule out opportunities to create new weapons". But the internal report talks about "the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons" and says that "laboratories are currently working on programmes to provide new or modified designs" to nuclear weapons.

Dr McKinzie said the work is intended to increase the power and precision of the next generation of weapons.

The Energy Department document is one of the nation's official plans for work on nuclear arms, which involves 25,000 people in a highly secretive industry.

"The laboratories are currently working on programs to provide new or modified designs," the document says, adding that the work "will exercise a broad range of design skills."

The document says the work on some types of warheads includes steps toward redesigning the heart of the hydrogen bomb, its atomic trigger.

As the powerful arms dealers

The warmongering arms industry is a central element of capitalism's economic and political existence



frankly admit, less business is bad business.

But surely in this age of new humanitarian credos such as that pronounced by British imperialism's fresh New Labour stooge as foreign secretary, this arms-race stuff will soon become a thing of the past?

Not when billion-pound profits can be made out of terrified ruling classes the world over, all fearful of being toppled at some stage by the real proletarian democracy of a workers state, or of running into devastating conflict with economic rivals in the cut-throat imperialist market place:

[Cutting on UK and US arms industry increases]

And how suspiciously quiet Germany and Japan are on this sensitive subject when their technological excellence in all things is famed the world over, and when their specific histories consist of such indomitable militarist traditions and such famed aggressiveness. Who can believe that their canny quietness and their immense vulnerability to trade-war dirty tricks and conspiracies does not have them secretly preparing for renewed inter-imperialist conflict too, – in everything but the actual mass-mobilisation now, openly, of the necessary scientific, industrial, material, and personnel resources to adequately take care of German and Japanese interests when push comes to shove in the trade war.

The formation of the SLP was an inspiring historical development, inseparable from an understanding of the crisis itself.

And the SLP phenomenon by no means stands alone, – again as noted in quiet corners by the capitalist media themselves:

IT'S ABOVE 40 degrees. Three thousand people from 60 countries huddle in the sparse shade in all corners of a squatted farm in Andalusia, southern Spain. It is announced in English, Spanish, French and Italian that people should conserve water and beware fires. The phrase "melting pot" has seldom seemed so apt.

Reclaimed 10 years ago, nine families live and work this land, organising themselves as a collective. It's a fine symbolic place for the grand-sounding Second Inter-galactic Encounter For Humanity And Against Neo-Liberalism. For the past nine days, grass-roots activists, squatters, indigenous tribes, anarchists and trade unionists have been meeting in gymnasiums, schools, nurseries and occupied land to establish what they call a "network of resistance" to the prevailing global economic system.

"We are here to discuss how the economic policies are affecting everyday lives all over the world," says Dalia, a masked "commandant" from the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). "We call these economic policies 'Neo-Liberalism': basically the privatisation of services, and pro-market free trade which has created economies bigger than the state."

The inspiration for the gathering

comes from the EZLN rebels, who on New Year's Day 1994 came out of the mountains and jungles of the desperately poor Chiapas State in Mexico and seized six towns, which they still control. Last summer, they constructed camps and appealed on the Internet to "all oppressed peoples of the world" to join them for the First "Encuentra" – or encounter. Four thousand people travelled to Mexico, and an annual event was born.

Just why this particular grassroots rising has been embraced internationally can be seen both in its timing, and in its breadth of appeal. The Zapatista uprising coincided with the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico and the US, which gave US multinationals massive new rights in the country. Zapatistas fired the imagination of millions afflicted by a general feeling of helplessness. "This was a new type of struggle, and a successful one, which has become a new focus of the left," said Andrew, from Ireland, at the Encuentro last week.

The Zapatista analysis of world events has begun to emerge as a consensus from the growing opposition to the new, post-communist, free trade economic order, as a potent critique of governments who ignore their weakest citizens in favour of economic growth. Neo-liberalism, an ugly word in English, has another sense in Latin America, where it is the dominant political force and a byword for globalism and stateless power. It is also applied to Thatcherism, the EU-Maastricht policies in Europe and IMF adjustment programmes in Africa and Asia.

But if the language used is sometimes new, the themes that it seeks to address are mostly age-old. In Spain, the 3,000 people divided into 24 groups to discuss everything from nationalism, marginalisation and immigration, to struggles for culture, education and information. And with women making up a third of the Zapatista army, it included the fight against patriarchy and for land and ecology.

The messages that people brought were of grassroots optimism, but also of a parallel, growing repression.

On the optimistic side, there were the experiences of 20,000 Nicaraguan families who manage their own co-operatives on four million hectares of land.

Swami, an Indian pacifist, once tortured by being subjected to 32 nights without sleep, described how people recently took apart, brick by brick, a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet as a symbolic act against capitalism. And how, as a statement of disapproval, 50,000 people gathered simply to laugh at a government building.

Maloop, from Forte Prenestino, a squatted social centre outside Rome, told how 4,000 Italians had demanded – and got – two free trains to travel to join the march against the Euro Summit in Amsterdam in June, blockading Milan's main station for eight hours before the authorities gave in.

The optimism was matched by harrowing tales of death, torture and persecution. Jose Das Grasas outlined the problems of the *meninos de rua*, the millions of Brazilian street kids. Debli, a Nigerian in exile in Denmark, updated people on the Ogoni struggle against General Abache's regime and its complicity with the multinational Shell. And, of course, there are the death squads and constant threat of annihilation faced by the Zapatistas in Chiapas.

For the 30 UK activists who travelled to Spain, it was illuminating, if only because there was no obvious surveillance, no security guards, or large numbers of baton-waving police with tear gas. Their struggles at Newbury or



Chiapas, Mexico anti-landgrab uprising by the Zapatista EZLN movement

Manchester, at street parties or squats, may have seemed like children's games in comparison to the life or death experiences they were hearing about, yet they found they were welcomed as equals – and the notion of taking over a motorway or living in trees astonished many.

"It's the act of standing up that is important," said one. "Humanity is the common goal. And it doesn't matter whether you are in Basildon or Bangladesh."

Following marches in Madrid and Barcelona, described as the most multi-national demonstrations since the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War, the Encuentro will now roll on with the creation of the International Network of Alternative Communication (RICA), a kind of activists' news agency.

Barnsley bureaucratism may seem out of place by comparison, but the implications of Scargill's move (whatever eventually becomes of it) are not so far distant from the message which this Spain get-together conveys, – that at some stage, the mass movement will revive universally, and bigger than ever in history, as well as potentially far more

knowledgeable than ever. And clarity about what must finally be done on the question of repeated capitalist crisis is growing all the time.

Again it is the capitalist press itself which has just revealed that under Swedish social democracy, hitherto rammed down communist throats as the really 'good' and 'human face' example of how 'socialism' should be approached, – there existed for more than 40 years a policy of enforced sterilisation and Nazi eugenics which would have made Hitler Germany blush with shame. For more than 40 years, ending only in 1976, the Scandinavian reformist stooges for the international imperialist system routinely terrorised all who did not conform to the arbitrary standards established for physical appearance, mental capacity, and potential ability in parental duties by the National Institute for Racial Biology.

Set in motion before Hitler had even come to power, these poli-

cies resulted in the living death of more than 100,000 Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians.

For utterly specious reasons, Labour Party types from Wilson onwards have always pretended to be so enamoured of Swedish 'socialism' and welfare-state provisions; and Blairites are huge fans of all this deceitful reformist nonsense.

Not surprisingly, Lech Walesa, the prize stooge for the CIA and Vatican non-stop subversive offensives to wreck the great achievements of the workers state in Poland, never stopped posturing about how delighted he would be to live under 'socialism with a human face' in Sweden, for example.

Well now the capitalist press itself can utter the final comment on all this hypocritical bilge which has been swallowed by generations of reformist idiocy in Britain and worldwide:

Among those sterilised were unmarried mothers with several children, people judged to be habitual criminals, even a boy considered "sexually precocious". "Grounds for recommending sterilisation: recognisable Gypsy features, psychopathy, vagabond life," reads a document cited by the paper.

The reformists always hold up the Scandinavian and bourgeois Baltic Countries as examples of supposed progressive cultures within capitalism and "defenders of democracy". Reality is very different as exemplified at the beginning of the Second World War when populations eagerly welcomed and collaborated with the German Nazi invasion - and the anti-Soviet bourgeois regimes post-1991 have celebrated their Nazi past

Höghammarsskolan had the makings of a classic borstal — a kind of prison where the children's mail was read, laughing was banned and unruly children were beaten with sticks and placed in isolation cells.

But it was also at the front line of an explicit eugenics policy which began in the Nordic countries before Hitler came to power in Germany and did not end until 1976, when concern began over low birth rates.

Nurtured by social democrats but reminiscent of National Socialism, it resulted in the sterilisation of more than 100,000 Swedes, Danes and Norwegians whose race, lifestyle or mental capacities were deemed undesirable. Ninety per cent of them were women.

'The day I was called in to the doctor's office — I was 16 — I knew I would be made to sign the sterilisation form. It happened to all the girls,' said Maria, now aged 72 and divorced, and living in Gävle, north of Stockholm.

'I ran down to the basement and cried in the toilets. I was determined not to sign. I thought of suicide, but decided I would not give them the benefit of seeing me dead. I decided to refuse to sign. But when they got me into the office they said that, unless I did, I would stay there forever,' said Maria.

AS a teenager in Sweden during the Second World War, Maria Nordin had what we now call learning difficulties. She was shy, her eyesight was poor

and she could not see the blackboard. She was not the kind of person that the builders of the nascent Swedish welfare state wanted more of.

When her headmistress suggested that she be moved to an institution for her own good, Maria's peasant family was too big and too poor to object.

Coercion was the method usually used, in a policy which at different times was racially or financially motivated.

The policy was applied to alcoholics, travellers, those who physically did not conform to a look established by the National Institute for Racial Biology, and other people, called 'mentally slow', who were considered unlikely to be able to fulfil 'parental duties'.

Before Sweden passed its eugenics law in 1935, a government commission recommended: 'The care of the weak and helpless has become more enhanced. From this stage it is not a big step to prevent the birth of individuals who, most likely, must become a burden to themselves and others.'

In Sweden, hospital administrators could refuse to grant abortions to women who would not be sterilised. In the 1960s and 1970s, Swedish housing workers were asked to report tenants whom they believed should not procreate. In one cynical application of the policy, young men in borstals were routinely sterilised in the spring before being sent to work on farms in the summer.

Denmark's law was passed in 1929—before Hitler instituted sterilisation of mentally handicapped people. In Norway, campaigning for the law, introduced in 1934, was led by a

prominent left-winger who considered Nazi sterilisation policies insufficient because they only applied to hereditary complaints.

According to the Swedish daily newspaper *Dagets Nyheter*, which last week revealed the extent of sterilisation in the Nordic countries — 6,000 Danes, 40,000 Norwegians and 60,000 Swedes — the trend was consistently led by left-wingers and met with some limited opposition from conservative politicians.

Historians quoted by the newspaper said the spirit of Sweden's move in 1942 to require travellers and gypsies to register was born of the same racism as fuelled the Nazi extermination programme.

To Maria Nordin, the issue is far from resolved; only last year she was turned down after she asked the Swedish government for 100,000 kronor (£8,000) in compensation, a figure she now considers too low.

'I cannot put a price on all the years I was childless and on all the comments from people who asked my husband and me why we did not have children,' said Maria. She worked as a nanny after leaving Höghammarsskolan, then married her ex-husband with whom she ran a florist's.

'I wrote to the government last year after I read about a woman who got 40,000 kronor (£3,000) in compensation. I was so disappointed when I was turned down.

'It seemed like this conspiracy of silence would continue forever. I have not been able to tell people about what happened to me — there has been no understanding of it until now,' she said.

Swedish historians believe that the



country's unwillingness to admit that eugenics had a role in supporting the modern Swedish state is tied up with a reluctance to come to terms with the past.

Gunnar Broberg, a historian whose research has contributed to the latest revelations, said: 'We like to think that this state of mind [eugenics] is in the past. Many people do not want to address the complications of our history.'

But Sweden has, even in recent years, been criticised for policies which, while providing a social safety net that in the 1970s was the envy of many European countries, require profound conformism.

Yesterday Margot Wallström, the Swedish Minister for Social Policy, issued a belated reaction to the revelations. She said: 'What went on is bar-

baric and a national disgrace.'

The culture of capitalist exploitation and of the survival-of-the-fittest free-market ethics have never ceased to rule in Scandinavia. Its 'reformist socialism' has always been a complete deception, talked up only in order to provide the 'free' world with more deceitful anti-communist ammunition.

And all anti-revolutionary 'socialist' complacency will never be able to provide anything else other than anti-communist deceptions and stunts. Build Leninism, and spread Leninism as far and wide as possible.

Roy Bull

The essential rottenness of capitalist exploitation and greed now in free-fall self-destruction. Blairites were diving for cover anyway, but there is no hope that New Labour or anyone else will be able to sit out the crisis. Despite bourgeois propaganda lies, the 'real economy' underneath will begin to collapse too. All of political philosophy must now be reviewed urgently. Correct revolutionary theory is the only possible guarantee of sound socialist practice and party-building.

[EPSR No924 28-10-97]

The return of the Great Crash on Wall Street is the real story illuminating New Labour's humiliating paralysis yesterday over a single European currency.

The only 'decisive' point about Brown's statement was "no going in for the foreseeable future". All the rest was sheer flummery.

As the *EPSR* has long explained, this is exactly in the direction of the populist, Little Englander chauvinism which the Blairites clearly opportunistically embraced a long time ago.

And as the *Review* has also consistently drummed home, the backdrop to this sinister adoption of defensive nationalist prejudice is the terrifying storm-clouds of international economic crisis.

It is highly symbolic, and not even much of a coincidence really, that Brown's mealy-mouthed gobbledegook, bristling with some half-defiant "what's right for Britain" nonsense, should have been uttered at the very moment that Wall Street was actually being closed for trading by its uncontrollable crash.

The bourgeoisie everywhere are frightened of what is to come. A panic move to get into the Euro at once "for safety" may briefly have been examined, but the spineless trend of Blairism, such as it is, prefers to do nothing except more 'wait and see'.

The 'commitment in principle' to the Euro, – but not before

six years time, – is just flannel, – another derisive joke on the electorate by the PR men, working out what sounds good but means nothing. For at the end of six years, all but impossible conditions for "satisfying Britain's requirements for entry" have been carefully laid down in advance, making it simple enough to rule it out again then for another six years or so of 'wait and see'.

But this daft period of non-government by advertising sound-bite gimmicks is hardly likely to last that long, because one of the surely-intentionally-ludicrous "conditions" is for "a period of stability" in the economy meanwhile.

And this on the day that the whole world free-market system was going up in flames.

The British ruling class are panicking more than most, and the essence of Britain's 'wait and see' is rigid funk.

The entire political and business Establishment is clearly hopelessly split, so overwhelmed are they by the difficulties facing British imperialism in particular in all directions.

This fear has split the Tory Party to unelectable indecisiveness.

Blairite advertising gimmicks got elected, but then what? A quite pointless nothing. No faction of the Establishment or Big Business is strong enough

to make the ridiculous Blairites' minds up for them, and so the paralysis continues.

As the *EPSR* has analysed, the sinister forces around Blair toy with all sorts of fascist gimmickry themselves, but clearly would make very sad and inefficient Nazis.

But right on cue for a new decade of world slump and murderous cut-throat trade war, just like the 1930s, – the propaganda stunts the Blairites are playing with potentially set the tone for serious fascism to come onto the scene, in the debris of New Labour idiocies.

In such time of real fear and turmoil, the aggressive populist mood can easily be turned towards chauvinistic xenophobia, such as is beginning to get a firmer grip of the Tory Party.

The wretched careerist Blairites are going along with that sour and destructive nationalism which will only make worse the disasters which the out-of-control international capitalist anarchy has in store for everyone.

The world free market will have its back broken eventually by this collapse of share values.

The biggest imbecility was that of J K Galbraith, wheeled out as an 'arch-critic' of the capitalist system to try to calm the panic.

"This damaging market hysteria has a life of its own, but it has nothing to do with the real economy underneath",

he was persuaded to tell international radio audiences.

Total lying shite. The crash has **everything** to do with the 'real economy underneath'.

Imperialist crisis is the **essential feature** of modern world history, – of the whole 20th century, and beyond, – as, once again, the *EPSR* has consistently explained to all who would listen.

It is the **crisis** which is the 'norm', not the comfortable productive boom times in between. For it is the **crisis** which finally dictates the whole pattern of 20th century history and beyond.

If the capitalist system was not a system of crisis, it is not conceivable that the 20th century could have happened the way it has and what is due in the 21st century could never occur.

Without imperialist economic crisis, there can be no socialist revolutions, and would have been none in Russia and China, nor the further revolutions which flowed out of those events.

How to correctly assess the workers states, their triumphs, and disasters (see subsequent article) is impossible without understanding that imperialist crisis, – or more specifically imperialist revolutionary crisis, – is the defining character of the epoch.

Stalinist revisionism eventu-

ally fell down on all fronts for failing to grasp this essential Leninist understanding, – wrongly assuming that the imperialist economies could no longer expand into renewed towering world crisis (J V Stalin, *Economic Problems*, 1952), and therefore wrongly assuming that 'peaceful roads to socialism' were the future, and opening the door to eventual Eurocommunism and Gorbachevism.

At the same time, understanding the essential nature of the epoch as defined by inter-imperialist warmongering crisis, – it was easier to spot the treacherous stupidity of the 'ultra-left' anti-Soviet swamp of petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries' in the West who preached Trotskyite hatred of the 'Stalinist bureaucracy' and helped to undermine confidence in the workers states which were (and some still are) a priceless haven against the eventual imperialist deluge.

The 'political revolution', supposed to restore revolutionary perspectives to the Stalinist bureaucracy, was an arbitrary voluntarist fiction. Imperialist crisis is the moving force of 20th century history, and despite revisionism, the Bolshevik Revolution had some of its most epoch-making triumphs in trouncing imperialist warmongering crisis during World War II and in the spread of workers states in its aftermath, and in the simultaneous triumph of the national-liberation revolution dismantling physical Western empires worldwide.

The workers states needed supporting **unconditionally** throughout. That required trying to agitate the Stalinist bureaucracy as best possible back towards Leninism in a non-hostile way.

The 'political revolution' nonsense was always doomed to disaster, being plucked out of the air as a mere slogan by Western petty-bourgeois 'ultra-left' dilettantes, and inevitably only regarded as counter-revolutionary agitation by all who genuinely understood the role of the workers states, (and indeed as it was also regarded by the big bourgeoisie who financed the Trots and such 'rank-and-file socialism' stunts as the Solidarnosc bogus 'trade union for workers rights', etc, which were straightforward capitalist restorationist.)

Renewed imperialist crisis is **alone** going to make possible, hopefully, a revival of Marxist-Leninist science in the remaining workers states, and would have held out the same possibility in East Europe.

With imperialist crisis accepted as the basic condition of capitalism, the bureaucratic deformities imposed by reviving imperialist encirclement become no less frustrating but easier to explain **and**

accept, thus also providing a way out for die-hard Stalinism which no longer needs to cling to the defeatist defensive myths of 'Soviet perfection, now lost forever'.

Ultimately, the flawed revisionist bureaucracy self-destructed, and lifting the weight of decayed CP revisionism off the world's proletariat's shoulders, always eventually necessary, tragically for East Europe happened before reviving inter-imperialist crisis could develop far enough to give their workers states a new lease of life. They will suffer grievously for this.

But for the rest of the world, resumed inter-imperialist war-mongering crisis will bear a tragic cost in economic, and then trade-war destruction, and possibly military destruction to follow, as the recriminating chaos deepens first, before eventually giving way to Marxist-Leninist revolutionary enlightenment everywhere.

Workers parties everywhere should all reassess their perspectives for socialism as rapidly as possible.

The illusory folly of 'reformism' only finally becomes clear as uncontrollable imperialist crisis gets a grip of the planet. There is no such thing as 'reforming' capitalism. There are no such things as 'forces able to reform it'. They don't exist. A majority of mass public opinion will always be conned one way or another by

bourgeois propaganda, and total state control, for as long as the capitalist free market continues to do reasonably well in satisfying basic human aspirations, however badly and shallowly.

Only with imperialist crisis does it become clear that the only forces which can do anything about capitalism are the revolutionary might of the proletariat, propelled into action for sheer survival as the crisis deepens.

And the only sensible action the working class can take, once it seizes power, is to abolish capitalism and to start constructing the socialist order of society.

Piecemeal 'reformist' agitation will continue spontaneously, and will continue to need to be led by a party of leadership for the building of socialism. But the actual perspectives for the socialist revolution need drumming into consciousness as much as possible too.

The crash marks the start of a completely new period of politics where both major classes begin to understand the real nature of the class war, and what is really at stake.

This transformation has already been registered by the complete *Alice-in-Wonderland* remarks of capitalist propaganda, stumbling through the crash chaos, and turning the advertisers health warning on its head: "Don't forget, the value of shares

can go up as well as down". But probably not for some time, – maybe ten years or so, – if the inevitable eventual total breakdown of the capitalist credit-creation grand illusion has already begun, as looks like happening.

With unbelievably unconscious irony, the world was also treated last night to the farcical selfsame presidential echo from the 1929 Wall Street Crash, – "the economy is fundamentally sound. Do not panic". So they all went out and panicked.

The Blairites are terrified of being crisis-dominated by Germany inside Europe; but equally terrified of being crisis-dominated by everyone else outside of Europe.

World imperialist leaders are clearing the decks for massive new credit-creation to try to rescue international markets which face absolute bankruptcy because of the share-price collapse, – but this really is adding fuel to the fire.

The anarchic greed of endless capitalist expansion through banking credits and other equally elastically-miraculous financial measures for increasing investments under capitalism, – has finally choked on its own profiteering.

As last week's *Review* spelled out in detail, quoting Marx (*Capital vol III* p.568), 'The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted

consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as if only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit.'

They all want to conquer the world market out of necessity because imperialist rivals must either swallow each other or be swallowed up themselves. Finance credit will endlessly put the money up for this jungle anarchy, – because finance-capital profiteering is the biggest shark-market of all, and the most lucrative.

'Surplus' capital is now sloshing all round the world's markets in unbelievable volumes, capable of obliterating entire markets and whole countries at the drop of a predictive futures index.

So get some more emergency credit ready, conclude the world imperialist leaders. Or put some more fuel on the fire!!

Eventually, of course, only destruction of 'surplus' capital becomes the imperialist system's 'way out'. But that means, at the very least, ten years mass-unemployment Depression; utterly ruthless trade war; and ultimately inter-imperialist diplomatic conflict leading to rearmament and threats of real war. Capitalist history points in no other directions.

Build Leninism.
Royston Bull

The right answers must now be fought for on all historical questions. Correct perspectives on the future are impossible without them. Nationalist confusion will be the great danger to the international workers movement. Philistinism and Trotskyism on theory are equally pernicious. Build Leninism and a correct understanding of the workers states, their successes and their failures.

[EPSR No924 28-10-97]

The 80th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution; the survival of the US blockade by Castro's socialist revolution in Cuba; and the digestion of capitalist Hong Kong by the Chinese workers state, immediately exposed to an international capitalist currency crisis, – all have helped the recurrence of a great new rash of questioning about what the workers states were, and are; what went wrong, and right; with hindsight, what would have been the best policies for trying to make them an even greater success; and what will happen to the workers states henceforth; etc.

It is correct to stress that the only really worthwhile legacy of communist revolution and its lessons is one which is being continuously and actively applied

to achieving the furthering of revolutionary socialist gains for the working class in today's world, – suitably fitting current tactical and strategic requirements, of course.

And the insistence on contemporary relevance for any conclusions drawn about past revolutions is also, of course, the sole method of analysis and agitation on such matters which could hope to make it feasible to get the right answers to all these questions.

It is the present-day international balance of class forces, correctly understood, which alone can provide the optimum information and historical guidelines for going back and getting the past right as well.

It is from the highest point yet reached in the historical evolu-

tion of the class struggle that more of the full significance than ever of civilisation's progress can be grasped.

But in the mastering of the best-yet-available perspectives on the socialist future of the world based on a correct understanding of the present international balance of class forces and the direction in which things are moving, – then properly assessing all that has gone before in revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle, and what are the most priceless lessons from it to take forward into today's struggles, – is crucial information too.

Sterile academic self-justification by sectarian groups of individualists (Trotskyists, uncritical Stalinists, anti-theory workerists and activists, anti-state anarchists, anti-communist 'state capitalists', etc, etc) is indeed uselessly time-wasting, boring, and unprogressive, – but the enormous amount of such subjective-idealist drivel in an age of massive ideological confusion should not be allowed to drive serious-minded socialist agitators into Philistinism on this question.

It really does matter to any attempted political struggle today to try to decide as best possible exactly what China is, for example, where it is going, and

why, etc; what the Soviet Union was, and how and why it was undermined, etc; what Stalinist revisionism was, and what its remnants represent now; what Trotskyism was, and is now; etc, etc.

It is above all crucial to understand that it is possible for these things to be 'correctly understood'. There are 'right answers'.

The 'whole truth' about the past, the present, and the future, is, of course, always being improved upon as time passes, and new and better insights into the whole condition of humanity and society become available.

But at any one moment, the historical struggle of class forces needs to know the 'right' answer there and then, and it cannot wait.

Is Blairism a catastrophic empty vessel, or a brilliant 'modernisation' of 'useful reformism'?

Was it the right time to launch the SLP?

Was it possible to denounce Thatcher's Falklands war, or the West's Gulf war, without sowing solidarising illusions in local Iraqi or Argentine backwardness?

What was the best way to agitate against Stalinist-revisionist mistakes and limitedness in East Europe while not falling for the CIA/Vatican counter-revolutionary fraud of the Solidarnosc



The devastating Catastrophe of crisis collapse of the whole imperialist system is now well underway and threatening workers in even the heartland of the richest nation with nothing but Slump unemployment, penury and warmongering

bogus 'trade union'?

Etc, etc, for a million and one more issues.

In other words, without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice. But without revolutionary practice (interpreted in the broadest sense of political class struggle), there will not be much useful revolutionary theory being produced.

The same dialectical relationship was summarised by Marx as "philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways; the point however is to change it".

Patterns in 'left' backwardness and subjectivism can be traced back to fundamental confusion on these basic questions of revolutionary philosophy.

Marx and Lenin were both endlessly attacked by the 'left' swamp of their day for being 'dictatorial' or 'dogmatic' when all that was being insisted upon was that disciplined revolutionary movement should not be held back indefinitely by incorrect ideas. Successful party building would be impossible unless decisions on programme, strategy, and tactics were accepted and applied as correct by everyone until fresh experience was able to demonstrate the incorrectness of any of it.

Today's 'left' swamp in Britain really hate this disciplined Marxist-Leninist approach, which they dismiss as 'Stalinist tyranny'.

They indulge in endless academic arguments about all sorts of things, but actually oppose the idea of obliging everyone to reach a conclusion and make a decision to which all must then show

disciplined acceptance, or take on trust until challenging new evidence has been generally accepted as invalidating or querying the original decision.

The 'left' swamp actually insists that party-building must develop along the **exact opposite** of these Leninist lines.

Hence their hostility to the unitary constitution of the Socialist Labour Party.

These subjective-idealist individuals ludicrously pretend that a 'party' will be built by allowing all 57 varieties of weird and wonderful 'left' nonsense, from anarcho-syndicalists to Martovites, to build their own factions and sects within one fought-over umbrella organisation.

What is unmissable about these frauds, of course, is that the 57 varieties can **never** get together to build this weird and wonderful 'party' on their own. It always has to be as parasites, – on the Labour Party originally, or on the Communist Party, and now on the SLP.

These Trot-individualist minds argue, of course, that the body they are leeching on "is the party of the whole class" or "belongs to the whole class", which, amusingly, does not stop them now jeering, – in the SLP's case, now that they have been booted out, – that the SLP now has hardly any members left, and has become a sterile sect, etc, etc.

This poisonous Trot hypocrisy about 'many factions, but great amalgamated united-party strength' never stops them from, on the one hand, inflicting

the most savage and arbitrary 'discipline' each within their own separate sects, rendering them notoriously autocratic and guru-worship inclined (Healy, Cliff, Grant, Yurukoglu, etc); nor, on the other hand, from savaging each other in sectarian warfare of utterly unprincipled abusiveness and intolerance.

Total programmatic, strategic, and tactical chaos on the issue of Scottish devolution, for example, has led to much atrocious deliberate "national-socialist" name-calling around the swamp; to virtual capitulation to bourgeois nationalism by the leading Trot group in Scotland creeping along opportunistically in the wake of the appalling SNP; – to bizarre claims of ultra-left sectarian proprietorship over 1½ million Scots abstention 'votes' in the referendum; and now to the editor of a particularly vitriolic and malodorous Trot weekly suddenly being forced to resign on the spot over all this flatulence.

And the biggest joke of all, of course, is that this entire 'left' swamp has got the whole national question misunderstood from start to finish. Sadly, the SLP in Scotland has been led into confusion by similar Trot naivety.

Declarations that a wish by Scottish workers for a government responsive to its needs equates to a "demand for a Scottish parliament" which must therefore be seen as a "working-class movement" are just nonsense.

The only 'Scottish parliament' involved in this devolution-referendum gimmick by the Blairites is another bourgeois-democracy fraud, identical to the rotten

racket at Westminster.

No such 'parliament' could ever conceivably be "responsive to Scots working-class needs", – no more than the capitalist system can ever be, in this or any other 'democratic' guise, or with no 'democracy' fraud at all. The anarchic laws of capitalism decide what will happen under the capitalist system, – as the terrifying slump-collapse which has just hit Southeast Asia beyond anyone's control has demonstrated, – with or without local 'parliaments' being in operation.

The 'parliament' in Scotland is a sop to the **bourgeois** movement by middle-class Scots irritated at British imperialism's economic paralysis, relative to the rest of the booming world market in recent decades.

Just as many workers in England were dragged along by Thatcherite ideological nonsense which they thought might be addressing their own discontent with life under capitalism; and just as many workers in Scotland have for decades, and now in particular, fallen for the petty-bourgeois lies and opportunist corruption of the Labour Party in Scotland and beyond; so have some workers in Scotland been deceived by SNP nationalist blather about how brilliantly Scotland would do "going it alone", etc.

The Scots, of course, have every right to go it alone under any circumstances they wish.

But it makes sense for everyone of any responsible understanding, – including inside the SLP, to explain that 'independence' under capitalism, – which is what this all means, – might not necessarily be a good thing for the Scottish working class at all.

It might be seen as a catastrophic diversion, splitting up the working class of Britain just approaching the time when capitalist crisis in Britain is likely to be preparing all workers to think in terms of a socialist revolution to build a government responsive to **all** workers needs.

Letting the clapped-out British capitalist ruling class (Scots included) get out of jail at such a time by raising the "let's go it alone" diversionary nonsense would be a disastrous trap for Scots workers to fall into.

There will be international turmoil at the time. The dismemberment of Britain could leave the relatively small population of Scotland, at the extremity, possibly vulnerable to the same Western imperialist manipulation and intervention that the dismembered peoples of Yugoslavia have recently suffered.

If Britain and the British working class remains united, such dangers are far smaller. Tailending these SNP-inspired shallow nationalist delusions in

the minds of some Scots workers is not a very heroic or sensible programme for the SLP to follow in Scotland.

A lead is what needs to be given, – expressing for workers in advance what they cannot yet express for themselves, just as the SLP in England expresses for workers what they cannot yet express for themselves, many of them temporarily mesmerised by the Blairite advertising gimmickry and capitalist media hype.

The call must be for working-class power over all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. The analysis that needs making is not about trivia such as how many Scots workers are being confused by SNP propaganda, or how deeply; but about how close to collapse is the international capitalist crisis, and how best to disrupt the propaganda of all the petty-bourgeois political diversions (such as nationalism, New Labourism, etc) which will try to hold back the working class from revolutionary socialist consciousness.

It really is pathetic to read that “a Scottish parliament has to be accepted because a majority of Scots clearly support it”. This is cowardly tailending philistine gibberish, not rational Marxist science. They all voted for Blairite crap too. Does that make it any

Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the “most just”, “purest”, most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity, a unity that is growing before our eyes with every mile of railway line that is built, with every international trust, and every workers’ association that is formed (an association that is international in its economic activities as well as in its ideas and aims).

The principle of nationality is historically inevitable in bourgeois society and, taking this society into due account, the Marxist fully recognises the historical legitimacy of national movements. But to prevent this recognition from becoming an apologia of nationalism, it must be strictly limited to what is progressive in such movements, in order that this recognition may not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness.

The awakening of the masses from feudal lethargy, and their struggle against all national oppression, for the sovereignty of the people, of the nation, are progressive. Hence, it is the Marxist’s *bounden* duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on all aspects of the national question. This task is largely a negative one. But this is the limit the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism, for beyond that begins the “positive” activity of the bourgeoisie striving to *fortify* nationalism.

To throw off the feudal yoke, all national oppression, and all privileges enjoyed by any particular nation or language, is the imperative duty of the proletariat as a democratic force, and is certainly in the interests of the proletarian class struggle, which is obscured and retarded by bickering on the national question. But to go *beyond* these strictly limited and definite historical limits in helping bourgeois nationalism means betraying the proletariat and siding with the bourgeoisie. There is a border-line here, which is often very slight and which the Bundists and Ukrainian nationalist-socialists completely lose sight of.

Combat all national oppression? Yes, of course! Fight for any kind of national development, for “national culture” in general?—Of course not. The economic development of capitalist society presents us with examples of immature national movements all over the world, examples of the formation of big nations out of a number of small ones, or to the detriment of some of the small ones, and also examples of the assimilation of nations. The development of nationality in general is the principle of bourgeois nationalism; hence the exclusiveness of bourgeois nationalism, hence the endless national bickering. The proletariat, however, far from undertaking to uphold the national development of every nation, on the contrary, warns the masses against such illusions, stands for the fullest freedom of capitalist intercourse and welcomes every kind of assimilation of nations, except that which is founded on force or privilege.

Consolidating nationalism within a certain “justly” delimited sphere, “constitutionalising” nationalism, and securing the separation of all nations from

the more palatable, or Scots voters any the less duped??

The cringing, pro-capitalist confusion in *Socialist News* No 8 was more suited to the SNP than the SLP. It even indignantly defended (in advance) the honour of a Scots parliament for being rigged in advance to collect taxes only on a bourgeois basis, just like the racket in London.!

But why not just denounce the fraud of **all** parliaments under capitalism **anywhere??**

And the final argument in *SN* 8 about “the chance to break the stranglehold of capitalism in one part of the UK first” is pure *Braveheart* romanticism. Good luck to the Scots if they do. They have always been the very best of fighters for the working class.

But all of history teaches the opposite to this speculative emotionalism, tinged with nationalist bollocks.

The ever-increasing monopoly-imperialist character of capitalism has steadily ironed-out much petty-bourgeois parochialism, and rustic superstition, and ethnic isolationism, – all round the world. Marxism has always welcomed this with open arms, declaring itself utterly hostile to all backward-looking nationalism which it considered the direct obstacle to proletarian internationalism:



one another by means of a special state institution—such is the ideological foundation and content of cultural-national autonomy. This idea is thoroughly bourgeois and thoroughly false. The proletariat cannot support any consecration of nationalism; on the contrary, it supports everything that helps to obliterate national distinctions and remove national barriers; it supports everything that makes the ties between nationalities closer and closer, or tends to merge nations. To act differently means siding with reactionary nationalist philistinism.

Marxists are, of course, opposed to federation and decentralisation, for the simple reason that capitalism requires for its development the largest and most centralised possible states. *Other conditions being equal*, the class-conscious proletariat will always stand for the larger state. It will always fight against medieval particularism, and will always welcome the closest possible economic amalgamation of large territories in which the proletariat’s struggle against the bourgeoisie can develop on a broad basis.

Capitalism’s broad and rapid development of the productive forces *calls for* large, politically compact and united territories, since only here can the bourgeois class—together with its inevitable antipode, the proletarian class—unite and sweep away all the old, medieval, caste, parochial, petty-national, religious and other barriers.

...while, and insofar as, different nations constitute a single state, Marxists will never, under any circumstances, advocate either the federal principle or decentralisation. The great centralised state is a tremendous historical step forward from medieval disunity to the future socialist unity of the whole world, and only *via* such a state (*inseparably* connected with capitalism), can there be any road to socialism.

Oct 1913 *Critical Remarks on the National Question*

The same applies to the national question. In most Western countries it was settled long ago. It is ridiculous to seek an answer to non-existent questions in the programmes of Western Europe. In this respect Rosa Luxemburg has lost sight of the most important thing—the difference between countries where bourgeois-democratic reforms have long been completed, and those where they have not.

The crux of the matter lies in this difference. Rosa Luxemburg’s complete disregard of it transforms her verbose article into a collection of empty and meaningless platitudes.

The epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Western, continental Europe embraces a fairly definite period, approximately between 1789 and 1871. This was precisely the period of national movements and the creation of national states. When this period drew to a close, Western Europe had been transformed into a settled system of bourgeois states, which, as a general rule, were nationally uniform states. Therefore, to seek the right to self-determination in the programmes of West-European socialists at this time of day is to betray one’s ignorance of the ABC of Marxism.

In Eastern Europe and Asia the period of bourgeois-democratic revolutions did not begin until 1905. The revolutions in Russia, Persia, Turkey and China, the Balkan wars—such is the chain of world events of our period in our “Orient”. And only a blind man could fail to see in this chain of events the awakening of a whole series of bourgeois-democratic national movements which strive to create nationally independent and nationally uniform states. It is precisely and solely

because Russia and the neighbouring countries are passing through this period that we must have a clause in our programme on the right of nations to self-determination.

The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within *definite* historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country (e. g., the national programme for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch.

What does this categorical requirement of Marxism imply in its application to the question under discussion?

First of all, it implies that a clear distinction must be drawn between the two periods of capitalism, which differ radically from each other as far as the national movement is concerned. On the one hand, there is the period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw all classes of the population into politics through the press, participation in representative institutions, etc. On the other hand, there is the period of fully formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—a period that may be called the eve of capitalism's downfall.

The typical features of the first period are: the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and for the rights of the nation in particular. Typical features of the second period are: the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements and the fact that developed capitalism, in bringing closer together nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement into the forefront.

The interests of the working class and of its struggle against capitalism demand complete solidarity and the closest unity of the workers of all nations; they demand resistance to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie of every nationality. Hence, Social-Democrats would be deviating from proletarian policy and subordinating the workers to the policy of the bourgeoisie if they were to repudiate the right of nations to self-determination, i. e., the right of an oppressed nation to secede, or if they were to support all the national demands of the bourgeoisie of oppressed nations. It makes no difference to the hired worker whether he is exploited chiefly by the Great-Russian bourgeoisie rather than the non-Russian bourgeoisie, or by the Polish bourgeoisie rather than the Jewish bourgeoisie, etc. The hired worker who has come to understand his class interests is equally indifferent to the state privileges of the Great-Russian capitalists and to the promises of the Polish or Ukrainian capitalists to set up an earthly paradise when they obtain state privileges. Capitalism is developing and will continue to develop, anyway, both in integral states with a mixed population and in separate national states. In any case the hired worker will be an object of exploitation. Successful struggle against exploitation requires that the proletariat be free of nationalism, and be absolutely neutral, so to speak, in the fight for supremacy that is going on among the bourgeoisie of the various nations. If the proletariat of any one nation gives the slightest support to the privileges of its "own" national bourgeoisie, that will inevitably rouse distrust among the proletariat of another nation; it will weaken the international class solidarity of the workers and divide them, to the delight of the bourgeoisie.

The demand for a "yes" or "no" reply to the question of secession in the case of every nation may seem a very "practical" one. In reality it is absurd; it is metaphysical in theory, while in practice it leads to subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie's policy. The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront, and does so in categorical fashion. With the proletariat, however, these demands are subordinated to the interests of the class struggle. Theoretically, you cannot say in advance whether the bourgeois-democratic revolution will end in a given nation seceding from another nation, or in its equality with the latter; *in either case*, the important thing for the proletariat is to ensure the development of its class. For the bourgeoisie it is important to hamper this development by pushing the aims of its "own" nation before those of the proletariat. That is why the proletariat confines itself, so to speak, to the negative demand for recognition of the *right* to self-determination, without giving guarantees to any nation, and without undertaking to give *anything at the expense* of another nation.

The whole task of the proletarians in the national question is "unpractical" from the standpoint of the *nationalist* bourgeoisie of every nation, because the proletarians, opposed as they are to nationalism of every kind, demand "abstract" equality; they demand, as a matter of principle, that there should be no privileges, however slight.

May 1914 *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*

The Bolsheviks held to this Leninist analysis even in circumstances where there was unending evidence of monstrous discrimination and damaging prejudice by Great Russian nationalism, rife throughout the Tsarist empire against hundreds

of smaller-numerically nationalities, many of them in clearly colonised territories far vaster than Scotland, and with utterly separate and distinct languages and culture, and many with an unbroken history of nothing but armed conflict with the Great

Russians.

Formal abstract right to self-determination is one thing. This smelly bogus 'devolution' stultified by deliberately deceitful bourgeois ideological muddleheadedness is nothing but a wretched Blairite stunt to try to divide and rule a British working class whose potential for internationalist solidarity and stubborn struggle and eventually socialist consciousness terrifies the Establishment.

Confusion on the national question is a weakness for the SLP. It is also an example of the damage that can be caused by leaving complex theoretical questions unresolved in general. Without a fully-worked-out all round political theory, correct political practice can never be more than a patchy hit-or-miss affair.

And correctly emphasising the importance of a current active political programme as the best driving force to help usefully clarify all questions, as explained above, itself needs to be understood in a specific way.

Immediate frontline class-war struggles are relevant to this, but they are nowhere near the whole story.

The capitalist class rules by total ideological control, not just by isolating frontline struggles via anti-union laws, corrupted trade-union officials, police pressure, bribed scabs, news blackouts, etc. But that ideological control cannot just consist of bread and circuses, – sport, consumer and fashion shows, song and dance contests, money quizzes, etc.

Real issues also have to be discussed, plenty of them. And as distorted as bourgeois news and feature coverage is of its own society, this ruling-class ideological blanket is what has to be picked apart, every strand.

It is argued that workers are "not interested" in a lot of current affairs, or are not interested to any great depth.

Once again, tailending such dubious 'knowledge' cannot be the response of the party that wishes to lead the working class to socialism, by taking power.

The whole of society has to be led to this conclusion, in a sense. Workers are the only class force that can take the power, but the general condition of society in which this is most likely is one where large sections of the petty bourgeoisie have been neutralised or won over by the strength of the working-class socialist case, and where even sections of the bourgeoisie have begun to doubt their own system and have lost confidence in the Establishment.

Endless social questions, argued firmly for the socialist cause by the party of working-class leadership, will play an enormous part in influencing these matters. The Bolshevik party leadership

and its press were outstandingly coherent and aggressive on every kind of philosophical, social, political, economic, and international question facing Russian society. And they eventually won the trust of the Tsarist masses by being right about everything, basically, – proved correct again and again by the test of time in every aspect of their propaganda, programme, strategy, and tactics.

One excellent orientation of 80th anniversary celebrations of the Bolshevik Revolution would be to agitate that only the renewal of such an outstanding party of revolutionary theory can remotely hope to meet today's requirements in a party of working-class leadership preparing for power to build socialism.

Reheated Stalinism is hopelessly inadequate, – even more so than when it was found wanting first time round.

As the *EPS Review* has repeatedly explained at great length, it remains ludicrously unserious for Stalin-apologists to keep on ignoring the crass theoretical errors, with catastrophic consequences, which demonstrably occur in Stalin's writings, notably his *Economic Problems of Socialism*, 1952; and to keep on insisting that it was Kruschew who first sold out Leninism but without explaining Stalin's responsibility for training a party which got so many things so wrong so quickly after Stalin's death.

Stalin apologetics are just religious dogmatism in defiance of all rationality, and disastrously useless to the working class, in the long run. *Lalkar's* deliberate six-year silence on these polemical challenges is just a joke.

The 'left' swamp's imbecilities on these questions is even worse, – but at least they show occasional signs of movement, which makes polemicising against them at least more eventful than watching paint dry, although not tremendously more intellectually stimulating.

One Trot entryist sect which has just nailed its feet more firmly to the floor on these questions, – the now editorless *Weekly Worker*, – has weirdly declared as a key 'killing comment' in a polemic against the LRCI*(?) [*League for the Revolutionary Communist International – ed]

The notion that a precise understanding of the nature of the USSR and Eastern Europe should be included in the programme of a revolutionary organisation is simply foolish. Within the programme, there must be room for a variety of different interpretations of historical phenomena such as the USSR.

This is seriously braindamaged stuff. The **correct** understanding of the 20th century world we are struggling for socialism in is the only conceivable aim. Not knowing what the USSR was, what its self-liquidation tells us, and

what a correct policy towards the workers states should have been, and should be now, is just not a serious basis for preaching socialist revolution.

As the lead story briefly explains, all political understanding begins and ends with the grasp of imperialist crisis as the decisive character of the epoch, dominating everything.

It even governed the eventual appearance of Gorbachevism, the final form taken by Stalinist revisionism, - as the EPS Review has repeatedly explained at length.

Dismayed that the received Stalinist wisdom (that imperialism would be incapable of economic re-expansion after 1945) seemed less and less comprehensible by the 1980s, Gorbachev turned on the Soviet system for its 'inefficiency' and 'laggardliness'.

Mindful of illusions in non-existent 'peaceful roads to socialism' and misled by creeping ex-

tensions of peaceful-coexistence temporary tactics into delusions of becoming the permanent condition for the world, - Gorbachev almost rolled on his back when Reaganism suddenly offered him disarmament agreements at Reykjavik and further on, and threw in economic cooperation gestures into the bargain.

Reaganism was preparing for the new era of inter-imperialist trade-war to the death with Germany and Japan, ditching some of the costlier and more useless aspects of the Cold War propaganda gimmicks against the bogus 'evil empire'.

Gorbachev, trained on Stalinist illusions, rolled right over and dismantled the dictatorship of the proletariat to please his new friends in the West, and to help build the lunatic project of "our common European home".

No one even believes this crap in the Common Market/European Union, as Britain demon-

strates, - all watching to see how best to coexist with terrifying German hegemony.

The demented subjective-idealism of Trotskyism had already screamed for decades that Stalinism had sold out to imperialism from the very beginning. Even at the conclusion in 1990 with the feebly self-aborted August coup 'attempt', to try to halt Yeltsin's capitalist restoration, - this was obvious nonsense. Theoretical chaos was Stalinism's problem, not selling out.

Total bourgeois ideological confusion has reigned ever since about the self-liquidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

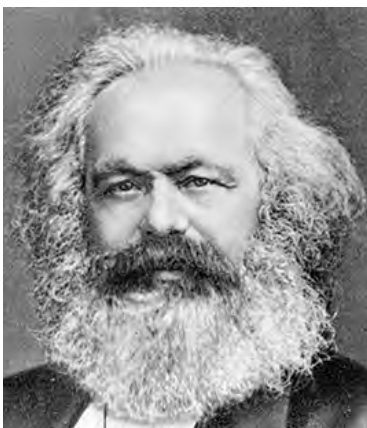
The more imbecile Trotskyites are still calling now for counter-revolutionary provocations to "bring down Castro" or "bring down Jiang Zemin", etc, determined to remain blissfully unaware of how the decisive imperialist-crisis character of the 20th century has long since, and

today more than ever, rendered their artificial 'political revolution' nonsense now just a useless historical fiction.

The world imperialist crisis should be able to demonstrate to Beijing the correctness of their insistence on maintaining the dictatorship of the proletariat when dispersing the Tiananmen petty-bourgeois counter-revolutionaries bearing their symbol of US imperialism's Statue of Liberty.

The 'free world' fiction is in free-fall collapse. It will be difficult, but workers parties in the West which wish to seriously and successfully face up to the new crisis-epoch reality of the imperialist system need to make an active grasp of proletarian-dictatorship philosophy the essence of their understanding and mutually-reinforcing cooperation overtures to China and the rest of the workers states.

Build Leninism. RB



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Engels, Marx and Lenin



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Leaving the world to be run by the greed of the capitalist monopolies can never stop resulting in periodic crises where trade-war destruction must rule, and to which the only antidote is Revolution and a strong workers state, --- as these essentials of Marxist-Leninist science explain.

Only the crisis events of collapsing imperialist rule interpreted in this Marxist-Leninist light will educate a mass workers party of leadership to do the necessary tasks.

The Revisionist retreat from the Soviet workers state because of crawling to shallow Western glitz and shame at their own past bureaucratic mistakes has only proved the soundness of Lenin's *State & Revolution* science about a very long period of proletarian dictatorship being the only way for the world to see-off monopoly imperialist warmongering, now back with a vengeance.

"It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's teachings is the class struggle; but this is not true. And from this untruth very often springs the opportunist distortion of Marxism, its falsification in such a way as to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the doctrine of the class struggle was created not by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie before Marx, and generally speaking it is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise only the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the boundaries of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the doctrine of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question as a practical issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the "Kautskyites" (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats who repudiate the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Lenin)

"The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as if only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit." (Capital. Vol III. P568.)

"For many a decade past", wrote Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, "the

history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises a great part, not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity - the epidemic of overproduction. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed. And why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary...they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them."

"The conditions of bourgeois democracy very often compel us to take a certain stand on a multitude of small and petty reforms, but we must be able, or learn, to take such a position on these reforms. (in such a manner) that - to oversimplify the matter for the sake of clarity - five minutes of every half-hour speech are devoted to reforms and twenty-five minutes to the coming revolution. (Lenin Dec 1916: *Principles involved in the war issue.*)" Lenin

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