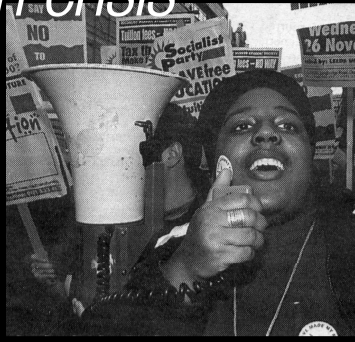




**Socialist Party
in crisis**



Taaffe debates with
SML - **p2**
SP referendum
silence - **p3**
SP and London
Socialist Alliance - **p4**

State attacks right to think

There is a hidden agenda of censorship behind the chorus of outrage over the Mary Bell biography

There are few things more stomach-churning than watching bourgeois society going through one of its moralistic spasms. Over the last week we have been bombarded by sensationalist stories about the "child killer" Mary Bell. The bigot-fuelled tabloids, of course, have had a field day, stoking up prejudice and all manner of backward ideas.

Unsurprisingly, tabloid editors have been working overtime evoking lurid images which could come from *The Omen* or *The Exorcist* - watch out for 'children of Satan' or armies of zombie-like killer-children roaming your street. As Emma Forest wrote in *The Guardian*: "In reporting on murder, there is an unspoken tabloid rule: when men kill it's bad. When women kill it's evil. And when children kill it's satanic" (May 4).

Thus, naturally, Mary Bell is supposed to become a hate figure - so runs the script. This means that the 41 year-old Mary Bell has to be demonised and scapegoated as a "child killer" rather than someone who killed as a child - for whatever reason. The fact that Mary Bell's specific case is being subsumed under a general tabloid-driven hysteria about 'paedophiles' lurking outside your back door makes the current mood even more alarming. This obsession with 'evil' killers and perverts led to a near-riot in Yeovil, when a rumour got out - tabloids again? - that Sydney Cooke was being held in the local police station.

And, of course, after reading about the 'evil' misdeeds of Mary Bell, people are inclined to look to the police and the bourgeois courts for protection. Not to mention censorship. This is the hidden agenda that lies behind the Mary Bell 'scandal'. You can be sure that tabloid editors, self-appointed moral guardians and other forces in society do not want us to get a glimpse of the real truth behind the Mary Bell story.

Instead, though with no logic whatsoever, we are supposed to believe in

the existence of a timeless, transcendental, ahistorical *evil* which possesses certain individuals - and not others. This is the force responsible for producing Mary Bell - and Sydney Cooke, Fred West, Thomas Hamilton, Peter Sutcliffe, etc.

Naturally, anyone who challenges orthodox reactionary assumptions is immediately suspect - and risks being stifled. (For example, look at the attempts to ban the 'offensive' film *Crash*.)

The real facts about the grim and tragic life of the young Mary Bell do not fit into the neat and easy categories conjured up the salivating tabloids. Sentenced to life imprisonment in 1968 *at the age of 11* for the manslaughter of two boys aged four and three, Mary Bell had suffered appalling maltreatment - sexual abuse and general deprivation - at the hands of her mother and her 'male visitors'. But the torture did not end there. At the Red Bank Special Unit, we are just learning, she was subjected to sexual attacks at the hands of staff and inmates. According to one former inmate, she was "petrified" the whole time as unit workers and residents "made it plain to her that was the way it would be" (quoted in *The Guardian* May 2).

Still hate her?

The general climate of censorship in Britain can be seen by the reaction to Gitta Sereny's book, *Cries unheard*, which she 'co-authored' with Mary Bell. Sereny has written a much praised biography of Albert Speer which attempted to penetrate the political psyche of those who masterminded the Third Reich. She has also written a study of Franz Stangel, commandant of the Treblinka concentration/extermination camp.

Sereny was motivated by the conviction that Mary Bell had been the victim of an "enormous relative injustice". She is also "absolutely convinced that children do not commit crimes because they are evil". There



had to be "a reason". And therefore that the judicial system has to changed so that children can never again be tried in adult courts or sent to adult prisons. It appears that these are 'bad ideas'. Perhaps they should not be said at all. Perhaps it would be better if *Cries unheard* was not published.

Thus, when it was discovered that Sereny had given Mary Bell some of the money advanced to her by the publishers, all hell broke loose. The tabloids scream about "child killers" profiting from their crimes, conjuring up the figure of £50,000. Jack Straw instantly said the payment by Sereny had "compromised" Mary Bell's anonymity. He was followed by his master, Tony Blair, who sanctimoniously pontificated that it was "wrong that people make money out of crimes they have committed". In the end the Bells

- mother and daughter - had to go into hiding to escape media harassment. The tabloids claimed the moral high ground to the bitter end, piling on the pressure to suppress Sereny's book.

Yet, with astounding hypocrisy, these very same newspapers have been offering far larger sums than £50,000 to Bell for her 'exclusive story'. Indeed, according to Sereny, £50,000 is "infinitesimal" in comparison to these offers, which "are still continuing to come in". Who is profiting from crime now?

In other words, to profit or not is not the real issue at stake here. It is clearly *what* is being said rather than who is saying it that is the target.

If you want more proof, it was announced last week that the brutal London gangster, 'Mad' Frankie Fraser, will be doing a TV advertisement for

Campari. The sound of moral outrage was conspicuous by its absence. But it is very unlikely that Fraser will feel the censor's hand - he does not pose a threat to establishment values - Mary Bell's life does.

As for murderers and killers 'profiting from crime', the local bookshop or library is full of the memoirs of assorted wartime politicians, generals, ex-members of the SAS, etc. They will continue to be published - with impunity.

This should send a clear signal to the workers' movement. Censorship and suppression of free speech is a weapon that can be directed against *anyone* who one way or the other goes against the ruling order. We must be vigilant and fight all attempts to deny our democratic right to think ●

Eddie Ford

Fight nationalist poison

On Thursday May 8, the Socialist Party is organising a London aggregate to discuss the developing crisis in its relations with Scottish Militant Labour. A representative of the executive committee of SML will present the case for the dissolution of the organisation into a Scottish Socialist Party, explicitly committed to the break-up of the UK state along national lines.

However, if the debate so far between the SML executive committee and the leadership of SP is anything to go by, the exchange could be an extended exercise in avoiding the issue. And the issue is the fight against the infection of nationalism in the workers' movement. This infection must be rooted out and destroyed by genuine partisans of our class.

Yet the SP EC seems determined to keep any discussion of substantive principle out of its discussions. Indeed, despite the fact that it recognises that what is being posed is "the dissolution of our organisation", it is pained by the suggestion that it has "declared war" on SML's proposals. This is an unnecessary "attempt to polarise the debate", it wheedles ('In reply to Scottish Executive Committee letter of March 27 1998' *Members Bulletin* April 2, p35).

Will the SP leadership never learn? Clearly the organisation is subject to increasingly powerful centrifugal pressures, only one of which is exerted in the direction of Scotland. It is significant for example that the whole issue of the "Scottish turn, part two" was "injected into a debate on finance by Mike Morris from Merseyside". He did this "in order to reinforce his argument that the financial proposals put forward by the EC" to counteract the organisation's looming crisis "were going too far towards 'a highly centralised structure'" (*ibid* p36).

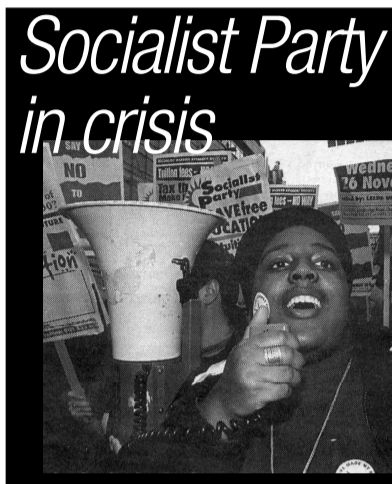
Also ominous in this context is the contribution to the same *Members Bulletin* by Roy Davies of Swansea branch. He more or less gives advance warning to the leadership that the crisis they face in Scotland is poised to repeat itself in Wales.

Criticising a recent contribution to the internal document from Hannah Sell - the national activities organiser - comrade Davies outlines the key issues "not addressed" by comrade Sell. Concretely, the comrade from Wales suggests that "the notion of an all-British workers' party being formed simultaneously in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, given the developments in Scotland and Wales, is questionable to say the least" (p43). The "most likely" scenario for the development of the British political scene apparently is "the emergence of politically dominant nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales that will grow at the expense of New Labour" (*ibid*). This poses "the question of the break-up of the British state" along national lines, a fracture that is apparently "integral to the development of the British revolution" (*ibid*).

Comrade Davies carries on - happily oblivious of the full opportunistic import of the words he writes - that "these national developments mitigate against the traditional concept we have long held of an all-British road to socialism" (p44). The comrade - quite correctly in my view - points out that "the national question in Wales could be advanced at a much faster rate than in Scotland over the next five to 10 years" (p43). Clearly though, his appetite is to adapt to it, to tail the growth of the same poisonous nationalism that is now rotting SML. He ends his piece with a flurry of sentences that the leadership of SP should take as a threat ... if it had the gumption to recognise it.

He assures readers that "these issues that I have raised have been the subject of some discussion in Wales over the past period. They are not something that have arisen from a clear blue sky ... the Scottish Socialist Alliance offers the answer" (p44).

It should be blindingly obvious to any political leadership worth its salt that SP faces a challenge to its very existence as an organisation. Most grimly, accommodation to nationalism threatens to split the organisation, to fatally divide Welsh, Scottish and English comrades. How do the SP and its international affiliates - organised in the Committee for a Workers International - respond?



The internal bulletin cited above features contributions from CWI sections in Germany and Sweden expressing "shock" and counselling against "quick decisions" (Germany, pp24-25); "great concern" and "upset" at the "mixing up" of the strategic need to build "a revolutionary party" with "the need for electoral alliances" (Sweden pp25-26. A lone dissident International Executive Committee member of the CWI, Farooq Tariq of Pakistan offers "full support to Scottish comrades in their tactics" (p29).

Positive or negative, all this is pretty irrelevant really. SML is quite clearly on a nationalist course. Therefore, the comments of the international sections of CWI will be only be of passing interest. More telling is the profoundly lame intervention of Peter Taaffe in his 'Short thesis on the revolutionary party'. Clearly, unless comrades break from the dim, formal and abstract method of this leading comrade, SP faces oblivion.

Characteristically, in the midst of a life-and-death struggle for the very survival of his organisation, he produces a thesis - that actually compounds the problem. Thus, the man writes - clearly with no notion of the nature of the processes that have produced the present dire situation in his organisation - that "SML is an autonomous part of the SP ... based upon a clear revolutionary programme, perspectives, strategy and tactics, and a separate revolutionary organisation" (*ibid* p22).

To be candid, if the SP or SML actually had a "clear revolutionary programme", then the question of "separate ... organisation" would never have arisen. This was a concession to nationalism and should have been killed when it raised its head in the first place.

Yet - despite himself - Taaffe cannot avoid the truth entirely. He writes of what he coyly calls "moods" within the class that have "undoubtedly spilled over at certain stages into the ranks of our organisation". How the fundamental division in the workers' movement between reform and revolution has become "blurred in the minds of some comrades". The political philistine Taaffe may think it a "paradox" that the "flexible approach" of SP towards a "new mass workers' party" has had a "negative effect" in the ranks of his organisation, "blurring" the distinction between "mass reformist, left reformist or centrist parties and a Marxist party" (p23). However, for Marxists this is quite explicable. SP has a reformist programme that adapts opportunistically to the political milieu it works in - be that Labourism, feminism, black separatism or Scottish/Welsh nationalism.

Without the means to fight, Taaffe - pathetically - is reduced to equating mundane organisational questions with the "revolutionary party". Quite frankly, it is sad to have this apparatchik write of the need "at all times [to maintain] a separate revolutionary organisation ... [which would] meet separately and regularly, preferably on a weekly basis, to discuss the way forward, to collect dues and to recruit to our party" (p24).

This is the world view of a tired, rather apolitical bureaucrat. Genuine revolutionaries in SP must fight the "Scottish turn, part two" at a far more fundamental level - at that of programme and revolutionary principle. An important section of our workers' movement is embroiled in a battle against the effects of petty nationalism. This section - politically personified in the inept figure of Taaffe - simply does not have the theoretical or programmatic arsenal to fight and win.

Yet win we must. The historical precedents show us what happens if we lose. Roy Davies of Swansea is correct in one sense: there is no 'British road to socialism'. But then, the comrade should be advised - there certainly is no Welsh or Scottish road to 'socialism' either.

Whatever the intentions of these comrades, at the end of that road lies hell, not socialism or anything like it ●

Mark Fischer
national organiser

Spurious argument

I must take issue with one assertion made by comrade Peter Manson in his otherwise most informative article, 'Capital backs Mandela' (*Weekly Worker* April 30). Describing the African National Congress government's 'growth, employment and redistribution programme' (Gear), the comrade states: "Based on the overriding demand to limit government borrowing to three percent of the gross domestic product, [Gear] necessitates slashing public spending, axing thousands of jobs through state sector redundancies (retrenchments), the introduction of compulsory arbitration in industrial disputes, and extensive privatisations" (my emphasis).

This argument reminded me of the line taken by left groups such as the Socialist Party, Socialist Outlook and of course Arthur Scargill and the Socialist Labour Party leadership on European monetary union and - in particular - on the Maastricht treaty. One of the central planks of Maastricht is also a stipulation that budgetary deficits must not exceed three percent of each European Union member state's gross domestic product. The groups mentioned, and others, have argued that Maastricht necessitates swingeing cuts in social and welfare spending. They have even portrayed the 1995 strike movement in France as being a fight "against Maastricht".

The argument that capping of current account budget deficits inevitably means cuts is wholly spurious. If there were to be concurrent substantial tax increases, then deficit reductions could quite well be accompanied by increased public spending. The working class agenda should not be to argue for opposition to Gear, Maastricht, or any other fiscal policies of individual capitalist states or economic blocs. Neither, in the case of Europe, should it be to get involved in expressing preferences over where the power to determine interest rates resides, or whether national currencies should be retained. Rather, we should be arguing that the capitalist class must pay for the universal working class demands for what we need in order to live anything like a decent life - benefits, pensions and student grants at the level of the minimum wage of £285 per week, free and comprehensive education and healthcare, 24-hour nurseries, etc.

The way in which the capitalist class must pay of course, is, as the 1998 Communist Manifesto published with the *Weekly Worker* (April 30) correctly states, through increased corporate taxation and a heavily progressive income tax, together with the abolition of indirect taxes such as VAT, and an end to the right of the rich to pass on their wealth.

John Pearson
Manchester

Workers Power 'solidarity'

In *Workers Power* (February) Richard Brenner, replying to the *Weekly Worker*, said that WP is a fighting organisation and the best proof of that was its involvement in the Campaign Against BP in Colombia.

John Stone (LCMRCI) pointed out that, "however worthy this might be, it only involved a handful of activists and went unnoticed as far as British or Colombian workers were concerned" (*Weekly Worker* February 26). Don Preston (*Weekly Worker* April 23) wrote that at the May 1997 general election, in Labour Party conference debates, at Reclaim Our Rights, at the SLP congress there was "no sign of WP". In fact, it is becoming more and more difficult to find WP and they themselves have not put on any public event recently.

Stone and Preston correctly focused their critique on the fact that WP uses those anti-BP actions to cover its general abstentionism from the most important points of the class struggle. However, it is worth mentioning the way in which they

are organising that campaign. They are not trying to do so in a united front way with other left groups.

The Colombian Refugee Association (Coras), one of the most militant organisations from the exile communities in London with tens of activists, is the main pillar of the campaign. WP provides its mail box and its English public leaders. Nevertheless, WP does not usually attend the important mobilisations that are organised by Coras.

On Thursday April 23 around 50 Colombians held a very militant picket against 'their' embassy in London. They assembled in protest at the assassination of Eduardo Umaña, probably the most important human rights lawyer in Bogotá. If WP is so keen on denouncing the paramilitaries in Colombia (and the way in which BP is financing them), they should have supported their Colombian refugee partners. Nevertheless, there was not one single member, supporter or friend of WP at that picket. The same happened some months ago when another 50-strong picket targeted the Colombian embassy in support of the Colombian general strike.

On Wednesday April 29 there was a lobby of parliament in defence of the refugees and later a picket at the Bolivian embassy in support of the strikers - no sign of WP. They are absent from the struggles of the refugees and they have deserted the Bolivian Union Solidarity Campaign, which the LRCI initially led.

In 1995 this committee organised around 150-200 people for the biggest protest picket at a Latin American embassy for years and a there was a big rally with Tony Benn. However, since the LRCI had just expelled their Bolivian section, they decided to ignore solidarity with that country's working class.

WP is only interested in organising campaigns which they can lead and through which they can show their members that they are involved in internationalist actions. They use the Colombian refugees when they want to demonstrate that they can organise an action and make new recruits. But WP abandons their refugee allies when they organise something by themselves. If tomorrow some problem arose with them WP would withdraw its participation and would suddenly create another 'solidarity committee'.

The WP turn towards 'building the party' is a shift à la SWP or RCP. They dismiss the rest of the left and concentrate on small-issue campaigns completely under the control of their supreme leadership.

Ana
London

Scargillism lives

Lew Adams, general secretary of the train drivers union Aslef has been defeated in a ballot organised to comply with the Tories' anti-union laws.

The victorious candidate is Dave Rix. Comrade Rix is a leading member of the Socialist Labour Party who was on the NEC during its first year and stood during the general election in Leeds Central. He has also been the leader of the unofficial rank and file within Aslef and stood for the general secretary's job on a radical left platform.

Aslef members will be expecting him to deliver on these promises when he takes over from Adams next year. As to the left, surely the *Weekly Worker* has proved correct when it warned that far from being finished, the SLP can provide a focus for mass discontent under conditions of New Labour. The election of Dave Rix points to the future. Scargillism lives. Away with premature obituaries.

Bill Stapledon
Halifax

From The Call, paper of the
British Socialist Party,
May 9 1918

The wish father to the thought

The past week or two has witnessed the circulation of persistent rumours of a counterrevolution in Petrograd. These stories went into detailed description of what was supposed to have happened and, in view of the absence of any denials from Russia, many friends were becoming alarmed.

These stories however are complete fabrications. Recent messages from Russia give a complete denial of anything in the nature of a counterrevolution taking place. The rumours were circulated for some obscure political reasons and, although they are presumed to have originated in Germany, they no doubt express the ardent wishes of the reactionaries in all quarters. It is a clear case of the wish being father to the thought.

As a matter of fact all the evidences go to show that the soviet government is increasing its influence and power in Russia. Internally the Revolution has nothing to fear. There is not a force that can seriously threaten it. This is admitted by friends and enemies alike. But the danger from without is a very real one. There is nothing so galling to the capitalist class as the existence of a socialist republic. They would prefer anything else rather than that.

In the Ukraine the bourgeoisie have placed themselves under the protection of the Germans, under whose wing a Cadet government has been set up, whose business it will be to give back the land to the landlords and protect private property generally. We shall see how far they can succeed. In Finland too the bourgeoisie, with the help of the Germans, have temporarily defeated the forces of the Revolution.

Both cases have been victories for German armies, but, in so far as they have been at the expense of the workers, they have been victories for the bourgeoisie of all countries. Thus is vindicated the international interest of the capitalist class. It is high time the workers looked at events from the same viewpoint ●

1918

Russian Revolution
this week 80 years ago

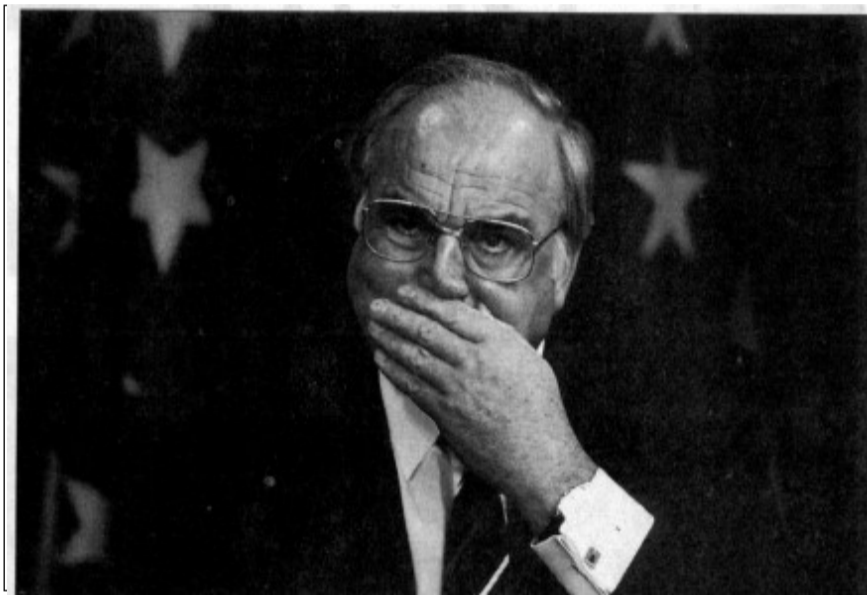
Germany SPD follows New Labour lead

The result of the April 26 local elections in Sachsen-Anhalt tells much about the political situation in Germany as a whole. The fascists gained over 10% and the Social Democrats (SPD) were the nominal winners with just 35% of the votes. It is very likely that the general elections in September will see a similar outcome, with a very weak showing for the conservative Christian Democratic Union and the Green Party.

There will be no landslide victory for the SPD's Gerhard Schroeder in September. People are not enthusiastic about this Blairite candidate for chancellor. They will vote for him reluctantly in the absence of any credible alternatives. The PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) has retreated from all-German politics and decided at its last congress to concentrate on what is terms 'east German' questions. The Green Party has shed its radical image and advanced explicitly anti-working class demands: for example raising the price of petrol to £2 a litre.

In 1994 Helmut Kohl won the elections despite a drop in support for the Christian Democrats. This result is very unlikely for 1998, however, given the 'repackaging' of the social democrats. Following the lead of its British counterpart, the SPD has totally remade itself in recent years. Like Labour it was an organisation with close union links that at least made noises about improving the situation of the working class. Now it has changed into a 'new', 'modern' party, concerned mainly to improve the *Standort Deutschland* - the economic performance of German industry.

Gerhard Schroeder in particular is known as a friend of the bosses. As presi-



dent of Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony) he has always been keen to attract industry to his federal state and has paid out millions of marks in subsidies to business - taxes raised overwhelmingly from the working class, of course. With the demand to reduce the highest tax rate from 53% to 49% the SPD has openly addressed its preferred audience - the bourgeoisie. And the fat cats are grateful. Almost all bourgeois papers are enthusiastically supporting Gerhard Schroeder, even the arch-conservative tabloid *Bild*.

German industry is quite keen to get a social democratic chancellor. It knows full well that nothing will really change, but a fresh face might produce a more dynamic image capable of restoring social consensus and reinvigorating investment.

The working class of course can expect nothing from Schroeder. Following Blair's lead, the SPD election programme restricts itself to a few modest promises, such as a marginal rise in child benefit and increased statutory sick pay. But even these two points - the central pillars of the whole election campaign - are subject to *Finanzierungsvorbehalt*: that is, if the SPD discovers the coffers are bare, it will abandon even these 'commitments'.

Just as in Britain, much of the German left has convinced itself that a social democratic government will automatically produce favourable conditions for working class struggles to develop. They should take a look at Britain after one year of 'New Labour' ●

Kathrin Maurer

Around the left Referendum silence

Thursday saw the London referendum. The campaign for a puppet London mayor and an emasculated Greater London Authority forms an important part of the Blairite project. It will provide an elected dictator under the guise of 'renovating' local democracy. If Blair gets what he wants, New Labour's hegemony over society will be further advanced.

The referendum confronted the left with a very real, all too concrete political issue. Was it correct to boycott the whole charade - or should we have voted 'yes' or 'no'? There were no other options - even in the imagination. Anyone eagerly turning to the left press for guidance will find ... nothing. Or to be more exact, they will find fudge, evasion and Delphic utterances. Clarity and leadership are two qualities they will not find.

In reality of course, the 'mute left' were sending out the subliminal message - 'Vote yes, vote yes, vote yes ...' This certainly seems the case with *Socialist Worker*. Under the headline, 'Proposals for London mayor offers less than the GLC', we are told: "But the proposals for a new set-up in London will bring hardly any change. The five million London voters will be asked ... to vote to set

up a directly elected mayor for the capital and a 25-member assembly. The majority of Londoners want to see a return of the Greater London Council which Margaret Thatcher abolished in 1986. But the proposed mayor and assembly fall short of even the limited democracy of the GLC" (May 2).

The SWP comrades seem unable to grasp that the May 7 referendum - and the May 22 joint referendums in Ireland - are all part of Blair's wider plans for constitutional reform *from above*. Blair wants his 'democracy' to smother real democracy and usher in - in theory - the victory of 'third way' capitalism. However, for opportunist ideological reasons the SWP wilfully refuses to understand or recognise this basic fact of British political life. Then again, how can it? It enthusiastically said 'yes, yes' to the September 11 Scottish referendum and it will - albeit perhaps slightly less enthusiastically - say 'yes' on May 22 to the imperialist peace process.

Socialist Worker complained: "The city will be divided into 14 voting districts, each of which will elect just one assembly member ... With only one member covering more than two of the cur-

rent boroughs, the assembly will be insulated from democratic pressure. The assembly will need a two thirds majority to challenge the mayor. The mayor will simply appoint people to the fire authority and economic development boards. The government will prevent the GLA from redistributing wealth in Britain's most class-divided city by taxing the rich. "New Labour's plan for London is a thin democratic veneer on a system which will leave most power in the hands of unelected quangos".

So, why did the SWP vote 'yes' to "unelected quangos" and Blair's anti-democratic "veneer"?

The Socialist Party, in even more cowardly fashion, choose to ignore the referendum issue altogether, so deep has its internal crisis become. It simply wished it away. The front page of *The Socialist* proclaimed: "Vote Socialist where you live, join the Socialist Party and fight for a real alternative to Blair's Tory policies" (May 1). But what if there was no "Socialist" standing "where you live"? Should you have voted SLP or Socialist Alliance? Or was it OK to have voted New Labour? And what about the referendum itself?

The only possible way to fathom the SP's position on the referendum was by actually attending a meeting - and then forcefully dragging an answer out of a tongue-tied SP spokesperson. However, the determined interrogator will discover that our fearless SP comrade would have said - cough, cough; eyes down; shuffle the feet aimlessly - 'yes' to Blair and his anti-working class project ●

Don Preston

action

■ CPGB seminars

London: May 10 - Marx 1848 - Dictatorship of the democracy. For more details call 0181-459 7146.

Manchester: May 18 - The reserve army of labour. For more details 0161-798 6417.

■ Party wills

The CPGB has forms available for you to include the Party and the struggle for communism in your will. Write for details.

■ Brent SA

To get involved contact Brent SA, Galaxy News Box 100, 37 Walm Lane, NW2 4QU. Tel: 0181-451 0616.

■ Scottish Socialist Alliance

To get involved, contact PO Box 980, Glasgow G14 9QQ or ring 0141-552 6773.

■ Glasgow Marxist Forum

Discussion - Lessons from the struggles of the Liverpool dockers. Wednesday May 20, 7.30pm, Patrick Burgh Hall

■ Hillingdon hospital workers fight on

The Hillingdon strikers in west London, deserted by Unison, still need your support. Send donations urgently, payable to Hillingdon Strikers Support Campaign, c/o 27 Townsend Way, Northwood, Middlesex UB8 1JD.

■ Irish political prisoners campaign

Downing Street picket - first Sunday of every month, 12 noon to 1.30pm. Release the prisoners! For more details contact: Fuascailt, PO Box 3923, London NW5 1RA. Tel: 0181-985 8250 or 0956-919 871.

■ Justice

Second march for social justice, called by the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards Committee.

Saturday May 30. Assemble 12 noon, Thames Embankment, Temple tube. For more information, contact Liverpool Dockers London Support Group: 31b Muswell Hill Place, London N10. Tel: 0181-442 0090.

■ Stop the fascists

The assembly details for the National Front march against the Northern Ireland peace agreement are as follows:

Saturday May 23, 2.15pm. Little Sanctuary, London SW1 (just off Parliament Square).

All anti-fascists are urged to mobilise against this demonstration.

Pooling our strength

Danny Hammill reports on the May 3 London Socialist Alliance election meeting

This meeting was characterised by serious debate and, on occasions, sharp disagreements. The fact that we can have such open and lively discussions should be viewed as “emancipatory”, said the chair of the meeting, Anne Murphy, London Socialist Alliance ad-hoc coordinator.

The LSA election meeting brought together members and supporters of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Socialist Outlook, the Socialist Democracy Group, the Socialist Labour Party, the Socialist Party and the *Marxist Bulletin* - along with the ex-Labour MEP Hugh Kerr and his political organiser, Pete Brown.

The first speaker, Julia Leonard of the Socialist Party, began by apologising for the absence of SP members. They were all busy campaigning, leafleting, canvassing, etc. All perfectly true, no doubt, but it has been noted that the SP is hardly ‘pro-active’ these days in its approach towards the Socialist Alliances - it sends only token representation to every event. For example, at the April 7 meeting of the LSA only one member of the SP turned up. This despite the fact the meeting was debating a resolution to boycott the May 7 London referendum - a course of action which ran contrary to the SP’s belief that Blair’s puppet mayor and weak Greater London Authority represents “some sort of advance”, to use the words of comrade Julie Donovan at the April 7 meeting.

Comrade Leonard claimed that SP members in Hillingdon were having a “really good response” from those they canvassed and talked to. A new workers’ party is needed, she concluded - or, to use her formulation, “a party of *representation*” for the class. As comrade Marcus Larsen of the CPGB later said, this SP soundbite is suspiciously Labourite and reformist. Is that not what the Labour Party always claimed to be?

The next speaker was Nick Long of Lewisham SA, a former member of the SLP and now a supporter of the soft Trotskyist SDG group. The comrade talked about the “tactical arrangement” some of the London SAs had made with the Greens, as part of the effort to build a “red-green” or “rainbow” alliance. (For all his commitment to this enterprise, comrade Long went on to describe the Greens who attended the national SA meeting in Coventry as an “obnoxious bunch”.) We start from our “modest beginnings”, comrade Long emphasised. However, Lewisham New Labour appeared “worried” by the challenge of the three SA candidates - so much so that, in effect, it tried to ban the first public meeting of the Alliance.

Comrade Stan Keable of Brent SLP/SA commented that, whether we like it or not, Blair is “extraordinarily popular” - still. The left has to start campaigning for the alternative we need, and the “sooner the better”, as the comrade put it. We should not get despondent about our forces. The local elections have proved that the Labour Party does not really have any activists on the ground. Put up a New Labour dog and it will get elected - at the moment.

Hugh Kerr argued that London mirrored the entire country - ie, the phenomenon of “mass apathy”. This represents a problem for the Blairites.

New Labour, continued comrade Kerr, is desperate to get a ‘yes’ vote in the May 7 referendum - just as it was during the September 1997 Scottish referendum (for all of the conspiracy theories of some on the left to the effect that Blair really wanted to lose).

Therefore the Blair honeymoon would not last much longer, according to comrade Kerr. There are over 700 policy changes in the pipeline. Inevitably people will be angered by

.....

‘... the Socialist Party is hardly ‘pro-active’ these days in its approach towards the Socialist Alliances - it sends only token representation to every event’

.....

the Blairite administration. As for the ‘third way’ we have been hearing so much about recently, that will rapidly lose its sheen.

He thought that attempts by Blair and the CBI to seduce and incorporate the TUC bureaucracy would “come unstuck”. Public sector cuts, pay restraint, job losses, etc, would further disillusion all those who voted New Labour. After all, suggested comrade Kerr, “the middle classes and the rich are more happy than Labour Party activists”. To back up his case, he quoted a poll from *The Observer* in which 53% said they voted New Labour last May - even though it only got 44% of the vote. This demonstrates that many people are keen to be associated with the winning team, not that New Labour has a deep wellspring of support in society as a whole. Comrade Kerr claimed that 10% of Labour Party members have “consciously resigned” over the last year. “A bit of cynicism, a bit of alienation and a bit of disappointment” was how comrade Kerr judged the current mood.

As for Scotland, comrade Kerr had high hopes. In his opinion, the SNP is “very likely” to form the single largest party in the Edinburgh parliament. Under the ‘alternative member’ system of PR to be introduced in Scotland, the Scottish Socialist Alliance/Scottish Socialist Party only needs around five to six percent of the vote to get a seat - Tommy Sheridan MSP? On Scottish Militant Labour’s proposed liquidation of the SSA into the separatist SSP, comrade Kerr implied that it was some sort of natural progression. Slightly circumspectly, he said the Scottish people “feel they want self-determination” and it was “probably right” to form an SSP. In other words, comrade Kerr effectively welcomes the growth of Scottish na-

tionalism. (His ally, Pete Brown, naively maintained that the “SSA comrades do not have a narrow nationalist project” and insisted that SML’s *Scottish Socialist Voice* “decries Scots nationalism”).

Comrade Kerr pointed out that what goes for the Scottish elections also goes for the European ones. The left needs eight to nine percent of the vote to get a seat in the European parliament. This was a far from impossible task in London - if the left pools its collective weight.

“There is more that unites us than divides us,” concluded comrade Kerr. Therefore, what is required is “a coalition of the left”. Quite correctly, Hugh Kerr thinks there are grounds for optimism: “Prospects are not as bleak as some imagine” - a useful antidote to the instinctive ‘vote Labour’ pessimism which pervades the left.

Marcus Larsen commented upon the all too evident fact that one year into the Blair government and there has been ‘no crisis of expectation’ - for all of the predictions and hopes of groups like the SWP. Instead we have had New Labour’s seemingly permanent PR campaign and an “almost sinister depoliticisation of politics”.

Comrade Larsen implored the SAs not to drift aimlessly along - they “must not be passive”. The LSA, for one, must start asking hard political questions - what sort of opposition do we need? What is our goal, etc?

The comrade criticised the almost unspoken assumption amongst many that the Greens are our “natural allies”. The Greens are not a progressive or pro-working class organisation. As typical examples of their essentially reactionary nature, Green election literature in Stoke Newington promises to work with the local police - one of the most notoriously corrupt, brutal and racist police forces in Britain. The Greens also encourage workers to buy from small corner shops as opposed to supermarkets - ie, workers should buy inferior goods at higher prices.

Comrade Larsen was also worried that elements within the SA could ‘do an SSP’ and fall into nationalism. “I am not an *English* communist, I am not a member of the *English* Socialist Alliance,” he said. Rather he was an internationalist committed to the overthrow of the *British* state.

Ian Dudley - having just resigned from the International Bolshevik Tendency partly over its attitude towards the SAs themselves - thought it was correct for the SAs to form “electoral united fronts”. But there has to be an *explicit* commitment to debate out programmatic issues. In practice, this means “full freedom to struggle against reformism”: the SAs “must have room for political struggle”.

Comrade Dudley also poured cold water on the idea that we should enter into any formal blocs with the Greens which would dilute working class independence. As for supporting ‘Red’ Ken for London’s mayor, as comrades from Socialist Outlook had suggested, he pointed out that the *Evening Standard* is backing Livingstone as the safe ‘left of centre’ candidate. That fact alone should ensure that socialists steer clear.

Marxist Bulletin supporter Barbara Duke complained that it was “hard to work out” what the Alliances stood for. There were candidates standing on “different programmes” in the elections. Comrade Duke singled out the discussion draft produced by the CPGB as “lowest common denominator” stuff. There was no call for a

workers’ government, for instance.

A South American comrade also felt the urge to criticise the CPGB. He ticked us off for not explicitly mentioning ‘socialism’ in election addresses - ignoring our manifesto. The comrade also objected to the CPGB’s demand to “nationalise unprofitable industries faced with closure”. The CPGB, in the view of the comrade should be demanding the nationalisation of *profitable* industries. This is of course to misunderstand completely the nature of the demand. Communists fight for what workers need in the here and now - ie, the bourgeoisie must pay for the failings of capital. We do not call on the ruling class to introduce state capitalism.

The comrade thought it was important that the SAs have “consistent tactics” towards New Labour, which he described as the “biggest party of the workers’ movement”. The implication was that standing SA candidates was all well and good, but really the left should be still voting for Blair’s party.

Alan Thornett of Socialist Outlook boldly stated that it was “mad sectarianism” to stand against Livingstone - as had SLP candidate Stan Keable in May 1997 (on the political basis of supporting the CPGB manifesto). The implication of this, estimated comrade Thornett (incor-

.....

‘On SML’s proposed liquidation of the SSA into the separatist SSP, comrade Kerr implied that it was some sort of natural progression’

.....

rectly), is that the SAs should stand against *all* Labour lefts. “This would be incredibly divisive,” said the comrade. He was also strongly in favour of a red-green alliance - there are “sections of the Greens we must unite with”.

As for Scotland, if certain comrades want to liquidate the SSA into the SSP, who are we to say they should not? After all, said comrade Thornett, having the *right* to self-determination is meaningless unless you can opt for the road of independence. Comrade Thornett seemed to be suggesting that if you correctly call for the right to self-determination, you therefore adopt a *laissez-faire* attitude towards nationalism/separatism: ie, how it is exercised.

Fellow SO member, comrade Dave Packer, also condemned “sectarianism”. Sure, we do not like Livingstone - we know he is an opportunist. But, for comrade Packer, Livingstone can “mobilise left reformism” - ie, forces to the left of New Labour. “Those are the forces we want to connect to,” he said. Continuing on this theme, comrade Packer said he was out to gain “something substantial” - ie, tens of thousands of workers - not the small

numbers present at the LSA meeting.

Like so many on the left, comrade Packer believes that the only possibility is a “process of recombination within the existing workers’ movement”. A left reformist party “will emerge”, said the comrade with iron certainty. Like comrade Thornett, he thought the ‘English’ SAs should not stand in the way of the SSP, describing it as a “broad reformist-type party” - which must mean it is a ‘good thing’. However, until an all-Britain centrist party emerges from the depths of Labourism and the trade union bureaucracy, we presumably have to keep on loyally voting Labour.

There is a certain paradox in the words of Socialist Outlook comrades. Thirty years ago the antecedents of SO in the International Marxist Group were organising pro-Viet Cong/NLF demonstrations and demanding a student-led revolution. In those halcyon days the proto-SO comrades were bowing to spontaneous leftist radicalism. Now SO is bowing to spontaneity again - but this time to mundane rightist reformism.

Mark Fischer of the CPGB admonished the SO comrades. They were repeating the same mistakes as the CPGB when it was under opportunist leadership - ie, relying on the Labour lefts to ... do something - anything.

“We must take ourselves seriously,” comrade Fischer declared. It is not predetermined that any future movement or party will be left reformist. History is made by *people*, not by ‘iron’ laws which rule out in advance other possible developments for example a reformed Communist Party. In essence, the SO comrades are accepting defeat before we even start.

“Ken Livingstone does not deserve our vote,” emphasised comrade Fischer. He represents nothing positive in the here and now. Communists test Labour lefts in *practice*. We do not give them automatic blank cheques. For organisations like SO its programme - and socialism - has become an ossified abstraction.

Even worse, said comrade Fischer, when it comes to Scotland comrades Kerr, Packer and Thornett seem to have forgotten even their ABC - ie, to oppose and *attack* nationalism, not accommodate to it. We are internationalists or we are nothing. In reality, according to comrade Fischer, the SSP is a prime example of a “negative party formation”. It is imperative that revolutionaries move against the “poison” of nationalism” that is gripping the SSA. Objectively, an SSP splits and divides our forces - we should oppose its formation.

Comrade Fischer’s contribution appeared to sting comrade Julia Leonard. In response, the comrade maintained that the Scottish comrades were “far further advanced”. Yes, comrade Leonard, but in which direction? Cryptically, she added: “What is the best way to get your message across?” Presumably, in the context of Scotland, this means going along with the nationalist tide.

Comrade Leonard announced that the Scottish question would be discussed at a London-wide meeting of SP members this week. Peter Taaffe and the SP leadership oppose the SML/SSP breakaway, albeit on purely technical grounds. Perhaps in the light of Taaffe’s opposition comrade Leonard enthusiastically backed the proposal from comrade Keable that the LSA organise a meeting to debate this crucial question ●

Delivering the masses

In the second of three articles on South Africa Peter Manson looks at the role of the South African Communist Party

During the revolutionary upheavals of the 1980s when the African National Congress strove to make the country "ungovernable", the South African Communist Party was unquestionably the ANC's most important component. Primarily as a result of the SACP's influence, the language of class struggle dominated the anti-apartheid movement. There was talk of an "uninterrupted revolution" that would proceed immediately to socialist tasks, and the Party actively promoted the idea that it was necessary to prepare for insurrection.

A decade on, such language is condemned as "ultra-left", and those who criticise the ANC administration and call for an independent working class agenda risk being smeared as belonging to the same camp as the "old ruling class". While the government implements its blatantly Thatcherite economic policy (the misnamed 'growth, employment and redistribution' programme - Gear), the SACP continues to give the ANC its full support. Party members Ronnie Casrils, Alec Erwin, Dullah Omar, Geraldine Fraser-Molekedi and national chairman Blade Nzimande are prominent members of the government, and the SACP's Gwede Mantashe is general secretary of the ANC itself.

When the government released details of Gear in June 1996, its anti-working class nature - underwritten by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank - was manifestly clear. With its central aim of slashing the budget deficit to three percent of the gross domestic product, it foresaw widespread privatisation, thousands of redundancies, cuts in services, a clampdown on wage rises and compulsory arbitration for industrial disputes. Alongside these attacks were reductions in corporate taxation and tax 'holidays' for certain investments. It is little wonder that the ANC administration has won wide acclaim, both from South African capital and the international bourgeoisie (see 'Capital backs Mandela' *Weekly Worker* April 30).

Yet, far from condemning such measures, the SACP preferred to highlight Gear's wishful phrases in favour of job creation and greater equity. It commended the "consistent endeavour to integrate different elements of policy" and Gear's "clear framework within which monetary and interest rate policy must work" (quoted in *S4 Labour Bulletin* August 1996). Its strongest complaints were reserved for the ANC's refusal to consult with its 'equal' alliance partners - the main trade union centre, Cosatu, and the SACP itself. According to *Umsebenzi*, the SACP's increasingly infrequent single-sheet 'newspaper', the party had been "especially unhappy with the declaration that the policy was 'non-negotiable'" (*Umsebenzi* July 1997).

The paper reported that, a year after the introduction of Gear, the central committee had called for "a thoroughgoing review of macroeconomic policy" and "greater emphasis on progressive taxation", in view of the fact that "there are signs that Gear is failing to deliver".

While Cosatu leaders were in general much more forthright in attack-

ing Gear, the SACP prevailed upon them to delay publication of the South African version of the 'alternative economic policy' - a study which the union leaders had commissioned. Many Cosatu tops hold party cards themselves of course.

Occasional mild rebukes notwithstanding, the SACP and Cosatu remain loyal members of the ANC-led alliance. The two junior partners recently agreed in a joint meeting to "work to strengthen the ANC's election campaign in 1999", according to the latest issue of *Umsebenzi*. However, that does not prevent them from simultaneously considering "initiatives around socialising the economy": namely, "practical work around the cooperative movement", and "the more strategic use of worker-investment initiatives" (*Umsebenzi* March 1998). Needless to say, such "socialising" measures do not conflict in any way with the government's capitalist policies; indeed they meet with the full approval of the ruling class.

In effect the SACP delivers unconditional support to the ANC government. This is by no means a negligible factor in its attempt to create a new capitalist stability. The SACP is a mass party, holding key positions in the ANC. In many townships and working class areas the SACP is the ANC. There are around 75,000 SACP cardholders although only an estimated 12,000-15,000 pay party dues. The SACP's influence within the Cosatu leadership, as well as over its 1.7 million affiliates, is considerable. At the September 1997 Cosatu congress a resolution proposed by the National Union of Mineworkers, encouraging every trade union to support the SACP financially, was passed overwhelmingly. A further call to "build the party" (the SACP not the ANC) was passed by acclaim without a vote.

So how do SACP leaders theorise their support for a bourgeois reformist government? Indeed how are they able to sell this support to their own members, and to the revolutionary masses themselves?

Earlier this month I attended two SACP rallies around Cape Town, both called to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the assassination of Chris Hani, the now lionised SACP leader. A remarkable feature of such events is the spontaneous singing of militant revolutionary songs by the audience, in stark contrast to the flaccid content of the speeches.

Speaking at the Langa township rally, Shepherd Umhlanga MP commented that if comrade Hani had still been alive, South Africa would not now be facing so many difficulties. The main thrust of his speech, however, was to stress that for the SACP the main task was the "strengthening and consolidation" of the 'national democratic revolution' (NDR). The SACP contends that the defeat of the old apartheid system is by no means complete.

Last month's widely publicised killing of a black baby is used to support this argument. Nicholas Steyn, a white farmer, shot at children who were 'trespassing' across 'his' land, using a well worn footpath. It was not just the murderous actions of a drunken farmer that caused such outrage, but



After apartheid

the events that followed. The local Afrikaner police chief, still living in the apartheid past, did not see any need to arrest Steyn. National Party spokesperson Daryll Swanepoel defended the actions of the local police. "After I talked to the investigating officer, he assured me that the accused had cooperated with the police in the investigation and had taken the children to the fire station," said Swanepoel. "He told me that he did not deem it fit for the farmer to be arrested. It appears to me that he used the discretion he felt fit and was convinced the accused would not escape justice" (*Cape Times* April 15).

After direct intervention from provincial police headquarters, Steyn was arrested and held in custody. The mass media descended on the farm in droves, as local ANC officials, Winnie Madikizela Mandela and even the president himself appeared on the scene. Most of the English-speaking press expressed dismay. Nevertheless the incident demonstrated how apartheid 'custom and practice' still holds sway over large areas of the countryside, particularly within the police. The army too undoubtedly still contains senior personnel loyal to an Afrikaner ideology.

In other words, despite the wide backing the ANC has won from capital and the bourgeois establishment, it may still be possible for die-hard reactionaries to launch an armed coup against the new order. Of course such an event would be extremely unlikely, in view of the consensus that Mandela has succeeded in building

up around his policies. If it occurred under present conditions, it would almost certainly meet with near unanimous condemnation and concerted action by international capital in order to defeat it.

On the other hand, a genuine "national democratic revolution" would rely on the mobilisation of millions to finally defeat reactionary apartheid forces and ensure that the people's will prevailed everywhere, including in countryside backwaters. It would be impelled by its own momentum to create new organs of state power and would incur the hatred of the bourgeoisie. It could only advance in concert with the forces of international working class revolution. In contrast the SACP's NDR now has the backing of the international bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless the defence of the NDR is the SACP's excuse for refusing to promote working class independence. Instead, comrade Umhlanga stressed at the Langa meeting, it was necessary to emphasise, in accordance with the ANC's *Freedom Charter*, "the unity of all the people, especially the Africans". This formula is actually a call for class peace and an apology for black 'economic empowerment' (ie, the creation of a black bourgeoisie).

In answer to those who now call for a break with the ANC, Umhlanga said that the alliance could be ended "maybe in 10 or 20 years". Besides, he added, the constitution prescribed a 'government of national unity' until 1999 and it was therefore impossible to exclude any forces before then. He told the rally that he had recently been privileged to go to "socialist Cuba", where he maintained that the people there were defending "their own national democratic revolution". He added that he hoped to see socialism "one day" in South Africa too.

As Umhlanga was speaking, a member of the audience began heckling. "What has the ANC done for us?" he demanded. The comrade next to me whispered that the heckler was clearly a supporter of the newly formed United Democratic Movement who had been sent in "to disrupt the meeting". The UDM is jointly led by Bantu Holomisa, a charismatic figure who was expelled from the ANC for exposing corruption within the organisation, and Roelf Meyer, a former 'leftwing' National Party minister. It has managed to build up a certain populist support and points to the kind of safe opposition party the ruling class would like to see.

At the second rally, held in the sprawling shack township of

Khayelitsha, the star SACP speaker was Tony Yengeni, former Western Cape commander of Umkhonto weSizwe, the ANC's armed wing, and now chairman of the parliamentary portfolio committee on defence. Five years ago comrade Yengeni was one of the bourgeois press's favourite bogeymen, pushing for direct action by the masses to achieve their goals.

At the rally he likened the NDR to the World War II alliance between the western bourgeois powers and the Soviet Union: "The only way Hitler could be defeated was through a united democratic front," he said. "We must defend our revolutionary and democratic gains. The alliance must do everything to strengthen the government. We must do nothing, say nothing, to weaken the alliance."

Quite a contrast to comrade Yengeni's views expressed to the *Weekly Worker* in an interview with me in December 1993. At that time he was clear that the SACP could not continue in alliance with the ANC once it began to adopt unambiguous capitalist policies in government: "The people will see that the ANC is not delivering. Then they will rebel - and the Party will have no option but to oppose the ANC" (*Weekly Worker* January 13 1994).

At that time he warned against "our superior morality ... being polluted ...", leading to the empowerment of an elite who are not interested in the role of the masses". Today Tony's slightly portly image adorns the window of an expensive men's boutique, Fabiani, in St George's Mall, Cape Town. A full-size photograph shows comrade Yengeni modelling an Italian suit. "He's a regular customer here," said Fabiani's manager. "He represents the powerful politician in our window synergy ... Mr Yengeni was not paid for the modelling - we gave him the suit" (*Cape Argus* April 18 1998).

Also speaking in Khayelitsha was Randy Pieterse, who addressed the audience on behalf of Cosatu. Himself an SACP member, comrade Pieterse appeared to have a difference of nuance with Yengeni, claiming that mass action by workers in defence of their rights was "not in opposition" to political support for the government.

However, Pieterse reserved his most controversial comments for the section of his speech dealing with crime. "Are we ready to hand over our child to the police when they commit a crime?" he asked. "If not, we are not serious about fighting crime."

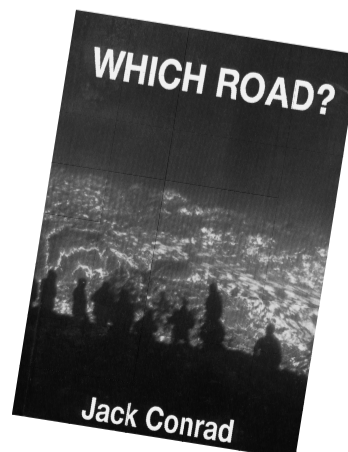
This disgraceful remark is actually in full accord with SACP policy. At present the only campaign the Party appears to be organising in the townships is known as the Triple H - 'hunger, homes, health'. As comrade Vusikaya Mvuyisi, chair of the 700-strong Khayelitsha SACP district with its 14 branches, later explained to me, defeating crime was linked to the fight against hunger.

Around 80% of Khayelitsha's 300,000, mainly unemployed, residents inhabit self-built shacks, most of which are now supplied with electricity via overhead cables, and have access to standpipes and basic sanitation. For these services residents are charged a rent by the council. Not surprisingly very few can afford to pay and do not do so. The SACP has not yet condemned this 'crime'.

Nevertheless an electrified shack is regarded by many as an advance. The SACP relies on such meagre 'improvements' and a fear of a return to the apartheid past to keep the masses tied to the ANC.

Which road?

Jack Conrad provides a sustained critique of the 'revolutionary' reformist programmes of the Eurocommunist CPGB, the CPB and the Militant Tendency (now the Socialist Party). It is the preliminary groundwork for our draft programme around which the struggle to reforge the CPGB is focused (pp267, £6.95 - available from the CPGB address).



Review

Cold War babies

Phil Cohen *Children of the revolution - communist childhood in Cold War Britain* Lawrence and Wishart 1997, pp189

It is no exaggeration to state that the practice of CPGB history has reached an impasse. The recent generation of CP historians (Kevin Morgan, Nina Fishman *et al*) have rightly rejected the outworn dogma of the Trotskyites, intent on picturing the Party as the mere reflex of the CPSU - all in all, a very useful polemic. However; the distinct under-theorisation of both schools has meant that there has been little advance in addressing the epistemological questions inherent in the subject.

Utilising the recently opened Comintern archives, contemporary researchers have largely followed an agenda whereby the CPGB is seen as having 'relative autonomy' from the diktats of Moscow. None of this has been allowed to disturb the morbid functioning of Trotskyist orthodoxy. In a review of a conference on the subject of the British Party and the Comintern, Bruce Robinson writes that the "new material ... does not provide the basis for any major changes in the picture of the CPGB as the willing servant of Moscow from the mid-1920s onwards" (*Revolutionary History* Volume 6, No2-3, p260). Telling a Trotskyist that the CPGB was not a puppet of Moscow is obviously a bit like telling Rod Hull that Emu does not exist anymore. Robinson asks the question of whether a prominent communist like Arthur Horner would have returned from Moscow if he had been summoned during the period of the purges, suggesting an answer in the negative (*ibid* p258). In fact Horner would have had a good chance of arriving back in Britain, in that the disappearance of this organic proletarian leader would have led to awkward and compromising questions in the South Wales workers' movement.

This is not to suggest that awarding the CPGB with a good dose of 'relative autonomy' *vis-à-vis* the USSR is any more helpful. *The British road to socialism* or not, 'official communism' was an international movement, in which it is ultimately impossible to dissect what was 'domestic' and what was 'external'. The *BRS* is a classic case, a much trumpeted totem of the CPGB's independence, closely supervised by none other than Joseph Stalin.

Animated though this debate may be, the fact is that both schools rely on similar theoretical preconceptions. Karl Marx writes in *The German ideology* of the "apparent stupidity of merging all the manifold relationships of people in the one relation of usefulness" (K Marx *Selected writings* Oxford 1977, p185). Both the Trotskyite and the 'revisionist' standpoints employ essentially the same abstract methodology in ordering the experience of communism in Britain. It is imperative that new contributions to the history of the CPGB are judged on their ability to disrupt the rather sterile dualism that disfigures the contemporary debate, and upon their willingness to countenance the Party's past as the relation of a dynamic totality. With this in mind we can turn to *Children of the revolution*.

Cohen's work focuses on the experience of children from Communist Party households growing up in 1950s Britain - a problematic with a

.....

'... the contested history of the CPGB was branded into the heart of their political being. This resulted in recollections that were alive with passion and controversy - priceless material for any researcher'

.....

great deal of potential. Familial communism was, and still is, an important arbiter of identity and Party culture. The text of the book represents a set of transcribed interviews, with some minor editing in the interests of grammar and style. This has a tendency to make the narrative seem a little garbled at times. In choosing such a presentation the author's aim is clearly that of empathy. However, one does wonder whether a commissioned choice of more considered recollections may have been of more aid in engaging the reader.

Cohen has assembled a reasonably interesting set of interviewees, including Alexei Sayle, Brian Pollitt, Hywel Francis and Nina Temple. Cohen elaborates the conceptual framework behind this selection in the introduction: "One of the reasons for writing this book is that with the demise of communist parties in Europe ... our generation will be the last to have this unique kind of upbringing. Growing up in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, our children will inherit a very different world" (p16).

Cohen is clearly intent on the manufacture of an essentially teleological method. As Althusser argued, such an epistemology runs the distinct risk of floundering into the realms of reductionism. This has particular ramifications for the structure of this text in that it is primarily concerned with the ordering of memory. Communism and the CPGB feature very little in the contemporary identity of the people featured here, disrupting any notion of the Party as a lived process. The author of this review encountered similar evidential difficulties whilst researching a thesis on the Communist Party in South Wales. By far the best interviews were provided by those comrades who still considered themselves communists. Even for members of Party splinters such as

the CPB or NCP, the contested history of the CPGB was branded into the heart of their political being. This resulted in recollections that were alive with passion and controversy - priceless material for any researcher.

Children of the revolution on the other hand too often restricts Party activity to a set of frozen, and at times rather nostalgic, cameos: "We went on the *Daily Worker* May Day march every year; my parents have recollections of me in a pushchair on marches with a *Daily Worker* keeping the rain off my hat ... On the Monday morning after the May Day march I used to come to school with the *Daily Worker* May Day badge, and I remember when I was about nine I came to school with it and Mr Baggs, the deputy head of my primary school, said: 'Oh, we're communists, are we?' " (p53).

Obviously, these fractured pieces of empiricism need to be bonded together in order to produce an outlook in which the meaning of the Party's past can be constructed. The idea of communism as a religion (or semi-religion) is a consistent theme of the narrative: "I think faith in communism was a kind of religion ... in terms of intensity of belief, and now, with the break-up of the Communist Party, the terrible loss and the lack of faith, it is like losing your god, and people are all over the place" (pp41-42).

Of course religion and faith in this context are ultimately dependent upon invoking a ritualised other. In this context Cohen refers to CPGB members as having a "quasi-religious faith" in the USSR: "an obsessive interest - encompassing everything from its films and books to its tractor design" (p16). Two points can be made here. Firstly, the CPGB's loyalty towards the Soviet Union was (in general) certainly based on emotional considerations. However, this should not be judged apart from the party's rationalism, as Hywel Francis recognises in his interview (p129). Secondly, this train of argument has a certain residue of the instrumentalism so beloved of the Trotskyists. Merely having "faith" in the CPSU seems rather more suited to the rationale of a 'fellow-traveller' than to a militant activist in the ranks of the CPGB. These points can be illustrated by making reference to one of my own interviews with Charlie Swain: "I was one of those who used to love Joe Stalin, I must admit, and I've still got a very big respect for him ... The idea of the people from the lower ranks displacing the entrenched capitalists ... landlords and aristocrats seems to me so fantastic that anybody who was at all sympathetic to that I would support" (author's interview, Cardiff, March 7 1996).

In Swain's narrative, support for the USSR was fundamentally bound up with the recognition of the necessity for a British revolution, thus inserting a marked kernel of rationality into his respect for Stalin. There are no doubt some critics who would just look at Swain's opening line and find enough ammunition for a set of very traditional preconceptions. Unfortunately for these people, *engaging* with the mentality of British communism is a sophisticated task and one that fails to yield to one-sided formulations.



Harry Pollitt: rationally nurtured Soviet loyalty

Despite these fundamental criticisms it should be allowed that Cohen has assembled some useful and at times thought-provoking material. Harry Pollitt's son, Brian, talks about his life alongside the Communist Party's best known general secretary. Pollitt's prominence in the Party's history makes this chapter interesting in and of itself. Hywel Francis offers himself as the most eloquent in exploring the various facets of CP identity in a discussion of his father, Dai Francis, one-time general secretary of the South Wales area NUM.

For anyone considering the history of the CPGB in South Wales this is always a pertinent question. Francis argues that the "trade union and the miners' union and the Communist Party were synonymous ... For my father they were indivisible, he was a communist miners' leader" (p124). In fact Dai Francis followed his comrades, Arthur Horner, Dai Dan Evans and Will Paynter - all CPGB members - in approaching their union tasks in a distinct syndicalist vein. On the whole communist miners focused their activities on the strategically placed miners' lodge, rather than through the structures of the Party. This created a marked sense of loss on the part of more Party-orientated militants: "We have outstanding figures in the Communist Party who had become, as one of our comrades put it, little tin gods in the village, but the people in the village didn't see the Communist Party at work" (Annie Powell CPGB 24th Congress *World News* April 28 1956).

This is not to site miners such as Dai Francis at too distant a point from their CP identity. As Hywel Francis shows, Dai stood by the CPGB during the 1956 Hungarian crisis, although it is admitted that "he would be suspicious of people who tried to impose the Party line on him" (p134).

Possibly the worst section in this book is the interview with Nina Temple, seemingly intent on presenting her rise through the CP bureaucracy as a series of unwanted accidents. Temple's narrative is however the source of some (no doubt unintended) humour. Nina recalls all the glitz and excitement of a 1960s YCL disco on her estate. Alas, for one young man these vicarious thrills were not enough: "... suddenly the music went off and Fergus Nicholson gave a speech about why Russia was right to invade Czechoslovakia. I was mortified and embarrassed, so that was the end of the YCL disco" (p95).

There is always someone to spoil it for everyone. Actually this extract just about sums up Temple's career in the CPGB - recoiling in horror from everything you are meant to represent. Another chuckle can be gleaned from Nina's father, Landon, who tactfully informed her that the Democratic Left constitution she had been helping to draft was "crap" (p96). Next time you are down at Progressive Tours booking your jaunt to Cuba, remind Landon of that one. It's worth a pint or two.

Although not short of practitioners, Communist Party history is beginning to suffer from a distinct methodological barrenness. Ultimately these difficulties can only be surmounted by the resurrection of a viable ideology of Partyism - a working class organisation that can adequately unify the varied and illusory disciplines of contemporary society. For the moment though you might like to try and quench your thirst with the quaint simplicities of *Children of the revolution*. Blistered and parched by the end, you may begin to discern the oasis. If Nina Temple's standing there, you will know you took a wrong turning ●

Phil Watson

Reviving the political

'Seeing red' is a festival of new political plays sponsored and produced by the multi-award winning Red Room. It brings together 16 of the most interesting and thought-provoking voices in British theatre, among them Peter Barnes, Kay Adshead, Judy Upton and Roddy McDevitt. Marking the 30th anniversary of the revolutionary situation in France and the 1st anniversary of the New Labour government, the season is designed to bring the political back into theatre. Jack Conrad spoke to Lisa Goldman, the Red Room's artistic director

Where do you see theatre in general and in particular, following the election of the New Labour government?

It depends on what kind of theatre you are talking about. There are many strands - commercial, subsidised and the fringe. In terms of radicalism there has been almost a complete reversal of roles between subsidised theatre and the fringe. The fringe is now mainly a middle class career ladder. Subsidised theatre often has a more radical agenda.

Twenty or thirty years ago the fringe was at the cutting edge. It presurised and in many ways gave a lead to the subsidised theatre. Today sights have been lowered. Subsidised theatre now follows the lead of commercial theatre - transfers, film deals, etc. As to the oppositional response to the election of Blair and New Labour, the Red Room's present season is probably the first. But that is hardly surprising, given the logistics of programming, writing, etc.

How did people view New Labour?

I can't speak for theatre artists as a whole. But in terms of those around me I think there are a number of trends. Many had no illusions whatsoever. For example, our piece by Roddy McDevitt gives a voice to the disenfranchised and the so-called 'underclass'. They knew that Labour would do nothing for them. Others had high expectations or at least a gut, anti-Tory desire to 'get the bastards out'. So for them on the night of May 1 there was either joy or relief. Many leading artists closely identified with New Labour - some still do. However, with the writers, directors and actors that I know there has undoubtedly been a change of mood. There is a lot of anger.

What sort of expectations were there in New Labour?

That there would be a turn away from the brutality of the Tories. That there would more concern for poorer people, the unemployed. That education and health would get a higher priority. That somehow things would change. Whatever Blair said and told them, they did not expect student fees, attacks on single parents or workfare. They were blinded by their desire to get rid of the Tories.

But Blair and New Labour went to great lengths explaining that they would keep to Tory spending limits. That is what they were pledged to do. So why do you believe there were high expectations?

Perhaps expectations is the wrong words. Perhaps hope is better. Either way the absence of a viable revolutionary left and the deep humanity of those involved in theatre created a situation on May 1 where there was a real euphoria. They invented their own Labour Party. They invented their own programme for New Labour. The point is however that someone could vote

Labour on May 1, celebrate on May 2 and then go on to write a savage indictment of the New Labour government. The plays in our season do that and more. For example Judy Upton's piece and Aidan Healy's. Under the Tories more often than not 'political theatre' would appear to be no more than a call for the election of a Labour government. Now social criticism can perhaps lead audiences to question the system of government and the system of society itself.

Does political theatre have a vision of the future or does it look back longingly to a non-existent golden age of welfare capitalism?

There is no unified vision, that is for sure. But neither is there a sentimental looking back. Any truthful artistic critique of the present implies within it the possibility of a different future. We have joined together a range of critical voices - in all their individuality and uniqueness - to begin a culture of opposition. A common theme in the work is the alienation of people. An exploration of powerlessness has within it at some level implicit or explicit an agenda for people to take power.

Do you think a political theatre providing real answers is possible at this moment in time?

No. There is no mass progressive movement in society. Theatre must connect with where people are at. **In terms of those you approached to take part in the 'Seeing red' season was there any kind of political differentiation between those participating and those not?**

You could say the older generation of writers were less forthcoming than the young. But to be fair that is in no small part explained by the older writers having their own up-and-running projects, overdue commissions, etc. Everyone I spoke to was tremendously supportive of the idea behind the season.

Do you think art and artistic criticism produces social change?

I think art can provoke. It can get people thinking, feeling and imagining. One way or the other that shifts consciousness. Whether or not that translates into political action is a very complex question. There is no direct relationship. It depends on the historical context. For example in 1968 there was a lot of revolutionary theatre. Artists question the status quo through their work, but that means keying into what exists. That can legitimately mean dealing with and exploring personal issues, individual crises and isolation. That was characteristic of the years of the Tory government. Of course, there was a negative side. Political theatre became for some almost a dirty word. The personal became depoliticised. We have taken a first step in reasserting, in re-establishing political theatre ●



Commemorating 1968

Seeing red

Part one: May 6-24

Fragmenting red by Tony Craze

Know your rights by Judy Upton

The head invents, the heart discovers by Peter Barnes

Election night in the yard by Roddy McDevitt

I'll cry if I want to by Aidan Healy

The cows are mad by Jon Tompkins

The Mandelson files by Paul Sirret

The big idea by Helen Kelly

Part two: May 26-June 14

On the couch with Enoch by Tanika Gupta

The ballad of Bony Lairt by Roney Fraser-Munro

The (bogus) people's poem by Kay Adshead

Part three: June 16-28

Made in England by Parv Bancel

Thanks mum by David Eldridge

Stick stack stock by Dona Daley

Slow drift by Rebecca Prichard

Les événements by James Macdonald

Venue: Battersea Art Centre, Lavender Hill, London SW11.

Tickets: £8 or £5 (concessions). Box office: 0171-223 2223

Summer Offensive '98

Make your pledge

The first weekend of the CPGB's 15th Summer Offensive fundraising drive has brought individual pledges totalling £11,500. This leaves us a long way to go to reach the collective target of £20,000 by June 29. Initial pledges must be met - and overfulfilled - and a wider circle of supporters and sympathisers drawn into the campaign.

Experienced comrades with proven fundraising skills, it seems to me, are being a little too backward in coming forward with appropriately challenging pledges. The legendary abilities of 'Bolsheviks' to conquer 'fortresses', I must remind you, depends on the applica-

tion of courage, boldness, initiative and hard work, not on the careful rationing of commitment.

Caution to the wind, comrades - targets must be *stormed*! A fighting start to the Offensive is the way to put our initial pledges behind us and break through the £20,000 target. Exemplary action and fighting spirit is the precondition for inspiring others to join in - and to surpass us.

Reports of pledges, initiatives and achievements - as well as cheques, payable to the CPGB - should reach me by phone, fax, e-mail or letter every Monday ●

Stan Kelsey

What we fight for

● Our central aim is to reforge the Communist Party of Great Britain. Without this Party the working class is nothing; with it, it is everything.

● The Communist Party serves the interests of the working class. We fight all forms of opportunism and revisionism in the workers' movement because they endanger those interests. We insist on open ideological struggle in order to fight out the correct way forward for our class.

● Marxism-Leninism is powerful because it is true. Communists relate theory to practice. We are materialists; we hold that ideas are determined by social reality and not the other way round.

● We believe in the highest level of unity among workers. We fight for the unity of the working class of all countries and subordinate the struggle in Britain to the world revolution itself. The liberation of humanity can only be achieved through world communism.

● The working class in Britain needs to strike as a fist. This means all communists should be organised into a single Party. We oppose all forms of separatism, which weakens our class.

● Socialism can never come through parliament. The capitalist class will never peacefully allow their system to be abolished. Socialism will only succeed through working class revolution and the replacement of the dictatorship of the capitalists with the dictatorship of the working class. Socialism lays the basis for the conscious planning of human affairs: ie, communism.

● We support the right of nations to self-determination. In Britain today this means the struggle for Irish freedom should be given full support by the British working class.

● Communists are champions of the oppressed. We fight for the liberation of women, the ending of racism, bigotry and all other forms of chauvinism. Oppression is a direct result of class society and will only finally be eradicated by the ending of class society.

● War and peace, pollution and the environment are class questions. No solution to the world's problems can be found within capitalism. Its ceaseless drive for profit puts the world at risk. The future of humanity depends on the triumph of communism.

We urge all who accept these principles to join us. A Communist Party Supporter reads and fights to build the circulation of the Party's publications; contributes regularly to the Party's funds and encourages others to do the same; where possible, builds and participates in the work of a Communist Party Supporters Group.

I want to be a Communist Party Supporter. Send me details. ☐

I wish to subscribe to the Weekly Worker. ☐

ww subscription £ _____

Donation £ _____

Cheques and postal orders should be in sterling.

	6 m	1 yr	Institutions
Britain & Ireland	£15	£30	£55
Europe	£20	£40	£70
Rest of World	£28	£55	£80

Special offer to new subscribers: 3 months for £5.00

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL _____

Return to: CPGB, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX.

Tel: 0181-459 7146 Fax: 0181-830 1639.

CPGB1@aol.com

Fight for revolutionary internationalism

Amidst a flurry of last-minute horse trading over who is to head the European Central Bank, the euro was born last weekend at a European Union summit in Brussels. The new currency will become legal tender in 11 member countries on January 1 next year. In a deal between Germany, France and the Netherlands, the new head of the ECB, Wim Duisenberg, will voluntarily stand down about halfway through his eight-year term. Duisenberg will probably remain until mid-2002, the final date for the switch from national currencies to euro notes and coins. The summit made an undertaking that the next ECB president will be a French national. This will be the current head of the French central bank, Jean-Claude Trichet.

On the surface, the birth of a new currency may seem a rather technical matter, impacting on the world of capital, but hardly one to grab the attention of partisans of the working class. Yet this would be to miss the fundamentals. European economic and monetary union (Emu) is, above all, a political endeavour. In bourgeois circles many see the outcome of this summit as the most important event in Europe since the fall of the Berlin wall. And they could well be right.

While everyone (apart from the odd rogue state) is meant to be friends post-1991, the New World Order is forcing realignment and the consolidation of economic blocs. This brings with it political change. Neo-liberalism may be breaking down old barriers, but it is slowly, at times imperceptibly, creating them elsewhere.

At the heart of the 'European project', as currently framed by the European capitalists and their politicians, is their recognised need to create a large home market in order to compete on the world stage against North American and Asian-based capital. If the euro is successful, they will have gone some way in achieving this. 'Euroland' - the combined economies of Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain - is huge. This zone accounts for 19.4% of global GDP (compared with 19.6% for the US and 7.7% for Japan) and 18.6% of external world trade (16.6% for the US, 8.2% for Japan). Add to that the likely entry of the UK, Denmark and Sweden in the 'second wave' and the stage is set for the 21st century to comprise three big economic zones, dominated by two currencies: the greenback and the euro.

But not everyone is happy. The enemy class exposed divisions at the summit, in what was regarded as an undignified squabble over the presidency of the ECB. Most supported Dutchman Wim Duisenberg, head of the ECB's forerunner, the European

Monetary Institute. In a move which caused outrage, particularly with chancellor Kohl, last November president Chirac nominated Trichet for the job.

Under the Maastricht treaty, the ECB is meant to be politically independent to encourage that most intangible of capitalist necessities: confidence in the financial system. The independence of the ECB is not only intended to signal prudent management of monetary supply and interest rates, but secondarily it is also meant to signpost and underpin political union.

From now on, even if the individual countries of the euro 11 wanted to take an independent economic course, it would be impossible. President Chirac's display of national intransigence on an occasion which was meant to celebrate closer European unity seems a final flourish of Gaullist brinkmanship. Markets this week reacted favourably to the Brussels summit.

There are other clear indicators of the political nature of Emu. In order to qualify for monetary union, EU members were expected to maintain budget deficits below three percent of GDP and public debt below 60%. It is arguable that most of the euro 11 nations only fell within these limits due to a degree of creative accountancy. Others were clearly outside. Belgium, for instance, has a public debt of 122.2% of GDP, while Italy's is 121.6%.

France's intransigence over the ECB president point to longer-term difficulties. How will sovereign nations exist within a single economic zone? While economic union does not automatically signal political fusion (Belgium and Luxembourg have shared a currency for some time now), it will be increasingly difficult to avoid.

Alongside the fiercely monetarist ECB is the euro-11 club - an informal grouping of the finance ministers of the euro zone - which many hope will act as a counterbalance. In what was seen as Gordon Brown's first major setback, Britain was excluded from this committee after deciding not to join in the 'first wave'. The more federalist politicians such as chancellor Kohl hope that this group will be strengthened, alongside an increasing role for the European parliament.

Whatever the fears of Eurosceptics pressures outside Europe may force the pace. *The Economist* (May 2 1998) notes that "it is hard to believe that America will not soon seek a European interlocutor who can speak with more authority than the current president of the European Union". Either way the direction is unmistakable.

Many, from the left and right, insisted that European union was impossible. Inter-imperialist rivalry and the political-economic interests of nation states would inevitably mean



We must fight for a democratic Europe

that Europe, as a capitalist enterprise, would collapse under the weight of its own contradictions. A united Europe was supposedly only possible under working class rule. In the bipolar world before 1991 this seemed more plausible. Though it was wrong even then. In the uni-polar world of neo-liberal hegemony, it lacks any intellectual weight. Life itself is proving the point.

The bourgeois triumphalism born in 1991 emerged alongside global strategic defeats for our class which were fundamentally, though not exclusively, of an ideological nature. The current quiescence of the working class, as a political class, has allowed the European capitalists more room to manoeuvre. Just as Blair has so far been able to achieve constitutional reform from above in the complete absence of any working class alternative, Europe is being remade from above in the interests of capital.

Yet it has not been all smooth sailing. The election of Lionel Jospin's Socialist Party in France, the referendum setback in Denmark and the sliding fortunes of chancellor Kohl, alongside a worrying rise in xenophobic parties in Germany and France, point to ongoing difficulties. So does the current strike by half a million Danish workers. While not sparked by direct resistance to Emu, its demands

implicitly challenge the spending limits deemed necessary for convergence.

The upsurge of mass activity in France at the end of 1995 was an explicit rejection of the economic measures needed to reach the Maastricht criteria which the previous Gaullist government attempted to enforce. Its impact rippled through French society, culminating in Jospin's election last year. In France at least, this signalled that the euro could not be bulldozed into place. Strategic battles in Europe lie ahead. However, workers' actions have so far been defensive and restricted to economic issues. The political call for a fully democratic Europe shaped from below by the working class has so far failed to connect with any mass movement.

In fact, what is worrying about the nature of resistance to the impact of Emu up to now has been a tendency for the labour movements of European countries to politically trail their 'own' rulers. In Britain, John Monks and the TUC leadership are enthusiastic supporters of economic union. With no independent political programme, they fall into line behind the sector of capital they judge will provide 'more jobs'.

On the other hand the Eurosceptic wing of the labour movement has tended to take a narrow nationalist line. In France, the chauvinist French

Communist Party questions Emu out of concern for French sovereignty. However, in Britain 'official communist' relics, such as the so-called Communist Party of Britain, not only 'say no to the euro' but call for withdrawal from the EU. Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party shares almost exactly the same 'little England' approach.

Unable to break free from the national socialist straitjacket of the *British road to socialism*, these forces have no vision of a unified international movement against capital and its governmental form of domination. The more honest CPB types admit that Emu and any political union would wreck the *BRS*. However, rather than develop a programme able to deal with the real world, like King Canute they are trying to hold back the tide to make the world safe for their dogma.

Quite clearly, economic union is becoming a reality. *The Economist* is wrong in its assessment of Blair's first year when it argues: "Labour is as confused as the Tories." Despite overtures from US House of Representatives leader Newt Gingrich for the UK to join Nafta, the pound seems headed the way of all mortals. Blair is playing it cautious yet clever. While the euro does not become the coin of the land on new year's day, neither will it be barred. The new currency will begin to circulate, people will get used to it and, alongside an increasing political culture of passively accepted referenda, a 'yes' vote for the UK to join Emu should become easier.

Unlike the TUC or the British roaders, the role of communists is not to advise this or that section of capital. We should not be advocating 'liberation' from Europe or championing the stability of the euro. On that level it matters not a jot who is ECB president. Yet to ignore such manoeuvring as irrelevant to our struggle would be inept. Any schisms, trip-ups or disunity must be used to our advantage. And their difficulties are not going to disappear, but more likely increase, as the contradiction between unity and national interest is exacerbated.

To the extent that European integration becomes a reality, our international political tasks becomes more solid: European-wide unions and a Communist Party of the EU. The example of the Renault strikers across Europe last year and the international impact of the Danish strikers at present point to the direction in which we need to organise. To act as cheerleaders for trade unionist resistance to the effects of Emu is no job for revolutionaries. We must generalise that resistance through a political programme for European revolution.

In this regard, the demonstration at the European summit in Cardiff on June 13 provides an opportunity to bring such an internationalist message to a wider audience ●

Marcus Larsen

*International demonstration
for jobs, services and democracy*

Assemble 1.30pm, Cooper's Field (behind Cardiff Castle), Saturday June 13. March to Euro summit. For more details or to book a seat on Cardiff coaches call 0181-800 7460