



Jesus, his brother James and the genesis of christianity

With just under five weeks to go, it is beginning to look as if Ken Livingstone, despite every effort on the part of Downing Street and Millbank, could win the nomination as the Labour Party's candidate in the elections for London's mayor. The results of those trade union ballots and constituency Labour Party polls published so far show a consistent pattern of majority support for Livingstone. Small wonder that the Dobson camp, mired in seemingly endless vicissitudes, has been forced to acknowledge that it looks like being "a very closely fought contest" (*The Guardian* January 7).

This latter assessment was the result of the Transport and General Workers Union's London region membership ballot, in which Dobson was not only trounced 12 to one by Livingstone but also humiliatingly consigned to third place behind the superannuated thespian and failed transport minister Glenda Jackson. This outstanding result was declared from the platform by TGWU regional secretary, Eddie McDermott, at a packed meeting of the Livingstone for London campaign attended by some 400 Labour Party members at Conway Hall on January 6. For those readers who may not have seen the figures, the results on a turnout of some 29% of eligible members - quite healthy by trade union standards - were as follows: Livingstone 15,858 votes (85.8%); Jackson 1,342 (7.3%); Dobson 1,285 (6.9%). This means that the union's 50,000 votes in its section of the electoral college will now be cast in favour of Livingstone, who was evidently delighted by the outcome.

Explaining the background to the TGWU's vote, McDermott said that the union's support for Livingstone had been influenced by three considerations: first, they felt that Livingstone would stand up for the rights of London's working people in the face of anti-working class trade union legislation, and would act as "a catalyst for debate to reflect a more progressive agenda" on issues affecting the class; secondly, Livingstone's commitment to keep the tube in the public sector and to improve conditions for passengers and staff alike on the public transport system by bringing back bus conductors, enforcing bus lanes, etc, obviously had strong appeal for a union whose members are strongly represented in the sector; finally, the TGWU took a very positive view of the way Livingstone ran the GLC.

Impressive though it was, the TGWU result had in fact already been exceeded by the ballot of RMT members, in which 91% of voters came out for Livingstone. But as readers will know, this union, along with MSF, has effectively been disenfranchised from the electoral college on technical, bureaucratic grounds in a transparently disingenuous attempt by the Labour Party machine to boost the chances of their own candidate, Dobson. Millbank's patently undemocratic and manipulative tactics will be tested in the high court next week, when six members of MSF, including former Labour Party general secretary Jim Mortimer, will challenge the party's ruling in a case that, whatever its outcome, is likely to do further damage to New Labour's threadbare 'democratic' credentials.

So far as the individual membership section of the electoral college is concerned, the results achieved in those

Dobson and 'red scum'

few cases where Labour MPs decided on a democratic consultative procedure by holding an indicative ballot among CLP members also give Livingstone ground for reasonable optimism. In Tooting and Hornchurch constituencies he was the clear victor with more than 60% of the vote. Hazardous though it no doubt is to extrapolate from such a limited sample, these ballots in fact confirm the strong and consistent anecdotal evidence that Livingstone enjoys sufficient grassroots support to give him a realistic chance of reaching his 70% target among individual members. A similar target among trade unions and affiliated organisations also looks attainable on present showing.

As Livingstone himself conceded at the January 6 meeting, his prospects in the third of the electoral college comprising London MPs, MEPs and GLA candidates are remote - his own estimate was that Dobson would defeat him here by some 10 to one. Millbank's insistence that there should be an open ballot among this section obviously puts pressure on potential waverers - a vote for Livingstone would inevitably consign them to political oblivion in terms of promotion by Blair and might even threaten their chances of reselection, given the iron grip of the party machine on the whole process. Where the carefully selected GLA candidates are concerned, the fact that all 14 have pledged their support to Dobson is hardly surprising, and nothing can be expected from that quarter. Among Westminster MPs, however, especially given the possibility of a general election within the next year or so, there could be a political price to pay for ignoring the obvious will of their own constituency members. It is this fact which makes it imperative for all Labour Party members and working class activists in the constituencies to demand to know their MP's intentions and to press for democratic ballots mandating MPs to vote according to the wishes of the party's membership.

Not all MPs have been cowed by pressure from the centre. John Austin, for example, the member for Erith and Thamesmead, is an open supporter of Livingstone and chaired the Conway Hall meeting. His speech gave us a fine example of the absurd anomalies that bedevil the electoral college system. Austin effectively has four chances to vote: as an MP, as a member of an affiliated organisation (the Coop), as a trade unionist with MSF and as an individual party member. Proportionally, in the first case, simply by virtue of being a mem-

ber of parliament, he has 1,000 votes; in the second, his vote has already been cast by the Coop - without any democratic consultation - on behalf of Dobson; the MSF, as mentioned above, has been disenfranchised.

Overall, as we have seen, the omens for Livingstone are looking promising and the announcement of the TGWU vote provided 'Livingstone for London' with the perfect start to the resumption of campaigning after the long holiday doldrums. Predictably, the reaction of the Dobson camp, whose campaign thus far - characterised by the press as "lacklustre" - has in fact been one long disaster, was to try and discredit the TGWU ballot, engage in more smears and vilification, and promote yet another re-launch of their candidate. Where the TGWU is concerned, Dobson himself argued that because the union's leadership had made a recommendation to their members, the outcome of the ballot was "flawed". Dobson supporters, clearly desperate, even suggested that the TGWU ballot was influenced by the 'leftwing' leadership of the union. However flexible this epithet may be in New Labour's lexicon, it is surely stretching the truth to breaking point to suggest that Bill Morris is a *leftwinger*.

Another indication of the desperation and growing acerbity among Dobson's team can be found in a glossy leaflet - produced at considerable cost and circulated to all London party members, which Livingstone produced at the meeting. Containing not one word of policy, the document sets out to vilify Livingstone and, uses the phrase "Red Ken - Red scum". When Livingstone supporters complained about this puerile and demeaning attempt to revive the anti-Livingstone rhetoric of the 1980s, Dobson's people tried to defuse the row by claiming that they had merely quoted a remark from the Liberal Democrat magazine *Liberator* - as if this justified a descent into rank personal abuse and calumny. In their turn, the Liberal Democrats also disowned the slur, and claimed that they too had been quoting from an (unnamed) source. In itself, the incident is unremarkable but it does emphasise the failure of the New Labour apparatus - from the prime minister down, with his scare-mongering about a return to the 'loony left' - to find any coherent way of combating Livingstone with ideas and policies rather than invective.

As Livingstone predicted on January 6, the relaunched Dobson campaign the following day concentrated on discrediting him in terms of 'the £18bn cost of Ken', according to

which, Livingstone's first term as mayor would cost every London household £6,100. Seizing on a remark which Livingstone had made on the government's taxation policies to the effect that "Instead of cutting corporation tax to 30% it should have been increased to 40%" (*The Independent* March 11 1999), Dobson launches into a tirade suggesting that, if implemented, such an increase would lead to a £5bn cut in the capital's GDP over four years and 100,000 job losses. The litany of the catastrophic economic consequences of a Livingstone mayoralty is a long and impressive one - until you realise one simple fact which, curiously, Dobson failed to mention, namely that, as mayor, Livingstone would have no power whatever to raise corporation tax.

Significantly, every sentence of Dobson's economic analysis is pervaded by a concern for the interests of "business": ie, capital, with constant emphasis on the fruitful "partnership" between New Labour and business on which, according to Dobson, the fate of London's working class depends. Hence, the suggestion that bus conductors and tube guards should be reintroduced is dismissed out of hand on grounds of cost: ie, the cost to capital in terms of reduced profits for shareholders and transport bosses. Any attempt to deal with London's traffic problems by means of a congestion tax is dismissed as "a poll tax on wheels". Dobson's advisers still appear not to have grasped one of the most obvious facts about the political climate in London at present - the concern of every Londoner with the appalling state of transport.

Livingstone has not made this mistake. Indeed, transport is his strongest card. He knows it and he plays it at every opportunity, especially where the future of the tube is concerned. His insistence that the tube should remain "one service in the public sector, accountable to the people of London under a democratically elected authority" was notably at the heart of the crisis in the interview stage for Labour's candidates, when his refusal to compromise looked for a time like leading to his rejection by the board. On January 6 he was surely correct to claim that Railtrack had been obliged to "sling their hook" in connection with a bid to run the tube's infrastructure under the so-called PPP initiative because their continued participation threatened to kill off Dobson's campaign for good. In itself, the departure of Railtrack from the bidding represented not just a reaction to the horrors of Ladbroke Grove but was

attributable to pressure from the transport unions and the growing effect of the Livingstone campaign itself.

In his speech Livingstone claimed that the mayoral election had effectively become "a referendum on privatisation" - the privatisation that means "cutting jobs in their tens of thousands, cutting wages and the living conditions of working people". He went on to say that the mayoral race had resulted in "bringing Labour Party democracy back to life", and created a forum in which his own vision of socialism - "planning, redistribution, sharing" - was back on the party's agenda. Among specific commitments, he joined Bill Morris of the TGWU in calling for a "substantial" increase in the minimum wage and for Labour to commit itself to preserving and enhancing a strong public sector, whose workers can and must be remunerated on a par with the best of their private sector counterparts.

From our point of view, of course, such demands can be categorised as reformist and economic. On the minimum wage, for example, we would have welcomed a statement from Livingstone affirming the fact that the minimum wage should not be based on what capital or the market can bear, but on the needs of workers to reproduce themselves not just physically but culturally, taking full account of what is necessary in the society in which they live. The figure we calculate as a minimum wage is £400 for a 35 hour week. Similarly, his vision of socialism is still rooted in the ownership and control of production by the bourgeois state and its agents rather than by the associated producers themselves.

There is much else in Livingstone's programme with which we can and will take issue but so far as the CPGB is concerned, the outcome of the December aggregate's adoption of Conrad's theses (see report on p7) means that, in relation to Livingstone's campaign, the question of *why* has been decided. The question of the moment is *how*: ie, how we and other forces determined to reject the sectarian approach that plagues the left can best aid a campaign which, warts and all, offers a real possibility waking the working class and giving us the opportunity to engage with the class with real revolutionary, socialist and democratic politics.

We demand that the rights of the members of RMT and MSF be recognised. We call on all communists and partisans of the working class to actively support the Livingstone campaign ●

Michael Malkin



Letters may have been shortened because of space. Some names may have been changed.

Party notes

Questions

Comrades around the country have told me how heartened they are to see that the left in London finally seem to be getting their act together. The first few meetings of the London Socialist Alliance of the new year have been business-like, productive and conducted in a fraternal manner. Of course, important differences of approach remain. Most importantly, the stance of the Socialist Party in England and Wales remains fraught with contradiction.

First, it indicates that if the Campaign Against Tube Privatisation presses ahead with its stated intention of standing a full slate of candidates for this May's Greater London Authority elections, it will get the votes of the SP. The LSA remains in negotiations with the CATP, but these have proved fruitless so far. Whether the SP would vote for the CATP slate, *against* the LSA's has not yet been clarified. This would be an important mistake in our view.

Second, the SP has a big difficulty with Livingstone. If he splits from Labour to stand as an independent, then there seems to be no problem. *The Socialist* has consistently told readers that "if Livingstone really wanted to offer the socialist alternative Londoners need, he would leave the Labour Party and call for a new workers' party on a clear fighting programme" (November 5 1999) - ideally, he should adopt a version of the SP perspectives, in other words. However, what if this pleasant scenario does not unfold. Suppose he stands as an independent on a non-SP platform? Or, even more problematically for the SP, what if he actually manages to win the Labour nomination, in the teeth of the bitter hostility and outright gerrymandering of the Labour mandarins? How could the SP then advocate a vote for a man standing as the candidate of a party the SP has characterised as being purely bourgeois, as having no working class content left in it at all?

For us, there are no such qualms. The very fact of the Livingstone challenge and the form it takes underlines that Labour remains a bourgeois workers' party, albeit operating in very peculiar historical circumstances. However much he might protest his loyalty if he wins the official nomination, 'Red Ken' would be a rebel candidate, sharply at odds with the Labour electoral slate he supposedly heads. Under these circumstances, the principled position would be to call for a vote *for* Livingstone and *against* Labour. The LSA should fight to attach itself to Livingstone in the minds of the electorate, so that both would be a mass working class protest vote against the pro-market policies of Blair and the Labour apparatus.

But what could the SP say having definitively characterised the Labour Party as a bourgeois party pure and simple? Its confused and sectarian reaction to the Socialist Workers' Party's perfectly principled lobby of last year's Labour party conference illustrated its difficulties.

Peter Taaffe, the key figure in the organisation, went as far as to publicly denounce the lobby in a public meeting. "As Blair is totally insulated from workers - he has his money from big business - the lobby is a waste of time ... we are not supporting the lobby", he bluntly told his audience (*Weekly Worker* September 16 1999). On the day, the SP actually backtracked and handed out a leaflet stating that "[we support] this demonstration against the government" as it was "an expression of anger against the government's attacks on working people and their families" (SP leaflet 'For a new workers party', September 26 1999). Although

the leaflet reminded protesters that the SP had "consistently pointed out that Blair's Labour Party can no longer be considered a workers' party", its only criticism of the action was the feeble comment that "it would have been better if the organisers of today's event had called it as a protest rather than a lobby".

The furore around Livingstone poses the same sort of problem, only writ large. The SP has simply *asserted* the claim that Blair's Labour has ceased to be a bourgeois workers' party, it has never seriously attempted to theoretically explain what would be a pivotal development in the workers' movement in this country. In truth the real motivation for this new turn came not from an honest appraisal of the dynamics of New Labour, but from the narrow sect interests of the SP and its organisational predecessors. A makeshift excuse was invented to justify the abandonment of the deep entryist *strategy* - ironically itself justified by the spurious and positively dangerous notion that the Labour Party was simply a "workers party" and that all attempts to build independently of it, including the formation of the Communist Party in 1920, were presumably ill-fated sectarian adventures.

Clearly, Peter Taaffe and his leadership clique believe that the world should be made to turn around the sectarian pinhead of the SP and its parochial needs. When it was embedded inside this bourgeois workers' party, apparently Labour was *the* party of the working class and even a viable vehicle for socialism: since it was purged in the late 1980s/early 90s, independent work has been justified by the assertion that Labour has become purely a "bourgeois" party.

Today's SP flimsy position even contrasts to what it said at the moment of its political predecessor's departure from Kinnock's party. Then it was emphasised by the leadership majority that "there is no proposal to abandon a long-term orientation towards the Labour party and a long-term tactic of entry" ('For the Scottish turn: against dogmatic methods in thought and action', September 1991, p8). The turn to independent work was characterised as "a temporary switch to more open work". The new assessment of Labour serves the needs of making that "temporary switch" permanent; it has never been rigorously debated. Had it been, the current controversy would still have proved it wrong, but then SP activists in London might have been less theoretically adrift.

In however inarticulate, refracted and secondary a way, the success of Livingstone's challenge to Blair's regime clearly reflects mass, primarily *working class* discontent with Labour in power. Therefore, a vote for Livingstone - even if he manages to become the official Labour candidate - is a blow *against* New Labour, a tactic that can open up masses of people to the project of the reconstitution of a working class *politically*. In other words, just like the SWP-initiated Labour party lobby last year, it would be a legitimate "expression of anger against the government's attacks on working people and their families" (SP leaflet, September 26 1999).

Despite at the moment being more cautious than most, SP comrades could still play a constructive and valuable role in the challenge to Blairism in the capital. The tensions and contradictions in their positions that I have highlighted here have not yet fully run their course. After mid-February and the decision on the Labour mayoral candidate, they will become questions of not simply tactical manoeuvre, but of the continued existence of Taaffe's Socialist Party in England and Wales ●

Mark Fischer
national organiser

Left and Livingstone

Contrary to what Tony Blair and Trevor Phillips might think, the 'hard lefts' (as the media likes to call the 57 varieties of left groups and journals) are far from united behind Livingstone or in admiration of him as Don Preston pointed out in the *Weekly Worker* (December 16).

An example of a particularly anti-Livingstone left-winger is Barry Bidulph who writes regularly in the *Weekly Worker*. I also understand that some of the comrades around *Labour News*, despite being Labour Party members, believe Ken to be a Blairite and therefore see no point in building his campaign. In addition to this, Scargill's SLP is insisting on a sectarian line of standing against Livingstone, which is, I am reliably informed, a total reversal of their position in the 1997 election.

Scargill seems to be under the illusion that although before 1995 the Labour Party was a 'socialist' party, now it is no different to the Liberals or Tories. But he faces some problems on this score.

One of the SLP's most prominent supporters, Bob Crow, is assistant general secretary of a Labour-affiliated union - the RMT. And he is recommending that RMT members vote for Livingstone.

In an interview in December's *Labour Left Briefing* under the heading, 'Ken's policies are just the ticket', Crow expresses a completely different view to king Arthur. Scargill says that Livingstone's policies for the tube are just a "gimmick" from someone totally committed to the market economy, yet Crow says that Ken should be supported "as the best way to stop the privatisation of the underground." It seems that even some of the Scargill faithful realise that the SLP is not in any position to have any impact on the mass consciousness - unlike Livingstone who is supported by the majority of Londoners and almost certainly most trade unionists.

He clearly represents a leftist anti-Blairite mood in London where he is fondly remembered, rightly or wrongly, as 'Red Ken' who stood up to Thatcher. Dobson and Blair are always pointing out that the SWP supports Ken. The SWP have, as usual, latched on to the 'Red Ken' bandwagon hoping to poach a couple of new recruits. This is despite the fact that during the bombing of Yugoslavia, the SWP ran around tearing down all their 'Let Ken stand' posters, feeling that supporting Livingstone was a 'line in the sand' that could not be crossed.

But now they have a reasonably correct position on Livingstone as pointed out in the *Weekly Worker*. This is despite their various antics/stunts which seem to be causing Ken more harm than good. For example, they have been collecting money for Ken despite the fact that he has made it quite clear that he will not accept it. Indeed, it would be a golden propaganda opportunity for Dobson's campaign if he did accept such money.

Nonetheless, November's *Socialist Review* correctly pointed out that "Livingstone is committed to more resources for public transport and this is anathema to New Labour" and Lindsey German concludes that "his candidacy can provide a focus for all

those who want to fight against those (pro-business) policies." In the article Lindsey German also quoted this passage by Margaret Hodge which is very telling: "A brief glance at his (Ken's) manifesto shows the seeds of what he intends. The mayor will not have the money to deliver."

That will bring him into immediate and direct conflict with the government. And he'll seek to blame the government. Or he'll seek to impose higher taxes on businesses to pay for his grandiose schemes. A mayor of London must work with business, not against it."

This is yet another example of how Blairites are worried about the class interests that Livingstone represents and the potential of a Livingstone mayoralty.

Indeed the hysterical reactions of the Blairites to Ken's candidacy are a rebuff to those who claim Livingstone is nothing better than a Blairite himself. The SWP's support, although opportunist to a degree, is based on not only what Livingstone represents (a form of anti-Blairism) but the potential of a campaign for Livingstone against New Labour.

As John Rees (according to the December 2 *Weekly Worker*) said at the recent London Socialist Alliance meeting, even if Livingstone is drifting to the right (which is highly disputable), the movement below him is moving to the left. This presents fantastic opportunities for socialists. But of course if groups such as the SWP had not ruled out working in the Labour Party, then they could have a far bigger effect on the results of the result of this contest than they can from shouting outside where the real contest is taking place - which is amongst rank and file Labour members.

The same is true of the CPGB, who have surprised many people by adopting a pro-Livingstone position on this question, although a minority of members seem to be viciously opposed to supporting any Labour left-winger. The CPGB have even received the attention of *The Evening Standard* for saying that they are supporting Livingstone in order to wreck the Labour Party. Unhelpfully for Ken's campaign and socialists fighting inside the Labour Party, the *Weekly Worker* said this interpretation of their position was "quite right." In reality, the battle (as other reports and articles in the *Weekly Worker* have confirmed) is about the future of the Labour Party.

Ordinary Labour activists do not see the need to wreck their own party but to reclaim it. Our aim should be to 'wreck' the 'project' to fuse the Labour Party with the Liberals and/or 'one-nation' Tories.

The Ken campaign has already played a helpful role in this process. It has put a strain on the cosy relationship between Blair and the leaders of the trade unions.

In my opinion, at this stage in the process it is unclear whether Blair will qualitatively transform the Labour Party or not. But either way, the CPGB is right to point out: "A vote for Livingstone is a revolt against Blairism." However, it must be emphasised that this 'revolt' has taken place inside the Labour Party.

Mark Williams
Leicester

Lunatics

When this 'British-Irish' thesis

first made its appearance in *Weekly Worker*, I asked you where you were going, as the road you were on had been trod before, with reactionary conclusions. I think we can see without doubt the logic. The loyalists constitute 'a nation', that nation does not wish to be part of a 32-county island of Ireland. We support their right to sovereignty and self-determination. It must follow that they also have the right to fight against being part of a 32-County Ireland, and against those fighting to take them into one.

The only logical conclusion you could possibly draw would be to support the loyalist military in its fight against incorporation into a united Ireland. This being the case the difference between you and the British-Irish Communist Organisation seems now nil. *De facto* you support the loyalist cause.

Are the lunatics running the asylum?

Dave Douglass
Doncaster

Jazz

No reader with the slightest interest in jazz should pay any attention to Phil Watson's pretentious - and yes, banal - undergraduate philosophy essay purporting to review Kofsky's marvellous book on John Coltrane (*Weekly Worker* December 6).

Phil adduces little evidence, beyond simple assertion, for his fundamental charge - that the author somehow essentially equates jazz with reality, rather than seeing in it an artistic mediation or reflection of the world.

Indeed, when one of the scandalously few passages from the work that the comrade can actually be bothered to cite is quoted in full, Kofsky clearly emerges as not guilty.

When Kofsky speaks of the cross pollination that takes place between jazz and the black community, he immediately continues by adding that both the music and the musicians will either anticipate or at the very least reflect the mood, concerns and aspirations of the ghetto.

Moreover, the cultural context of listening to jazz in Britain in 2000 could not be further removed from the US of the early sixties. Almost 40 years of bowdlerisation have obviously blunted much of hard bop's musically revolutionary qualities. Harlem or Watts, circa 1964, must have been a radically different proposition to a night out in Pizza Express, comrade.

The only way to understand the emergence of the genre is precisely as a musical response to the emergence of civil rights struggle and the colonial revolution. Kofsky does sterling work in setting this out so that we - living in another time and place - can catch some of the flavour of the phenomenon.

This work is without doubt a pioneering text in the historical materialist analysis of music, and not only because there is very little else available on the question. It has many substantial merits from a Marxist standpoint.

Not least of these is its focus on the disparity between white ownership of jazz's means of production, distribution and ex-

change and its production by almost entirely black labour.

There is also thought provoking discussion of the classical form as a creation of Europe's bourgeois revolution, through such developments as so-called equal temperament standards of tuning for musical instruments and the codification of harmony, backed up by the suppression of precapitalist musical forms.

Certainly the book is not without its political faults, primarily an accommodation to black nationalism deriving from the author's adherence to the US SWP. How odd that Phil did not mention Kofsky's affiliation, which is surely salient.

In addition, it is badly edited in certain places, and some of the material - for instance, the stuff on polyrhythms - is difficult to follow, even for those with some musical training. But do not let any of this put you off. All socialists who take music seriously will enjoy this book.

On a more general point, I know from my own experience how difficult it is for leftwing publications to maintain anything like consistent cultural coverage. But I for one would like to see more such articles in the *Weekly Worker*. What do other comrades think?

Dave Osler
London

No future

Has the left a future? In spite of recent SSP success, the left continues to be small, fragmented, factionalistic and substantially sectarian. It is not an accident that this is the case and important for the left to talk openly about why if this situation is to change. Clearly in the last century the identification of Marxism with Stalinism was central. It allowed both Stalinists and capitalists to marginalise and isolate the genuine revolutionary socialists and their tradition.

Post-Trotsky Trotskyism assimilated much from Stalinism. Popes and bishops who led the groups might not send disloyal members to the gulag, Instead there was a milder form of rule by fear. Dissent meant expulsion, expulsion meant the wilderness, the wilderness meant private life, isolation, purposelessness.

The consequences, all be it in difficult post-war conditions, has been the existence of a culture of blind faith and conformism on the left. The line would be memorised by the rank and file and regurgitated as gospel without much, if any, critical thought about whether the guru who had come up with the line really knew what he or she was talking about.

The Socialist Labour League/Workers Revolutionary Party, Revolutionary Socialist League/Militant and SRG-IS-SWP traditions have been the worst offenders. All were at various times characterised by blind faith, treatment of pamphlets and papers as sacred texts, a lack of honest political accounting for mistakes and a misplaced bragging about being "the socialists". The degenerated chest beating stage was usually followed by a split.

Of course, if you have the combination of membership blind faith and leaderships who ensure their line is different from each other on each issue at it arises you have a lethal combination. Disunity and enmity are then inevitable.

Attempts at rank and file unity over issues by small numbers of genuine revolutionaries are going to fail. The popes have acted in a particularly damaging way. They knew shared common experiences

by revolutionaries at a rank and file level would end their own project and ambitions for their own organisation.

The desire for greater organisational unity would have found greater expression by larger numbers of people putting more pressure on them to unite. This Stalinist, authoritarian culture has criss-crossed with a tradition of sectarianism on the British left in the classical Marxist sense of the term. The existence of groups putting their own interests before the interests of the working class has meant failure to relate seriously to the working class organisations as they exist and continued marginalisation.

A serious left would find mechanisms to unite on the issues of the class struggle that focussed on empowering our class. Success around the issue of the repeal of the anti-trade union laws to take one example would, ironically see recruitment to all left groups dramatically increase in the new heightened level of class struggle.

In reality, sectarianism has meant a constant high turnover of members as many of those convinced of the arguments about the need for workers' revolution and workers' parties become demoralised when nothing gets any better in the real world in spite of all their self-sacrifice. The real crime is that sections of the left, most notably the SWP point blank refuse to learn from this sorry history. Mass workers parties have never been built by one by one recruitment.

Irony is heaped upon tragedy when their members routinely denounce all left critics as 'sectarians'. In the 21st century we need a new 'new left' which bases itself on honest dialogue about differences, unity in action on the basis of democratically run ad-hoc committees (as a bridge to further realignment), political accounting about mistakes and being honest about how bad things actually are.

If this culture can be developed then we can shorten the road to the formation of a democratic mass workers party and a socialist society in which human beings interests are primary.

Peter Burton
Edinburgh

Little Moscow

It was reported last week by journalist Peter McCusker in the Newcastle regional newspaper *The Journal* that to mark the millennium, the Chopwell lodge of the National Union of Mineworkers will parade its traditional banner featuring portraits of Marx, Lenin and Keir Hardie for the first time in years at next July's Durham miners gala.

While the General Strike lasted only a few days nationally, in Chopwell it lasted over a year as "coal was stolen, officials intimidated, property damaged and blacklegs abused" and striking miners went poaching at night for goods which were then distributed equally around the village by the highly organised Council of Action.

There are two streets in Chopwell named after Karl Marx and VI Lenin. It now appears that, just up the road, Northumberland's last working mine at Ellington Colliery will be lost with barely a whimper, so it is important that we, as communists entering a new millennium, learn the lessons of our militant past in order to build our revolutionary future.

Sean Tait
Northumberland

London mayor

Unity now

On the front page of our last paper of 1999, we reported the potential threat to left electoral unity in London posed by the blinkered determination of the Campaign Against Tube Privatisation to press ahead with standing its own independent list of candidates in May's Greater London Assembly elections. Despite the sometimes hostile attitude of the CATP, the London Socialist Alliance has continued to emphasise the need for agreement to be reached to avoid a damaging clash at the polls.

With the agreement of the bloc as a whole, officers from the LSA have met leading CATPers privately and, while the negotiations were more fraternal than some recent exchanges, no progress was made. The CATP's meeting of January 11 appears to have settled the question, in the absence of any dramatic new developments. Participants voted by a margin of 20 to eight to accept a CATP officers' report that recommended that, despite the approaches of the LSA, the previous decisions of the CATP stood.

Thus, the campaign will stand its own independent slate. It will not seek agreement with the LSA. While - apparently - there remain four places available to others on the 11-candidate PR slate, these are only held open for individuals, not representatives of a different bloc with its own distinctive political platform.

There are a mixture of motives behind the CATP's narrow-minded intransigence. Certainly, there is the (more or less) honest impatience of a layer of union militants with what they see as a chronically sectarian, fractious and discredited left. Beneath this, there may also be a determination to keep the CATP 'clean' from the contamination by socialist groups in the anticipation of some sort of link up with an independent Livingstone mayoral candidacy. 'Red Ken's recruitment material has already implied that membership of any organisation other than the Labour party is viewed as a problem for his campaign.

More worrying however is the influence of individuals associated with the Fourth International Supporters Caucus, the former chief witch hunters in Scargill's Socialist Labour Party.

Leading Fisc supporters such as Patrick Sikorski, Colin Meade and Jan Pollock appear to be well ensconced in the CATP. They bring with them a deeply ingrained and *theorised* anti-left sectarianism that has seen them in the past wreck open conferences in solidarity with striking miners rather than allow democratic rights for the floor. Fisc, much like the viral pest the flu bug, has mutated historically. Its current guise as a component part of the CATP is to be regretted to extent that it undermines principled attempts to bring the left together for electoral work in the capital.

In this context, it is amusing that comrade Oliver New, a leading spokesperson for the CATP, has pointedly dismissed the LSA as a bloc of "small groups" (see *Weekly Worker* December 16 1999). Consciously or not, in its studied refusal to countenance principled unity, the CATP is implementing the programme of a genuinely "small group", the minuscule Fisc clot.

However, this split may pose more problems to the CATP than to the LSA at the end of the day.

There is no free post delivery for GLA candidates' electoral materials. To 'compensate' for this restriction on democracy, the statutory proposed limits on expenditure have been set at 'generous' levels - nearly one million pounds, for the mayoral candidate, £35,000 per candidate contesting an Assembly constituency and £495,000 per party list. Clearly, for smaller parties and blocs to make an impact, they must rely on activists on the ground. Thus the participation of the a range of left groups, including the SWP in the LSA is a telling advantage. What forces can the CATP rely on?

Furthermore, the very thing that CATP and their Fisc inner-caucus believe imparts the campaign its strength - its narrow focus - also makes it extremely vulnerable to political developments. As things stand today, there will be at least four other slates in the GLA elections that are opposed to tube privatisation - the SLP, the Green Party, the Liberal Democrats and the LSA. Brave attempts by CATP activists influenced by the Alliance for Workers Liberty to broaden the political platform on which the campaign stands appear pretty futile, particularly given the history of its relations with the LSA.

LSA comrades report an impression gained from discussions with leading CATPers that the focus of their fight for votes seems almost to be on tube workers themselves - some 7,000 of them - rather than the six million population of London as a whole. This underlines once again that while the CATP initiative is important, it does not represent some mass political upheaval from below, with masses of the class propelled into politics.

Although the decision to stand independent candidates undoubtedly reflects a passive mood of resentment against new Labour from below, this is not a manifestation of the left's much-vaunted 'crisis of expectations' in the Labour Party. Actually, the mood the CATP is attempting to exploit has more of the character of fairly predictable disillusionment and cynicism that follows the election of *any* bourgeois government. The deep unease felt by activists and a fraction of the trade union apparatus in the RMT about the plans of the Blairites for the underground is seeking sectional expression in at the polls. There is no attempt by the CATP to articulate the broad democratic and class interests of proletarian London.

Recent meetings of the LSA have estimated a working budget for our campaign of some £40,000. We have drawn up provisional plans for work in the trade union movement and all-London campaigning. A website is under construction and leading artists in the field of music and comedy are being approached for benefit gigs. Local rallies and meetings are planned and candidates approached, including some well-known and respected activists. The door remains open to cooperation and principled unity with the CATP and the Scargill-Brar SLP. Meanwhile the job at hand - building the working class alternative to Blair's New Labour - also needs our attention and work ●

Mark Fischer

action

■ CPGB seminars

London Sunday January 16, 5pm - 'The modern state, part 2', using Ellen Meiksins Wood's *The pristine culture of capitalism* as a study guide. Sunday January 16, 5pm - 'Self-emancipation from below', using Hal Drapers *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution* as a study guide.

Manchester Monday January 23, 7.30pm - 'Social degeneration and developing general crisis', in the series on crisis. E-mail: CPGB2@aol.com.

■ Assembly elections

Eleven members of the Greater London Assembly will be elected in the first-past-the-post system on a borough level. Local Socialist Alliances are putting forward united candidates. All welcome to the following organising meetings:

Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest: Thursday January 20, 7.30pm, Tut n' Shive, 235 Upper Street, Islington. For more information phone 07930-129909 or write to Hackney SA, Box 22, 136-138 Kingsland High Street, London E8 2NS. Lambeth and Southwark: Monday January 17, 8pm, Hope and Anchor, 123 Acre Lane, SW2.

■ Brent Socialist Alliance

To get involved, contact Galaxy News, Box 100, 37 Walm Lane, London NW2 4QU, or ring 0181-451 0616.

■ Chechnya solidarity

Public meeting 'Stop Russia's war against Chechnya', organised by the Committee for Workers' Solidarity with Chechnya. Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn and Bruce Kent. Wednesday January 19, 7pm, SOAS, Thornough Street. For more information contact cwsc@cosc.fsnet.co.uk.

■ International Socialist Forum

Public meeting 'After Seattle, the fight goes on - for what?'. Speaker Massimo de Angelis. Sunday, January 16, 2 pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

■ Support Mumia Abu-Jamal

Various events: **January 26** National demonstration in London.

January 28 'Rage Against the Machine' concert, Wembley.

March 'Asian Dub Foundation benefit gig'.

Next organising meeting on January 27 at 7.30pm and then every second Thursday at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. For more information contact mumia@callnetuk.com, www.callnetuk.com/home/mumia.

■ Against police brutality

On March 15, socialists demonstrate all over the world against police brutality. For more information contact JusticeUK@appleonline.net.

■ Support Tameside

Support group meets every Monday, 7pm at the Station pub, Warrington Street, Ashton under Lyne.

■ Republican communist

Quarterly discussion journal of the Republican Communist Network. £2.50 inc p&p. one year (four issues): £10 inc p&p. From RC, c/o PO Box 6773, Dundee, DD1 1YL. Cheques payable to 'Record of Letter'.

■ Party wills

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

■ RDG

If you want to contact the Revolutionary Democratic Group you can write to: PO Box 6773, Dundee DD1 1YL.

Human.liberation.com or Bill Gates rules?

Allan Armstrong of the Republican
Communist Network takes issue with Dave Craig

Dave Craig's latest document, *Human.Liberation.com* (*Weekly Worker* December 16), appears to represent an advance in that, for the first time, he is forced to address the issue of communism directly. However, the purpose of the article is quite clearly to strip the notion of communism of any real dimension of human liberation. Instead of a fundamental transformation of social relations between human beings we are offered a vision of further "technological" and "economic revolution". But this will only occur after 'international socialism' is first achieved. Quite clearly this contribution falls into the long line of social democratic attempts to undermine communism as an operative concept for the here and now.

In support of the valid argument that "Communism is not a utopian scheme invented by ideologists", Dave quotes Lenin: "Communism 'has its origins in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the action of a social force to which capitalism gave birth.'" Lenin thought that communism was possible in 1917 on the basis of the technology which existed then. Famously, he later equated communism with "electrification plus soviets". After the heady days of the 1848 Revolution and the *Communist manifesto*, in 1850 a more sober Marx still envisaged communism by the end of the 19th century at the latest. "You will have to go through 15, 20, 50 years of civil war and national struggles." (*Revelations concerning the communist trial in Cologne*). He saw steam power, the new technology of industrial capitalism, as an adequate technological basis for communism.

Although experience has shown that continuous technological revolution undergone by capitalism has strengthened capital's control, rather than weakening it, Dave is confident that we now at last have the right technological fix for communism. "The immense technological revolution on the basis of information technology ... that has given us the world wide web is the technology of communism." So far neither Bill Gates at Microsoft, nor all the myriad ideologues and apologists for the new world order of globalised capital appear to agree. It is a long time since capital's spokespersons have appeared so confident. The world's productive forces are still being increased, and directly capitalist economic relations are being extended to ever newer areas of the world and to ever more aspects of people's lives. For the overwhelming majority, this "technological revolution" is experienced as massive insecurity and uncertainty, a decrease in the quality of life, along with a stunting of our human potential. Depending on new technologies to provide the basis for human liberation is likely to see us still dominated by capital at the end of the 21st century.

It is worth remembering the reason why capitalism created new technologies and crushed other possibilities. When workers successfully struggled for and won the ten hour day in the

last century, capitalists resorted to the large-scale introduction of steam-powered machine technology to intensify the exploitation of labour. This reduced human workers to 'hands' controlled by the discipline of the machine and the factory masters' foremen. Today's information technology has given us the call centre, the sweatshop of the new millennium.

In Marx's emancipatory vision of communism, technology is a subordinate element. The communist revolution is not essentially technological nor economic. Marx saw the voluntary cooperative and consciously planned efforts of freely associated labour as communism's basis for providing a qualitative step beyond capitalism. He certainly saw this as leading to a qualitative increase in the physical wealth necessary to live a truly human life. But an increasingly important contribution to the new social order resulting from freely associated human labour is the ability to incorporate non-economic, social, cultural and 'spiritual' elements into the production of human wealth. Socialism, the first phase of communism, would develop out of the capitalism we are attempting to supersede, so we will have to make use of its inherited technologies. But part of the communist revolution will be to 'take these technologies apart' and reassemble them so they are consistent with truly human productive activity.

However, there is another precondition for Dave's 'communism'. This is the existence of the "world market ... [which] has given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country" (*Communist manifesto*). For Dave, this world market has a super-real character, which seems to place iron restraints on what is possible. In particular, the existence of 'the world market' definitively rules out any socialist advance short of workers achieving power over the whole world. But just as the multinational corporations have now, at last, come up with the necessary information technology, so Dave approvingly quotes D Rousset's *The Legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution*: "Monopoly capitalism has created an autonomous reality; the world market ... [which now allows] socialism to be built on the basis of the highest level of [international] development. The socialist revolution is not and cannot be a national one".

So let us look at the real attempts humankind has made to achieve human liberation, as opposed to Dave's dogmatic schema. First, D Rousset is wrong. Monopoly capitalism did not create the autonomous world market. The world market was begun under mercantile capitalism, as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and, as Dave's quote from the *Communist manifesto* highlights, was well advanced before the development of monopoly capitalism from the 1870s. The significance of this is that every phase of capitalist development has been met with resistance and we cannot dogmatically say that emancipatory alternatives were only possible on the basis of the world market.

We now know that fully developed capitalist social relations could not provide the basis for human emancipation, but it was not classical capitalism these people were trying to create. Marx was later in life to disown the abstract historical schema which made slave society beget feudalism, which in turn begot capitalism and would finally give birth to socialism. The continued existence today of the Amish communities in the USA, despite all the pressures from later forms of capitalism, provided a dim and distant echo of just one possible alternative which might have generalised itself in the seventeenth century. For example, the Levellers fought for a real alternative to the large scale agrarian and mercantile capitalism and it was through their defeat in 1649 that this form of capitalism eventually triumphed in England.

However, there was another response which came from both the chattel and wage slaves (as well as the then 'reserve army of labour' - the vagabonds) of the time. The majority of chattel and wage slaves soon came to appreciate that they were doomed to remain outside the freedoms offered by the emerging property owning democracy. Some, therefore, sought to build alternative communal societies outside and beyond this new social order. Hence you had the numerous 'maroon' societies of runaway slaves in the Caribbean and Brazil and attempts by landless labourers, such as the Diggers, to build their 'proto-communist' order on St Georges Hill in 1649.

As capitalism moved beyond its agrarian and mercantile origins, through its industrial and free trade stage, its monopoly and imperial protection stage, to the current stratified and globalised new world order, it has been contested at every stage. Massive class struggles led to widespread resistance and attempts to set up or protect communal alternatives.

If, instead of concentrating on the real social relations of production and real class struggle, we move to Dave's more rarefied world market, we will see this has not developed in a continuous upward curve under capitalism. The period of industrial capitalism and free trade was dominated by British imperial power (so much that it has sometimes been termed 'free trade imperialism'). As a result, the new capitalists in other countries, such as Germany, felt it necessary to try and develop their infant capitalism behind protectionist barriers. Furthermore, the growth of the power and influence of the new industrial working class confronted the industrial capitalists with a choice. They could try to maintain or emulate the minimal state bureaucracy of the UK, which in the mid-19th century was at a historically low level. However, this might no longer prove powerful enough to contain the new challenges, domestically or internationally. Since workers had learned to combine and struggle in a legal climate far worse than that prevailing under today's anti-trade union laws, the capitalist state increasingly made another choice - to push for a more interventionist state. An imperialist vision was promoted, which soon made huge inroads into the politics of social democracy. State sponsored colonialism, which also provided a safety valve for

still remaining social unrest, became the norm from the late 1870s. This is the beginning of the period Lenin characterised as monopoly capital dominated imperialism. Initially this extended the scope of the world market, as each state increased its economic linkages with its overseas colonies, but what was now increasingly being created was not a single world market, but several markets extending over the world. The development of the world market was not some pre-ordained working out of an abstract capitalist inner logic, but was a direct consequence of the course of class struggle.

From the outbreak of World War I we can see the shrinkage rather than the continued development of the world market. At the beginning of monopoly capital's new imperialist stage in the 1880s, the international legacy of free trade capitalism still ensured continuing and developing trade between the different imperialist metropolises. However, the world market became increasingly fragmented as the dominant imperial nations resorted to increasingly protective economic measures. The different political regimes all represented different ways of containing the challenges of the international revolutionary wave of 1916 to 1921 - 'counterrevolution within the revolution', a reinvigorated social democracy, nationalist populism, coalitions of the bourgeois parties, military or fascist terror. Despite their political diversity, all of these countries increasingly resorted to state capitalist measures behind protectionist barriers. This allowed for greater or lesser development of productive forces, despite the shrinking world market. The human cost of such economic development under capitalist social relations was usually horrific.

Who is to say that if working class revolution had been successful in the larger, more advanced imperialist powers, whether significant advances towards a new communist society could not have been made within these less than worldwide frameworks? It is worth pointing out that in 1915 Lenin thought it was perfectly possible to build socialism, even on a less than European scale, in countries such as Germany, Britain, France or the USA. In 1915, Lenin did not think such a leap could be made in the Russian empire at the time, because he thought its level of economic development was still too backward, despite its territorial extent and wealth of resources. But in the lead up to the international revolutionary wave of 1916-21, which did indeed both break down and cross the boundaries of the existing imperial territories, the last thing that was on most minds in the new communist movement was fear of the limitations of the world market.

The nature of the world market has changed again, and not because of any objective capitalist economic law determining its inevitable expansion. The working class, peasants and other oppressed took increasing advantage of the contradictions of the various post-World War II statified capitalist regimes. By taking independent action and putting pressure on their various official communist and social democratic parties and trade unions, the working class managed, to different degrees, to extend 'their' welfare states to meet more of their needs. The

governments of the imperialist powers were able to finance this by imposing taxes on their industrial corporations. They could do this because they ran nationally integrated production units (even if some also had overseas supplier and production subsidiaries), which could be threatened with real sanctions if they fail to comply.

However, a capitalist counter-offensive started around 1975. This has been met with continuous, but overwhelmingly defensive, working class, peasant, and tribal resistance internationally. The multinationals' 'economic' response to the previous working class offensive was to fragment production and disperse facilities internationally. Once a certain threshold had been achieved, and once the main example of integrated statified production had collapsed in the USSR, the controllers of this new global production decided to eliminate all such remaining concentrations. This helped them to undermine the old working class social democratic methods of organisation associated with the previous period.

A genuine world market has been recreated on a new basis. The 19th century world market covered not only worldwide commerce, including trade in exotic crafts, it also led to the imperially managed production of primary products - the raw materials and foodstuffs necessary for the metropolitan manufacturing industries and their workforces. Today's world market is extending this much further - with global finance and commerce. Manufacturing and service industries are increasingly being located in the sub-imperial and neo-colonial states. However, care is being taken to ensure that it is lower order production facilities (particularly the environmentally destructive 'dirty' industries such as chemical and waste recycling) that are sent overseas and that no state should have nationally integrated production within its boundaries. Multinational corporations have utilised democratically unaccountable and exclusive 'clubs' such as the OECD, IMF and WTO, to try to coordinate this capitalist offensive. Their interests dominate the decision making of the US-dominated UN security council. They have directed their activities, in particular, against the various 'communities of resistance' which have stubbornly resisted becoming super-exploited enclaves for capital. Sometimes they have managed to create 'reservations for the oppressed' as in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraqi Kurdistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and possibly East Timor. These are reduced to begging for multinational intervention to alleviate their misery. Yet resistance continues, whether from an older working class in France and the USA; the working class in newly industrialised Brazil and South Korea; or from peasants in Mexico (the Zapatistas) and throughout Indonesia, or on the streets of the USA's ultra-modern, north-west Pacific city, Seattle, in the very 'heart of the beast'.

For genuine communists, "the world is now our oyster" not because of the iron restraint of the world market, but because of the worldwide resistance to global capital. The world communism we seek to achieve aims to link up the majority of the world's

James and the genesis of christianity

In writing this supplement my intention is to find the real Jesus and show how christianity emerged as a split from the Jesus movement. Of course, we can never know Jesus as a rounded personality. Was he an extrovert? Or was he reserved and prone to dark moods? Perhaps both. Did he have a ready smile, charm and wit? Or did he persuade by citing text? Was he tall or short? Were his eyes brown or grey? Did he cut a handsome figure? How easily did he secure his first followers? All of that is unlikely ever to be discovered and is anyhow of entirely marginal importance. We can, however - using archaeological evidence, a firm understanding of the dynamics of ancient Hebrew society, broadly contemporary Jewish literary sources, early christian writers, the beliefs and practices of his immediate followers in Palestine and current advances in biblical scholarship - put Jesus into his historical, national, political and class context and thereby know him. In this way the christian man-god is brought down to *terra firma* and revealed - and thus freed - as a wholly human being along with the myths that have been carefully accreted around him.

1. A recapitulation

A year ago we published a supplement which approached Jesus in the main from the direction of what preceded his truncated career as a revolutionary prophet. Let us recapitulate some of the salient points.

Before their Babylonian exile in 586BC the Jews were no different from the numerous semitic tribes that inhabited the Middle East. As nomads each tribe or clan would carry their fetish objects or *teraphim*. The bible story of the Ark of the Covenant - a box in which god purportedly dwells - is an echo these days. Even as a settled people the Hebrews worship numerous nature gods.

Having taken Babylon without a fight, the Persian king Cyrus decided to permit the Judeans (the Jews) to return to their homeland. The elite were to serve as vassals. Jerusalem and its temple was rebuilt as the religious-administrative centre of a *sub-ordinate social order*. From here the elite would oversee the extraction of tribute from the local population and the management of the Jewish diaspora (successful Jewish traders were established in colonies from one end of the known world to the other). To facilitate that socio-economic relationship the returned exiles completely reinvented their religion (Babylonian myths - the garden of Eden, the tower of Babel, the flood, etc, were mimicked). The Jewish god emerges fully formed as the god of Jerusalem - equated with the god of Moses - who triumphs over rivals. Consequentially Jehovah is both universal and parochial. Jehovah, or more correctly Yahweh, was the god of all humanity (creation) and yet was also claimed as the ancestral and national god of the Jews.

The Jehovah cult reflected, in no matter how distorted a manner, the class antagonism between the returned elite and the masses, ie the domination of history or social forces over humanity (in contrast to nature). As Persian vassals the elite had no army only a religious police force. They had to rely on remaking and then maintaining the Jews as a people-religion. Fear of god had to impose obedience. The evolution of the strong Jehovah cult is therefore bound up with military weakness and class struggle. Those peasants married to 'foreign women' were initially excluded from the 'assembly of Israel'. Priests formed themselves into an hereditary theocracy which extracted tribute (surplus product) through the system of compulsory pilgrimage, sacrifice and offering - the dominant mode of surplus extraction.

As this system decayed it created

conditions for royal messianism in Palestine (not the diaspora). There was a sudden power vacuum when the Macedonian empire fragmented after the death of Alexander. Judas Maccabeus led a peasant based revolt against the Seleucid (Greek-Syrian) overlords. A crazed Antiochus Epiphanes had tried to compel the Jews to desert their religion. The Jerusalem temple was rededicated as a shrine to Zeus. He wanted the people of his kingdom to be one and therefore demanded "that each should give up his customs" (I Maccabees i, 42). After a series of brilliant victories independence was gained in 160BC and the Maccabees made themselves both high priests and monarchs.

However, being strategically located at the interface between the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Damascus and in conditions of an emerging Roman hegemony over the whole of the eastern Mediterranean, all in all the Jews become an oppressed nationality. Effective independence does not long endure. Roman imperialism was ruling Palestine through quislings by the time of Pompey and Augustus.

The Romans came not to bring the splendours of civilisation - roads, public baths, theatres, etc. Culturally the Romans were parvenus. When Solomon was financing the construction of the first great temple Rome consisted of little more than wooden huts. No, the Romans sought plunder, slaves and the maximisation of tribute. The 'beast' made no bones about its intentions. Aside from freebooting governors and proconsuls the emperor in Rome was determined to squeeze his possessions till the pips squealed. Taxation was farmed out to gangs of thugs - 'publicans' in the bible. Huge sums were extracted with the help of racks, thumb-screws and other such torture equipment. Those who could not pay found themselves and their families sold off into slavery. Taxation frequently produced absolute pauperisation. The Jewish masses gave a ready ear to anyone promising national freedom and class vengeance against the Roman oppressors and their Herodian satraps.

Inevitably such a history and the associated ideas of national resistance welling up from below is mediated through religion. Long term military weakness of the Jews in the corporeal world is compensated for by reliance on the power of god in the collective imagination. Jehovah's host of angels, the elect of the holy people and their carefully listed cavalry and infantry divisions grow on the pages of the scribes in proportion to an inability to act decisively on the field of battle: "You have a multitude of holy ones in the heavens and hosts of angels ... together with your holy ones [and] your angels, and directing them in battle [so as to condemn] the earthly adversaries by trial with your judgments. With the elect of heaven [they] shall prev[ail] ... Crush the nations" (M Wise, M Abegg, E Cook *The Dead Sea scrolls* London 1996, p161). Fantasy substitutes for the poverty of reality. Such was the dialectic.

There is a parallel conviction amongst the Jews that a messiah - a human deliverer chosen by god - would appear. Jesus, I argue, was one of many such messiah's or apocalyptic revolutionaries. He seems according to the evidence to have been utterly convinced that with the divine intervention of Jehovah he could inaugurate the liberation of Israel. Jesus' claim to be 'king of the Jews' was therefore political and practical not otherworldly.

Jesus was a man completely in tune with the historically established Jewish traditions and limitations of his day. His slogan 'kingdom of god' was widely used by zealot and other anti-Roman forces. It conjured up for Jews an idealised vision of the old monarchical system of David, Solomon and the Macabees - which could only be realised by defeating the Romans (the Kittim in the Dead Sea scrolls).

Jesus and his small band of lightly armed disciples bravely staged their side of the apocalyptic coup. The Jerusalem temple and its compound is seized and protected with the decisive aid of the mob (ie, the urban poor plus rural pilgrims). Yet instead of triggering divine intervention he was seized instead by a cohort of Roman troops. The masses rallied not to demand his death but his freedom - in terms of demonising the Jews with an indelible blood guilt the gospel of John is the most obscene. Despite that, along with many another Jewish revolutionary, Jesus suffered a miserable end at the hands of the Roman imperialists. What marks him out as special is the creed amongst his followers that he had risen from the grave. Like Elijah he would return again. Soon. The end of the old world was nigh. With the empty tomb the world historic myth was born ('Jesus: from apocalyptic revolutionary to imperial god' *Weekly Worker* December 17 1998).

Now in this supplement we will further our investigation by discussing our subject from the vantage point presented by verifiable, or at least probable, developments which followed Jesus' crucifixion by the Romans. To reveal Jesus we will bring into play his immediate successors and followers in Palestine and show how christianity was invented not by Jesus and his co-thinkers but Paul. His was a new pro-Roman, class collaborationist religion, based on crude anti-semitism and abstract universalism. Paul was, to use a euphemism, the anti-christ.

Christianity seen from this angle represents a radical rupture with Jesus his Jewishness, his anti-Romanism and his revolutionary communistic programme. The words and deeds of Jesus were mercilessly distorted and turned into their opposites by Paul and the succeeding redactors of the *New testament*. Obviously a *forgery* enormously facilitated by the absence of mass literacy and the necessity of laboriously copying, ie rewriting, every book by hand. This would be done many, many times. Embarrassing passages were thereby overwritten and thus obliterated un-

der the guidance of the established church hierarchy. The whole process of inventing christianity took something like 300 years. There were though limits. The redactors could go only so far. Oral traditions set the parameters. Nevertheless Stalin would surely have envied Paul and his christians. Progress Publishers never dared release a reworked *Capital* or *State and revolution*.

Despite the systematic distortion, I shall still cite the standardised bible. Why? Because it is a basic text which if examined critically, and with common sense, allows us to both pick out the essential thought pattern of the Jesus movement and locate the ideological concerns and drives of the Pauline church. The forensic evidence of what the church covered up and therefore guiltily sought to conceal is plentiful. I will also draw upon the celebrated Dead Sea scrolls, suppressed or lost gospels, the writings of church fathers such as Eusebius and Hippolytus, and other ancient sources, not least the works of Flavius Josephus.

2. King Jesus and his brother James

The Roman's execution of Jesus surely came as a serve shock. His followers must have been mortified. Nevertheless the Jesus party survives the death of its founder-leader. Indeed it grows rapidly. The 'Acts of the apostles' report a big increase from 120 cadre to several thousand in the immediate aftermath of his crucifixion. The recruits were, of course, fellow Jews - including essenes, baptists and zealots. People undoubtedly inspired by the boldness of Jesus' attempted apocalyptic coup and the subsequent story that his body had disappeared and had like Elijah risen to heaven (the Romans blamed his disciples, they had secretly removed the corpse from its tomb - a slightly more likely scenario). All fervently expected imminent deliverance through the return of Jesus; "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of god is at hand" (Mark i, 14-15).

The party, commonly called the nazarenes or nazoreans, was led by James - the brother of Jesus. This is hardly surprising. The followers of Jesus presented him as king of the Jews. He was, they claimed, genealogically of David's line (David ruled Israel 600 years previously). That is why two of the gospels - Matthew and Luke - are interesting in that they leave in the great lengths earlier *source* accounts had gone to in order to prove that *through Joseph* he was biologically directly related to David "fourteen generations" before (Matthew i, 17).

The prophet Micah had predicted that the messiah would be born in Bethlehem like David. Jesus, or his early propagandists, were proclaiming him to be the lawful king as opposed to the Herodian upstarts. It was like some charismatic medieval peasant leader announcing themselves to be the direct heir of Harold and hence the true Saxon king of England against the Plantagenet or Angevine de-

scendants of William of Normandy. Roman domination was initially imposed through Herodian kings who were at the most only semi-Jewish in background and religious observance. The Dead Sea scrolls exude disgust and disdain for the king, whom we presume to be Herod or one of his successors, who was appointed king by the Romans; he is condemned as a "foreigner" and a "covenant breaker".

The election as leader of James the brother of Jesus by the nazoreans was therefore perfectly natural in terms of inheritance. The nazorean tradition being closely followed by the sunni muslims whose leadership traces its bloodline back through the caliphates to the prophet Mohammed himself.

It is surely a sound argument that to know James is to know Jesus. Who would be more like Jesus in terms of beliefs, expectations and practices? His closest living relative who is chosen by Jesus' cadres as his successor? Or Paul who never saw Jesus alive only in visions? Who defended and continued Jesus' programme? Was it James and other intimates in Palestine? Or was it Paul, a Roman citizen, who as Saul or Saulus, admits he was a persecutor of Jesus' followers? All the christian churches maintain that it is the latter. Paul with his convenient dreams and reliance on the doctrine of faith was apparently more in touch with the authentic Jesus, the so-called christ in heaven, than James and the family of Jesus.

To establish this reversal of common sense and reality the gospels go to great lengths to denigrate the family of Jesus, his brothers and disciples. They are constantly belittled, portrayed as stupid and lacking in faith. "I have no family" says the Jesus of the gospels. The disciples are similarly rebuked for failing to appreciate that Jesus and his kingdom are "not of this world". Peter famously denies Jesus thrice before the cock crows due to lack of faith. Ect.

Although James is appointed or elected 'head' of the Jerusalem community and was also of the Davidic branch through Joseph he is almost entirely absent from the christian tradition. He has been reduced or cut out altogether so embarrassing is he. Nor does James appear in the *Koran* - though muslim dietary laws are based on his directives set out for the overseas communities as recorded in the acts (Acts xv, 20-29). Arabs were being drawn to monotheism before Mohammed and the ideological influence of James (and therefore before him Jesus) is unmistakable on islam.

The gospels as they come down to us have obviously been overwritten. James peers out as a shadowy figure as if through frosted glass. Sometimes he is disguised as James the Lesser, in other places as James the brother of John, or James the son of Zebedee. Such characters make a fleeting and insubstantial appearance in the gospels. yet James does suddenly pop up in the twelfth book of the acts as the main source of authority in Jerusalem. Evidently his other *obscure* titles are due to redaction. We also have Paul's letters which openly acknowledge the true relationship between James and Jesus. James is straightforwardly called "the brother of the lord".

Not surprisingly church fathers had acute problems. The more ethereal and pro-Roman Jesus is made the more James sticks out like a sore thumb. Origen (185-254) therefore rounded on those of his contemporaries who accorded James high esteem and who linked his death with the fall of Jerusalem in 70. Surviving nazorean, ebionite and other 'Jame-sian' sects were branded heretics. Eusebius (260-340), bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, was prepared to grant that the *New testament* letter of James might be used for instructional purposes, but questioned its "authenticity". For Robert Eisenman,

author of a monumental work on James, this was in part because “its content and theological approach were so alien to him” (R Eisenman *James the brother of Jesus* London 1997, p3). It fumes with wonderful class hatred and promises the certainty of retribution. “Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you” (James v, 1). In the 4th century Jerome finally decides that Jesus and James were cousins. In other sources too the relationship is distanced. Jesus’ brothers, including James, become half-brothers, step-brothers or milk brothers. A theological construction carried over into the *Koran* by Mohammed in the 7th century. A divine Jesus has no need for an earthly father, uncles, brothers or sisters. There is also the growing cult of Mary’s perpetual virginity. Joseph could not have had any children with her. Augustine, in the 5th century, firmly establishes this as doctrine.

That does not mean James cannot be restored to his rightful place. On the contrary we can unearth James and in so doing light is cast on his brother Jesus. Actually the most reliable biblical testimonies concerning James and his role in the nazorean party are found in Paul’s letters. Given all we know, they seem to be accurate above all because they paint a picture of conflict between Paul and James. Paul, repeatedly, disagrees with the rulings on diet, circumcision and observation of Jewish laws and taboos handed down by the Jerusalem council. Paul even denigrates what he calls “leaders”, “pillars”, “archapostles” and those “who consider themselves important” or “write their own references” (Galatians ii, 9 and I Corinthians iii, 1-9; v, 12; viii, 1; x, 12; etc). In other words the apostles, chief amongst them James. Paul freely admits those leaders whom he calls Peter and Cephas were willing to defer to the authority of James (Galatians ii, 10-12).

So the relationship between Jesus and James and the latter’s standing is attested to in the acts and Paul’s letters. In them and tangential gospel accounts we find that besides James, there were three other brothers of Jesus - they are given the names Simon, Jude and Joses. A sister, Salome, is also mentioned in Matthew. Furthermore where the established canon is evasive or eerily silent about James, the early and non-canonical (gnostic) gospel of Thomas puts these words into the mouth of Jesus. Having been asked “who will be great over us” after “you have gone?” ‘Thomas’ has Jesus say this: “In the place where you are to go, go to James the Just for whose sake heaven and earth came into existence” (Thomas xii). The mystical gnostics it should be noted deemed that James possessed almost supernatural powers. Of course, it is not that the gospel of Thomas (written in Coptic in something like 90) should be thought of as historically reliable. It is full of mythological invention. What distinguishes its account is that in certain key areas it is not *inverted* by mythology like the standard versions.

A profusion of competing gospels are known to have existed before the *New testament* was finalised with Constantine and the incorporation of the church as an arm of the Roman state. The first is called the Q gospel by scholars (Q standing for ‘quelle’ which means ‘source’ in German). It was written in the 50s (see BL Mack *The lost gospel* Shaftesbury, 1993). From fragments discovered in the Egyptian desert and passing references in early church sources we know of others. Eg, the Ergeton gospel, the gospel of the Hebrews and the Cross gospel (see JD Crossan *The historical Jesus* Edinburgh 1991, appendix 1). From them and other such literature we learn that James plays a role of “overarching importance” (R

Eisenman *James the brother of Jesus*, London 1997, p75).

There is further evidence about James in the polemics and commentaries of the early christian church. James is discussed by Eusebius (circa 260-340), Epiphanius (367-404) and Jerome (347-420). Much of what they have to say is based on earlier writers whose work has been destroyed or lost. The first, is Hegesippus (circa 90-180) who was a church leader in Palestine, the second, Clement of Alexandria (circa 150-215). There is another Clement (circa 30-97), this time of Rome, who gave his name to what we now know as the Pseudo-clementines.

Works such as the *Recognitions of Clement* are as Eisenman, argues “no more ‘pseudo’” than the gospels, acts and the other christian literature we now possess from that period (R Eisenman *James the brother of Jesus* London 1997, p71). Interestingly though the account of the Pseudo-clementine material is highly mythologised it includes letters purportedly from Paul to James and from Clement to James. James is addressed as “bishop of bishops” or “archbishop”. Eusebius in the second book of his *Ecclesiastical history* writes that: “James, who was also surnamed Just by the forefathers on account of his superlative virtue, was the first to have been elected to the office of bishop of the Jerusalem church” (quoted in *ibid* p166). Elsewhere Eusebius cites Clement of Alexandria. “Peter, James and John after the ascension of the saviour, did not contend for glory, even though they had previously been honoured by the saviour, but chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem” (quoted in *ibid* p187). Jerome provides an account of how James was either “ordained” or “elected” as bishop of Jerusalem. Epiphanius suggests that James was appointed directly from Jesus in heaven. James was the “first whom the lord entrusted his throne upon earth” (quoted in *ibid* p200).

So there is no shadow of doubt that James was elected leader of the Jesus party after the death of his brother and served in that capacity till his own execution in 62 (he was succeeded by Cephas, a first cousin). The acts manifest a highly significant silence about this, surely defining moment, for the post-Jesus nazorean movement. The first chapter which deals with the replacement of Judas *Iscairiot* after his treachery and suicide is a combination of slander and cover-up - Judas is in all probability Jude, ie, one the brothers of Jesus. The story the “eleven” supposedly getting together to elect another apostle is in all likelihood a cynical overwrite for the election of James. In the acts it is rather a non-event with which to begin the official history of the early church. “Mattias” is chosen after the casting of “lots” over “Joseph called Barabas” (Acts i, 23-26). But the redactors were determined to blacken the name of Jesus’ closest associates or, failing that, remove them where they could. There is an striking parallel here with the way Stalin’s propagandists malignly treated Kamenev, Trotsky, Zinoviev and other members of Lenin’s inner-circle after his death.

Whatever the exact truth an obvious question presents itself. Why was the early church so eager to play down or obliterate the role of James? We have already discussed the embarrassment concerning the blood relationship between Jesus and James. But there was more to it than that. My answers can be grouped under four headings. Firstly, as successor of “the lord”, James has to be counted amongst those Jewish revolutionary extremists who opposed the Roman oppressors. Secondly, the Jesus party headed by James took an active role, perhaps a leading one, in preparing the ground for the great anti-Roman uprising of 66. Thirdly, James exhib-

ited, neither in thought nor practice, not the slightest trace or hint of christianity. He was single-mindedly, not to say intolerantly, Jewish. He observed the minutiae of Jewish religious law and demanded that other Jews did the same. Fourthly, there is abundant evidence that there was a fundamental and acrimonious schism between the community led by James and Paul, the real founder of christianity. There is even the possibility that Paul was involved in an attempt on the life of James. None of this would have been to the liking of the early church. Indeed so successful was it in forgetting (destroying) its own origins that in the 4th century christianity was adopted by imperial Rome.

3. Jewish politics

Let us expand on the argument above beginning with the nazorean movement as one of the parties in opposition to Rome. To do that it is necessary to bring into focus the other elements which made up the spectrum of political-religious life. Josephus lists what he calls three schools of thought. Sadducees, pharisees and essenes.

Nowadays the sadducee party would be described as conservative, elitist and rightwing. The sadducees must be distinguished from the Herodian royal family and the internationalised aristocracy and its immediate clientage - who proudly aped Greek ways and served as agents of exploitation. Sadducee is virtually synonymous with that caste of high priests who officiated at the temple and the traditionalist aristocracy which sided with them. According to Josephus 1,500 priests received tithes in return for religiously serving the community. However a swift class differentiation took place. Half a dozen families elevated themselves above the common priesthood and secured a monopoly over key appointments. Used to luxury and greedy for more, the high priests had no compunction about actually stealing the tithes allocated to other, impoverished, priests. Occasionally violence erupted. It was in general an uneven contest. High priests had temple guards, many servants and other such dependants and hangers-on and could afford to pay out for additional bands of heavies.

The functions of the priesthood centred on the sacrifice of animals, presiding over ceremony and the collection of the temple tax. In class terms the sadducees articulate a social relationship internal to Jewish society and like the post-Babylon priesthood lack what is normally called state power. Morally, however, their authority was steadily diminishing. Sadducees resented the prerogatives that firstly, the Herodian kings and then, Roman procurators accumulated for themselves over the temple. Herod had purged the priesthood of Maccabees (Hasmonaeans) and made the high priest one of his own creatures. As for the Romans they even took charge of the sacred vestments used on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). Hiring and firing too fell to them. Valerius Gratus, predecessor of Pontius Pilate, deposed and appointed four high priests. In consequence of such cavalier foreign interference the popular esteem of the priesthood plummeted to zero. Temple ceremony was not invalidated but the high priests as individuals were viewed with contempt.

Sadducees felt themselves conducting a rearguard battle on two fronts. Constant Roman meddling and the founding and growth of Greek cities in Palestine, along with their gymnasiums, gladiatorial games and polytheistic temples, must have nauseated many priests. Yet being aristocratic and in possession of large landed estates they loathed democracy and feared the discontent of the common people more. Given the balance of military forces of which they were fully cognisant the sadducees

had no interest in taking a lead in resistance against the Romans. Broadly speaking therefore they fall into the category of unwilling collaborator.

Judaism defined itself as a religion of the book. The age of prophecy was formally closed by the Persians. With a few notable exceptions the Hebrew cannon was finalised by the time of Ezra (the writer Edras in the bible) and Nehemiah (the first governor of Judaea appointed by Cyrus). In religious terms the theocratic priesthood thereby froze the meaning of the past from the time of creation to the building of the second temple but simultaneously condemned itself to merely preside over a fixed ritual which inevitably loses its content. Being worldly wise and educated fellows the sadducees could not believe in the resurrection of the dead, angles or predestination. The medium therefore becomes the message. They could neither interpret text nor initiate. But life moves on and constantly creates new needs. In-between the innumerable contradictions of the written word and the requirements of change stepped the pharisees. The pharisees were a religious intelligentsia. Expert in the obscure methods of scholastic debate and adapt at bending the law the pharisees formed a party which not only rivalled the discredited priesthood but sunk far deeper organisational roots amongst the masses.

Josephus writes glowingly about the pharisees being the “most authoritative exponents of the law”. He also credits them as the “leading sect” (Josephus *The Jewish War* Harmondsworth 1984, p137). A widely accepted designation. From Karl Kautsky to Hyam Maccoby the pharisees are held to be the popular party of the 1st century. Robert Eisenman disagrees.

For Eisenman the pharisees were part of the establishment and had a programme of accommodation with both the Herodian state and its Roman sponsor. As evidence he cites countless passages in the Dead Sea scrolls against ‘seekers after smooth things’ and the historic fact that the pharisee party nowhere took the lead against foreign occupation but everywhere sought compromise. Pharisaic Judaism emerged as the dominant school of thought only after the destruction of Jerusalem. Johanan ben Zakkai - rabbi Jochanan in the *Talmud* - had himself safely smuggled out of the besieged city in a coffin after which he “made his way to the enemy camp” (H Polard trans *The Talmud* London 1978, p336). Here he obtained permission from the Roman general and future emperor Vespasian to establish an academy in Jamnia (Jabna). Modern Judaism - orthodox, liberal, conservative and reform - traces back its origins to this defining moment. Even before that, during the initial phase of Roman expansionism, we find pharisees cooperating with Roman troops and Herod’s father Antipater in storming the Jerusalem temple against the will of the people. The purist priests are slaughtered by the pharisees. Under Herodian rule they got their reward. Pharisees dominated the 70 strong sanherdrin - the appointed council which regulated Jewish religious-civic matters.

Finally on the list given by Josephus we arrive at the essenes. Where he gives the sadducees and pharisees a rather pinched treatment the essenes are afforded considerable space. In part this is no doubt due to a desire to entertain high class readers with their unusual monastic lifestyle - of which Josephus had first hand experience having spent a year as an initiate. The essenes maintained a strict discipline in their isolated but “large” communities. They “eschew pleasure-seeking and are peculiarly attached to each other” (Josephus *The Jewish War* Harmondsworth 1984, p133). Sexual intercourse was, however, it seems, outlawed. Josephus does though re-

port that one branch related to the main sect allowed marital relations between men and women, albeit purely for reasons of procreation. The essenes were “contemptuous of wealth” and “communists to perfection”. All possessions were pooled. Members gave what they had and took what they needed (*ibid* p133). Universal suffrage was used to elect those in authority over the community.

Life was materially simple. Dietary laws rigorous. No one was allowed to defile themselves by eating “any creature or creeping thing”. Nor was alcoholic drink permitted. Everyone wore the same white linen garments till they were threadbare with age. Ritualistic washing was performed round the clock. Josephus chuckles that they even cleaned themselves after defecating - “though emptying the bowls is quite natural” (*ibid* p136). The idea of a clean body had nothing to do with our modern notions of hygiene but was to render oneself fit for god’s knowledge and purpose. Something gained by painstaking study of the bible and the special insights of the sect. Not that the community was merely contemplative or pacifistic. Essenes took part in the anti-Roman uprising of 66.

Despite certain differences - according to Josephus the essenes frowned upon slavery - there is an obvious similarity with the group at Qumran responsible for the Dead Sea scrolls (written sometime between 200BC and 100AD). The Qumran community too demands that those “entering the sect transfer their property to the order.” Extreme communism is practised. Ways of doing everything are laid down in great detail. Decisions are by majority vote. Meals are eaten in common. There is an annual membership review. Clearly the essenes and the Qumran community belong to, or stem from, the same tradition.

It is germane to note therefore that Qumran members living in wilderness camps are described as “volunteers” and are organised into thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. An echo of the way Mosses and Joshua marshalled the men under their command for the initial attacks on Canaan. Elsewhere the scrolls envisage the recruitment of virtually every Jewish male over the age of 20 into the holy army. Only the very old, the simple minded and those deemed unclean are excluded.

The Qumran community, and the movement of which it was a part, were apocalyptic revolutionaries or holy warriors awaiting their fate. They fasted, prayed for and expected god’s divine intervention against the Romans and a messiah (in the Dead Sea scrolls there was to be two messiahs - one in charge religious affairs, the other a military leader). After the hour appointed by god there would ensue a protracted, 33 year, war in what were the last days. “[Then ther]e shall be a time of salvation for the people of god, and a time of domination for all the men of his forces and eternal annihilation for all the forces of Belial [the devil - JC]. There shall be [g]reat panic [among] the son of Japheth, Assyria shall fall with no one to come to his aid, and the supremacy of the Kittim shall cease, that wickedness be overcome without a remnant. There shall be no survivors of [all the sons of] darkness” (M Wise, M Abegg, E Cook *The Dead Sea scrolls* London 1996, p151-52).

Thankfully Josephus extends his list. He writes of a so-called ‘fourth philosophy’. Here we detect the real people’s party of the 1st century. It combines religious nationalism with guerrilla war. During the final years of Herod there were numerous urban and rural rebellions. Riots erupted in Jerusalem. In Galilee guerrilla foci found themselves gaining enough adherents to allow regular military units to be formed. Their leaders had themselves crowned kings on the messianic

model. Among them were Simon a former slave of Herod and Athronges, a shepherd. However the most successful liberation fighter was Judas, whose father Ezechias was a well known “bandit” who was executed in 47BC. Josephus complains that Judas “tried to stir the natives to revolt” by encouraging them not to pay taxes to the Romans. Judas “was a rabbi” [teacher - JC], says Josephus, “with a sect of his own, and was quite unlike the others” (Jospheus *The Jewish War* Harmondsworth 1984, p133). His message was republican not monarchist. The people should have no master except god.

The Romans felt compelled to intervene and decided to establish direct rule over Judaea. Resistance was crushed. There was much bloodshed. Two thousand captives were reportedly crucified and many sold into slavery. The first measure enacted by the Romans was to order a census in 6 (there was no stipulation that every adult male had to register at their place of birth - a purely literary device invented by bible writers in order to move Joseph and the pregnant Mary from what was anyway a non-Roman administered Galilee in the north to Bethlehem, the town of David, in the south). The census had nothing to do with the provision of public services or population projections. Like the famed Doomsday book of William I its purpose was quite unambiguous. Assessing a new acquisition for purposes of tribute. As such it was deeply resented and triggered another wave of popular rebellion.

Judas in Galilee aligned himself with the dissident pharisee Sadduck whose allotted task was to rouse the people of Jerusalem. The zealot party was born. It would dominate popular politics till the fall of Jerusalem in 70 and the final heroic stand at the desert fortress of Massada in 74. Despite being a member of the establishment, and someone seeking to ingratiate himself with the Romans, Josephus has to admit that the zealots inspired the masses “to bold deeds”. Their “madness infected the entire people”. Galilee in particular was a hotbed of revolt.

Josephus exhibits very mixed feelings towards the zealots. He was upper class but also a proud Jew. So on the one hand he indulgently attacks them as “bandits” because they butchered “distinguished people” such as himself and because eventually they “brought about our ruin.” Supposedly due to such revolutionaries the Romans sacked Jerusalem and crucified tens of thousands - a moral stance akin to blaming the bund for the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto by the Germans. On the other hand he cannot but admire their conviction and steadfastness. Judas and the most militant of the zealots “showed a stubborn love for liberty” and would rather suffer torture than “call any human being their master”.

Having imposed direct rule over Judea the Romans appear to have come round to a policy of deliberately provoking a general uprising. There might have been a fear that the Jews were getting too powerful and too numerous in the empire. Yet whatever the reason the procurators appointed from Rome seemed determined to conduct affairs in such a way as to lose any consent they might otherwise have enjoyed. The last two, Albinus and Florus, were particularly bad. Albinus unashamedly took bribes from criminals. On the completion of his term in office he opened the prisons so as to “fill the land with robbers”. Florus plundered whole towns. Most outrageously he helped himself to the temple treasury. When the people objected his troops cut them down. Individuals were picked out at random from the crowd and crucified. That included some who had been admitted to the Roman equestrian order. The fact that Florus was prepared

to trample on Roman norms certainly adds weight to the hypothesis that there was a plot to foment a rebellion.

Either way a revolt there was. And one which initially drew to it virtually all classes in Jewish society. Florus urgently called in Cestus Gallus, the legate of Syria, and his legions so as to restore order. All the while in Egypt and Syria there were inter-ethnic clashes between Jewish and Greek inhabitants. Many Jews were killed. Greek towns in Palestine suffered a similar fate at the hands of Jews. Consequently Hyam Maccoby suggests there were two intertwined struggles taking place. On the one hand a military rebellion against Roman power; and on the other hand an ideological clash “between the Hellenistic and Jewish civilisations” (H Maccoby *Revolution of Judaea* London 1973, p224).

The Romans swiftly advanced. Having pushed its way through Galilee and Samaria the 30,000 force under Gallus entered Judaea. The defenders put up a hard fight but were overcome. He marched victoriously into Jerusalem. However zealots ceased key strategic points, including the temple and its enclosure. They rained missiles and rocks down upon the Romans. For reasons that still remain somewhat a mystery Gallus decided to retreat from Jerusalem. Perhaps he was forced out, or, perhaps, his decision was connected to the political crisis gripping the empire. The fire of Rome occurred in 64 and Nero was widely viewed as mad. His forced suicide in June 68 was followed by the rapid succession and downfall of Galba, Otho and Vitellius. Whatever the reason for the sudden withdrawal from Jerusalem in September 66 on the way back out through Judaea Gallus’ army was ambushed by zealot guerrillas. The Romans were routed. Gallus only saved the day by sacrificing his rearguard. Six thousand died and huge quantities of arms, siege artillery and supplies were captured.

That the zealot attack took place at Beth-horon - the mountain pass where Judas Maccabaeus defeated the Seleucid Greek-Syrian army in 165BC - gave it a miraculous quality. The Jews had god on their side. Even the sadducees joined the uprising. Under such conditions of class collaboration the zealots allowed the conduct of the war to pass to Hasmonaeen aristocrats who were by tradition the military leaders of the people. One of them was Josephus who was appointed as general in command of Galilee. Much squabbling between him and the Galilean zealot, John of Gischala, ensued. The defences of Galilee were left fatally weak. And as a reinforced Roman army renewed its offensive Josephus defected.

In Jerusalem itself the zealots take a vow to fight to the end. Sadducees and aristocrats increasingly clamour for a negotiated settlement. Class conflict erupts between those above and those below. Revolt against Rome takes on the dimensions of a social revolution. Eminent people are assassinated. Others such as Antipas, a member of the royal family, are placed under arrest. The masses appoint their own high priest. Street fighting brakes out between zealots and sadducees. With the help of Idumaeen allies the sadducees are defeated. A multi-layered phenomenon. It is the victory of the party of war over the party of peace. Of the countryside and the urban poor over the rich. Of revolutionary terrorism over invented tradition. The high priest Ananus is executed along with many young aristocrats. The zealot party itself fragments under the pressure of responsibility and rivalry. Menahem, son of Judas the zealot founder, is killed by republican zealots after he declares himself messiah (king). The zealot’s ‘redoubtable’ wing withdraws to Messada in the south. The remaining zealots are split. One

the one side is the faction following John of Gischala, who fled to Jerusalem after the collapse in Galilee. On the other the extreme left of the democratic party behind Simon bar Giora. Much to the disgust of Josephus he “proclaimed the liberty of slaves”, cancelled the debts of the poor and attracted to his banner “the scum of the whole district” (Jospheus *The Jewish War* Harmondsworth 1984, p275). Like Spartacus his movement threatens the social order itself.

Having been elected emperor Vespasian passes control of the campaign to his son Titus. The Roman noose around Jerusalem is tightened. Giant mobile siege towers close in. Adversity cements a certain unity amongst the zealots. Each faction defends its own districts and walls and courageously strikes back with lightning raids on the enemy. Josephus boasts of the speeches he made before the city urging surrender. He was met with insults and stones. Yet fear and hunger causes many of the festival pilgrims trapped in the city to want to flee. Those that did have to evade both zealot guards and Roman troops. If caught they were crucified. Thousands of crosses soon litter the surrounding plain. Roman soldiers split open the bellies of those hanging on the crosses after finding an escapee extracting gold coins from his faeces. Titus ordered an end to that practice but not crucifixions.

After a couple of months the well-oiled Roman military machine breached the outer carapace of the defences and legionnaires captured the third north wall. Months of fierce sector-by-sector and street-by-street fighting follow. But the city was eventually taken. The temple was torched and the complex raised to the ground. In the end the whole city lay in ruins. While Josephus’ claim that over one million died in the siege and the subsequent butchery is a huge exaggeration - like most pre-modern sources - there is no doubt that Titus allowed his troops to indulge in unrestricted slaughter. Only once their bloodlust had been satiated did he call a halt. Surviving females and male youths under 17 are to be auctioned off into slavery. Men were sent to labour in Egypt. From amongst the prisoners zealots were singled out for immediate crucifixion or killing by wild beast or the sword in the shows that Titus staged in Syria. Simon bar Giora and “tallest and handsomest” captives are saved for the triumph in Rome (*ibid* p371).

In 71, before Vespasian and Titus sitting in imperial splendour, the victory over the Jews parade took place. Cut into the stone of the arch of Titus we can still see legionnaires carrying the sacred menorah, or seven stemmed candlestick. The climax of the proceedings was the strangulation of Simon bar Giroa. News of his death brought about a great cheer. Of course, he was no modern revolutionary. Nonetheless the determination of Simon bar Giora to give his all for freedom has universal significance and should be claimed and celebrated by communists. Since there has been unfreedom there has been freedom fighters.

The seething discontent that built up from the imposition of Roman direct rule in 6 to the general revolt of May 66 yielded a rich crop of charismatic messiahs who found themselves a substantial following. Josephus mentions a handful by name or title - Theudas, a “false” prophet from Egypt, etc - but all the indications are that as a type they were numerous. After the defeat of one another arose. Some, for example, John the Baptist - who though he never claimed to be the messiah led a messianic movement - were relatively peaceful. Though such “religious frauds” did not “murder” Josephus calls them “evil men”. They were “cheats and deceivers” and “schemed to bring about revolution-

ary changes”. The Romans typically responded by sending in infantry and cavalry. John was beheaded by Herod Antipas. Others fought fire with fire. These “wizards” gained “many adherents” says Josephus. They agitated for the masses to “seize” their “liberty” and “threatened with death those that would henceforth continue to be subject and obedient to the Roman authority”. There was an unmistakable class content. The “well-to-do” were slain and their houses “plundered” (*ibid* p147).

Clearly there existed a blurred line between the rural revolutionary and the criminal rebel. Kautsky draws a parallel between 1st century Palestine and the situation in 1905-8 Russia when anarchist gangs were given free reign to loot the countryside. We in our time have seen similar manifestations occur in Northern Ireland. Mainstream loyalist and fringe republican paramilitary groups indulged in drug running, protectionism and plain theft. Certain individuals enriched themselves and lived in plebeian luxury. In Britain itself anarcho groups/movements like Reclaim the Streets, Class War and Stop the City provide a cover for common criminal, agent provocateur and hooligan elements. Having said that, it is clear that Josephus, just like his present-day establishment political, media and business contemporaries, cannot but acknowledge the moral superiority of revolutionaries who died fighting for the interests of those below, eg, Rosa Luxemburg, John Maclean, James Connolly, Antonio Gramsci, ‘Che’ Guevarra, Bobby Sands. Jospheus wants to dismiss them as bandits. But they are, he admits, prepared to suffer torture rather than submit. Josephus himself fatefully chose the slippery road of treachery and moral surrender. Abasement is no guarantee in a life whose only certainty is death. Josephus appears to have come to an untimely end at the hands of his imperial Roman masters.

Josephus mentions one other type of “bandit”, ie revolutionary, the sicari. This was a movement of urban guerrillas which “committed numerous murders in broad daylight” (*ibid* p147). Their preferred tactic was to “mingle with the festival crowd” in Jerusalem. Concealing curved daggers underneath their cloaks they would stab to death the intended target. Like a fish in the sea the sicari then melt away. Evidently they enjoyed wide support amongst the Jerusalem proletariat and lumpenproletariat. One of their first victims was Jonathan the high priest - who we shall meet later. But there were many more. The quislings lived in constant fear of the terrorist knife.

From Josephus it is clear that the masses were not united behind a single party. Yet inhabiting the rarefied atmosphere of the aristocracy Josephus would have had only the haziest knowledge of politics on what is today the extreme left. One should take his description as a thumbnail sketch on a par with a contemporary analysis of the left coming from an intelligent writer on *The Daily Telegraph* or *The Guardian*. Logically everything tells us that mass politics in 1st century Palestine were far more complex, far more variegated than described by Josephus. In the *Talmud* we find the artistic claim that “Israel did not go into captivity until there had come into existence 24 varieties of sectaries” (quoted in H Schonfield *The pentecost revolution* Shaftesbury 1985, p259).

Where do James and the nazoreans fit? Obviously there are differences between them and the essenes and the zealots. They were not monastic like the essenes. Neither were they republicans and practical guerrilla fighters along zealot lines. Nonetheless we should not forget that at least five of Jesus’ so-called 12 disciples were associated with or came from the ranks of the zealots and *retained* guer-

rilla nicknames (Peter ‘Barjonah’ - ‘out-law’; Simon - the zealot; James and John - the ‘sons of thunder’; and Judas ‘Iscariot’ - the ‘dagger-man’). More than that their founder Jesus was crucified as a rebel by the Romans. Broadly speaking then, the nazoreans should be thought of as occupying the same political-religious space as the essenes and zealots and certainly sharing similar aims.

The party name, nazorean, reinforces this thesis. There is a common misconception that nazorean derives from the town in Galilee where the youthful Jesus and his family lived, ie, Jesus of Nazareth. The origins of this are to be found in Mark and was repeated for the church by Epiphanius. Yet in Hebrew the term simply means ‘keeper’, ‘consecrated’ or ‘to be separated’. It conjures up the idea of keeping the customs of the ancestors, and as such was an esoteric term, or party name, associated with zealotism or messianism. So nazorean “cannot mean ‘from Nazareth’ ... though all such plays on words were probably purposeful” (R Eisenman *James the brother of Jesus* London 1997, 244). In all likelihood the town Nazareth, if it existed in ancient times, derives from nazorean not the other way round.

4. Nazorean politics

Nazoreans were apocalyptic revolutionaries only different from the movement founded by John the Baptist in that they could confidently name the messiah. It was surely another advantage that their man had safely risen to heaven. He was still alive but could not be captured or killed. Jesus would come and deliver his people at the decisive moment (in this respect the nazorean story of king Jesus is akin to the British myth of the sleeping king Arthur). The potency of this combination is shown in the acts. In spite of itself the acts also casts light on the true nature of the nazorean party.

Seven weeks after the crucifixion of Jesus the narorean party was gaining many recruits and was widely acclaimed by a Jewish population that had according to the gospels just been clamouring for his death. “And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising god and having favour with all the people. And the lord god added to their number day by day those who should be saved” (Acts ii, 44-47).

The acts were composed in the 2nd century and are overtly Pauline. Nevertheless though an apologia for Paul and unmistakably christian the acts not only show the communistic nazoreans finding “favour with the people” but as a community using and worshipping in the temple. Evidently the nazoreans were neither christian nor Jewish-christians. They were Jews by birth and Jews by faith. The nazoreans were a leftwing Jewish sect or party that primarily distinguished itself from other similar groups by proclaiming Jesus as the prophesied messiah, a descendant of the house of David who is the legitimate king of the Jews. Hence they diligently kept the laws of Mosses and observed the sabbath.

James - their prince regent - in particular was renown for his saintly devotion. So often did he pray that his knees became “callused as a camel’s”. Like the most extreme Jews of his day he recoiled from any contact with foreigners, abstained from drinking wine and was a lifelong vegetarian. Furthermore he took a vow of celibacy in order to preserve his ‘righteousness’ (‘zaddikim’ in Hebrew). It was James not Mary who was the perpetual virgin from the womb. We know about the dress, dietary rules and taboos ob-

served by James from a wide range of sources. Take Eusebius, he quotes Hegesippus as saying that James “drank no wine or strong drink, nor did he eat meat” (quoted in R Eisenman *James the brother of Jesus* London 1997, 256). We can also employ deduction and come to similar conclusions from the acts and Paul’s letters to the Galatians and Corinthians. For example, unlike the “pillars” in Jerusalem, Paul tells his followers that they can eat “everything sold in the meat market” (I Corinthians x, 25). He also instructs Jews to break the taboo outlawing table fellowship with gentiles. The biblical image of Jesus magically transforming water into wine, the man-god who like a heathen equates the bread and wine of the last supper with his body and blood and who freely consorts with prostitutes, Roman centurions and tax collectors was almost designed to produce apoplexy amongst the nazoreans. It is an insulting reversal of nazorean sensibilities.

The righteousness or ‘zaddikim’ of James is repeatedly referred to by the church fathers Origen, Eusebius and Jerome. They claim to have seen a no longer extant version of Josephus - the implication in Eusebius is that it is his *The Jewish War*. It is reproduced as follows: “And these things happened to the Jews [defeat and the sacking of Jerusalem - JC] to avenge James the Just, who was the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ, for the Jews put him to death, notwithstanding his pre-eminent Righteousness” (quoted in R Eisenman *James the brother of Jesus* London 1997, p235). We can discount the nonsense about Jerusalem being destroyed because the Jews bear collective guilt for the death of James (as they are supposed to have done for the killing of Jesus). Origen gives a similar account, though he claims his version of the death of James originates in the *Jewish antiquities* of Josephus. In essence Jerome repeats what he has read in Origen and Eusebius. Interestingly he refers to another tradition about James (which also echoes the normative Jesus story). He says that James: “who was the first bishop of Jerusalem and known as Justus, was considered to be so holy by the people that they earnestly sought to touch the hem of his clothing” (quoted in *ibid* p239). Jerome and Epiphanius are moreover insistent that James wore the mitre of the high priest and actually entered the holy of holies in the temple (no one apart from the high priest, who enacted the annual Yom Kippur ritual there, was allowed into the inner sanctuary).

So it appears that James functioned as an opposition (righteous or zaddokite) high priest. Whether he stood before the ark just once or on a regular, annual, basis is a moot point. Either way James could only have crossed the threshold of the inner sanctuary, to pray for the people on Yom Kippur, if he had the active support of the masses. In other words at least on the level of morality, ritual and the theocratic statelet wielded by the high priesthood there was dual power. Josephus candidly admits that there was “mutual enmity and class warfare” between the high priests on the one hand and the “priests and leaders of the masses in Jerusalem on the other” (quoted in *ibid* p318).

With this in mind it is hardly surprising that the nazoreans were overwhelmingly lower class. One of their party names - along with the Qumran community - was ‘the poor’. This sociological make up continued after the first beginnings and is referred to by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians: “not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were noble of birth; but god chose what is foolish in the world to shame the strong, god chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not,

to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of god” (I Corinthians i, 26-30). The proletarian character of the nazoreans is one of the reasons why we possess so little hard evidence of exact organisation and ideology. The leaders were surely persuasive and eloquent men. But their party culture was oral not written. Maybe the apostles could read and write. They were unlikely to have been humble fishermen - a reading which stems from a misunderstanding of ‘fourth philosophy’ parables relating to preachers who cast out their nets. That aside, the rank and file were largely illiterate. The loric teachings and sayings of Jesus were therefore to begin with handed down by word of mouth. There was considerable scope for exaggeration and downright fabrication. And, of course, it should be stressed that the myth making of the nazoreans about Jesus, his mission and his miracles are within the traditions of Jewish communistic sects.

Nazoreans exhibit a strong class antagonism against the rich. We find such firmly established ideas scattered throughout the *New testament*. Being seared onto the brains of even the most ignorant amongst the congregation they could not easily be expunged by later redactors. The acts have a story about a well off married couple, Ananias and Sapphira, who having joined the nazoreans “kept back some of the proceeds” from the sale of their property (Acts v, 2). They both fall down dead when rebuked by the apostles. In Luke we read that the rich man “who was clothed in purple and fine linen” goes to Hades and “torment” and the “flames” because he is rich. The poor man Lazarus in contrast finds comfort in “Abraham’s bosom” (Luke xvi, 19). The letter of James - from the first half of the second century is, as we have already seen, full of loathing for the rich, once more simply because they are rich. The poor have been “chosen by god” to be “heirs of the kingdom which he has promised”. The rich “oppress you”, “drag you to court” and “blaspheme” thunders the apostle (James ii, 5-7). The poor are urged to patiently await the “coming of the lord” and class revenge.

If we grasp the fact that the poor masses in Jerusalem of the late 30s to 70 were in sympathy with the nazoreans and their anti-rich messianic programme then the events reported in the *New testament* and other sources about the strength of the community can be made sense of. It is also because the nazoreans were lower class, revolutionary and popular that the Romans and sadducees considered them a threat and, when the situation allowed, persecuted them.

Almost immediately after the execution of Jesus his followers reorganise themselves and find a remarkable response in the poor quarters of Jerusalem. Their headquarters was in a district called the Ophel situated in the cramped lower city. The atmosphere must have been feverish. There is wild talk of miracles and cures. Of the coming messiah and quickly ending Roman rule. In our terminology the masses were beginning to refuse to be ruled in the old way. Recruits came in their thousands and they brought all their possessions with them. The nazorean leaders address huge crowds from the steps of the temple. Only the temple area has enough space to accommodate those who want to hear them. Any fear that might have demoralised or cowed them when Jesus was executed vanishes. The masses give them courage and power. They are inspired and psychologically become the message in their own persons. The ‘spirit’ is upon them.

The sadducees respond by having the temple guard detain those whom the acts call Peter and John. Their re-

ported excuse is that they were preaching resurrection - Jesus being proof. But the actual interrogation that followed the next day concerns the healing of a cripple. He is brought in as a witness. The apostles refuse to be intimidated and boldly proclaim the name of their messiah. No religious or state crime has been committed. The high priest make threats but decide to release them “because of the people” (Acts iv, 21). The nazorean had scored an important tactical victory and were further emboldened. Some 5,000 more join their ranks.

Not long after, worried by the ever increasing numbers attracted to the nazorean meetings at the temple, the high priest and sadducees have all the “apostles” arrested and placed in a “common prison” - presumably a temple dungeon (Acts v, 18). When the temple police go to fetch them for interrogation they are horrified to discover that the cell empty. Presumably sympathisers not an angel had sprung them. Far from fleeing the apostles are found “standing in the temple and teaching the people” (Acts v, 25). Without violence, “for they are afraid of being stoned by the people”, the guards bring them before the sanhedrin. They are ordered to stop their agitation. On behalf of them all Peter refuses. A pharisee named Gamaliel eloquently urges caution. So after beating them and charging them not to “speak in the name of Jesus” they “let them go” (Acts v, 40). Again to no effect. Every day nazoreans continue their meetings at private homes and in the temple enclosure.

Nazarene doctrine found support not only among the Palestinian Jews but numerous “Hellenists”, ie Jews living in Jerusalem who spoke Greek. It is in this context that the acts introduce Stephen. The sadducees have him seized and falsely accused of blasphemy. Stephen defends himself bravely but deaf to his pleas he is stoned to death. There is an interregnum in Roman power in 36-37 with the departure of Pilate and the preparation of war against the Arabs. Under such conditions Jonathan the high priest exercises greater autonomy. The acts report that Saul (Paul) takes a lead, not only in the killing of Stephen, but the “great persecution” against the “church in Jerusalem” initiated by Jonathan that followed.

Robert Eisenman disputes the veracity of the Stephen story. He argues at length, and for me persuasively, that the martyrdom of Stephen (a Greek name) is an overwrite for an attempt on the life of James. He reckons that James was attacked by Paul and his gang of hired ruffians who participated in Jonathan’s pogrom against the nazoreans and *all other* oppositionists. We find confirmation of this thesis in the Pseudoclementine material. The scenario it presents tells of a big debate at the temple between the sadduceen hierarchy and the nazoreans headed by James. At a prearranged moment Saul (Paul) and his men stage a riot. Saul (Paul) lays hold of a brand from the altar and begins the action. The *Recognitions* contain the following passage: “Much blood is shed; there is a confused fight in which that enemy [Paul - JC] attacked Jacob [the Hebrew name for James - JC], and threw him headlong from the top of the steps; and supposing him to be dead, he cared not to inflict further violence upon him. But our friends lifted him up, for they were both more numerous and more powerful than the others” (quoted in H Schonfield *The pentecost revolution* Shaftesbury 1985, p127). Though both his legs are broken James survives. He retreats to Jericho along with 5,000 followers. The standard narrative then proceeds with Saul (Paul) in chase - with the blessing of Jonathan the high priest - and then having his vision of Jesus and losing his sight for three

days. He then turns nazorean and later adopts the Latinised form of his name.

The nazoreans launch themselves as active proselytisers outside Palestine. They recruit Jews living throughout the Roman empire - in particular Rome, Syria and Alexandria. Through their intersection with the well established Jewish communities, belief in Jesus as a resurrected messiah spreads. However the key to why nazoreanism sired christianity as a bastard child is found in its success in winning non-Jews to convert to a sympathising level of Judaism. Full conversion involved circumcision and observance of all of the laws and taboos. ‘God-fearers’ or ‘proselytes of the gate’ were a kind of partial or half-way conversion. They were not required to undergo circumcision nor change their nationality. God-fearers only had to accept the seven laws of the sons of Noah and revere the Jews as a ‘nation of priests’.

Paul proves brilliant at winning people in the eastern part of the Roman empire to become god-fearers and winning god-fearers to recognise Jesus as the messiah. It is his converts who are first called christians. Possibly James encouraged Paul to take up missionary work abroad when he presented himself to the Jerusalem council three years after his road to Damascus ‘experience’. Paul says he tried to see the apostles but only met “James the brother of the lord” (Galatians i, 19). He travelled widely and persuaded many of the uncircumcised to accept Jesus as redeemer. Yet so determined was Paul to maintain the growth of his overseas communities that he embarks on a process of whittling away the specifically Jewish elements of the faith. At first his programme would have been no more than implicit, a tendency. Laws and taboos should be moderated not discarded. However soon his teachings start to explicitly diverge from nazoreanism and Judaism itself. Paul’s mature views are to be found in his epistles. Written some time between 50-55 they are in the most part considered “the genuine work of Paul” (H Maccoby *Revolution in Judaea* London 1973, p235). These letters form the earliest material contained in the *New testament*.

In them we find Paul expounding upon the divine nature of Jesus. The death of Jesus is recounted in terms of the self-sacrifice and rebirth of a man-god. Paul announces that Jewish laws are no more than outdated prejudice and that the distinction between Jew and gentile is forthwith abolished. He openly courts the Romans and the powers-that-be. What is to be christian doctrine is still underdeveloped. There is no trinity nor virgin birth. But what we know as the gospels today owe their mysticism and pro-Romanism to Paul. With his innovations acting as mediation the whole Jesus story is gradually retold and turned into something entirely at odds with the nazorean tradition. The only nazorean document in the *New testament* that survives the Pauline revision more or less intact is the letter of James. Presumably due to its fame.

Paul made such headway in his first mission abroad that he was able to negotiate a compromise deal in Jerusalem with the apostles and elders of the nazorean community to “make no distinction between us and them”, ie Jews and god-fearers (Acts xiv, 9). There had been much criticism of Paul by those who demanded that all male converts be circumcised. He even claims to have been physically assaulted by “unbelieving Jews”. For the nazoreans the compromise struck in Jerusalem officially meant that the god-fearers would be treated as, what Hugh Schonfield calls, “resident aliens” (H Schonfield *The pentecost revolution* Shaftesbury 1985, p187). A letter is agreed. As

long as gentiles refrain “from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and what is strangled and from unchastity” then “you will do well” (Acts xv, 29). Furthermore James rules that Paul confine his activities to gentiles and on no account should he attempt to water down the stipulation that Jews observe the laws of Moses. The face-saving formulation gave Paul apostolic status amongst the gentiles but in return was designed to vouch safe for the nazoreans’ reputation for strict orthodoxy amongst fellow Jews.

The deal is broken. On his next two missions overseas which begin in the spring of 50 and end in 58 Paul recounts how he preached in the synagogues of the diaspora that Jesus’ crucifixion was necessary and generally proclaimed the equality between Jews and god-fearers on the basis of his increasingly non-Jewish views about Jesus the christ (Greek for chosen one) who was born to suffer. He also reveals to the authorities in Macedonia who have imprisoned him that he is a Roman citizen. Paul not only demands his release but an apology (Acts xvi, 37-38). Wherever he goes he stirs up the animosity of orthodox Jews. The nazoreans counter him by sending out their own cadre to his communities. No surprisingly Paul exhibits some trepidation about returning to Jerusalem. Nor is it surprising that when he does the nazorean community fears association with Paul. Unnamed brethren complain to him of the “thousands” of their followers who have been told “about you and that you teach all the Jews who are among the gentiles to forsake Mosses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs” (Acts xxi, 21).

It is mutually agreed that Paul would present himself as a penitent at the temple and undergo purification. Yet before the seven-day process can be completed he is recognised by “the Jews from Asia” (Acts xxi, 27). They, presumably backed by the zealot/sicari underground, rouse the masses to protest against the apostate. He is dragged out of the temple and would probably have been beaten to death unless Roman troops had not rushed to his rescue. As a Roman citizen Paul is taken into protective custody.

A sicari plot is uncovered to assassinate Paul. He is escorted out of Jerusalem under heavy guard: 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen and 200 spearmen accompany him to Caesarea (Acts xxiii, 23). Paul appeals to Nero and sails to Rome. However Paul’s fate becomes subsumed in the revolutionary situation rapidly developing in Judaea. The ‘fourth philosophy’ in its various manifestations is a palpable threat. The established order can no longer rule in the old way. Festus, the governor, is recalled by Nero and while Albinus was still on his way the high priest Ananus arranges the show trial and stoning of James in 62. Discontent reaches new heights. Ananus in turn will be executed by zealots in revolutionary Jerusalem. Paul himself was beheaded on the order of Nero in 64 as someone linked to Jewish subversives. A few months later the fire of Rome was blamed on the *chritiani*. Nero knew his scapegoat.

It was the uprising of 66 and the destruction of the Jerusalem which definitively separated the gentile congregation from its Jewish roots. Roman terror virtually extinguishes the nazoreans. The Pauline communities have every interest in distancing themselves from the Jewish national revolution. They therefore do everything possible to purge their doctrine of anything Jewish. The original tradition is overwritten and made as pro-Roman as circumstances allow. The christian Jesus therefore becomes the opposite of the historical Jesus●

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workers and peasants who are now labouring directly or indirectly for capital. We see their struggle as linked to our struggle to recreate ourselves as humanised, rather than capitalised human beings. That is why we need to strengthen the existing 'internationalism from below', giving it a voice - a human emancipatory and genuine communism, before we can move to more permanent organisation.

Now Dave does not locate the real contradictions of capitalist production in the class struggles associated with the continuous clash between capital and labour. Instead, "It is within the world market that capitalism assumes the greatest contradictions". Does this mean that we should join those socialist Jeremiahs, that ever hopeful band of crash-gazers? Despite the failure of previous predictions, it does not deter the 'true prophets'.

Gramsci hit upon the real significance of economic crises. It may be ruled out that immediate economic crises of themselves produce fundamental historic events; they can simply create a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought" (*Prison notebooks*). When we look, however, to Dave's distant communism, we find him still trapped in the reified world of the categories of capitalist political economy and the sphere of distribution so loved by all social democrats. "Capitalism is an exploitative commodity producing society ... regulated by value expressed in the relationship of wages, prices and profits". When Marx wrote *Capital*, he did not do this from the viewpoint of an objective social scientist/economist, but from the viewpoint of collective labour struggling to meet its human needs and create a new society, the possibility of which was latent within capitalism, but constantly suppressed by the controllers of capital. The prime political purpose of *Capital* was to get the working class to inscribe on its banners not "A fair day's work for a fair day's pay", nor even "We demand the full product of our labour", but "The abolition of the wages system". Yet even in Dave's postponed version of communism, the best he offers is "the power of productive labour to produce more socially useful goods and services" - nothing on the ending of wage slavery; no hint of transformed social relations between human beings. Dave's vision of communism, largely stripped of any wider prospect of human emancipation, provides a pretty narrow basis to oppose global capitalism's 'shop till you drop' view of our freedom. According to Dave, not only must we put away our finest banner until his 'international socialism' has almost been achieved, we should probably burn it now, since it will never be needed. In refusing to develop a genuine new communism for the millennium, Dave quietly drops a central feature of Marx's emancipatory vision of communism, just as Kautsky and all the centrists of the Second International did before him.

The real essence of capitalism, as Peter Hudis has pointed out, is "the reduction of concrete labouring activity into abstract labour through the medium of socially necessary labour time" (*Conceptualising an emancipatory alternative*). This standpoint places class struggle at the very centre of capitalism - the constant struggle between 'living labour' and the representatives of 'dead labour' to extend or limit socially necessary human needs. Because it is our labour power which creates all new value for the capitalist, each of us must be rewarded with some of this value in the form of wages, if only to prepare ourselves for tomorrow's "daily grind at the mill". The capitalists try to reduce this socially necessary labour to the minimum, the better to extract the maximum surplus labour. As workers, however, we try individually and collectively, through

industrial and political struggle, to maximise the proportion of value received as socially necessary labour time, the better to meet our needs. This creation of all new value, both the socially necessary and surplus labour, by the collective working class is the essence of the labour theory of value.

However, even a labour theory of value is still restricted to the viewpoint of capitalist political economy. What gave Marx the confidence to inscribe "The abolition of the wages system" on the communist banner was his adoption of the viewpoint of socialised humanity. By adopting such a viewpoint, Marx went beyond a classical political economy's labour theory of value and in effect argued a 'value theory of labour'. He showed why it was that the rewards of our labour are constantly being pushed down to what the capitalists think is 'socially necessary labour' and why political economy uses reified categories like wages, prices and profits. But he went further and showed us that under capitalist production relations labour is not only exploited but is the real creative pole of the capitalist production relationship. The capitalists' capital, formed by accumulating our past or 'dead' labour makes the capitalist class appear creative, to give them economic, social and political power. But their power is nothing but our own creative activity stolen and alienated. The major job for any workers' republic is to abolish wage slavery, and this, of course, is why Dave's undeclared programme of "revolutionary democracy" is not communist. His banner for a future workers' republic (if he was honestly to raise it) is "The wages system under workers' representative control".

If there is a distinction to be made between pre- and post-international revolutionary wave, revolutionary social democracy, it lies in the following. The older revolutionary social democracy clung to Marx's pre-Paris Commune view that socialism would come about by further perfecting and bringing the existing capitalist state 'under workers' control' - through socialist majorities in parliament and other levels of the state. Drawing on the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx later rejected his earlier view. He now boldly declared the need to smash the capitalist state machinery.

But in the period following the Paris Commune Marx went further, making his earlier slogan, "Abolish the wages system" more concrete. He showed us that workers' economic control could not be brought about just by placing the wages system under 'workers' control'. The whole wages system needed to be abolished. This requires a double mechanism. First, we have to take over direct control of production and distribution through combining as 'freely associated labour' - what was later understood as workers' councils. Secondly, our workers' councils must plan production and distribution directly on the basis of labour time. This eliminates the distinction between socially necessary and surplus labour and allows us collectively to agree what proportion of social labour is allocated to individuals (by means of labour certificates showing the hours we have worked) and what is reserved for the meeting of wider social needs, democratically decided by the workers' councils themselves.

If our workers' councils confine their role to 'political revolution', then the political 'representatives of labour' will develop a new power beyond our real control by mediating between what they see as the wider social interest and our 'local selfish' interests. It is only the direct collective control of labour time by each workers' council concerned which gives us the equivalent decisive power to that enjoyed by the owners and controllers of capital at present. This means 'political revolution' must be followed directly by 'economic revolution'. However, the purpose of

this is not to continue these two separate spheres inherited from capitalism, but to unite them in what amounts to 'social revolution' and overcome this division created by capitalism.

The failure of the infant USSR to move beyond the first requirement to begin the transition to socialism - the abolition of the capitalist state and its replacement by workers' councils - to the second requirement - the abolition of wage slavery and the beginning of the uprooting of the law of value, is the main reason why this model has to be superseded today to create a genuine new communism for the millennium. If we go back to Lenin's *State and revolution* we can see the theoretical embryo of this failure. Lenin refers to Marx's *Civil war in France*, enabling him to advocate a new commune state based on soviets. Furthermore, he also quotes extensively from Marx's *Critique of the Gotha programme*, getting very close to the need for production and distribution planned by workers' councils on the basis of labour time.

However, it is precisely at this point that Lenin moves away from Marx. For, despite his monumental efforts since grappling with the *Philosophical notebooks* in 1914, Lenin still clung to some of the revolutionary social democratic views of the pre-World War I Second International. In particular, he shared the view of socialism as the culmination of the 'objective' concentration and centralisation of production undertaken by monopoly capitalism. This looked to the state to continue the centralising process until production was fully nationalised and hence ripe for socialisation. Viewing society as would-be socialist administrators running a centralised system of production, revolutionary social democrats rejected Marx's lower phase of communism, organised as 'freely associated labour' abolishing wage slavery. Lenin, still taking his lead from the earlier social democratic revolutionary legacy, took its logic one step further.

"All citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of armed workers ... The whole society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and pay." Thus it is that Lenin, coming so close to Marx's genuine communism, ended up advocating instead a 'barracks socialism'. Revolutionary social democracy viewed the economic organisation bequeathed by monopoly capitalism as progressive. It did not see the need to abolish wage slavery (and also began to view Henry Ford's capitalist assembly line technology and workplace organisation favourably, too). Instead it tried to put the wages system 'under workers' control'. The experience of the whole last century is that this has no more provided the basis for a successful communist (or even socialist) transition, than placing parliament 'under workers' control' (electing social democratic governments). Furthermore, if we look at Lenin's quotes, we can see just how close they come to anticipating the society which triumphed under Stalin. The supervision by armed workers soon gave way to supervision of unarmed workers by socialist administrators, backed by the regular army, regular and secret police, as well as Party placemen at every level. Needless to say, equality of labour and pay were never implemented. But the Stalinist USSR certainly came close to being a society organised as "one big office" and "factory".

German social democrats clung on to their Marxist label until the 1953 Bad Godesburg conference - as long as they only claimed Marx's pre-Paris Commune view of socialism as the fullest 'parliamentary democracy under workers' control', this had some legitimacy. The official communists claimed more of Marx's legacy and accepted the need to smash the capitalist state, but

until official communism finally collapsed in 1991 they also clung to Marx's pre-1875 view of placing 'the wages system under workers' control'. Quite clearly, we can now see that both these views have led to disaster.

Yet Dave and others, in that shrinking band of dissident revolutionary social democrats, still want to cling on to a restricted vision of Marx, born out of the 'counter-revolution within the revolution'. Dave wants to refine this old revolutionary social democratic theory to make it more consistent. In complete opposition to Marx, who linked the need for 'freely associated labour' (workers' councils) with the abolition of wage slavery and the introduction of time labour accounting, Dave completely separates them. He protests vehemently against orthodox Trotskyist contributors to *Weekly Worker* that his version of 'revolutionary democracy' in no way denies the need to move to a 'workers state' with workers' councils wherever that is possible, ie nationally. But then silence - what are these workers' states to do? Do they manage capitalism until the 'United States of the World' has been achieved? Now, orthodox Trotskyists quite rightly believe that to state such a thing openly would hardly inspire workers to make a revolution. That is why there is an alternative neo-Kautskyist face to Trotskyism. Maybe we should just wait until the capitalists have created a fully integrated world market and state before we attempt to build socialism. The irony is that, despite heated debates on terminology, Dave (provided he does not slide into the neo-Kautskyist paralysis which is latent in his politics), the orthodox Trotskyists and the old Stalinists have the same post-revolutionary programme - 'the wage system under workers' control'.

What went wrong according to Dave is that the communists tried to build communism in one country. Dave has it completely wrong. It was the failure to successfully move fully to the first phase of communism which forced the retreat from international communism to national Bolshevism and hence state capitalism in one country. This failure was at least partly due (international factors undoubtedly played their part) to the attempt to limit communism to the view that it involved placing the 'wages system under workers' control'. This is what Dave is arguing we should advocate today, whilst reassuring us that the "economic revolution" will take care of the communist future. The most politically articulate members of the Bolsheviks and the Third International, who most vociferously opposed Lenin and the Bolshevik majority's retreat to national Bolshevism, had a more internationalist perspective than those who now argued for NEP, the capitalist 'transition to socialism' or later for state capitalist 'socialism in one country'. The first task of any successful workers' revolution will be to extend the revolution internationally. Despite Dave's attempts to characterise the debate in the RCN as a debate between 'international socialism' and 'socialism in one country', history has shown these two false alternatives are but the two faces of 'socialism in no country'. Dave does not seem to appreciate that (as long as he is still arguing for workers to seize power nationally) we will face the same immediate economic problems of isolation, whether we confine our programme to setting up workers' councils or move on to abolish wage slavery. International capitalism is not going to like it either way and will attempt to crush such efforts militarily or by an economic blockade causing undoubted hardships. (We can go further and point out that the major imperialist players are not even happy with mildly reforming governments which threaten to nationalise some local multinational facilities, such as Arbenz's challenge to the United Fruit

Company in Guatemala, or Mossadeq's challenge to Shell-BP in Iran). Therefore 'state capitalism under workers' control' faces the same problem as the first phase of genuine communism. The advantage of the latter is that workers have more effective and entrenched control of society. There is no separate state (whether it calls itself 'soviet', or is a party-state), which the imperialists can more easily focus their pressure on. Secondly, the example of genuine workers' control (as opposed to 'representative' or nominal workers' control) is a much greater inspiration to workers and the oppressed when it comes to spreading the international revolution.

The revolutionary social democratic vision no longer inspires confidence. Yet class struggle, often on an epic scale, continues today. What we lack is a genuine communist vision, rooted in today's realities. Whilst Marx insisted on winding up the first Communist League and then the First International, and working out the basis for a more adequate communist programme and organisation for periods 30 years apart, today we still face those who have retreated to a theological view disguised as science. There are various parties and sects claiming to be the true apostolic succession dating from 1917 or 1938. Dave cannot be accused of this. Instead he wants to edit and then preserve the resulting sacred texts as dogma.

The gospel according to Dave goes something like this: "Past attempts to achieve salvation (socialism/communism) have now revealed themselves to be false starts, because they have not found the necessary religious practice (technology) or taken sufficient account of god's will (the world market). However, information technology and the world market taken together form a beam of the perfect light. And true believers know that this perfect light is merely the opaque veil disguising the future 'international socialist' heaven on earth. However, we must be patient and show fortitude. At present we must follow Dave the sceptic and dismiss all premature attempts to move towards socialism. These can only be doomed to perdition (national socialism). But Dave still has faith in our salvation in the future, provided we follow him in the true religion. Now whilst Dave is clear as to the hell which awaits us if we try to seek a premature salvation, he is decidedly coy over the vales of tears and tribulation which millions of workers and oppressed have already experienced over the last century by giving unto Caesar what is Caesar's (continued capitalist production relations) whilst trying to seek mercy and tame his terrible anger through collective prayer ('workers' power')."

Dave is offering us a reconstruction of the 'Titanic'. He still has not come to terms with the events of the last century. "The brutality of Stalin's USSR, Mao's China, Kim Il Sung's North Korea, Ceasescu's Romania and Pol Pot's Kampuchea, along with the stifling of democracy, the bureaucratic privileges, the countless petty regulations, the economic waste and environmental destruction that characterised all the regimes where 'revolutionary' social democrats (calling themselves communists) have led to widespread distrust by workers towards those advocating a communist alternative. Despite the current crisis-ridden trajectory of international capitalism, with all the misery it brings in its train, the memory and failure of the official communist alternative remains the most important material factor preventing workers fighting for a new emancipatory alternative" (*Draft programme of the Communist Tendency*). Or, as Marx might have said, "The traditions of all the past generations (and the outdated thinking based on these) weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living" (*Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*) ●

Kashmir and freedom

Jim Gilbert assesses the response of India's left to the hijacking of Flight IC814

The Christmas eve hijack of Indian Airlines flight IC814 from Kathmandu ended with one hostage dead in Kandahar, Afghanistan, the five hijackers being permitted to leave and three Kashmiri militants released from jail. It also had India's extreme rightwing BJP government of prime minister Vajpayee ranting impotently against the 'hidden hand' of Pakistan and its Inter-Security Intelligence Agency (Pakistani secret service). As for the Kashmiri people, they overwhelmingly showed a certain sympathy for the hijackers. They do after all favour independence, but are held by force within the Indian state.

Maulana Masood Azhar, a leader of one of the pro-independence Kashmiri liberation struggle organisations and one of the three released by India in exchange for the hostages aboard the hijacked Indian airliner, had been held without trial since 1994. The other two, Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, an Indian Kashmiri, and Ahmed Umar Saeed Sheikh, a Pakistani-born British citizen, have not been seen in public. Speaking to a rally of 10,000 in Karachi on January 5, Azhar declared that the five hijackers were Indian Kashmiris and that they had returned to Kashmir: "They are preparing for their next assault." Clearly, India's Kashmir question is not going to go away.

India's establishment media was unsurprisingly universal in its condemnation of the hijackers' terrorism, moderated only by criticism of the government in its mishandling of the crisis itself. Kashmir and its people's rights took a back seat, swamped by media and state generated public outrage. Tucked away in some newspaper articles there was mention of 'autonomy', but then that is a term which can mean almost anything. In the course of the crisis, Indians of almost all political persuasions were united in their refusal to support Kashmiri rights, overwhelmingly rejecting any suggestion that self-determination should even be considered for discussion.

The only reported instance where dissidence amongst India's population outside of Kashmir occurred while the hijack was still going on, was when relatives of the 154 hostages aboard the Indian Airlines plane staged a demonstration at government offices in Delhi. They not only insisted that they be kept informed of developments, but that the government accede to the hijackers' demands. These relatives' attachment to India's territorial integrity was clearly too abstract when faced with a human issue: the threat to the lives of their loved ones.

Unfortunately for the world wide project of human liberation, none of India's motley communist parties and groups could be differentiated from India's bourgeois parties in their views on the hijack and Kashmir. The overall view of the Indian polity, including its 'official communists', is and was that the integrity of the Indian state's territory is inviolable. The main differences arise around how that inviolability is to be maintained, whether by direct, military force against the recalcitrant Kashmiris, whether attrition will wear them down, or whether they can bamboozled through social policy

None of India's motley communist parties and groups could be differentiated from India's bourgeoisie ... the integrity of the Indian state is inviolable

sops. Many liberal and radical Indians (including the 'official communists') imagine that once Kashmir was granted the right to secede, others such as the Tamils or the Sikhs/Punjabis would follow suit, not to mention the fractious northeasterners like the Nagas. This logically leads to the denial of the democratic rights of the Kashmiris, lining up the left, the centre, and the right behind the state's 'rights' rather than peoples' rights.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), India's largest 'official communist' party and the leading force in the left coalition running West Bengal, is only prepared to tackle the crisis in Kashmir by suggesting ameliorating social conditions from above, without involving Kashmiris except as supplicants. More than anything, the CPI(M) is intent on preserving the territory of the Indian union. It has no programme which recognises Kashmiri self-determination, which any communist worthy of the name would advocate. In the current issue of the CPI(M) weekly English language newspaper *People's democracy*, GN Malik praises the former United Front government of Deve Gowda and its "announcement of support to the state [of Jammu and Kashmir]." But then his, and presumably the CPI(M)'s, only solution to the present crisis is to assert that, "it is an established fact that only the political workers of all hues who can save the situation for the country ... with their myopic policy, the central and state governments have created such a situation that political workers are being hounded out [of Kashmir] ... [which is] not in the interest of the country and its democratic set-up. The situation demands united intervention by all the democratic and patriotic forces in the country so that the [Jammu and Kashmir] state's au-

tonomy could be restored and further strengthened ... something absolutely essential for overcoming the Kashmiri people's sense of alienation, re-integrate them into the national mainstream, and thus defend the unity and integrity of the nation." (*People's democracy* January 9 2000)

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), never averse to advocating Blanquist attacks on the Indian state, also took a distinctly nationalist line, contenting itself with criticising the government's handling of the hijack. "Close on the heels of the Kargil war, the Kandahar episode has come as yet another classic example of the Vajpayee government's comprehensive failure on the sensitive subject of national security." Defying logic, the CPI(ML) also trotted the usual cliché about seeing "the shadow of the invisible long hand of US imperialism". And this Maoist party could only manage the following conclusion in its statement following the hijacking: "The revolutionary left and other patriotic democratic forces must focus primarily on pinning down the Vajpayee government on the many facets of its internal failure and on the failure of its shady Kashmir diplomacy with the United States." Not one word did this 'revolutionary' party spare for the rights of the Kashmiri people.

What is the background to the Kashmiri question? British withdrawal in 1947 resulted in the disastrous partition between a hindu-majority dominion of India and a muslim-majority dominion of Pakistan (West and East, the latter seceding following the war in the 1970s and becoming Bangladesh). Partition trains literally dripping with blood arrived in India and Pakistan, full of murdered hindus and muslims. In this atmosphere, and complaining of Pakistan's military incursions, the British puppet hindu ruler of muslim-majority Kashmir, Sir Maharaja Hari Singh Dogra, decided that 'his' country would join India rather than Pakistan. No one asked the Kashmiris. As Hari Singh admitted to Lord Mountbatten, the last governor general of India: "The people of my State both the muslims and non-muslims generally have taken no part at all." The Indian army halted Pakistani tribal Lashkar forces outside Srinagar and attempted to take control of all Kashmir; after the 1947 war, Pakistan controlled 37% of Kashmiri territory, so-called 'Azad (Liberated) Kashmir', and India 63%. Currently, two million Kashmiris are refugees in Pakistan and elsewhere in the world, 4.3 million live within Pakistan controlled Kashmir, and 7.3 million live within Indian controlled Kashmir. In Indian controlled Kashmir there are 64% muslims and 36% non-muslims; there are only muslims in Pakistan controlled Kashmir.

Since independence from Britain in 1947, Pakistan and India have fought three wars in and over Kashmir, in 1947, 1962, and 1971. The 1971 ceasefire line became the current line of control separating the two countries. But within the last six months, military conflict flared up again when Pakistani-coordinated forces were repulsed by India's armed forces in the Kargil-Dras region of Kashmir, less than a year since both sides tested nuclear devices in a sabre-rattling exercise.

A poll conducted on behalf of India's *Outlook* news magazine in 1995 in Jammu and Kashmir found that 72% thought independence would bring peace to the region, 80% thought that

elections are no answer to the problem, and 90% thought that Indian armed forces were guilty of a high level of human rights violations in Kashmir. Official figures show that 20,000 people have been killed in Kashmir since early 1990, when the present insurgency began; but figures maintained by hospitals, journalists, and lawyers suggest that over 52,000 Kashmiris between the ages of 15 and 35 have been killed in the past nine years. More than 175,000 hindus and muslims have been displaced from their homes. Over 40,000 Kashmiris are in illegal detention without trial in Indian jails, their families not informed of where they are being held.

To contain the insurgency and demoralise its mass support base, India sent 300,000 soldiers into densely populated civilian areas of Kashmir. As a result, the minority Kashmiri Pandit (hindu) community has been uprooted as communalist tensions have turned even nastier, and are mostly now living as internal refugees.

Pakistan's governments have tried to rely on resolutions of the United Nations from 1948 onwards to bolster its claim to Kashmir. Something continued by the present military government in Karachi.

However, under the UN definition the right to self-determination does not exist in any sense consistent democrats would understand it. For the UN self-determination does not mean the right to secede if the 'parent state' is an independent one, a decolonised one. The UN has defined self-determination in such a way that it is restricted to meaning only devolution of power, regional autonomy, and minority rights; but secession, an absolutely essential element, is denied. Given the nature of the UN, of course, this is hardly surprising.

The only hope for Kashmir's people in their present circumstances, having faced the depredations of the Indian army's jawans (privates) over more than a decade, lies not in some international forum of nation states (the UN) or the International Court of Justice. No, their democratic demand for self-determination, untrammelled by interference from the two states jostling to dominate them, lies with the working class in both India and Pakistan, but primarily that of India.

As consistent democrats communists in India must raise the demand for self-determination for the Kashmiri people, up to and including the right to secession. In Britain, we have a similar duty to support the self-determination of the Irish people.

Pakistan's working class, too, must demand the right to self-determination for Kashmiris, especially including those millions within Pakistan-controlled Azad Kashmir. Pakistan can have no right to hold onto a third of Kashmir's population without a free vote. 'Azad' does not mean 'liberated' if there is no democracy. There does, however, not appear to be a movement for independence within the Pakistan held parts of Kashmir. Whether or not that would change if Indian Kashmir got self-determination is another matter.

Yet, among the Kashmiri people straining under the yoke of Indian oppression there is very little enthusiasm for a rai shumari (plebiscite) which would confine them to exchanging life under India for life under Pakistan. Pakistan is, after all, one of the world's poorest countries (ranked 132 out of 173 in terms of human development) and there is a huge democratic deficit. A real choice by rai shumari would include the right to opt for independence, for the true ability to make a decision by and for a people.

Finally, there is another aspect of the whole question of self-determination for Kashmir that has interesting parallels in current discussions within and around the CPGB over the future of the British-Irish within a united Ireland, and that is the position of the large hindu minority within Indian occupied Kashmir, particularly in the clearly delineated territory of Jammu (which is two thirds Hindu, one third muslim), and of the other large non-muslim minority in areas such as Ladakh (which is half Buddhist, half muslim). Communists would surely urge as a key component of a consistent revolutionary democratic programme that the democratic rights of these groups Jammu and Kashmir should be fully respected. To the extent that there is a national question hindus and buddhists in definite territories within Kashmir must have the right to self-determination. Consistent democracy demands it ●

Fighting fund

New year

As is to be expected, funds have not been flooding into the *Weekly Worker* offices over the holiday period. The December fund barely scraped home and January's has gotten off to less than a flying start.

The seasonally expanded twelve-page *Weekly Worker* that fell onto doormats before Christmas could become a regular event if only we can maintain - and indeed increase - the flow of money into the coffers.

Last year saw a number of our readers take out standing orders to support the paper. We urge more of you to take this step in 2000. Regular income allows us to plan

the expansion of the paper - important if we are to give full coverage to developments on the left and the workers' movement in general.

We have great ambitions for the *Weekly Worker* in the new millennium. But it is up to you to make this possible! Time to step up your political and - crucially - financial contributions. Start today - ask for a standing order form ●

Robbie Rix

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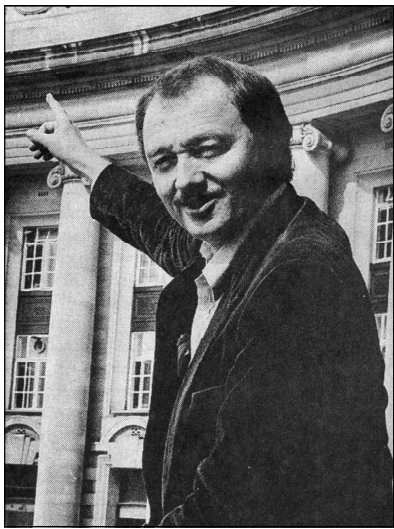
Aggregate Debating London tactics

The last CPGB aggregate of 1999 took place in London on December 19. Those present included comrades from Scotland and Wales as well as England. Besides members a number of supporters of the CPGB attended along with a comrade from the Revolutionary Democratic Group. Unfortunately quite a few CPGB members were unable to attend, Christmas and family duties taking their toll.

The first item on the agenda was a report by comrade Mark Fischer on the work of the London Socialist Alliance and the participation of the CPGB in it. The LSA is talking positive steps preparing for May's Greater London Assembly elections. Comrade Fischer reminded the meeting that last May the LSA failed to take part in the European election because of the capitulation of the SWP to Scargill and his moribund Socialist Labour Party. Once the SWP withdraw other groups flaked off leaving the CPGB to stand alone. The role of the SWP remains pivotal. The LSA meeting on December 15, it was reported, was conducted in a positive and cooperative spirit, with the SWP taking a full part, including donating £1000 and nominating a leading member to work on the election subcommittee. The Socialist Party in England and Wales, in contrast, has made only a tentative commitment to the LSA. Their representatives were annoyed when the LSA voted on December 15 to oppose all immigration controls. The SP advocated a formula of opposition only to racist immigration controls, on the grounds that the public would not accept the more principled formulation. The question can be fruitfully debated - let the SP publically defend its dishonesty. It should also be stressed that the CPGB has - as the extreme left of the LSA - has many differences with the majorities' manifesto. We will openly criticise what we disagree with while tirelessly working for the common interest.

The LSA is pressing ahead with preparations to stand its own candidates in the GLA elections, but is also willing to cooperate with other left forces, including the Campaign Against Tube Privatisation, which has committed itself to standing a full slate of PR candidates. As comrade Fischer wrote in the *Weekly Worker* (December 16), the CATP has, under the influence of Fisc, displayed a contemptuous attitude to the LSA. It is hostile to what it calls small left sectarian groups. But there has been some contact and negotiation between the CATP and the LSA. The situation remains fluid. The LSA has also declared itself open to the possibility of cooperation with a potential Livingstone-backed slate of GLA candidates, if Livingstone does break from the Labour Party and forms his own independent organisation.

Comrade Marcus Larsen supplemented comrade Fischer's report. He emphasised the importance of the SWP as the center of gravity of the LSA, and welcomed its recent shift from the conservative to the activist wing of the organisation. He also mentioned the problem of localism, in the form of Nick Long - who was till his resignation in January LSA chair. He wants us to stand only in boroughs where "we can build real socialist alliances." Long was criticised at the December 15 LSA meeting for attacking the AWL in the *Observer*. Comrades were reminded that it was Nick Long who participated in the anti-communist witch hunt in Scargill's SLP and



Livingstone: communists need coherent tactics

Our goal is to organise the advanced part of the working class into a mass Communist Party equipped with a revolutionary programme ... all our tactics serve that end

who effectively attempted to exclude the CPGB from participation in the reestablishment of the LSA by arranging for things to happen during the CPGB's Communist University 99. In the discussion of comrade Fischer's report, the view was put forward that Long is a rightwing sectarian and should be exposed as such.

Answering questions, comrade Fischer stated that although the make up of the LSA slate has not yet been decided, the CPGB intends to take a full part, including by putting forward and paying for a candidate. Regarding the SWP, he said the rank and file has now been informed of their leadership's participation in the LSA and new willingness to stand in elections, although the lack of openness makes it difficult to judge to what extent they support the new line. Summing up, comrade Fischer said that events have forced the SWP, and other former auto-labourites such as Workers Power, to act in advance of their theory. They can no longer advocate voting New Labour, but have not yet theorised an alternative.

The main business of the day was a debate on the draft theses on the Labour Party and Livingstone written by comrade Jack Conrad and published in *Weekly Worker* November 18. Comrade Conrad spoke on his theses, and there was a full debate (there were 29 contributions with supporters taking a full part in the discussion). Comrades were all given ample time to expand upon their attitude towards this important subject. De-

bate lasted over four hours. CPGB members then voted overwhelmingly to accept the theses, with no votes against and only one abstention.

Introducing his theses, comrade Conrad described the way the selection of a mayoral candidate has caused a crisis in both the Tory and Labour parties. The selection panel set up by the Labour Party with the specific purpose of excluding Livingstone was forced to keep him on the list, because of mass pressure from below and the knowledge that if he stood as an independent Livingstone would defeat any official Labour candidate. Livingstone's inclusion on the Labour shortlist is not a manifestation of Labour Party democracy. It is a consequence of the left mood of the masses in London, and their idealised memories of the days of Livingstone's Greater London Council. If Livingstone is not selected as official Labour candidate, he could stand independently with his own slate of GLA candidates. He would be expelled from Labour under those circumstances and the real opposition to Blair would come not from the Tories, who are in total disarray, but from the new assembly across the other side of the Thames. Our job as communists is to intervene actively in this fluid political situation, and to do this we must sympathetically relate to those in Livingstone's campaign, and try to influence it in a direction which sees a mass split from Blairism.

Comrade Conrad expected critics to complain that the new position outlined in his theses is a break from the Leninist purity of the past, and to accuse him of objectively supporting New Labour. In fact our real aim is to historically break the hold Labourism - left as well as right - has over our class. We are open about this. Our goal is to organise the advanced part of the working class into a mass Communist Party equipped with a revolutionary programme, and all our tactics are designed to serve that end. If they do that they are legitimate. We need new tactics for the changed situation. Those who tie themselves to old tactics fail to understand revolutionary method, argued the comrade.

Comrade Conrad's most stubborn critic within the CPGB was comrade John Pearson. He denied the charge of failing to understand the relationship between tactics and strategy, and argued that the adoption of particular tactics should not affect the principle that we always tell the working class what is true and what is important. If we are to adopt new tactics, this should not be at the expense of softening what we say about the Labour Party. He contrasted theses two and three with comrade Conrad's description of the Labour Party in his book, *In the Enemy Camp*, (1993) as "a workers' party of the monopoly bourgeoisie", "a party of counterrevolution" which "loyally served British imperialism in a few left groups specifically. He began with the Socialist Party. In *Perspectives '99* we noted that the SP was "in a tail-spin to destruction". A year later the SP is now well advanced on the road to liquidation.

As to the SWP, as predicted in *Perspectives '99*, its electoral turn has continued to create tensions. The leadership will now be faced with the programme question - new tensions will arise. The state of the Scottish Socialist Party was also discussed. The CWI in Scotland looks set to split, while the CPGB is establishing comradely relations with the Republican Communist Network - which is primarily based in Scotland ●

Pearson said it is nauseating for the CPGB to enter a new century supporting old Labour against new Labour, which is what support for Livingstone objectively amounts to. He said a better strategy for precipitating a crisis of Labourism and splitting the advanced working class from it would be to campaign for more trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party.

The theses were extensively debated, with several comrades expressing reservations about the wording of individual theses. Some comrades, for example, agreed with theses one to eight but described theses nine to 11 as "weak". The question was raised as to whether support for Livingstone should be conditional on his acceptance of a minimum programme. This has been the CPGB tactic in relation to Labourite politicians in the past, but most comrades agreed that in the current conditions of mass support for Livingstone that an unthinking repetition of these tactics would be hopelessly sectarian.

Despite these reservations and disagreements the decisiveness of the vote to accept the theses indicates that CPGB members believe they contain an accurate analysis of the current situation and that the new tactics provide our organisation with the best chance to intervene positively in the evolving crisis in New Labour.

The final item on the agenda was a review of the CPGB's *Perspectives '99* document, as part of the preparation of *Perspectives 2000* which is due to be circulated later this month. National organiser Mark Fischer opened the discussion on *Perspectives '99*, critically comparing developments during the year with our analysis and plans published a year earlier - see *Weekly Worker* December 17 1998. The comrade concentrated on the section on the politics of the working class. He remarked that we are now entering a phase of change. However, the period of reaction continues, as does the decline of the left. Many left groups are characterised by programmatic incoherence and organisational decay. We do not welcome the disintegration of political rivals. As it states in *Perspectives '99*, "Without a strong revolutionary pole of attraction, all we see is the dispersal of working class cadre to the winds". We will continue patiently to work to overcome sectarianism and unite the left. However, this goal is not an end in itself. Our central project remains the fight for a reformed Communist Party. As stated in *Perspectives '99*, this is a class project, not one reliant on the left as currently constituted. The class matters more to us than any array of sects. When there is movement from below, we should concentrate on building links with the masses.

Comrade Fischer discussed developments in a few left groups specifically. He began with the Socialist Party. In *Perspectives '99* we noted that the SP was "in a tail-spin to destruction". A year later the SP is now well advanced on the road to liquidation.

As to the SWP, as predicted in *Perspectives '99*, its electoral turn has continued to create tensions. The leadership will now be faced with the programme question - new tensions will arise. The state of the Scottish Socialist Party was also discussed. The CWI in Scotland looks set to split, while the CPGB is establishing comradely relations with the Republican Communist Network - which is primarily based in Scotland ●

Mary Godwin

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.

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Tom Delargy reports on Scotland

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SSP factions unite

The Republican Communist Network in Scotland held a meeting on Saturday 8 January in Edinburgh. It was organised in the hope of coordinating the intervention of the far left at the Scottish Socialist Party's two-day conference in February. Representatives came from Socialist Outlook, Alliance for Workers Liberty, Campaign for a Federal Republic, Red Republicans, Glasgow Marxist Forum and other non-aligned leftists.

I am pleased to report that debate was conducted in a fraternal manner, with no self-censorship or fear that views would be stifled. Also, at least as important, it was apparent to everyone that no one was able to automatically carry a majority simply out of deference to a 'charismatic' leader, nor to someone having smuggled in a bunch of brain-dead voting fodder. Everyone felt able to raise amendments to proposed conference motions, and to argue the toss over the tactics necessary to get them onto the conference agenda in the first place, and on how to persuade conference to endorse them. I do not think anyone is in any doubt that the breadth and diversity of forces at the meeting represents an enormous strength, and that positive contributions were made by all. In the process of democratic debate, minds were changed. People not only switched sides but, occasionally, switched back again. Even when a clear majority emerged, no attempt was made to prematurely rush to a quick vote without first trying to win unanimity - or at least give the dissidents ample opportunity to fully explain the nature of their opposition.

This is extremely important, as it enables the minority to influence the majority group if its policies are mistaken. Also, if a minority can, in time, say to the rest "I told you so", then they have every right to do so. The rest of us ought, in such circumstances, to give them due credit and listen with more care and attention to what they say on related matters in the future. A motion was drawn up on Ireland by Allan Armstrong. In what is likely to become a precedent inside the RCN, the AWL representative, Stan Crooke, went out for a smoke at this point. This made sense to everybody since there is little potential for a meeting of minds on this question between the AWL and the rest of us in the foreseeable future. Yet both the AWL and the rest are grown-ups. We should not let differences on one or more important issues cripple the potential for unity. I personally would argue that the RCN endorses at least 90% of the contents of the AWL draft for their proposed SSP faction.

While minor differences within the RCN on Ireland no doubt fester beneath the surface, there appears to be a basic agreement. Our views should be known to regular *Weekly Worker* readers as they have been expressed in articles written by Allan Armstrong,

Dave Craig, myself and by other non-RCN critics of Jack Conrad's theses. The only significant change to Allan's document was proposed by Sandy McBurney. In the original draft, the anti-catholic 'Act of Settlement' was used as a pretext for the SSP to not call for an immediate end to all religious segregation in schools.

It did not take too much prompting from the meeting to persuade Allan that this was a serious mistake, and the text was reworded. The debate around the draft motion on republicanism saw not one but two seismic shifts inside the constituent parts of the RCN. Drawn up in advance by members of the CFR, it did not call for an exclusively Scottish solution to the problems posed by the hereditary monarchy - this being the norm inside the SSP. In a welcome break from the past, the Red Republicans raised no objections to the CFR motion's implicit call for the overthrow of the monarchy throughout the United Kingdom.

I consider that this is a great achievement, and fully justifies the decision of the CFR and the Red Republicans to drag themselves beyond their respective sectarian ghettos and to invite others on the SSP left to join them in the RCN. What happened next was a far bigger surprise and more welcome still.

Having made this concession to the RCN majority, the CFR seemed surprised to find themselves suddenly targeted by the Red Republicans. A temporary alliance formed at this point between those who advocate, in the first place, a Scottish Workers' Republic, on the one hand, and, on the other, those who are agnostic, if not openly hostile, to the idea of Scottish independence. The temporary allies of the Red Republicans in this instance advocate an all-Britain Workers' Republic.

This latter group are themselves subdivided into two camps: there are those who want a centralised workers' republic (Sandy McBurney's preference), and there are those who want a federal workers republic (my own preference). We all insisted on calling for a discussion on the meaning the CFR attaches to their "modern democratic republic". By this, do they mean what is generally meant: a normal bourgeoisie republic along the lines of the USA and Germany? Under relentless questioning, Mary Ward eventually conceded that it was legitimate for the CFR to be forced to differentiate the kind of republic they advocate from that of what everyone else thinks they must mean.

Mary argued that since, contrary to what everyone else feared, the CFR will not content themselves with a bourgeoisie republic, then, by implication, they must designate it as a socialist, or as a workers', republic. Nick Clarke put up much greater resistance. In time, though, he too was won over. The RCN managed, unanimously, to agree on the following conference motion: "The SSP is com-

mitted to the abolition of the monarchy and all crown powers without recourse to referenda and to campaign for wider political democratic demands, and to a genuinely democratic workers' republic free from all vestiges of feudalism". While I am over the moon that the CFR were persuaded to make this historic concession to their critics, I suspect that Dave Craig, and the CPGB PCC, might need some convincing. Some excellent contributions from Marcus Larsen, in the *Weekly Worker* and on the AWL website, suggests that he is already clear in his own mind that all references by him to "democratic republic" are synonyms for workers' (or proletarian) republic, modelled along the lines of the Paris Commune and the early months of Soviet Russia. It is time for the CPGB to be as explicit as Marcus about this matter.

The main debate, though, centred around the CFR's proposed constitutional amendments. There was an alternative draft to one agreed by the SSP's executive committee. This, along with a motion proposed by East of Scotland SSP organiser Colin Fox, represents a serious attack on the democratic structures of the party. Only Campbell McGregor of Socialist Outlook saw any merit in the executive's proposal of a delegate based conference, everyone else favouring the retention (and, where possible, strengthening) of a direct democracy that encourages the widest possible participation of the membership in policy formation. This executive proposal, along with Colin Fox's advocacy that branch representatives to each national council should be elected for a full year (rather than to be recallable and subject to re-election prior to each NC meeting) proves that, far from being a 'party of a new type', the SSP is in imminent danger of degenerating to a very familiar and discredited model.

The SSP policy of a workers' MP on a workers' wage is taken from the Paris Commune. If those other principles drawn from the Paris Commune (an annual conference based on direct democracy, and on the recallability of delegates) are junked, how much longer before justifications for "socialist differentials", rewards for "responsibility", become the order of the day? The cult of the personality, the norm inside all bureaucratic workers' organisations, has been latent in the SSP from the very beginning.

One of the most nauseating expressions of this trend is the fact that the editor of *Scottish Socialist Voice* misses no opportunity to splash a smiling mugshot of party spokespersons, and regular *SSV* columnists, in the paper. The CFR motion tried to cut party spokespersons down to size by insisting that they only have the right to propose motions to conference when they relate to their brief, rather than, as the executive wants, to give such individuals rights on a par with that of entire branches. In what, on the face of it, looks like a

concession to tendencies, the executive has proposed that, from next year, factions ought to have the automatic right to present conference with a motion in their own name. However, in return for this concession, certain riders were added. Factions, for the first time, will be required to have at least ten fully paid up members of the SSP, the names of members have to be registered with the executive, and names which appear in one faction list cannot feature in any other. Objections were raised to every one of these provisos. None of us can accept a situation where members are forced to choose between factions.

The project the RCN has set itself, of uniting the fragments of the SSP revolutionary left, would come to an end if this bureaucratic ultimatum went through: this is one possible explanation for why the idea has suddenly appeared now. Yet, speaking personally, I do not want a situation where ten people can all belong to ten (or more) factions, thinking themselves entitled to unwarranted rights at the expense of other individuals, - ie, those who choose not to join any faction. I can equally see the sense of factions of vastly differing sizes having somewhat different rights. A faction of three people cannot reasonably expect to have the same rights as one of 50 or 100 just because their members assess their own ideas as especially praiseworthy. This, in my opinion, would be to abuse the democratic procedures of the party.

If a faction wants to run away from this challenge, then it is stating that it wants to be free from any incentive to recruit. It is exposing itself as perfectly satisfied with languishing as an uninfluential pressure group of two or three. I argued that if the RCN refuses to address these arguments, this could cost us dear at conference.

RCN comrades took little convincing that our motion had to address the key issue of our democratic right to representation on leadership bodies, rather than to content ourselves with being allowed to let off steam once a year at conference - something the SSP leadership could quite easily live with. I, therefore, proposed that our constitutional amendment included a guarantee that factions are entitled to one representative to each national council, with observer status. The SSP membership badly needs its own Freedom of Information Bill. We know, for instance, that the NC was paralysed for months on whether or not to support/organise a campaign of mass non-payment of student fees. Yet, despite the support for such a campaign from all SSP factions (the AWL, CFR, Red Republicans and, last but by no means least, the overwhelmingly dominant SCWI), the NC managed to keep the entire membership in the dark as to who precisely was acting as the social democratic break on the militant ranks of the party. Here we have the exact opposite of democracy.

Just how can the membership be

genuinely free to vote for our representatives to the NC, executive, *SSV* editorial board, area organisers, party spokespersons, or anyone else, if those who seek to fill these positions do not have the guts to tell us how they voted in the past. If our existing elected officials do not have the courage of their convictions, then they should make way for others who do. Factional representation on the NC would seem to be a prerequisite for informing the membership as to the nature of debates at the top of the party. It is also essential to ensure that no undeclared leadership faction can abuse the levers of power inside the SSP. We need such representation to be in a position to alert the entire membership of any attempts by the leadership to bureaucratically suppress those in the minority who aspire to persuade the party as a whole to adopt their policies.

While I had anticipated that other RCN members might want to go still further, and to advocate that factions have the right to send representatives with full voting rights, it was unanimously agreed not to push our luck. Besides, token representation can be no substitute for our winning the respect of other comrades through consistent work on the ground. On the contrary, it could breed hostility amongst the large section of the party not belonging to any faction, thereby lowering the prospects of our members winning a democratic mandate from our respective branches to full representation on the NC. Once again, I wanted to restrict this right to those factions with 10 or more members and, again, I was outvoted. As a democrat, I will, of course, go along with the RCN majority decision.

However, I would appeal to all RCN members to keep their ears to the ground. If it becomes clear that we will be forced to choose between limiting this right to factions of ten members (a barrier that the RCN has no problem with) or to lose it altogether, then it would be insane of us not to make the necessary compromise. Those factions with fewer members can come in behind the RCN and, simultaneously, seek to recruit additional members behind their own, more exclusive, factional banner. Shortly before the meeting broke up, Allan Armstrong proposed that members of the Glasgow Marxist Forum draw up a motion calling on the SSP to sponsor similar forums in Edinburgh, Dundee and elsewhere.

John MacLean, much lauded inside the SSP has entered the history books partly as a consequence of the tireless work he put in to educating workers in Marxist economics and on the history of class struggles. If the SSP leadership does support socialist unity, and if it also places a high priority on Marxist education (as the SCWI executive claims), then they will find it impossible to argue against the setting up of such forums open to SSP members and non-SSP members alike ●