



# weekly **worker**



**Open letter to Tusc from CPGB:  
Clive Heemskerk sets down  
worrying terms and conditions**

- Tusc and Bob Crow
- Oppose Islam4UK ban
- Hans Werner Henze
- Ecology and economism

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Towards a Communist Party of the European Union

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# No act of god



## LETTERS



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

## Sex and power

It was with great horror and astonishment that I read SKS's letter about the age of consent (September 17 2009).

His reactionary tirade recycles a number of platitudes popular among anti-sex feminists during the 1980s. The most damaging among these is an overly simplistic and reductionist view of sexuality. Because sexuality involves people enmeshed in power relations, it is easy to point to a single axis along which inequality between two categories of people exists and use that inequality to question the consensuality of any sexual behaviour between them.

So, for instance, adults have economic and political power, while children and adolescents have comparatively little. Therefore, any sexual activity between minors and adults is by definition abuse. According to this logic, the power to enjoy or to consent to sexual relationships is carelessly reduced to how power operates in another dimension of social existence. The idea that sexuality might have relative autonomy from other modes of cultural and economic domination is dismissed. And anybody who questions the dismissal, especially if he is a man, is subject to suspicions of wanting to 'fuck anything in sight'.

Yet much can be learned from how these arguments about power are deployed. We rarely, if ever, see people like SKS arguing that sexual relationships between capitalists and proletarians, between geniuses and the less intelligent, or between bodybuilders and beanpoles, ought to be criminalised categorically. Certainly, the capitalist's greater prosperity, the genius's intellectual facility, and the bodybuilder's brute physical strength bestow upon them advantages in certain social contexts, and these contexts can complicate the question of sexual consent. But almost nobody would claim that relationships between members of these social groups are *a priori* not mutually consensual and enjoyable. Talk about confusing.

Why is age singled out from these other power dynamics? According to SKS, the answer lies in scientific studies showing that young people and adults are sexually "very different" and "incompatible".

The characterisations "incompatible" and "very different" do not sound scientific to me, but since SKS does not cite any specific studies, we can hope that the unnamed publications he touts are more reliable than early sexological studies that made similar claims about interracial sex. Following the lead of other Marxists (like those who released the edited volume *Pink triangles*), I am more inclined to approach the question from a historical materialist perspective. Like them, I think the answer has less to do with science than with the merger of capitalism's requirements with anti-sex religious and political traditions.

Whatever the answer, it should be informed by young people's voices rather than anti-sex moralising and half-baked references to ideologically driven scientific studies. It should recognise that young people are sexual beings with sexual desires, while also recognising that they are relatively disempowered both economically and politically. How to reconcile these facts is a tricky and urgent problem. It requires attention to, among other things, the power

dynamics of age, professional relationship and class, each of which differs on a case-by-case basis. But it also requires that we abandon the age-of-consent laws as a failed, authoritarian model for understanding and regulating sexual behaviour.

The Communist Party of Great Britain should be lauded for understanding this, and taking a properly Marxist approach, even if SKS cannot and will not.

**Clark**  
Toronto

## Infantile

James Turley's use of the term 'demand' rather than 'policy' is both an anachronism and infantilism (Letters, January 14).

Infants make demands for things that they are unable to get for themselves: they demand an ice-cream, an Xbox or a new Barbie. Adults go out and buy them for themselves. If a leftwing party puts forward a list of 'demands', they appear in a similar childish light.

There is also an anachronistic element in that they refer back to a time before universal suffrage or the establishment of parliamentary sovereignty - a time in 19th century Bismarckian Germany. In a period when the working class movement aimed to achieve full civil rights that they did not yet have, there appeared no alternative to demanding them.

But more than a century has passed since such formulations. Communist parties that gained power did not have 'demands' in their programmes: they had policies that they intended to carry out once in power. Gottwald and the Czech party did not demand the expropriation of the landlord class or the nationalisation of industry: they promised it. Mao and the Chinese party did not demand New Democracy: they organised an army to win it.

When socialists address economic problems, they should formulate policies that, when put into practice, would solve the problems. They have to break with the mentality of small campaigning groups and say what they would do if they had power. If they criticise government policies, it should be in terms of saying exactly what should be done instead.

This point is independent of how you think power is to be won. If you are an old Attlee or Benn-style social democrat, you are talking of what an elected government will do. If you are an advocate of direct democracy, you are talking about what policies you hope to put forward and argue for in citizens' initiatives. But in either case concrete policies are needed.

**Paul Cockshott**  
email

## Here and now

James Turley should not feel too despondent at waking up to find he was arguing Lassallean, not Marxist, politics in calling for the bourgeois state to nationalise the banks. As Hal Draper points out, as far back as the German SPD, the 'Marxist' movement has been influenced far more by Lassalle than Marx - hence its statism.

James is right to say that I have had many arguments with the Alliance for Workers' Liberty over Iraq and the demand for 'troops out now'. However, in all of those arguments, I made absolutely clear that I was highly sympathetic to the point that simply raising this demand could easily be interpreted either as a pacifistic appeal to imperialism to act morally or else, as in the case of the Socialist Workers Party, amounted to nothing more than a call for the victory of the clerical-fascist enemies of the Iraqi workers.

The whole point of my argument, as

with that subsequently put forward by David Broder and others, was that it was possible to make the call for 'troops out' within the context of this being a mobilising demand for the self-activity of the Iraqi workers. But I was also keen to point out that, although such a demand could act to mobilise workers in Britain and the United States to take direct action, it could not be seen as a means of actually stopping the war, short of a direct challenge for state power.

As Trotsky said, "Where and when has an oppressed proletariat controlled the foreign policy of the bourgeoisie and the activities of its army? How can it achieve this when the entire power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie? In order to lead the army, it is necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize power. There is no other road. But the new policy of the Communist International implies the renunciation of this only road."

It is essentially the same point he made in relation to the demand for the nationalisation of the banks. Outside a revolutionary situation in which the workers are challenging for state power, such demands amount to nothing more than pure reformism and act to mislead the working class. And, if the workers are to be mobilised, then the point of the mobilisation should be to achieve something of actual benefit to the workers, such as getting the troops out.

But what actual benefit to the workers does state capitalist nationalisation bring? It clearly has benefits for capital, but all experience of nationalisation shows that it is merely a means of the capitalist state carrying through rationalisation, of recapitalisation, and raising the rate of profit through more effective exploitation of the workers. James can refer us to the demand for 'workers' control', as the Lassalleans did, but, I repeat, under present conditions what chance is there of achieving that and, even if it were possible, how long would it last short of an actual overturn of the state?

Moreover, if 'independent working class action' or 'self-activity' is to be reduced simply to such calls for the bourgeois state to introduce such reforms, why not extend it further? Why not raise the demand for the state to introduce 'arbitration bodies under workers' control', so that workers did not have to bother with such tedious things as strikes to achieve their ends?

This is why Marx in the *Critique of the Gotha programme* pointed out that it was precisely the fact that the workers' cooperatives were the direct product of the workers' own self-activity that gave them their progressive character. Engels, in particular, made the argument that where firms were closing down the workers should take them over and run them as cooperatives. He argued vehemently against calls within the SPD for the bourgeois state to take the lead through state aid.

When Northern Rock failed, the workers should have occupied it and taken it over with the support of its customers. That could have acted as a spark to workers in other banks to have done the same. It could have linked up with the occupations at Visteon and Vestas, and set a precedent. It could still act as a precedent for Royal Mail workers.

That has been the experience in Argentina and, under such conditions, the workers do not have to beg for workers' control: the very nature of their ownership gives it to them. They do not have to continually engage in a battle with the state capitalist owner of those means of production, because they are themselves the owner. And, under

those conditions, the demand for 'state aid', to be treated the same as any other business, takes on a completely different character.

What is more, in the case of the banks, we already have a cooperative bank that such worker-owned banks could have tied in with, mobilising the entire labour movement around a demand for the democratisation of the existing cooperative sector and for the democratisation of the trade unions that would be necessary to implement real workers' control. It could tie into the demand that workers have control over their pension funds, amounting to around £500 billion, to be placed with the workers' own banking and financial cooperative.

None of this requires waiting until some future date of overthrowing the existing state, or appeals for it to act in workers' interests, but is achievable here and now by workers' own self-activity in the true sense of the term.

**Arthur Bough**  
email

## Green bubble

Paul B Smith is right to identify the concept of capitalist decline as a breakdown in the functioning of the law of value and the fact that the 'free market' becomes a contradiction in terms (Letters, January 14).

The state has assumed the role of a life-support machine for capitalism, pumping into the banks huge sums of money to prevent the thing from completely dying, whilst wages are cut (primarily by cutting hours) and pension funds raided.

The latest phase in the breakdown of the system is surely encapsulated in the weird phenomenon known as 'green economics', which Barack Obama and Gordon Brown are eager to promote. Under green economics, production that is held to disturb nature is fined, whilst the decline of manufacturing gets rewarded. Subsequently, there is a 'carbon market' that was worth \$64 billion in 2007.

Carbon dioxide, as a waste product, has no use, yet it is exchanged as if it had value. The price of carbon can only be determined by bureaucratically invented targets regarding how much carbon needs to be purged from production (in Britain, 60% by 2050). The carbon market, by penalising actual producers, allows for a transfer of funds from the productive economies of the east to stagnant economies like Britain's. In turn, some of this money gets paid to underdeveloped regions in order that they do not develop (the trees must be left standing).

The green economic bubble that is being created here depends on brainwashing the world with environmentalist ideology. Thus the Copenhagen summit was billed as a success, not because it achieved anything concrete regarding global warming, but because it encouraged everyone to think green. Commodity fetishism has been tweaked to imply we should fetishise green products and sneer at ungreen products. Green products are notoriously more expensive - I recently saw a notebook made from recycled elephant shit retailing for £5, 10 times the price of an ungreen notebook.

For paying the extra money, you are supposed to get a warm green glow inside. People who buy the green products are labelled 'ethical shoppers' and they look down on everyone else. Thus green economics provides the elite with a sense that they are special in an age where old-fashioned ideas of racial supremacy are no longer acceptable.

The green bubble, like all bubbles, will pop one day. But there is an urgent

need for a critique of green economics, so that we can understand what is going on when that happens.

**Barry Curtis**  
Chelmsford

## Base motives

We need to *oppose* the sending of US troops to Haiti.

We should have no illusions that the US marines are there for humanitarian reasons. They are there to restore *order*. There is a probability that martial law will be declared. The *Wall Street Journal* states: "Relief groups said that looters on Thursday broke into at least one warehouse ... 'The main issue that is coming fast is lawlessness'" (January 15).

It is clear that the marines are there to protect rich neighbourhoods. Breaking into a food warehouse is not 'looting': it is *expropriation*. After the flooding of New Orleans, soldiers were sent in. However, when poor people tried to obtain food, they were shot at and some killed by those who were there to 'help' them.

Haiti is being invaded by the US in the guise of humanitarian help. The probable result will be a US base.

**Earl Gilman**  
email

## Already renegade

As a communist, hopefully speaking in the company of other communists, I have to say I do not share the outlined view of Lars T Lih ('Kautsky, Lenin and the "April theses"', January 14).

There is no doubt whatsoever that Lenin firmly understood the centrist position of Kautsky (revealed since 1914) whilst on his way to Petrograd in March/April 1917. There was nothing new in Kautsky's March 1917 outline for Lenin, especially so in the light of the concrete events then rapidly developing in Russia. The tenor of Lih's conclusions suggests that Lenin retained belief in Kautsky's 'internationalist' Marxist authority. But this is not true.

What distinguished Lenin at that time from any other Marxist since Engels and Marx themselves was his unique ability to distinguish between a rotten compromise, which he separated from as soon as possible, and an enforced compromise, whereby he sought to hold 'opposites within his embrace' that later he would work around, whilst creating the conditions to deliver the decisive counterblow - once conditions were favourable.

Lenin demonstrated this most distinctly from this period onward precisely because he saw the need to avoid making complications amidst the conquest of power, with all the attendant human shortcomings in leadership around him - both fellow Bolsheviks and internationally. This was something Trotsky himself indelibly learned from Lenin in this crucial period and the part-Menshevik in his soul was banished forever after, which forged him into the greatest Leninist after Lenin's death.

Lenin was indeed a great teacher but our latter-day student has to understand his working conditions. Kautsky's view had become abstract to Lenin's dialectically probing mind and, moreover, Lenin would have had grounds for a fairly good judgement, in that he was with Zinoviev in Switzerland and on the sealed-train journey to Petrograd. Unquestionably, they would have discussed the February and March unfoldings and where the revolution was to possibly/probably go from this new plateau.

Knowing Lenin's consistent demand to educate the party in the spirit and necessity of both objective

conditions and socialist possibilities, he would have seen the need to declare his reaffirmation as a rearming of the Bolsheviks for both the dictatorship of the proletariat and the necessity for a socialist perspective that would become the consequence under that dictatorship. He knew only too well that the dangers of the 'marsh and swamp of abstract democracy' could, and eventually would, otherwise undo the party and the proletariat/soldiers/peasantry within the soviets.

This is important because within Lenin's 'April theses' is contained both the positivity for the success of October and a potential negativity, subsequently realised in all the betrayals of Marxism stemming from both the 2½ Internationalists of Kautsky's persuasion to the eventual national bureaucratisation within Russia itself, embodied in the eventual Thermidor of Stalinism.

Reading this latest view of Kautsky, you immediately find further yearnings from him for peace in the imperialist war. His policy was for social democracy to return to some 'abstract socialist evolution'.

After three years of imperialist war, all he wants is a return to a pre-war formula. The unMarxian viewpoint of Kautsky in relation to the social composition of this new 'politicised Russia' was simply that he condescendingly lectured his Second International in his time-honoured way - ie, the formulaic analysis of Russia as being overwhelmingly peasant and of not being 'mature enough for socialism' regardless of the liberal bourgeoisie's clear ineptitude toward an attempt and a viable programme for power against the Romanov absolutism or the fact that imperialism had objectively revealed its complete negation of any progressive fundamentals - worldwide.

The Kautsky cowardice displayed toward his own big bourgeoisie was an SPD fuselage sitting between the rightwing Eduard Bernstein and leftwing Karl Liebknecht. We wouldn't have long to wait long for his anti-Bolshevik polemic *Terrorism and communism*.

From his atrophied historical position, it was impossible for Kautsky to consider as viable a dictatorship of the minority proletariat and it was that which led him directly to the counterrevolutionary camp post-October.

We only have to see (if we choose to look) Kautsky's attitude reflected in the overwhelming majority of the central committee of the Bolshevik Party immediately after the February days, an orientation - or more correctly from Lenin's perspective, disorientation - in the concrete reality of dual power emerging and demanding resolution. We now know *post factum* that Lenin had ostensibly the second-tier Bolsheviks, leftward-moving workers and advanced battalions of soldiers on his side within and without the Bolshevik Party and soviets (which in early May was joined by Trotsky's arrival and concurrence with the 'April theses').

Lenin, it shouldn't be forgotten, was accused at the time, by most central committee Bolsheviks and not a few Mensheviks, of declaring for the programme of Trotsky's *Permanent revolution*. That very same Trotskyist 'dreamy view' - so utopian, abstract and futuristic - a view that they had all learned by rote to dismiss. But Lenin wasn't dismissing it now!

So, yes, Lenin did indeed bring socialism in with the 'April theses' as the essentially new component, but it didn't take the shallow Kautsky to initiate the Marxian notion in Lenin, much as he respected all his former collaborators-cum-teachers and with whom invariably he sought to retain communist unity in the face of reaction. But he also knew that to go

forward there comes a time when needs must, to decisively cut the tie that binds and eventually strangles.

Kautsky was objectively opening the door to the German counter-revolution. In Russia with Lenin it was the opposite.

**RayRising**  
email

## Not Leninist

In his article 'World politics, long waves and the decline of capitalism' comrade Mike Macnair makes a quite unwarranted attack on the Workers Power organisation (January 7).

Whilst I myself am not a member of Workers Power (I am a supporter of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League), I have several members of Workers Power amongst my friends. In my opinion they are all genuine communists. I must therefore protest at comrade Macnair's attack on their organisation.

Comrade Macnair writes that WP longs for a very severe economic crisis. I believe this to be untrue. WP prepares for all economic contingencies, including a severe slump. But they also know that revolutionary situations can arise in times of boom too. Witness France in 1948, when 10 million workers went on strike and objectively posed the question of state power.

Comrade Macnair writes: "WP argues that the working class needs to create a state like the early Soviet Union, complete with the dictatorship of the party ..." (which he later terms a "Leninist combat party"). I would argue - and I think that WP would argue - that what is needed is precisely a Leninist combat party capable of leading the working class to establish its soviets and to use these to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Regarding the Russian Revolution, Lenin and Trotsky led it on the assumption and understanding that the revolution of 1917 would be rapidly followed by a soviet revolution in Germany. However, in Germany what was lacking was precisely a Leninist combat party analogous to Lenin's Bolshevik Party. The opportunity to create a soviet Germany was thus lost. This led to the isolation of the revolution in a backward peasant country. In turn this led to its degeneration, despite the efforts of Trotsky's Left Opposition.

It is necessary to understand that if revolutionary situations take place without the existence of Leninist combat parties the working class can go down in terrible defeat. The 20th century has seen many instances in which, owing to the absence of Leninist vanguard parties, the working class has experienced this. For example, Germany 1918, Britain 1926, China 1927, Spain 1936-39, Indonesia 1966, Chile 1974 and others. Trotsky was absolutely right when he wrote in 1938 that the crisis facing humanity was reduced to a crisis of proletarian leadership.

Although it is not directly related to WP, another aspect of comrade Macnair's article deserves comment. This involves his conception that capitalism is in decline. I would maintain that it is meaningless to talk of the decline of capitalism in the abstract. Capitalism can be defined by two factors: (a) commodity production predominates; and (b) labour-power is a commodity. The only meaningful decline of capitalism is its overthrow by the working class.

For many years capitalism has been kept intact by Stalinism and social democracy, especially by their hold on the trade unions. We need to keep in mind the fact that capitalism is developing rapidly, especially in China and, perhaps to a lesser extent, in India and Brazil.

Towards the end of his article comrade Macnair states that it is "probably decades" before the working class can "[begin] to act politically". The above view shows how far comrade Macnair is from political reality. In many parts of the world sections of the international working class have been in action. In 2009 alone three million demonstrated against Sarkozy in France, with 2.7 million demonstrating against Berlusconi in Italy. Greece has been in ferment, as has Iran, along with several countries in Latin America. Militant movements have developed amongst the many-millioned working class in China. Sections of the working class in Russia have been demonstrating against Putin. In Japan the JRCL is winning increasing support amongst thousands of workers and students. The list could go on.

Comrade Macnair's view is that a Communist Party should not take power unless and until it has won the support of the majority of voters. But Marxist philosophy tells us that the working class acts first and thinks about the significance of what it has done afterwards. It is this that has led Trotsky to write: "Scientific socialism (Marxism) is the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process: namely, the instinctive and elemental drive of the proletariat to reconstruct society on communist beginnings" (*In defence of Marxism* London 1975, p129).

A reminder is necessary that politically advanced workers can learn very quickly during the course of a revolution, provided that they are led by a Leninist party. Thus in 1917 between February and October the political level of the working class increased considerably, owing to the guidance of the Bolsheviks.

As already quoted above, comrade Macnair has written that WP argues that "the working class needs to create a state like the early Soviet Union, complete with the dictatorship of the party and the dictatorship of the leadership over the party". This makes plain that comrade Macnair dissociates himself from the 1917 revolution.

This rejection of the principle of the 1917 revolution needs the close attention of all CPGB members. It should be recalled that the CPGB arose from an organisation calling itself *The Leninist*, which based itself on the teachings of Lenin. It should also be recalled that Lenin wrote: "... only workers' soviets, not parliament, can be the instrument enabling the proletariat to achieve its aims; those who have failed to understand this are, of course, out-and-out reactionaries ..." (*Leftwing communism* Moscow, p65).

In total opposition to Lenin, comrade Macnair takes the view (fully set out in his book *Revolutionary strategy*) that communist parties should not attempt to lead a revolution until they had won the support of the majority of voters. This attitude is, of course, precisely the same as that of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, which today has about the same number of members as it had when it was first founded about 100 years ago.

All members of the CPGB who genuinely consider themselves to be communists should reject the ideas of comrade Macnair and return to the principles which were fought for by members of *The Leninist*.

**John Robinson**  
London

## Funny jive

I thought 'Delusion, distractions, dialectic' was very funny ... especially the *Grundrisse* jive (January 14).

**Louis Proyect**  
Columbia

# ACTION

## Communist Forums

**London:** Sunday evenings. Study topic, plus weekly political report from Provisional Central Committee. Ring 07950 416922 for details.

**January 24:** John Bellamy Foster *The ecological revolution: making peace with the planet*. Subject: 'Peak oil and energy imperialism'.

**January 31:** John Bellamy Foster, *The Ecological Revolution: Making Peace with the Planet*. Subject: 'The Pentagon and climate change'.

**Oxford:** Study group, every Monday evening, studying David Harvey's *Limits to capital*.

Details: oxfordcommunists@googlemail.com.

**South Wales:** Call Bob for details: 07816 480679.

## CPGB podcasts

Every Monday, we upload a podcast of commentary on the current political situation. In addition, the site will feature voice files of public meetings and other events: <http://cpgb.podbean.com>.

## Communist Students meetings

**London:** Every Wednesday, 7.30pm: Introduction to Marxism series, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1 (Russell Square tube). [ben@communiststudents.org.uk](mailto:ben@communiststudents.org.uk); 07792 282830.

**Manchester:** Every Tuesday, 7pm, University of Manchester Student Union, Oxford Road, Manchester M13. [www.communiststudents.org.uk](http://www.communiststudents.org.uk).

**Oxford:** Mondays. [oxfordcommunists@googlemail.com](mailto:oxfordcommunists@googlemail.com).

**Sheffield:** Every Sunday, 7pm. 07730 682193; [sheffield@communiststudents.org.uk](mailto:sheffield@communiststudents.org.uk)

## Radical Anthropology Group

Tuesdays, Spring term, 6.15-9pm: Evening course, 'An intensive study of mythology', St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 (Camden Town tube).

**January 26:** Keith Hart, 'A human economy for the 21st century'.

**February 2:** Ana Lopes, 'Sex work, resistance and action research'.

## Climate and capitalism

Saturday January 23, 10.30am: Day school on ecology, capitalism and Marxism, Manchester Metropolitan University, John Dalton Building, Oxford Road, M1. Organised by Socialist Resistance and Green Left: [www.socialistresistance.org](http://www.socialistresistance.org).

## NPA and the left

Tuesday January 26, 6pm: Meeting, University of Manchester students union, Oxford Road, Manchester M13. Tina Purcell discusses the new anti-capitalist party in France. Organised by Manchester Communist Students: [www.communiststudents.org.uk](http://www.communiststudents.org.uk).

## Blockade Brown

Thursday January 28, 8.30am: Protest against Gordon Brown's Afghanistan war conference, Lancaster House, Stable Yard, St James, London SW1. Stop the War Coalition: [www.stopwar.org.uk](http://www.stopwar.org.uk).

## Progressive London

Saturday January 30, 9.30am to 5pm: Conference, 'Stop the right in 2010', Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1.

Speakers include: Ken Livingstone, Jenny Jones (Green Party), Mike Tuffrey (Liberal Democrats), Kate Hudson (CND), Diane Abbott MP, George Galloway MP, Anas Altikriti. Registration: £10 (£6 unwaged). [www.progressivelondon.org.uk](http://www.progressivelondon.org.uk).

## Right to Work

Saturday January 30, 11.30am: Conference - 'Fight for every job'.

Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester M1.

Organised by Right to Work: [www.righttowork.org.uk](http://www.righttowork.org.uk).

## A woman's right

Saturday February 13, 12 noon: Annual general meeting of Abortion Rights, TUC Congress Centre, London, WC1. Membership: £20/£5.

Registration: £5/£2. [www.abortionrights.org.uk](http://www.abortionrights.org.uk).

## Stop the Nazis

Saturday February 13, 9.30am to 5pm: Unite Against Fascism national conference, TUC Congress Centre, London, WC1. Registration: £25 organisations, £10 waged, £5 unwaged. [www.uaf.org.uk](http://www.uaf.org.uk).

## Republican Socialist Convention

Saturday February 13, 12noon: Discussion on national question and general election, London South Bank University, Elephant and Castle, London. Sponsored by Scottish Socialist Party and Socialist Alliance: [www.socialistalliance.org.uk](http://www.socialistalliance.org.uk).

## Iranian revolution

Saturday February 13, 2pm: Day school - 'Imperialism and the Iranian revolution', University of Manchester students union, Oxford Road, Manchester M13. Followed by fundraiser.

Organised by Hands Off the People of Iran: [www.hopoi.org](http://www.hopoi.org).

## Putting Irish unity on the agenda

Saturday February 20, 10am to 5pm: Conference, TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1. Plenaries, seminars and discussions. Speakers include: Gerry Adams MP, Diane Abbott MP, Ken Livingstone, Salma Yaqoob.

Registration 9.30am: £8/£4 unwaged, or send cheque payable to "London Irish Unity Conference" to PO Box 65845, London, EC1P 1LS. Hosted by Sinn Féin: [londonconference@sinn-fein.ie](mailto:londonconference@sinn-fein.ie).

## CPGB wills

Remember the CPGB and keep the struggle going. Put our party's name and address, together with the amount you wish to leave, in your will. If you need further help, do not hesitate to contact us.

# No more proscriptions, bans or secret cabals

The CPB has pulled out of Tusc, reports **Peter Manson**. Where does that leave the coalition?

**T**he *Morning Star*'s Communist Party of Britain has opted out of the leftwing alliance to contest the general election, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

The CPB's support for another electoral coalition with the Socialist Party in England and Wales, following their joint support, along with the Rail, Maritime and Transport union, for 'No to the EU, Yes to Democracy', which contested the June 2009 European Union elections, has been in question for some time. Towards the end of last year the CPB pulled out of the monthly meetings of the ex-No2EU 'core group' - a decision that was reversed within a couple of weeks after general secretary Rob Griffiths led a fightback on the executive committee. But this time the withdrawal will undoubtedly be permanent.

The reason given by the CPB in a statement published on its website following the latest EC meeting last weekend is that "the RMT executive has decided not to affiliate formally to any electoral coalition for the forthcoming general election, and that no other union has taken a formal position". So, despite its name, Tusc enjoys no official support from any national trade union - that is why it is a "trade unionist" and socialist coalition. This is hardly a satisfactory title, clearly adopted as a second-best. It seems to epitomise the sad reality that, while SPEW *aspires* to win a union-led political alliance and eventual party, unfortunately there are no official takers, only individual trade unionists.

Bob Crow and Alex Gordon of the RMT leadership are backers, but, just like No2EU, it seems that more or less all the other leading union members who sign up - Brian Caton of the Prison Officers Association included - will be SPEW comrades. But at least - unlike No2EU - Tusc's name expresses a pro-working class orientation.

Although the CPB says it "has determined not to participate in

a formal electoral coalition", its statement then immediately goes on to announce: "The Communist Party, and its allies in UK-domiciled communist and workers' parties, perhaps with other forces, will contest as many constituencies as feasible in the general election, in order to project a clear leftwing alternative."

So the CPB appears to be saying about Tusc: not *this* "formal electoral coalition", and not *this* "clear leftwing alternative". Leaving aside the question of *which* "other forces" the CPB intends to stand alongside (I, for one, cannot imagine who else would be prepared to join with it in such a narrowly based alliance), it is clear that the RMT's rejection of the coalition was the last straw. Not even the CPB 'innovator' wing headed by Griffiths and former *Star* editor John Haylett would have relished playing a junior role to the SPEW 'Trots' (not to mention the Socialist Workers Party, which is also set to participate).

Comrades Griffiths and Haylett no longer think it possible for the Labour Party to be 'reclaimed' and as a consequence favoured working closely with Respect, but

their position was defeated in 2004. The 'traditionalist' wing, headed by international secretary John Foster, stands by the scenario spelled out in the CPB programme, *Britain's road to socialism*, whereby an increasingly leftwing Labour Party, backed up by CPB MPs, delivers a national socialism from on high.

There has generally been an uneasy truce between the two wings, with the question of 'reclaiming' Labour - as opposed to the possibility of the unions setting up an alternative "party of labour" - being left open. But this truce was severely tested by the attempt to build upon last year's No2EU alliance for the gen-

eral election. Now the RMT pull-out has clinched it for the 'traditionalists' (although the failure of the *Morning Star* so far to mention either Tusc or the CPB rejection of it might imply continuing differences).

Both wings, of course, are agreed that "a Labour victory would be preferable to a Tory victory", in the words of the EC statement. This means "recommending a vote for Labour in the majority of constituencies, especially where the Labour candidate has a record of opposing imperialist war and privatisation, and supporting trade union and other democratic rights". The CPB in particular urges support "for those Labour prospective parliamentary candidates who have clearly identified themselves with progressive politics." However, the CPB welcomes "principled contests against those New Labour figures who have distinguished themselves as the worst advocates of privatisation, war and neoliberalism".

In reality, despite the talk about contesting "as many constituencies as feasible", it is only these so-called "worst advocates" against whom the organisation has proposed standing. Elsewhere the CPB is calling for a blanket Labour vote and in this context noises about "especially" supporting "progressive" Labour candidates are meaningless.

So where does the CPB withdrawal leave Tusc, given that another of the No2EU participating organisations, the Alliance for Green Socialism, had already pulled out? Well, we know that the SWP hopes to stand six candidates as part of the coalition, but this week's *Socialist Worker* is

totally silent on the whole question (January 23).

Similarly *The Socialist* is strangely muted. A very brief article entitled 'Support grows for new coalition' announces that "hundreds of declarations of support have been received" and that Tusc "is receiving enthusiastic support from fighting trade unionists" (January 19).

While the article treats readers to a list of some of the initial sponsors (mainly SPEW members who are trade union branch officers), it says nothing about the participation of other groups - as well as the SWP, the CPGB, Alliance for Workers' Liberty and rump Socialist Alliance have all expressed an interest.

*The Socialist* also carries a local report from Portsmouth, headed 'Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition gets started', which tells us that "No2EU Wessex" has been transformed into 'Tusc Portsmouth' and support is growing to back Mick Tosh, an RMT activist and former RMT executive committee member, as a candidate in Portsmouth North for the general election." It seems that candidates are already being selected before the participation of other left groups has even been decided upon.

No doubt Bob Crow's opinion on that question will carry a good deal of weight. We know, for example, that, according to a CPB internal circular about the No2EU campaign last year, "SWP, AWL, *Weekly Worker* and other ultra-left groups have not been considered eligible" (March 16 2009). Considered by whom?

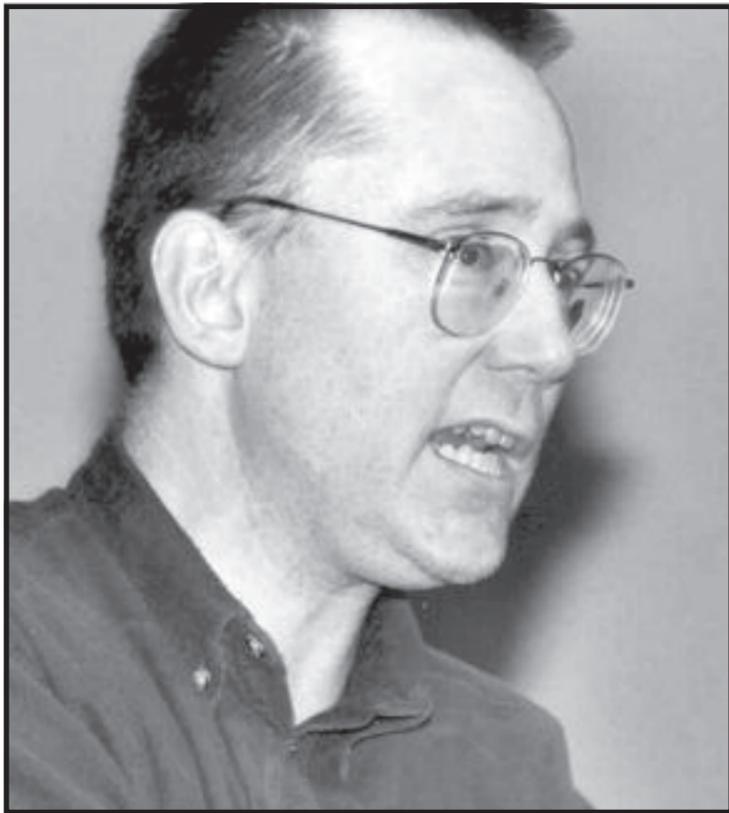
Tusc urgently needs to drop the secrecy and open up to the rest of the left. Where did all those talks behind closed doors with the CPB, RMT and AGS lead? To their withdrawal, one after the other. Now the general election is probably just 15 weeks away - very little time for a genuine leftwing coalition to be built. There should be no more bans and proscriptions ●



**Bob Crow: in the driver's seat**

# For left unity

Open letter to Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition



**Clive Heemskerk: worrying formulations**

The Communist Party of Great Britain welcomes the launch of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition because it has the potential to lead towards the sort of principled left unity our class so urgently needs. This is why, despite our reservations about the way Tusc has been launched and the content of its provisional programme, we have written to you registering our willingness to stand CPGB candidates under its banner and to support its campaign.

In one sense, almost any move towards a degree of left electoral cooperation on a common platform should be viewed positively. We squandered the tremendous opportunities that there were from the mid-1990s to establish an electoral beachhead for Marxist politics. Ranged against us, there was a rightward-moving Labour Party and a Tory Party that made itself more or less unelectable for a decade plus. There was space and opportunity. But instead of advances for the genuine politics of the working class, the grim aftermath of the various abortive unity initiatives has been one of splits, bitterness and decline for the revolutionary left. An initiative such as Tusc that coheres something out of this wreckage can be important.

That said, there is too much that is sadly familiar about this latest attempt to present to the electorate what comrade Dave Nellist of the Socialist Party in England and Wales has dubbed "a clear anti-cuts and socialist programme" (Campaign for a New Workers' Party email, January 19).

Yes, we have differences with aspects of the Tusc provisional programme. Democracy and republicanism are not sufficiently stressed; instead of just looking towards the working class implementing its programme within the narrow confines of Britain there needs at least to be a pan-European perspective; left electoral coalitions are all very well, but what is really needed is a mass party of the working class based on Marxism. Of course, from our angle,

none of this represents a barrier to joint work: with the democratic space to argue our politics we are convinced that our arguments will win through. In the meantime, we accept majority decisions.

Here we get to the nub of the problem, however. From the bureaucratic, top-down and secretive manner the coalition has been put together, a strong, negative message has been sent out. There is no democracy. Nor bottom-up structures through which supporters can elect representatives and debate and in due course arrive at policy decisions. Bob Crow and an invited inner core get to decide everything of importance. Others, specifically the Socialist Workers Party, Alliance for Workers' Liberty and the CPGB, have been banned or proscribed. A regime that characterised Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party from the beginning - a control-freakery that produced fiasco and the organisation's effective demise.

Hence the worrying comments made by Clive Heemskerk, a leading member of SPEW and a key player in Tusc. Speaking at the Left Unity Liaison Committee meeting on December 19 last year the comrade stated that organisations wanting to join the coalition would "need to have some 'social weight' and be able to work by consensus". Responding to requests for clarification, the comrade hedged: "No criteria has been laid down to determine 'social weight', and all organisational requests to get involved will be looked at on merit."

"Merit" is no more comforting as an entry qualification as "social weight", frankly. Who is the arbiter of a political group's "merit"? Bob Crow? Clive Heemskerk? An unelected inner core?

As for "social weight", under present circumstances no strand of the organised left has significant mass support in any meaningful sense. None of the sects that litter the scene today can seriously organise or lead real sections of the working class itself. True, there are those elected to trade union positions. But that hardly

represents conscious support for republican democracy, socialism and the project of human liberation. This is something that a serious unity project will doubtless address by patiently overcoming the ideological differences that at present divide us and above all by spreading the ideas of Marxism, mobilising to extend democracy in all spheres of life and building branches and other such structures in every neighbourhood and big workplace.

If comrade Heemskerk means by working "by consensus" the willingness to accept that political differences, debate and sometimes sharply expressed criticisms are no barrier to democratically agreed unity in action, then we are with him. Again, however, given the poisoned atmosphere that prevails on our left today, this is something that has to be built rather than decreed.

The CPGB has been involved in all the serious left unity projects, from Scargill's SLP, through the Socialist Alliance and Respect. In the SA - which was the high point of these unity attempts - we were its most active partisans. We took the lead in establishing the London SA in 1999 and - with active support from the Socialist Workers Party - stood our comrade Anne Murphy in the local elections.

When the SWP fully threw its weight behind the alliance, we participated at every level of the organisation, locally and on the national leadership. We cajoled other more timid groups to present a serious challenge in the June 2001 general election, overcoming those who advocated just six candidates (or 20 from the more 'ambitious') and eventually our 'mad' perspective, as it was dubbed by some, became SA 'common sense'. In the end the alliance stood 98 candidates.

In that election, a CPGB representative sat on the drafting committee for the SA manifesto *People before profit*. Particularly in that period of intense political work, but also throughout the lifespan of the SA, the CPGB made considerable financial and logistical commitments to the common project. The CPGB and its newspaper were real assets to the SA. This, we suggest, was of real "merit".

The Socialist Alliance generated real enthusiasm not because of the "social weight" of the groups and individuals participating, but because it united the major components of the revolutionary left in a challenge that seemed to indicate that the Marxists were at last beginning to take their responsibilities to the class seriously. That is, to build a permanent political entity that united different political strands in the workers' movement around acceptance of (not agreement with) a political programme. An organisation that was capable of uniting for action, but could contain differences.

In other words, the strength of the SA was not numbers; it was the idea of left unity. Although the political conditions are now less favourable, an initiative that looks to democratically unite all genuine working class political strands for commonly agreed action is still what the situation demands.

Start with exclusions and you guarantee yet another failure ●

**Mark Fischer**  
national organiser CPGB

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## HAITI

# Quake: no act of god

Millions around the world were appalled at the death and devastation in Haiti. James Turley puts the calamity into context

As readers will know, just before 5pm local time on January 12, a catastrophic earthquake struck Haiti. Its epicentre was very close to Léogâne, a well-populated town not far from the capital, Port-au-Prince.

The tremor is estimated at 7 on the seismic moment magnitude scale (which is similar to but more precise than the old Richter scale). Seismologists recorded no less than 33 aftershocks, themselves reaching about 5-6 on the scale. Soon, Haiti was descending into almost biblical chaos.

An earthquake this powerful would have caused significant infrastructural damage in a first-world metropolis, and probably some loss of life too. In Haiti, however, things are of a qualitatively different order. It is the poorest country in the western hemisphere; its buildings are not state-of-the-art, reinforced concrete constructions, but built on the cheap or - in the case of the many large and overpopulated slums, including the infamous Cité Soleil - on no budget at all. The hospitals are not well equipped, well maintained medical centres typical of the global 'north' - and in any case, all those in the capital collapsed during the quake. There is, needless to say, no equivalent to the American Federal Emergency Management Authority waiting to step in and re-establish control.

As such, the devastation is horrifying; it is a humanitarian disaster on a scale not seen at least since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed over 230,000 (triggered, of course, by another earthquake). Over 80% of the buildings in Léogâne were destroyed. The shaky infrastructure of the country has been shattered, and the relevant government agencies - however feeble their efforts could only have been in any event - now lie in ruins.

Amid the debris, what benefits of civilisation that had not already been sabotaged by a predatory global capitalism evaporated. Survivors had no choice but to sleep in the streets or otherwise exposed to the elements - only the open air is guaranteed not to fall on your head in the event of another aftershock. Medical care in the immediate aftermath reverted effectively back to the stone age; but a bigger problem than treating the 250,000-odd injured was presented by their less fortunate compatriots. The sheer volume of corpses - combined with damage to roads, communications and the rest - rendered disposal a logistical nightmare. Estimates as to the death toll start at 100,000 and go up to 500,000 or even higher: 5% of the total population.<sup>1</sup> The government has confirmed, at time of writing, that 70,000 corpses have already been buried in mass graves, but they will be clearing the rubble for some time yet.

Mati Goldstein, the chief Israeli aid worker in the country, even found himself uttering the 'H' word - "Everywhere, the acrid smell of bodies hangs in the air. It's just like the stories we are told of the holocaust - thousands of bodies everywhere. You have to understand that the situation is true madness and, the more time passes, there are more

and more bodies, in numbers that cannot be grasped. It is beyond comprehension."<sup>2</sup>

Goldstein's is one of a great number of nationally sponsored aid efforts, with countries from the United States down to Botswana pledging money, missions or material support. The US and the World Bank top the table in monetary terms, with around \$114 million promised by Barack Obama's government and an emergency grant of \$100 million from the World Bank. (Exactly how much of this cash actually reaches Haiti, and how much negotiates the notoriously corrupt official structures when it gets there, is another matter.) There are, needless to say, a not-so-small army of aid workers on the ground now, and conditions have stabilised to a point.

NGOs and even that den of thieves quaintly known as 'the international community' are, of course, reliable up to a point in delivering frontline aid in the throes of a disaster. Indeed, many such efforts in such extraordinarily difficult conditions (according to a UN spokeswoman, the worst disaster her organisation has ever faced) are genuinely heroic. Yet bureaucratic inertia, as well as the logistics of getting people into a country with a wrecked airport from thousands of miles away, assures that most help does not arrive until 'the worst is over' - and when the time comes to rebuild the resultant presence of so many dubious imperialist interests makes accepting emergency relief, however necessary, a poisoned chalice (the US has a history of meddling in Haiti, as we shall see).

Certainly, we should have no truck with another iteration of the most depressing pattern in disaster coverage - the running battle between saintly aid workers and malicious, conniving locals. It was not long until the headlines were filled with lurid tales of looting and sundry barbarism among the local population. For once, Britain's gooiest liberal daily, *The Independent*, was united with the American crypto-racist slavery nostalgia outfit, the Council of Conservative Citizens, in running shock headlines about "thugs."<sup>3</sup>

Fox News, Rupert Murdoch's infamous American cable news network - whose coverage's fantasy-to-reality ratio is currently somewhere between those of the *Sun* and *Der Stürmer* - could barely bring itself to cover Haiti. "All eyes are on the Massachusetts Senate race," said solipsistic Fox commentator Sean Hannity, in the immediate aftermath of the quake; nothing like the tedious spectacle of bourgeois politics for a distraction from a mountain of corpses. His buffoonish colleague, Bill O'Reilly, used the happy occasion of a couple of hundred thousand deaths to attack Barack Obama, for not taking the necessary steps to prevent aid money from falling into the hands of a sinister and ever-so-slightly enticing criminal *demi-monde* full of extortionists and "voodoo priests".

The truth is

- shall we say - a little more complicated. It is unsurprising that in the midst of such pandemonium, some resort to theft and intimidation to get their basic necessities. It is unsurprising, moreover, that cynical criminal organisations should take advantage of the confusion to advance their own interests (the US government, for instance). Disasters very often have the opposite effect, however - people realise that they will survive better by banding together. Shattered communities are reported to have taken policing into their own hands, organising ramshackle militias with the tacit cooperation of an organisationally crippled police force. An American general insisted that Haiti was less violent after the earthquake than before it - probably true, and in fact exactly what you would expect, were you not pushing basically colonial discourses about savages and their voodoo rites.

As is typical, such stereotypes - the Haitian-as-savage and the Haitian-as-powerless-victim - are recycled in a total historical vacuum. And Haiti's history is, despite its modest condition today, a proud one. Hispaniola, the island it shares with the Dominican Republic, was colonised first by the Spanish in the 16th century. The invaders did not find it easy; rebellious indigenous peoples put up sturdy military resistance, only finally overcome over a decade after Christopher Columbus first founded a settlement. Later, under French rule, the colony became - like many others - the destination for African slaves. The *Code Noir*, apparently intended by Louis XIV to mitigate conditions among the colonial slaves, ended up putting the official seal on brutal methods of ensuring 'labour discipline'.

A century later, revolution broke out in France - and the repercussions were to reach the periphery of its empire. A first, unsuccessful revolt - which did not attempt to free the slaves - was defeated by the colonial authorities. In 1791, the slaves decided that enough was enough - a call to arms was issued by a Vodou (not "voodoo") priest, and the revolt spread rapidly. Over the next 13 years, unstable political accommodations with revolutionary France slowly disintegrated, and war reached a brutal pitch after Napoleon, having been informed that to restore order on the island would require him to re-establish slavery

and "destroy 30,000 negroes and negresses", ordered increasingly desperate acts of savagery.

It came to nothing - on new year's day 1804, the new country of Haiti declared independence. It was the first independent state in the Caribbean or Latin America since its colonisation, and the first post-colonial country anywhere in the world under black rule. The remaining whites, previously tolerated by the revolutionaries, were massacred by an insurgent majority fresh out of patience. Haiti's first ruler, Jean Jacques Dessalines, was unrepentant: "We have repaid these cannibals, war for war, crime for crime, outrage for outrage."

Like all Latin American countries Haiti's more recent history has been a catalogue of shadier imperialist interference, of the type for which the US can be thanked for systematising into foreign policy. It occupied the country for almost two decades from 1915, at which point it was a German semi-colony; the US has since sponsored various dictatorships in Haiti, and continues to persistently interfere in its politics. A particular thorn in America's side has been Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a left-populist who has been deposed twice in US-supported coups. The result is two centuries of political turmoil, during which Haiti has been divided and reunited several times and dogged by brutal regimes and the revolts that overthrew them; this history - heroic and tragic in equal measure - brought it to January 12 2010, crippled and impoverished.

There are two major lessons here. Firstly, the idea that the bourgeoisie is a 'democratic' class is complete bunk. The Haitian revolution was resisted to the hilt by the newly

founded republic (and then empire) of France, still drunk on the insurrectionary atmosphere of 1789. It was isolated by its neighbours, the US refusing recognition until the southern secession due to pressure from slave-owners; it also, of course, beat America to the abolition of slavery by over six decades. Even the new Latin American republics that formed in the Haitian revolution's inspiring wake were troubled by the slave question, and Haiti was excluded from the first conference of such countries in 1826. This is because it was the slaves and oppressed indigenous peoples that made, and led, the revolution, not the bourgeoisie.

The latter's most radical representatives produced works of historic importance, from which the Haitian insurrectionaries took no small inspiration, it is true (as an aside, it was an even more powerful earthquake in Portugal that led Voltaire to cast his most barbed attacks on church dogma, and Immanuel Kant to formulate the first serious theory of seismology); but it was not the French or American bourgeoisie that internalised that democratic spirit, but brutally exploited colonial chattel - and later, the nascent working class in Europe.

Secondly, as many on the left have pointed out today, *this is not simply a natural disaster*. Haiti's parlous condition has been engineered by an imperialist state system that super-exploits the subordinate states in order to reproduce the military-economic hegemony of the US, and thereby the global conditions for capitalist production. *Capitalism* has demolished Haiti's cities, and buried its population in their rubble.

Slavery, occupation, massacres - none of it was enough for this system, and as its decline sharpens and its logic disintegrates, nothing will ever be enough. Communism is the true heir to the Haitian revolutionaries •

## Notes

1. [www.shanghaiidaily.com/article/?id=426219](http://www.shanghaiidaily.com/article/?id=426219).
2. <http://jta.org/news/article/2010/01/17/1010200/israeli-medical-rescue-workers-help-haitians>.
3. <http://cofoc.org/2010/01/haitian-thugs-fight-like-vultures-over-looted-goods>.



Heart-rending human tragedy

**RIGHTS**

# Johnson's bans are an attack on us all

In yet another attack on democratic rights, as from January 14 membership of the reactionary Islamist group, Islam4UK, became a criminal offence punishable by up to 10 years in jail. Announcing the ban, home secretary Alan Johnson declared that Islam4UK's 'parent' group, al-Muhajiroun, had also been proscribed under legislation introduced in 2000 outlawing the (supposed) "glorification" of terrorism, and the two were effectively one and the same organisation.

Two previous incarnations of this rather unpleasant group had already been banned - al-Ghurabaa and the Saved Sect (or Saviour Sect). Islam4UK/al-Muhajiroun had also operated under the names, Call to Submission, Islamic Path and London School of Sharia - all of which are now banned as well under the home secretary's edict. Justifying his action, Johnson claimed that the order was "not a course we take lightly", but was a "tough but necessary power to tackle terrorism" - adding that organisations should not be able to "circumvent proscription" simply by changing their names.

Islam4UK first achieved a certain degree of media prominence in October 2009 when it organised protests against the visit to London of the Dutch politician, Geert Wilders, the pro-Israeli leader of the rightwing and explicitly Islamophobic Party of Freedom - which amongst many obnoxious things calls for a five-year ban on immigration for those coming from "non-western" countries, annulling the right of "foreign residents" to vote in municipal elections and a five-year suspension of any new mosques or Islamic schools (slightly crazily, Wilders also subscribes to the revanchist dream of "reuniting" Flanders and the Netherlands). In a clash of reactionary opposites, Islam4UK supporters waved banners containing attractive slogans such as "Sharia is the solution - freedom, go to hell" and "Geert Wilders deserves Islamic punishment".

However, it was Islam4UK's plans - first announced at the beginning of this month on its (now archived) website - to stage a "peaceful" protest march in Wootton Bassett that was the final straw for the authorities, or so it seems. This Wiltshire town is the site of 'informal', though increasingly semi-institutionalised, public mourning, as the funeral corteges of military personnel killed in active service (ie, Afghanistan) make their way from RAF Lyneham to John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

Islam4UK leader Anjem Choudary openly admitted that the proposed demonstration was a publicity stunt, as Wootton Bassett would attract "maximum attention" from the media and said that 500 supporters Islam4UK would carry "symbolic coffins" in memory of the Muslim civilians "murdered by merciless" coalition forces in Afghanistan. As Choudary explained in an open letter to the "families of British soldiers who have fallen" on the Islam4UK website, Afghanistan "is not a British town near Wootton Bassett, but rather Muslim land which no-one has the



**Anjem Choudary: reactionary anti-capitalist**

right to occupy" - and denounced the "greedy interests of the oppressive US and UK regimes".<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, that was enough to ignite patriotic outrage - even if Choudary did insist, perhaps not too convincingly, that any putative demonstration would *not* coincide with the return of a dead soldier's body. Gordon Brown immediately pronounced that the very idea of mounting an anti-war protest in Wootton Bassett was "disgusting" and "completely inappropriate". The ex-mayor of Wootton Bassett, Chris Wannell, pitched in with the view that "we are a Christian country" and this is a "traditional old English market town who honour very much our queen and country" - while James Gray, the local MP, reminded us that the "people of Wootton Bassett are decent, quiet, pragmatic people" who would rather "stay at home" than react to these "foolish people making a silly point".<sup>2</sup>

By January 5, over 400,000 had joined a "non-political" Facebook group opposing Islam4UK "extremists" - stating that the "wonderful people" of Wootton Bassett "do not deserve this march to happen". The group is campaigning to get the route from RAF Lyneham to the Sir John Radcliffe Hospital "officially known as the 'Highway For Heroes'" by having "milestones or plaques" placed along the path in "recognition of the fallen".<sup>3</sup>

As for the Muslim Council of Britain, it too was horrified by the prospects of anti-war demonstrations in Wootton Bassett: indeed, mortified by the thought - "Like other Britons," the MCB asserted, "Muslims are not opposed to Britain's armed forces." Meanwhile, the obviously upset Wiltshire Islamic Cultural Centre militantly announced that if necessary they, alongside the Call Islam Centre and Masjid al-Ghurabaa, would "counter-demonstrate" against Islam4UK/al-Muhajiroun. Furthermore, and no doubt treacherously as far as Islam4UK is concerned, the WICC called upon the Wiltshire police to ban the proposed march in the "interests

of public order, public safety and community cohesion"<sup>4</sup> - a call strongly echoed by CIC, which classifies al-Muhajiroun as one of the "deviated sects" alongside "evil" people and organisations like Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Sufis.<sup>5</sup>

Well, the MCB, WICC, CIC, etc certainly got their wishes - and far more besides. So Johnson initially indicated he would agree to "any request" from the Wiltshire police or local government to ban the "hate march", as the *Daily Mail* called it (January 13), under section 13 of the Public Order Act 1986. In turn, clearly feeling the heat, Islam4UK decided to beat a tactical retreat and said on January 10 said it had abandoned its Wootton Bassett plans - though, apparently, the police had not actually received any request from the organisation for permission to march. However, in the end, Islam4UK's climbdown made no difference, as it was duly banned anyway - Wootton Bassett march or no Wootton Bassett march.

Not that Islam4UK was particularly fazed by the banning, of course - quite the opposite, if anything. It issued a defiant press statement declaring that the proscription order was a "victory for Islam and Muslims" and asserted that "if you differ with the Brown regime" - and those who "advocate freedom and democracy" for countries like Afghanistan - then "freedom quickly dissipates to be replaced by dictatorship". Hence, it continues, Johnson's banning order is a "clear case of the oppressor and tyrant blaming the oppressed" and an example of how Britain has "become an apartheid state - where Muslims are treated as second-class citizens". The banning was yet "another nail in the coffin of capitalism" and Islam4UK members confidently look forward to the day when they "liberate our land from occupation and implement the sharia not just in Muslim countries, but also right here in Great Britain".<sup>6</sup>

For communists the banning of Islam4UK represents a disturbing attack on fundamental democratic rights - such as the right to free speech and freedom of association. By all accounts, there is absolutely no

evidence or even serious suspicion that Islam4UK was involved in - or was planning - any violent or terrorist activity. No, rather, it is self-evident that Islam4UK was effectively banned for being *unpatriotic* and stridently 'anti-war' - no more, no less.

If so, this has obvious and worrying implications for the left in this country - especially for the consistent anti-imperialist or revolutionary left. Were not our extremely militant and very loud protests against imperialist occupation and brutality in Suez, Aden, Vietnam, Northern Ireland, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc also clear-cut examples of unpatriotic disloyalty to the existing British state? More bluntly still, if Islamist groups like Islam4UK can be prohibited on the grounds that they are 'treasonous' - then what about explicitly communist ones?

After all, we in the CPGB are unambiguously committed to the positive, democratic overthrow of the current system of government. To the likes of Gordon Brown and David Cameron that must sound unmistakably like a clarion call to sedition or 'treason' - perhaps, with the right sort of lawyers giving the right sort of advice, even a bit like the "glorification" of 'terrorism'. First Islam4UK/al-Muhajiroun, then the CPGB/*Weekly Worker* or the Socialist Workers Party?

Of course, communists find the world view of Islam4UK/al-Muhajiroun foul and repugnant - as a very quick perusal of its history and origins amply confirms. Al-Muhajiroun was founded by the Syrian-born Omar Bakri Muhammad, previously the "spiritual" leader, or amir, of Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation) - whose avowed ultimate goal is to merge all the Muslim countries into a single, unitary Islamic state ruled by Islamic/sharia law and with a caliph head of state elected solely by Muslims. Hizb ut-Tahrir flatly rejects democracy as a "western system" and "un-Islamic".<sup>7</sup>

As a more zealous offshoot of Hizb ut-Tahrir, al-Muhajiroun gained notoriety when Bakri held a press conference praising the "magnificent 19" - that is, he lauded those responsible for the September 11 2001

terrorist atrocities. Subsequently, Bakri was banned from the UK in August 2005 - eventually ending up domiciled in the Lebanon - by the then home secretary, Charles Clarke, on the grounds that his presence was "not conducive to the public good".

Self-evidently, Bakri and al-Muhajiroun - including his devoted disciple, Anjem Choudary - are inveterate enemies of democracy and socialism, promoting a backward-looking 'anti-capitalism'. So in an interview with the *Christianity Today* magazine, Bakri outlined his "ideal" Islamic state: "No private schools will be allowed, and there will be an Islamically influenced national curriculum. No new churches will be permitted, but existing ones will be allowed. Private consumption of alcohol will be permitted, but not its public sale. All state officials must be Muslims, save for the caliph's assistants to advise him about relations with non-Muslim citizens. Muslims could not convert to Christianity on pain of execution. Evangelistic campaigns would be forbidden, but people would be free to present Christianity on TV, in debates, etc."<sup>8</sup>

Such ideas are totally unrealisable - a reactionary utopia. Indeed, it is quite fair to say that virulent anti-communists and bigots like Omar Bakri Muhammad engage in a crazed rhetoric which promulgates a violent hatred of anything and anybody deemed inimical to the 'laws of Allah' - like Jews, homosexuals, democracy, women's liberation, "deviant" or heretical Islamic sects/traditions, rock music and so on almost endlessly. Such people yearn for a theocratic dictatorship ("freedom, go to hell") that would crush all those who demur from their leaders' harsh and anti-human interpretation of what constitutes a model Islamic state. So, yes, in that sense communists do indeed find the politics and message of Islam4UK/al-Muhajiroun 'hateful' and 'extremist'.

But as militant defenders of free speech we oppose all measures which give the authorities the right to decide what can and cannot be said, or to adjudicate as to what is 'correct' or not, or to decree what is 'hateful' or not. Communists have long argued that backward and reactionary ideas - whether they come from Islam4UK, the British National Party or the English Defence League - are generally best fought *in the open*, where they have no room to hide and fester: least of all by state bans and proscriptions.

Cardinally, by opposing Alan Johnson's ban on Islam4UK/al-Muhajiroun we in the CPGB are defending the democratic rights of our class and its fight for socialism and revolution ●

**Eddie Ford**

**Notes**

1. www.webcitation.org/5mjjwYVAA.
2. *The Daily Telegraph* January 4.
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## DEBATE

# Will left go on the offensive?

Dave Craig considers the prospects for the Republican Socialist Convention

**O**n Saturday February 13 the Scottish Socialist Party (international committee), Socialist Alliance, Green Left and the Labour Representation Committee are sponsoring the Republican Socialist Convention in London. What are its aims and its significance in the context of the class struggle today?

The convention will discuss the crisis of democracy, the national question and the general election. Publicity material identifies a range of speakers from across the socialist movement, including Peter Tatchell (Green Party), Colin Fox (SSP), Robert Griffiths (Communist Party of Britain), John McDonnell MP, Peter Taaffe (Socialist Party) and Bob Crow. It will be an opportunity to see how the left is gearing itself up for the general election.

What is the political significance of this event? Unless we put it in a political context, it is just another meeting. But context is all and that implies some questions. What direction is the UK and in particular England going? What direction is the socialist movement going? Are socialists leading or following the country? Will the left go on the offensive in the general election? These are big, unanswered questions even for a small meeting.

In 2009 four major issues grabbed people's attention and shed light on where we might be going. First was the economic crisis and rising government debt. Second came the crisis of democracy around the MPs' expenses scandal and the 'arrival' of the British National Party. Third was the mounting toll of dead and wounded in the Afghan war. With soldiers marching through the streets, we saw the danger of a rising tide of militarism and British patriotism seeping deeper into national psychology. Last but not least was the failure of international capitalism to deal with climate change, highlighted by the UN conference in Copenhagen in December.

## Crisis of democracy

The convention is not attempting to answer all this. But it does connect to one issue - the crisis of parliamentary democracy brought to the fore by the MPs' expenses scandal and the BNP. The scandal had a major impact on public opinion. The capitalist parties have to try to restore public confidence in an institution whose credibility was shot to pieces. Each will have some democratic proposals. The Liberal Democrats, for example, will be calling for proportional representation, recallable MPs and an elected House of Lords.

Patching up a busted system will not deal with the real problem - the overweening power of the executive. The failings of the Westminster parliament are nothing new. The Iraq inquiry is a timely reminder. In early 2002 the crown, fronted by its first minister, Tony Blair, made a secret deal with Bush to go to war. War plans were put into operation in August or September. Neither the cabinet nor parliament nor the people were told about this. Blair continued to play his public game of great peace-broker and war-avoider.

In early 2003 over one million people demonstrated against the Iraq war. Finally, when British troops were on the Iraqi border ready to invade, parliament was allowed to vote. It was

already too late to stop the tanks and planes. Westminster would never bite the hand of the crown that feeds it and pays its expenses. Parliament proved, at least before the millions who opposed the war, to be rotten, corrupted and unrepresentative. Since this date parliament has never plucked up the courage to seize all the documents and files, call ministers to account and arrest anybody who tried to hide the truth. All these whitewash enquiries set up by the crown will never find the truth.

The best that parliament could do was provide some 'legitimacy' for Blair's lies and deceptions. It was a willing accomplice to the war crimes and imperialist ambitions of the crown. This is typical of the way an undemocratic and unrepresentative institution works. It fails the people on countless small, everyday issues, not just on big events. At the last general election 40% of the electorate did not vote. The BNP is not the cause of parliamentary decrepitude, but the party most likely to gain from it.

The 'old corruption' is not confined to MPs' expenses or the corridors and bars at Westminster. It lives through the laws, taxes and spending decisions that affect the living and working conditions of the working class. If you want to see the failure of the Westminster brand of democracy, don't queue up outside the House of Commons for a seat in the visitors' gallery. Of course, you can watch the whole ridiculous pantomime in action. Better to see the results by walking around the streets and housing estates in any of our inner cities.

The crown-state governs the country on behalf of capitalism. At the centre of this state is the treasury, linked with the Bank of England and the City. For many the crown is the symbol of monarchy. But in reality it stands for the rule of the banks. The UK with its bloated and crown-protected financial sector was hit hard by the credit crunch. People were incredulous when the banks' debts were nationalised. But nationalisation under the crown is not socialism.

The crown-state is nearly bankrupt. Not quite. As long as the City and international bankers are prepared to keep lending, the evil day is staved off. But they are demanding their pound of flesh. Whichever government takes the reins of power, it will share out the crown's debt amongst the people. No guessing which class will have to pay the most. This is real 'socialisation' - making the people pay for the banks' failings through higher taxes and massive cuts in the public sector. The policy of the crown and the capitalist parties coincide with the demands of the City and international banks.

This is fraud on a huge scale by greedy 'banksters', as these speculators, swindlers and confidence tricksters have been called. But they are protected by the crown and defended by ministers and MPs. They line up to criticise and 'threaten' bank bonuses. Better to channel popular anger into a dead end, the safe zone known as the Westminster parliament. It's a great safety valve.

Parliament is supposed to be the means by which people control government and bring it to account. Reality is the other way round. Parliament serves the crown. It provides 'democratic' cover for the rule of City finance. Here is

the real corruption. Money talks and parliament sanctifies. The MPs' expenses scandal is really a side-show detracting from the corruption of the institution as a whole. This is not to dismiss the scandal. It has damaged credibility and threatens to shatter illusions. It draws the attention of millions to the fact that something is seriously wrong. If people carry on looking, they will conclude that more radical reform is necessary.

We can sum up our system of government by taking up where Walter Bagehot, who wrote on the constitution in the 19th century, left off. Real power is in the hands of the crown and the City, in Whitehall and Canary Wharf. The monarchy and parliament are "decorative" institutions for pomp and pantomime. They are part of the camouflage of power. Wherever power resides, it is neither in Westminster nor Buckingham Palace. Yet parliament and monarchy are absolutely essential because they give people something to believe in. Nothing will change whilst we keep on believing.

If the masses are being fooled, surely not the left? Unfortunately this is not true. Labourism is the political expression of this false consciousness. It says, on one side, the only political task is to win a Commons majority and, on the other, that there is no reason to abolish the monarchy. Historically constitutional change has little place in Labour politics. Labourism was non-republican socialism. New Labour made it not republican and not socialist.

The Marxist left is not fooled by the Commons. But the queen still casts a magic spell over many of them. She is the living proof that there is no need for republicanism. Reasoning that Buckingham Palace has no power (although more than most people think), they conclude there is no point. In any case the idea belongs in the 17th century transition stage from feudalism. The queen thus unites the royalists, Tories, Labourites and Lib Dems with the stages logic of a section of the socialist movement.

## Socialist movement

The Republican Socialist Convention may be the first time in the last 10 years that the socialist movement in England met to discuss democracy, parliamentary reform and republicanism. But how does this relate to the historical evolution of the socialist movement? What has taken place in the last 10 years between the Socialist Alliance and the Republican Socialist Convention?

In 2001 the Socialist Alliance stood 98 candidates on a non-republican but socialist election platform. It was the politics of old Labour. At the SA's constitutional conference at the end of 2000 there was a resolution calling for the adoption of an amended version of the Scottish Socialist Party's constitution but with the name, 'Republican Socialist Party'.

This resolution was heavily defeated by the votes of the Socialist Workers Party. The SWP was the main opponent of republicanism and equally opposed to forming a new workers' party. Since then we had 9/11 and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the mass anti-war movement into 2004. The SA was more or less destroyed when the SWP

set up the Respect coalition with George Galloway. From this high point it went into a 'downturn'.

The SWP took non-republican socialism into Respect. At its founding conference the SWP openly opposed secular and republican democracy. Respect politics repeated the core values of old Labour with its illusion in the Commons and monarchy, but it was born out of a real connection with the Muslim community alienated by urban poverty and Labour's wars.

Subsequently and predictably Galloway and the SWP fell out. In Scotland the SSP was torn apart over issues around the Tommy Sheridan trial.

In 2009 the new kids on the political block in England were the Rail, Maritime and Transport union under Bob Crow's leadership, taking up cudgels against Labour. He openly calls for a new workers' party. The first tentative steps were taken in the Euro elections under the slogans 'No to the EU, Yes to Democracy'. I will not waste time reciting the problems of policy and organisation which this campaign faced. It was attacked from all sides. Nevertheless around No2EU gathered 'the few' - those militants, trade unionists and socialists with a proven record of fighting the bosses and the capitalist Labour government.

The second slogan - 'Yes2Democracy' - was given less prominence by the campaign. But its goes to the heart of the matter. What attitude and policies should the left adopt in the UK? When the Socialist Party, the RMT, the Communist Party of Britain, the Alliance for Green Socialism and the Socialist Alliance stand for election on these slogans, it cannot and should not be ignored.

What did 'Yes2Democracy' actually mean? Was it yes to old, traditional, British democracy with its Commons and crown, or did it mean yes to a new democracy? No doubt its very ambiguity meant different things to different people. Yet the slogan has a powerful connection with movements like the Chartists and with working class people today who feel the need to have a say in all aspects of their lives - at work, in their unions, in their communities and over the actions of government. No2EU posed the Yes2Democracy question and the Republican Socialist Convention is an opportunity to provide some answers.

## General election

All these matters will be fought out in a general election as part and parcel of the class struggle. The fight will show up the real state of the movement. Socialists will hardly be united. In England we are divided across the Labour left (LRC), the Green left, Respect and the son of No2EU now called the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. These organisations and one or two more are not expected by and large to be in direct competition. We should try to fight together.

The Republican Socialist Convention is seeking to bring representatives of these organisations together in the spirit of joint struggle against a common enemy. However, the fault lines are not simply between different organisations. They are more about how to respond to the crisis. Should the left concentrate on building up our defences or should we

go on the attack? Given the parlous state of the left, surely we should dig in and prepare for the clunking fist or the big axe to smash our dented shields?

I think not. American football is a form of ritualised warfare. Each team has a defensive and an offensive unit. When the enemy has the ball you bring your defensive team on the pitch to try to stop them scoring, generally beat them up and drive them back. When you get possession of the ball you bring on your offensive team, which takes over and can throw or run the ball over or through the enemy into the end zone for a score.

Our defence is our trade unions, which if well organised can mount a serious defence of our jobs, pay and conditions, etc. But in the general election we need to put our offensive unit on the pitch. The name we should give this team is 'republican socialist'. If the left is going to go on the offensive against the capitalist parties it has to make the case for republican democracy and public or social ownership. There could no better time to make such a case and gain a hearing for this in the working class movement.

It goes without saying that the working class movement needs both defence and offence. If you cannot defend, you cannot attack. If you cannot attack, then eventually the defenders will be exhausted, demoralised and overrun by the enemy. The combination of the two is necessary, as is being able to go from one to the other. In the general election the left may be weak and divided, but we have to go on the offensive. The stronger the offensive, the better will be the trade union defence facing the new government. The Republican Socialist Convention is an opportunity for the left to consider its offensive weapons.

Finally we must not end up with a London or England-centred view. It looks different for people in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Here parliaments and assemblies raise different democratic issues about power or sovereignty. After 1997 demands for self-government produced a Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly. The republican movement in Northern Ireland came to a deal with the crown in the Good Friday agreement. The future of these institutional arrangements is far from settled. The present Scottish National Party government in Edinburgh, for example, is planning an independence referendum. The national question is not resolved. This issue will also be open for discussion.

The Republican Socialist Convention is not a sectarian initiative setting itself up against the rest of the left by offering the 'correct' view. My views here are only one amongst many. Of course, the convention stands for republicanism and socialism. But the aim is to promote dialogue across different strands, 'warts and all', that make up the working class movement. If there is criticism, it is because it does not have all strands of opinion on the platform. However, it is an invitation for all to contribute and hopefully gain a greater understanding of the importance of democracy in the struggle for socialism ●

**MUSIC**

# In the very fabric of art

In his rejection of practice that prioritises cooperation over competition, Hans Werner Henze conspires with a system he claims to oppose, writes **Gordon Downie**

Last weekend the music of the German composer Hans Werner Henze was featured in the Barbican's Total Immersion series, which claims to examine the work of a single composer through performances, discussions and films.

Born in 1926, Henze moved to Italy in 1953, where he joined the Communist Party. His left-leaning political interests are reflected in a number of works, such as his requiem for Che Guevara, 'The raft of Medusa'. His music is assertively eclectic and highly subjective, incorporating both atonal and tonal harmonic materials in addition to elements drawn from popular culture such as rock and jazz.

The bourgeois press has featured several interviews and articles about the composer. In the articles, Henze makes much of his disdain for the high-modernist avant-garde that arose during the 1950s in continental Europe. He claims that, during the establishment of the Darmstadt Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, composers' music that refused to submit to ideals promulgated by this tendency was censored. However, a brief examination of concert programmes of this period does not necessarily support this claim.<sup>1</sup>

In an interview with music critic Andrew Clarke he makes a now familiar assertion that high-modernist music has been rejected by audiences because it exhibits "no emotions", and claims that his move to Italy was prompted by a desire to avoid the "strictures of the post-war avant-garde".<sup>2</sup> Clearly, Henze feels that he has a score to settle with his artistic enemies and competitors, a process to which the current music establishment appears more than willing to offer its assistance. And the current focus upon the composer's music at the Barbican, in addition to further performances scheduled later in the year, is part of this process of legitimisation. But precisely what might he mean by these remarks - criticisms that have been reiterated over many years?

## No emotion

What does Henze mean by "emotions"? Firstly, the answer can be found in the reified affective categories that constitute the musico-discursive fabric and focus of not only Henze's work, but a large body of officially sanctioned and neo-conservative contemporary music production. Such music seeks to establish a high level of identity with its listeners. As I have stated elsewhere, "this is most easily achieved by occupying an aesthetic, cultural and ideological terrain that most closely matches that with which the target is already familiar".<sup>3</sup> This musical terrain is occupied by the established concert repertoire of canonised, so-called masterpieces, in addition to rock, pop and jazz - all of which is more or less tonal in construction.

By incorporating such materials in their music (even if complexly mediated), composers are able to exploit an infinitely large body of affective categories and inputs that are able to stimulate and guarantee an equally wide range of affective responses and outputs. As Zajonc has observed, subjects express preferences for stimuli based on the frequency with which they encounter them.<sup>4</sup> This is a form of conditioning. Thus, as "tonality forms the dominant aural and acoustic soundscape of both private and

social environments, whether as TV advert or Hollywood blockbuster soundtrack, Microsoft Windows earcon, hotel lobby or shopping mall accessory, cell-phone ring-tone or medical centre waiting room aesthetic",<sup>5</sup> music is not recognised as such if it does not adopt these norms. In this context, tonality has a strongly integrative function.

Secondly, the answer can be found in the representational and mimetic power of tonality itself, in addition to the archetypal forms to which it is umbilically connected in terms of periodic and symmetric structuring and goal-oriented directionality. These constitute the ideal forms with which to represent the subjective experience of human environments, in terms of arousal, excitation and closure. In many respects, tonality functions in the same way as representation in landscape painting and still life, or narrative in the novel and film.

By 'emotion' then, Henze is referring to classes of reified and standardised modes of expression, and the ability of composers to trigger responses in subjects using suitably fabricated materials and cues. This is clearly not a critical perspective. Rather, as Brian Ferneyhough has observed, it is one that submits itself to "immediate purchase in the slave market of emotional exchange".<sup>6</sup>

## Avant-garde strictures

What is it about the programme of post-war aesthetic modernisation that generates such hostility? Artists can be characterised as experts who are frequently unable to access and account for the creative decisions they make. Their practice is frequently informal, and based on heuristic knowledge (or rule of thumb) that is frequently inaccessible, and thus unavailable for rational critique or systematic reflection. This accounts for much of the mystique generated by cultural artefacts, a form of mystification that cultural producers, their publicists and agents exploit in order to benefit from the aura and charisma that it creates.

But much of this hostility has its source in the role that culture is assigned in capitalist society. Its function, forming part of the leisure, heritage and culture industries, is largely diversionary - whether as entertainment, spiritual transcendence, libidinal excitation, surrogate religion, or all four. As I have outlined elsewhere, formalised art is seen to reproduce those features of administration and bureaucratisation from which subjects seek an escape.<sup>7</sup> If a subject's environment is dominated by bureaucratic, administrative forms of social control and the scientific management of the labour process, we should be unsurprised that subjects do not want to encounter the same control mechanisms in those cultural products they consume in their leisure time.

What then is formalised music? In order to restore creative control over atonal, poorly structured pitch materials, during the 1920s Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern developed serialism, which fixes the order of the 12 notes of the western chromatic scale for an entire composition. In common with developments in the visual arts, some composers and theorists after 1945 began to explore the possibility of extending the organisational and structuring potential of

serialism to other parameters of music, such as rhythm and dynamics. This was called integral serialism, or *total organisation*, to reflect the goal of building a compositional system - and aesthetic - determined by a precisely articulated and interconnected set of organisational principles.

Integral serialism (and related algorithmic procedures) can be viewed as a manifestation of general systems thinking. As it establishes and fixes certain structural relationships at the start of the creative process, it is a form of top-down, functional decomposition, and is a means of breaking down or deconstructing a problem, process or goal into successively more detailed steps.

What advantages does such a working method offer composers? As it allows a systematic and transparent mode of production, the semantic content and signifying capacity of the music can be more precisely determined, the impulsiveness and concomitant inconsistencies associated with spontaneity and opportunism are more easily avoided, and opportunities are generated for creative accountability. By following a deliberate, formally determined process, the aesthetic artefact can be liberated from following inherited paths and routines.

Such routines are overloaded with signifiers and referents that are more or less out of the control of the composer, and some members of the 1950s continental avant-garde, such as Iannis Xenakis, Karel Goeyvaerts, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Milton Babbitt and Pierre Boulez, claimed they wished to purge music of these inherited categories. And by formalising creative process in this way, an objective knowledge-base of creative method and standards of practice is established that transcends the particularities and limitations of ad hoc, personalised decision-making. In this context, opportunities are created for the collective ownership of materials and associated procedures.

This approach is in sharp contrast to creative behaviour that discards deliberate reflection in favour of more or less immediate commitment, which builds problem solutions from the bottom up. This applies to how most music is composed, and, indeed, how most cultural artefacts are produced - spontaneously, informally and ad hoc. And if formalisation does not eradicate the artist, it certainly transforms the artist. As systems theorist Edward Yourdon asserted, problem-solving processes need to be made "more explicit ... and less implicit and artful".<sup>8</sup> Within this context then, *art* is what we call those types of human problem-solving behaviour that are more or less unstructured and display a resistance to formal explication or explanation.

Within capitalist society, the production of aesthetic artefacts is intimately connected to bourgeois notions of *freedom of expression*, and the licence given to artists is an assertion of this ideal. As Mike Macnair has observed, however, such a notion can be more effectively reconfigured in Marxist terms as *freedom of communication*.<sup>9</sup> This immediately removes our focus away from the disempowered singularity, or individual, to the more powerful *collective*, a body predicated on the free exchange of knowledge and information. And it is *collective* action that forms the basis of the approaches to creative problem-solving described

here, a practice in direct opposition to the directive of *competition* driving capitalist society.

## Style police

But the threat of collective action is one of the primary reasons the bourgeois music establishment continues its hostility towards this tendency, despite it having been a short-lived (albeit influential) movement, and despite the small number of works it generated (which are performed rarely). Thus, relating Henze's encounter with this movement, Tom Service describes it as "the style police of post-war central Europe".<sup>10</sup>

This is not an inappropriate description, as any dictatorship requires appropriate enforcement. However, Service did not mean to pay any compliments: western European formalism, in all media, has frequently been smeared by association with Stalinoid centralisation and authoritarianism - a wholly erroneous linkage, given that regime's promotion of a moribund realism. Whether he is aware of it or not, however, Service and his ilk prefer the anarchy of the flexible market, and he appears blind to those ideological forces that function to ensure that all phenomena, artistic or otherwise, conform to it - surveillance takes many different forms. If they do not conform, then desperate attempts are made to remodel them so that they do.

Thus, in a review of a performance of Stockhausen's early constructivist score, *Kreuzspiel*, Service claimed that the pianist brought "wit"<sup>11</sup> to the rendition of the music. In effect, Tom Service is claiming that, if the avant-garde refuses to repent, then their music can be reinterpreted, recuperated and repackaged in an attempt to drain it of critical content, so that those critical categories deployed for the simplicities and juvenilities of Haydn can be applied everywhere else - totalitarianism takes many different forms. However, the continued absence of this repertoire from concert programmes illustrates the failure of this process of appropriation.

In such a cultural and political context, the appeal of Henze is thus obvious. Henze displays all those traits of hyper-individualism that conform to bourgeois notions of genius. Everything about the features by Service and Clarke exude the archetypal and now reified characteristics of the bourgeois artist-as-hero music interview - and everything Henze has written functions to ensure its compatibility with the expectations embedded therein. Service notes that he is "standing outside the German composer Hans Werner Henze's house in Marino, near Rome, looking at his olive grove, an infinity of gnarled branches and leaves that shimmer in the brilliant winter light", whilst Henze's living room contains "lavish paintings, a baroque effulgence of fabrics [and] two symmetrically placed Steinway grands". The interview with Henze, Service remarks, is "punctuated by sips of his favourite cocktail, a mysterious green liqueur".<sup>12</sup> And Clarke notes that Henze's home is "an earthly paradise that has been his refuge for nearly 50 years", that "Henze has long been a man of contradictions", and "In his various writings Henze makes no secret of the fact that his life has been a yo-yo of hedonism and heartache."<sup>13</sup>

We should question what any of this colourful prose has to do with

Henze's music. Discursive categories such as these certainly make it easier to sell the product, as they sit comfortably within the pages of weekend supplements that distract bourgeois readerships. However, in this form, such writing is largely indistinguishable from the copy found in the pages of *Hello!* magazine and similar celebrity fanzines. As such, it functions to reduce creative behaviour to mere autobiography, whereby the source of creative decisions is seen to be those incidents that form the creative subject's lived experience.

## Negation

Reminiscing with Tom Service, Henze notes that Adorno considered his music "not chaotic enough - music today has to be chaotic", to which Henze retorts: "What a thing to say! There you are every day, trying to put something reasonable and clear on paper, and somebody comes and says it is not sufficiently chaotic."<sup>14</sup>

It is unclear whether Henze understood Adorno's criticism. In describing his music as insufficiently chaotic, Adorno was asserting that the music was insufficiently *negatory*. And it is to this that Boulez refers when he asserted that composers were useless if they did not adopt serialism - he was not making a merely colourful, rhetorical aside. Rather he was stating that any cultural producers who fail to fully critique and interrogate the medium within which they work lose control of that medium. By using material uncritically, composers risk becoming vehicles for the transmission of ideologies that are embedded and encapsulated - in a congealed form - in pre-formed, off-the-shelf materials.

Thus, to be truly negatory, opposition has to be built into the very fabric, material and generative procedures of the artwork itself. But in the eclectic nature of his work, in his submission to the cult of personality, and in his rejection of practice that prioritises cooperation over competition, Henze conspires with an economic and political system - capitalism - which he otherwise claims to oppose.<sup>15</sup> ●

## Notes

1. See [www.internationalesmusikinstitut.de/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=36&Itemid=39&lang=en](http://www.internationalesmusikinstitut.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=36&Itemid=39&lang=en).
2. *Financial Times* January 8.
3. G Downie, 'Cultural production as self-surveillance: making the right impression', in *Perspectives of New Music* Vol 46, No1, p201.
4. RB Zajonc, 'Attitudinal effects of mere exposure', in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 9, No2, supplement, June 1968, pp10-27.
5. G Downie, 'Cultural production as self-surveillance: making the right impression', in *Perspectives of New Music* Vol 46, No1, p201.
6. Personal correspondence, February 10 1994.
7. G Downie, 'Aesthetic necrophilia: reification, new music and the commodification of affectivity', in C-S Mahnkopf (ed) *Critical Composition Today* Hofheim 2006.
8. E Yourdon and LL Constantine *Structured design* New Jersey 1979.
9. M Macnair, 'Marxism and freedom of communication', *Critique* conference, London School of Economics, March 2009.
10. *The Guardian* December 14 2009.
11. *The Guardian* September 8 2000.
12. *The Guardian* December 14 2009.
13. *Financial Times* January 8.
14. *The Guardian* December 14 2009.
15. It is the case, of course, that many composers of the post-1945 avant-garde also submitted to the excesses associated with the cult of personality. This is certainly the case for Stockhausen (as the Maoist, Cornelius Cardew, attempted to show) and Boulez, though it developed later in their careers after they abandoned their commitment to a more or less strict formalism. By his own, more youthful standards of analysis, Boulez is now useless.

## REVIEW

# Ecology and economism

Martin Empson *Marxism and ecology: capitalism, socialism and the future of the planet* Bookmarks, pp32, £1.50



Giant redwood trees: wealth not created by labour

In some ways, this small Socialist Workers Party pamphlet is a useful read. Although it hardly presents a thoroughgoing critique of capitalism and its plundering of nature, it carries arguments, backed up by numerous figures and statistics, that many interested in climate change, particularly those new to Marxist ideas and concepts, will find useful.

The pamphlet's main strength lies in its attempt to shift 'green' thought by highlighting Marx's contribution to the ecological question and how his method centred on the "metabolic rift" between human beings and nature.

This sees Empson making a fairly strong case against the "libel against the human race" that forms the basis of Malthusian arguments on climate change (p20). This is completely necessary, given that Marx is often treated either with disdain or distrust by the ecological movement. Quite correctly, Empson highlights how the Marxist contribution has been "forgotten or dismissed by many who want to save the planet" because of Stalinism and the cult of the five-year 'plans': "the crimes - including the ecological crimes - of those who claimed to govern in the name of Marx and Engels, particularly in the former

Soviet Union" (p6).

It is also correct - in light of the petty bourgeois hysteria which postulates individual lifestyles, consumer behaviour and recycling habits as somehow holding the key to overcoming runaway climate change - for the pamphlet to stress that "the effect that we have as individuals pales into insignificance when compared to the damage wrought by the multinationals and by government policies. We need to examine the relationship between our society as a whole and the natural world upon which it depends" (p9).

As we will see, although the

pamphlet is correct to investigate Marx's contribution to tackling this question, the 'Marxism' that comrade Empson propounds leaves a lot to be desired - recapitulating, as it does, some of the ideas on humanity and nature that Marx and Engels fought tooth and nail.

## Climate change

Comrade Empson places capitalism in its historical context, but fails to properly examine climate change in the same way. So, whilst correctly highlighting the havoc that climate change is already unleashing by pointing, for example, to 1998, the

hottest year of the 20th century, he does not consider this in relation to the fact that the Earth's climate has always, like all matter, undergone constant change. After all, there were many hotter years than 1998 in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries.

The problem with failing to do this is that it risks falling into a trap common within the green movement: that it is possible to 'fix' the climate at some ideal point, or to return to a certain pre-industrial level, when everything was apparently dandy.

This is not to say that "the human race" does *not* face "an environmental crisis like nothing we have ever lived through before" (p4). It is merely to recognise that the changing climate must be conceived in a manner that does not revolve around 'stopping climate change' (as if such a feat were possible), but that we must fundamentally alter our relationship with nature so that we can consciously control the anthropogenic aspect of it. Empson is therefore wrong to focus only on greenhouse gases and fossil fuels as causes of the warming of the planet - there are many other factors in operation that include ocean currents, sunspots, cloud cover, methane concentrations, as well as planetary movement. But perhaps comrade Empson is trying to keep things simple.

His critique of capitalism also appears rather partial. Although he argues that capitalism will never be able to heal the "metabolic rift" between humans and the natural world (p26), and quotes Marx to outline the theory of alienation, he brings this down to three reasons: its short-term nature, the competition at the heart of the system and the resultant inefficiencies, together with the externalisation of the cost to the natural world.

When it comes to competition, it would be truer to say that modern capitalism today operates through *pseudo*-competition and, as the law of value declines, there is an increasingly complex interpenetration with a (negative) anticipation of the law of the plan in a higher form of society. This is a minor point, but it seems that the factors that comrade Empson lists are more *features* of capitalist production than its essence.

At root, capitalism (generalised commodity production where labour itself is raised to the level of a commodity) is antithetical to the environment because in the destructive reproduction cycle, money-commodity-money, capital has no interest but to raise profitability and expand. Because of this, nature is not regarded as something to be cherished, but as a free resource to be plundered. In this sense it is also misplaced to talk of the "fossil-fuel economy" that has grown with capitalism (p26). Even if capitalism *could* mass-produce electric cars, this in itself would not solve its internal contradiction, which is that just like a shark, it must constantly move if it wishes to stay alive. The working class, which is in capitalism but not of it, must put forward another vision.

## Wealth and workers

Now we come to the pamphlet's major shortcoming. In the rather oddly titled chapter 'Class and social justice', Empson writes that "Under capitalism, workers produce all the wealth in society" (p23). This phrase is more or less directly lifted from the SWP's 'Where we stand' column (the

closest thing the SWP has to a programme!) printed in *Socialist Worker* every week.

The notion that "workers produce all wealth" is not a Marxist one, but a thoroughly bourgeois one that reduces "the workers" to a slave class. It is economism in Marxist clothing.

Firstly, it is patently wrong - there is the not inconsiderable output of the petty bourgeoisie and other subordinate classes, such as the peasantry. But this is not the crux of the matter, which is that nature itself is also a source of wealth. This is true in the sense that our very existence is predicated on it and therefore all of our "work" depends on it too. However, it is essential to appreciate that clean air and thriving wildlife and vegetation are enriching to our existence in and of themselves. This is hardly irrelevant in a pamphlet on ecology! To quote Marx, "Nature is just as much the source of use-values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labour, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labour-power" (*Critique of the Gotha programme*).

It is astonishing that comrade Empson himself not only quotes Marx's *Critique of the Gotha programme*, but also proposes it as one of the texts in the 'recommended reading' list at the end of the pamphlet. After all, it is precisely in this text that Marx takes Ferdinand Lassalle's absurd notion that "workers create all the wealth in society" to task. And Marx could hardly be clearer: "Labour is not the source of all wealth" (original emphasis). Surely, having read comrade Empson's (necessarily introductory) pamphlet, comrades will rush to get hold of this Marxist classic, where the above sentence will jump out at them.

If Marx is wrong on this question - and in my opinion he is correct - then comrade Empson should at least try to explain why. Yet, just as with all complicated and 'grey' areas of theory that necessitate open and honest discussion if our class is to become equipped with the theoretical weapons to forge a new society, the SWP sweeps this under the carpet as potentially embarrassing or harmful to 'the movement' (read the SWP apparatus). But those who actually take the time to critically read Marx's *Critique* will find that Lassalle's formulations, lambasted by Marx, are almost a photocopy of the SWP's 'Where we stand'.

Not that Tony Cliff, Chris Harman, Alex Callinicos, Martin Smith, John Rees or even comrade Empson actually sat down and consciously drew inspiration from Lassalle. This historical reflex represents a manifestation of bourgeois ideas in the working class, that, given the nature of bourgeois society and the subordinate position of the working class, constantly re-assert themselves. There are good

reasons for this too. As Marx puts it, "The bourgeoisie have very good grounds for falsely ascribing supernatural creative power to labour; since precisely from the fact that labour is determined by nature, it follows that man, who possesses no other property than his labour-power, must in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labour. He can work only with their permission, hence live only with their permission" (*Critique of the Gotha programme*).

Similarly, the Empson pamphlet tends to define the working class not as sentient, thinking and emotional beings, but as mere wage-slaves - typical of economic thought more generally. So, while points are made against the environmental movement's distrust of "working people", comrade Empson concludes, in a criticism of environmental campaigners such as George Monbiot: "Ignoring thousands of workers whose jobs are at risk will result in them being alienated from the environmental movement. This is why social justice is so important to the debate about a future sustainable society" (p21). This utterly fails to establish why the working class is key.

For Marxism, the working class is the revolutionary class not because of its strength at the point of production, but because of the fact that it is separated from the means of production and thus there is a need among the class as a whole (all those dependent on the wage fund) for collective and voluntary organisation, serving as a signpost to a higher form of society. It is this emphasis on this kind of working class self-organisation that the SWP - and the economic left more generally - lacks.

### Revolution

Thus for the SWP the solution to runaway climate change and overcoming capitalism is to be found in trade unionism and mobilising workers merely around jobs, pay and conditions - with the tightly-knit bureaucratic centralist sect pulling the strings from behind closed doors. What is missing from this argument is the political action that is needed: the type of programme the working class as a whole should advance, both nationally and internationally, in its own independent interests. For the SWP, the solution lies in 'the movement' and the CC's 'right line' or 'correct transitional method'.

The danger with this approach, however - especially in light of the immediate and serious threat posed by runaway climate change - is that it turns the left into cheerleaders for, or 'the best builders' of, the green movement. *Socialist Worker's* headline for its 'blue wave' edition, 'People power can save the planet', is just one example of this simplistic, populist approach. This is quite explicit

in the pamphlet: "Every victory for the movement is one that makes the world a better place, but is also one that strengthens the confidence of ordinary people to change the world" (p29).

This embodies the problem of economism. Instead of high politics around the programme of Marxism becoming hegemonic by leading the struggle of all oppressed sections of society in the battle for democracy, the working class is either drowned out by or pulled behind the politics of other classes: petty bourgeois or bourgeois forces that have recently discovered their 'green' credentials, reactionary forces that wish to see world population drastically reduced, or technoquacks who wish to fire dust into the upper atmosphere. The 'programmophobia' that has engulfed the left has left us vulnerable to all sorts of alien, anti-working class ideas and values. Historically this has seen us bowled over by black separatism, feminism and other outlooks of the petty bourgeoisie.

There can be no tailing of the green agenda and its partial, naive and sometimes even deeply reactionary critique of humanity and nature - we must develop a Marxist programme for these questions. Comrade Empson is not forthcoming here. Whilst towards the end of the pamphlet he comes up with some supportable demands - "massively improved public transport systems"; "better provisions for cyclists and pedestrians and over time we would redesign our towns and cities"; "collective social institutions like free crèches and laundrettes" (p24) - these certainly do not amount to a radical shift away from market imperatives towards the principle of need.

Moreover, they seem detached from any discussion of how to achieve "a truly sustainable society ... where production was organised rationally in the interest of people and planet" (p24). This is doubly true of the SWP's lack of democratic demands. Yet without democracy the working class cannot rule nor achieve a society which is rational, planned and sustainable. What about our own organisations and instruments of struggle? It seems a bit cheap that Alex 'Stalinicos' is quoted to ridicule the faux democracy under capitalism, yet he is a central figure in a leadership that presides over a party regime that has hacked into emails, expelled comrades over the telephone and ensured that dissenting voices are excluded from conferences.

This is not just a cheap swipe. The party we fight for, the manner in which we organise now, is inseparable from the sort of society we wish to see, in which democracy flourishes and the law of conscious, controlled planning from below sweeps away the chaos of the market. As such, the party and its structures are a political question. But none of this is mentioned - just a quick allusion to the soviet/mass strike line that passes as a strategy for working class power.

Thus, although there are a few nods towards the working class as the basis for thoroughgoing social change, the pamphlet is not able to offer a partyist alternative - a programme for the proletariat to fashion itself into a class fit to rule and to usher in a society rid of the malfunctioning madness of capitalist production. As such, what we see is economism parading as Marxism - spontaneously created ideas under capitalism substituting for the political economy of the working class.

What is needed is not the confining of theory to the anointed few, while the rank and file are encouraged to tail this or that movement and their alien ideas in the search for a short cut, but a mass Marxist perspective. And that is clearly missing from Empson's pamphlet, which underlines that, although John Rees and his allies might now be gone from the central committee, their popular frontist movementism certainly has not

Ben Lewis

# What we fight for

■ Our central aim is the organisation of communists, revolutionary socialists and all politically advanced workers into a Communist Party. Without organisation the working class is nothing with the highest form of organisation it is everything.

■ The Provisional Central Committee organises members of the Communist Party, but there exists no real Communist Party today. There are many so-called 'parties' on the left. In reality they are confessional sects. Members who disagree with the prescribed 'line' are expected to gag themselves in public. Either that or face expulsion.

■ Communists operate according to the principles of democratic centralism. Through ongoing debate we seek to achieve unity in action and a common world outlook. As long as they support agreed actions, members have the right to speak openly and form temporary or permanent factions.

■ Communists oppose the US-UK occupation of Iraq and stand against all imperialist wars but constantly strive to bring to the fore the fundamental question - ending war is bound up with ending capitalism.

■ Communists are internationalists. Everywhere we strive for the closest unity and agreement of working class and progressive parties of all countries. We oppose every manifestation of national sectionalism. It is an internationalist duty to uphold the principle, 'One state, one party'. To the extent that the European Union becomes a state then that necessitates EU-wide trade unions and a Communist Party of the EU.

■ The working class must be organised globally. Without a global Communist Party, a Communist International, the struggle against capital is weakened and lacks coordination.

■ Communists have no interest apart from the working class as a whole. They differ only in recognising the importance of Marxism as a guide to practice. That theory is no dogma, but must be constantly added to and enriched.

■ Capitalism in its ceaseless search for profit puts the future of humanity at risk. Capitalism is synonymous with war, pollution, exploitation and crisis. As a global system capitalism can only be superseded globally. All forms of nationalist socialism are reactionary and anti-working class.

■ The capitalist class will never willingly allow their wealth and power to be taken away by a parliamentary vote. They will resist using every means at their disposal. Communists favour using parliament and winning the biggest possible working class representation. But workers must be ready to make revolution - peacefully if we can, forcibly if we must.

■ Communists fight for extreme democracy in all spheres of society. Democracy must be given a social content.

■ We will use the most militant methods objective circumstances allow to achieve a federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales, a united, federal Ireland and a United States of Europe.

■ Communists favour industrial unions. Bureaucracy and class compromise must be fought and the trade unions transformed into schools for communism.

■ Communists are champions of the oppressed. Women's oppression, combating racism and chauvinism, and the struggle for peace and ecological sustainability are just as much working class questions as pay, trade union rights and demands for high-quality health, housing and education.

■ Socialism represents victory in the battle for democracy. It is the rule of the working class. Socialism is either democratic or, as with Stalin's Soviet Union, it turns into its opposite.

■ Socialism is the first stage of the worldwide transition to communism - a system which knows neither wars, exploitation, money, classes, states nor nations. Communism is general freedom and the real beginning of human history.

■ All who accept these principles are urged to join the Communist Party.

## Fighting fund

# Anticipatory

A couple of donations received via our website to report this week. Coincidentally both are full of praise for the "excellent Kautsky translation, which is incredibly valuable", in the words of comrade TP, who also commends us for our coverage of the "whole SWP debacle".

She rewards us with a very nice £25, while comrade JF is even more generous - he thinks last week's Kautsky supplement is worth £30, also donated via PayPal. (Talking of our website, by the way, the number of online readers is continuing to edge its way up, with 16,773 being recorded last week.)

We also received a kind gift from comrade LR, who has not only started a monthly standing order for £10, but has thrown in a handy £15 cheque to get the ball rolling! Then there is the batch of

already existing standing orders that have been transferred into the *Weekly Worker* account totalling no less than £345 over the last seven days.

All that comes to £475 received since I last wrote this column, which more than doubles our total for January's fighting fund, to £907. As I wrote last week, I have every reason to be confident that we will reach our new monthly target of £1,250 - we still have 10 days left to raise the extra £350 we need.

So let me thank all those who gave this week - and add an anticipatory 'thank you' to those who are about to do so! ●

Robbie Rix

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# weekly worker

## General election tactics

# Taking Labour seriously

The Labour Representation Committee has just published a list of Labour candidates that it will be actively supporting in the coming general election. It is a starting point, argues **Ben Lewis**

**T**he Labour Representation Committee's January 13 press release on the general election highlights the weak position the Labour left currently finds itself in. This in turn reflects a more general malaise on the left as a whole.

Underlining the cross-party cuts consensus, the LRC is looking instead to back "Labour candidates who have stood up for socialist politics". It argues for "maximum socialist representation" in the new parliament against a background of another "Labour government". Quite correctly, the LRC is concentrating its forces by actively picking out and backing candidates standing for left politics, no matter how vague or inadequate.

A mere 23 in total, and the LRC was obviously stretching things to recommend a vote for even this small number. Indeed, to describe ex-cabinet minister Michael Meacher, who voted for the Iraq war, as "standing up for socialist politics" is enough to make many in and around the LRC cringe. The rather vaguely worded criteria for support seem to confirm this attempt to bend over backwards to include as many candidates as possible - the list includes all "who are (or would become) members of the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs" and "those who backed (or would have backed) John McDonnell's leadership bid in 2007".

However, we welcome the list's publication as a starting point when deciding which Labour candidates should be given support. Not that we should simply take a passive approach. We urge voters to get in contact with the candidates and question them about their policies. We are recommending a two-pronged approach:

1. Given the proposed 'slash and burn' attacks on the public sector, will you oppose all cuts in services?
2. What about the British occupying forces in Afghanistan? Will you call for their immediate and unconditional withdrawal?

We argue for such an approach because, even in its current state - precisely in its current state - it is imperative that Marxists take the Labour left seriously. This means seeking out and actively engaging with these forces. Too often the far left ignores or belittles the significance of the Labour Party and the place it still occupies in the minds of large numbers of class-conscious workers in this country.

In the Socialist Alliance 2001 general election campaign, for example, our proposals for a proactive approach and united front tactics in relation to Labour left candidates were often met either with cries of derision or outrage (sometimes both). We suggested contacting Labour candidates and offering to stand down in those constituencies where the alliance was also contesting if they would come out in favour of the SA



**John McDonnell: supportable**

'priority pledges'. Diane Abbott, for one, willingly did so, but the SA issued no statement supporting her (there was thankfully no SA candidate put up against her).

That she could publicly declare her support for left policies, and that we

could vote for her, was a vindication of the sort of tactics our movement needs if it is to overcome the strategic problem of Labourism in the struggle for a Communist Party. This is something that could not be achieved by the drab and uninspiring auto-

Labourism ('Vote Labour, but ...') prevalent on the far left before the days of Tony Blair. Nor can it be achieved by the flip-side of this perspective: the auto-*anti*-Labourism that decrees Labour's death and then seeks to create - wait for it - a new

Labour Party to replace it!

At the 2005 general election, when the movement against the Iraqi occupation was still a key issue in British politics, we in the CPGB called for a vote for all Labour candidates who would openly declare for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of imperialist troops. We were genuinely shocked to find that just four were prepared to do so (see *Weekly Worker* April 28 2005).

We must utilise a wide range of tactics and interventions to open up the gulf between left and right in the Labour Party. In the coming period, every voice in parliament against swingeing cuts and the continued barbaric occupation of Afghanistan can only help to strengthen our movement. Using the LRC list as a starting point, we would urge our readers and supporters to contact Labour candidates and report back to the *Weekly Worker*.

The LRC's recommended candidates are:

Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington), Ronnie Campbell (Blyth Valley), Martin Caton (Gower), Katy Clark (North Ayrshire and Arran), Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North), David Drew (Stroud), Sarah Evans (North West Hampshire), Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent Central), Paul Flynn (Newport West), Nia Griffith (Llanelli), David Hamilton (Midlothian), Gary Heather (Tunbridge Wells), David Heyes (Ashton-under-Lyne), Kevin Hind (Bury St Edmunds), Kelvin Hopkins (Luton North), John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington), Michael Meacher (Oldham West and Royton), Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby), Gordon Prentice (Pendle), Linda Riordan (Halifax), Lee Skevington (Yeovil), Dennis Skinner (Bolsover), Mike Wood (Batley and Spen) ●

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