

The Leninist



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FOUNDING STATEMENT OF THE LENINIST

The Communist Party, the crisis and its crisis

1981 a year to remember:

- Riots in the cities as Black youth, after years of grinding, oppression, hit back. White youth fight alongside them in their battle with the forces of the state. In practice, the government can only respond in one way: CS gas, rubber bullets, water cannon; in other words, better equipment for the good old British 'bobby' to crush any further attempts like the Summer Uprising. Enquiries abound, used as a smoke-screen to cover increased repression.
- Unemployment reaches an all time record level, as British capitalism reels from the devastating effects of the world capitalist crisis. In order to extricate itself from its weak position relative to its imperialist rivals, the capitalists in Britain attack the living standards of employed workers; civil servants, car workers, steel workers and many other sections have their real wages slashed. Resistance to closures and sackings becomes increasingly stiff from the rank and file.
- Hundreds of thousands take to the streets in massive demonstrations against the Tory government, their anti-Soviet war drive, their racist laws, and above all mass unemployment.
- A twelve-year war of National Liberation continues to rage inside the United Kingdom. The Nationalist population of the Six Counties show their unequivocal position on the

'terrorists' of the Provisional IRA by electing Bobby Sands, who, after dying a martyr's death, had a funeral which brought one hundred thousand on to the streets to honour him and his cause.

For liberals, these developments can only provoke fear and a dread of the future. Visibly shaking at the knees, they approach the state, pleading for reforms to dampen down and divert the struggles of the masses: more public spending; inner city development; youth opportunities; a united Ireland... well, in the long (very long) term; and we even hear of proposals to raise Dixon of Dock Green from his grave; anything but face sharpening class struggle.

So far, much of the discontent of the masses has been channelled into the Labour Party, contained within the safe banks of reformism. This has been done not without cost, for the surge of mass activity caused by the crisis has resulted in an almost reflex left shift in the Labour Party. This, plus the general dilemma in ruling class circles on how to deal with the popular upsurge. The fact that the consciousness of the masses always and inevitably trails material developments, has meant that the two-party system of the Conservative/Labour swings and roundabouts, which has dominated the political scene in Britain since the end of the second imperialist world war, is visibly tottering; the effects of the crisis in British capitalism increasingly comes to determine politics, in an indirect but ever more visible fashion.

All this is good news, very good news, for revolutionaries. Such is the life blood of revolution;

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objectively, it all goes to confirm the scientific position of Marxism Leninism about the nature of capitalism and its inevitable tendency towards crisis. Subjectively, as well as making our hearts beat faster and stiffening our resolve, it presents us with immense opportunities, above all, the task of building a mass revolutionary party capable of leading the working class and its allies in the coming life and death struggle with decaying, moribund capitalism. We are confronted with an upsurge of mass activity. Our task is to extend and consolidate it, to help develop it to a *higher plane*, to give it a *revolutionary* direction.

Liberals of all varieties and hues fulminate against the government. Pointing an accusing finger at the Tories, they solemnly proclaim that it is they who are responsible for *forcing* workers to strike, *forcing* the Irish to support the Provisionals and the INLA, *forcing* the black youth to riot. "If only we were in power none of this would happen, everything would be sweetness and light" they plead to the bourgeoisie. Such is the nature of all reformists.

In times of social peace, differences between revolution and reform can become blurred, but in the event of crisis and social upheaval opportunists dispose of all their old revolutionary rhetoric, their principles; like someone trading in an old car, in place of the old model they get the latest version of class collaboration. Such is the reward of opportunism.

The Party— our crisis

Our party was formed during the burning heat of revolution that swept the world following the 1914-18 imperialist war. Its birth was necessitated like other communist parties, the Bolsheviks included, by the betrayal of revolution and the cause of the proletariat by the leaders of the Second International and the 'official' Marxist parties, in the years preceding the outbreak of the war and the emergence of a general revolutionary situation. The formation of the Communist Party in Britain was an integral component part of a world split between reform and revolution. At the time of its formation, the party was tiny in terms of membership, but, being a Leninist party and basing itself on the conditions for affiliation to the Third International (see V.I. Lenin, *CW*, Vol. 31, pp 207-12, 563), it was able to raise the blood-red banner of revolution in the British Labour Movement. Despite the fact that the movement was dominated by reformism, which rested on Britain's past as the world's leading imperialist power, the Communist Party was able to take a lead in many of the nascent struggles of the workers.

For, through the thick crust of deadening reformism by which social peace had been secured for so long, vibrant workers' movements burst,

shaking the domination of the labour aristocracy and bureaucracy over the working class. Lenin described the creation of Councils of Action in Britain as embryonic Soviets, thus laying the basis for dual power. Although these challenges to the conservative labour leaders, and therefore the capitalist state itself, were finally crushed by the betrayal of the 1926 General Strike, the Communist Party refused to furl the banner of class struggle. Its existence remained a constant threat to the capitalist system; for the very nature of capitalism's inner workings tends it to crisis. With a revolutionary party the working class, the grave diggers of capitalism, could finally put capitalism where it belongs, into the history books - remembered but not mourned.

How does the Communist Party stand in relation to its revolutionary tasks today, when after the long boom, capitalism again plunges into deep economic and social crisis?

Well, in terms of organisation, even through the thickest rose-tinted glasses, there are, to say the least, desperate problems facing us. Membership continues to dwindle: figures announced by Dave Cook, were 18,458 (*Morning Star*, July 16 1981) which compares with 20,590 at the same date two years previously and with 25,293 in 1977 and 28,519 in 1975. In other words, a decline of about one third in six years, although this in itself is not a disaster, the broad influence of the party has declined in proportion: the *Morning Star*, its very existence now uncertain continues its downward spiral, along with *Comment*. The number of functioning branches has steadily diminished and the activity of those that still function has become increasingly narrow.

These problems in themselves are not crucial and certainly not central to the crisis in the party, for the crisis in organisation and influence of the party is but a reflection of the ideological crisis that has become chronic in our ranks. A party a fraction of the size of the party today could, if united around a consistent Leninist position, look to its tasks with confidence, with the certainty that they would inevitably triumph. For the party, theoretical clarity is vital — without this, it is as Samson shorn of his hair, the source of his strength.

There exists today within our ranks a mass of opportunist ideological positions; what unites them all is that they are non-working class ideological tendencies, alien to the workers' movement. Horrors abound: Viki Seddon, a member of the Yorkshire District Committee, writes that "all men" benefit from violence against women, "just as benefits accrue to all white people from discrimination against blacks" (*Marxism Today*, August 1981, p.6). It is not the working class which benefits from racism, but the bourgeoisie, as a result of the divisions created inside the working class, just as they benefit from the divisive effects inside the working class, of the feminism which comrade Seddon adheres to.

Anti-Sovietism is rampant. The role of the

Soviet Union is blamed for the imperialist war drive, their intervention in Afghanistan condemned on the basis of it aggravating world tension. But the piece de resistance must be Sam Russell's call for the Soviet Union to disarm, in the face of a massive anti-Soviet war drive by the imperialist powers, especially the United States. According to comrade Russell, the Soviet Union "now maintains and renews a gigantic surplus (our emphasis) of nuclear striking power" (*Marxism Today*, June 1981, p.24).

If opportunist positions were held by a small minority of the party, things would not be so bad, but a fish rots from the head down. The main diseases that effect comrades in the leadership of the party is the tendency to capitulate to bourgeois nationalism and their advocacy of utopian disarmament.

Tony Chater, Editor of the *Morning Star*, writes that disarmament under capitalism would mean that vast resources "could ... be diverted to peaceful construction". To prove his point, he quotes the notorious warmonger Mountbatten, who the comrade says was "murdered" (Tony Chater, *The Case for Peace and Disarmament*, p.17).

We read in another party pamphlet that if Britain diverted resources from arms it "would be in a much better position to compete internationally in high technology industries... the drive for peace and disarmament... can create the conditions for a safer, more productive and competitive Britain" (George Bolton, *Act Now to End Mass Unemployment*, p.12).

This view is echoed by the General Secretary of the party, Gordon McLennan, who says that if arms spending could be diverted to "manufacturing investment" it would be of "far greater benefit to the country" (Gordon McLennan, *Oppose Tory Policies — Take Britain on a Different Course*, p.28).

In contrast, the Leninist position is that:

"Our 'peace programme' must explain that the imperialist powers and imperialist bourgeoisie *cannot* grant a democratic peace. Such a peace must be sought and fought for, *not in the past*, not in a reactionary utopia of non-imperialist capitalism, nor in a league of equal nations *under* capitalism, *but in the future*, in the socialist revolution of the proletariat. Not a single fundamental democratic demand can be achieved to any considerable extent, or any degree of permanency, in the advanced imperialist states, except *by way of* revolutionary battles under the banner of Socialism.

"Who ever promises the nations a 'democratic' peace without at the same time preaching the socialist revolution, or while repudiating the struggle for it — the struggle which must be carried on now ...is deceiving the proletariat." (V.I.Lenin, *The Peace Programme*, March 1916, *CW*, Vol. 22, pp.167-168).

The rot may begin at the head, but it is from the body that the greatest smells now emanate. Most pungent (so far) is the work of the dynamic duo of revisionism, Mike Prior and David Purdy; their book, *Out of the Ghetto*, is a piece of work that the 'Father of revisionism' Bernstein himself would be proud of. It rejects the Marxist theory of the capitalist crisis, Leninism, and revolution; in their

place our authors advocate a social contract and wage restraint. The only saving grace of the work is that it is *honest*, that is, honest revisionism open for all to see.

The party today is a seething mass of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois tendencies — feminism, pacifism, economisni, liberalism, anti-Sovietism, nationalism — all the offspring of opportunism. What this leads to if not checked is the dissolving of the party organisationally, for as opportunism has dissolved the party ideologically, it is only one more step, and a 'logical' one, to liquidate the party organisationally. At the moment this will not mean winding-up the party — no, it means obliterating its independent work, its independent position in front of the masses, submerging it into the 'broad' movement.

The liquidators in Russia after the Revolution fought to abolish the underground party and to substitute in its place an amorphous party within the bounds of the law. Lenin fought bitterly against this trend, demanding the expulsion from the ranks of the party, all who advocated such an erroneous view. In this fight the Bolsheviks aligned themselves with the Pro-Party Mensheviks, Plekhanov and his followers who also stood for the purging of the liquidationists. On the other side of the barricades were not only the liquidationists but also the conciliators, most notably Trotsky (see V.I.Lenin, *CW*, Vol. 19, pp.147-169, *Controversial Issues An Open Party and the Marxists*). Trotsky and the liquidators may not have had the same view, but as Trotsky sought to reconcile the party with opportunism, he justly earned the stinging polemic delivered from Lenin's pen.

The tendency towards liquidationism has been greatly accelerated by the growing influence of left wing reformism in the working class in the form of Bennism. For, having taken the party down the road to ideological opportunism, leaders in the party now find themselves confronted by elements who look at the Labour Party's mass following with the eyes of a hungry man and plead to be allowed to eat, for in order to reach the table, all that has to be sacrificed are a few old, 'useless' principles. Benn's political position has many similarities to those advocated by the opportunists, a fact of which they are constantly reminding us. The fact that he can attract mass support around his position only adds salt to the wounds of the party as it desperately attempts to reverse its organisational degeneration.

The result is that voices are raised, and are becoming increasingly vocal in the call for the ending of independent party activity, for the submerging of the party in the flood tide of Bennism. The danger of this happening is great; it can only be prevented by a united offensive by all those in the party who favour its continued independent existence and who stand for the purging of the party of the liquidators. *Those who call for peace, who seek to conciliate between the*

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various trends in the party and liquidationism are in reality anti-party, in the sense that they refuse to fight against those who wish to see the party's independence a thing of the past. Our fight needs to be irreconcilable, against both the liquidators and the conciliators.

Party Unity

The present situation in Britain cries out for a mass revolutionary party. The coming period will see huge clashes, for it is only a matter of time before the working class as a whole begins to move into battle, as the effects of the crisis become ever wider and deeper. But recognising the need for a mass revolutionary party is one thing, achieving it — to state the obvious — is a very different matter.

No number of tried calls to 'Build the Party and the Morning Star' will take us one inch forward. To create the party which is so urgently needed requires firstly and above all ideological and organisational unity in the ranks of the communists.

But how is it to be achieved?

To answer this, it is important to fully understand what a revolutionary workers party is: the politically advanced section of the working class, its *vanguard*, led by the most *advanced* theory, that is, Marxism-Leninism. This is the key to the question; for unity, without unity around Marxism-Leninism, is false, bureaucratic unity, lifeless. And, more than that, a unity that is bound to shatter at the first serious test.

It is on the basis of unity around Marxism-Leninism that the party can be built — it is the foundation for its organisational forms, above all democratic centralism. To attempt to build the party around the principles of democratic centralism without ideological unity can only lead to total instability, a house built on sand. This position was succinctly defined by Lenin in his famous dictum: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" (V.I.Lenin, *What is to be Done*, C. W. Vol. 5, p.369).

What is therefore required is an *ideological struggle* in the party in order to *purge it of all rotten opportunist elements*. Without this, genuine unity is impossible, for ideology and organisation are *intimately linked* — without ideological struggle, party organisation will be directionless, blind, useless for the purpose it is intended to serve, that is the class struggle of the working class for state power.

Ideological Struggle

Looking at the Communist Party today, an honest party worker might say that 'the last thing we need is more ideological struggle', and turning to us, the Leninists, he would proclaim that 'there are tens, even hundreds of ideological differences in the party — what we need is unity!' What our

friend says has some truth in it, but what he describes as 'ideological struggle' is nothing more than the , wrangling of petty bourgeois intellectuals and the manoeuvring of centrists. Yes, there are hundreds of differences, but these are alien influences in the party, they are the differences between opportunists. This is the main content of debate in *Marxism Today*.

Take, for example, the August 1981 edition. There we have Monty Johnstone chiding various contributors to *Marxism and Democracy*, a recently published work by party members who insist that Lenin is only for fools and Marx is little better than irrelevant. This stuff proves a bit strong for our dear Monty to stomach; he accuses the authors of "throwing out vital organs of the Marxist baby with the dogmatic bath-water." (*Marxism Today*, August 1981, p26). What our comrade does not say is that to remove "vital organs" from an infant, let alone a scientific theory, is *murder*. The irony is, of course, that it was comrade Monty Johnstone who lifted the first knife himself. He should feel deep embarrassment about accusing anyone else of 'gutting' Marxism. For what such debates are about has nothing to do with defending Marxism: it is the vultures fighting over the remaining flesh of Marxism on the party body.

We agree that the party does not need such 'ideological struggle', what it needs is an ideological revolt against such vultures, a revolt now, before the maggots devour everything that remains. Such a struggle is no luxury, no self-indulgence, it is a necessity, the duty of every communist worthy of the name.

"A revolt is a splendid thing when it is the advanced elements who revolt against the reactionary elements. When the revolutionary wing revolts against the opportunist wing, it is a good thing. When the opportunist wing revolts against the revolutionary wing, it is a bad business." (V.I.Lenin, *One Step Forward Two Steps Back* CW Vol 7 p405)

Our party, the Communist international itself, was born as a result of a bitter ideological struggle. Leninism was forged in the heat of the fierce ideological battles that raged inside workers' movements, inside Russia and internationally. Now when the existence of the party is in question, when its organisational structures are crumbling and opportunism haughtily rules the roost, now is the time to raise the call for Leninist revolt, for in order to effectively challenge the capitalist class in general we must deal with its agents inside the movement itself, above all in our own party. Not to do so would merely be court disaster, it would be a criminal act.

What sort of struggle?

Imagine four or five 'hard' comrades reading what is written above. Sitting in the local real ale pub, concurring with each other, they proudly proclaim 'ideological struggle — that's what we've been

doing for ages!'. They reassure each other that history is on their side, that all they have to do is win that vote in the branch and 'we'll have it tied up'. They thus for the moment dismiss the argument of *The Leninist* and return to the serious business of plotting how they will win that all important vote. Such comrades have been convinced the party is theirs, it's only a matter of time, of being patient, of aligning themselves with the less obnoxious opportunists, who are meant to rush into their arms because our comrades are the best (if not the only) sellers of the *Falling Morning Star*. They feel peeved by the publication of *The Leninist*. What rankles is not the politics but the very fact of publication. 'What it says is O.K... But why?...why publish? Many comrades have been immersed in an atmosphere of conspiracy inside the party — while plotting in pubs comes naturally to them, to engage in *open ideological struggle* is something that strikes them, at least initially, as indisciplined. But first impressions in politics should never be trusted. Marxism-Leninism is a science, not an art. The question of inner-party struggle must be examined with the coolness of a scientist, not the passion of an artist.

Open ideological struggle is the Leninist method of fighting opportunism in the workers' movement. The *Collected Works* of Lenin himself are rich "with polemic — all open in front of the masses. If Lenin had confined himself to 'ideological' conspiracy, he could never have developed a revolutionary party in Russia, , yet alone the International. The works of Lenin have the appearance of a tall cliff, in which each strata is different, all rich in ideological struggle, like rich seams of precious metals. The Struggles against Economism, Liquidationism, Trotskyism, Centristism and Leftism are the heritage of Lenin. Advocating *open ideological struggle*, Lenin, writing against the 'Economists', says that:

"Without struggle there cannot be sorting out, and without a sorting out there cannot be any successful advance, nor can there be any lasting unity.

"... an open, frank struggle is one of the essential conditions for restoring unity.

"Yes restoring unity! The kind of 'unity' that makes us conceal 'Economic' documents from our comrades like a secret disease, that makes us resent the publication of statements revealing what views are being propagated under a social-democratic cover — such 'unity' is not worth a brass farthing, such 'unity' is sheer cant, it only aggravates the disease and makes it assume a chronic, malignant form. That an open frank and honest struggle will cure this disease and create a really united, vigorous and strong Social-Democratic movement — I do not for a moment doubt." (*CW*. Vol134 p.53).

It is not open ideological struggle that is alien to Leninism but 'pub room conspiracy'. Open struggle develops the understanding of theory in cadres, it steels them and in truth it is the only way to achieve a genuinely united party. Plotting and conspiracy in matters of ideology only leads to the stultification of comrades, it isolates them from the masses, and in the end can only result in

bitterness and disillusionment. Such a position has nothing to do with Leninism and Bolshevism — it is a poison.

To accuse Leninists of breaking party discipline and unity is not only hypocritical, when the party faces the danger of liquidationism, but is itself a form of opportunism.

Organisational Fetishism

The view that dominates many who oppose the growth of opportunism in the party is that what is crucial in defeating it, is the gaining of a majority at Congress: 1977, 1979, 1981 now 1983, 1985... 2001? In order to achieve this, allies have to be won, opportunists yes, but to make them more palatable they are given the false label 'Pro-Party Mensheviks' (even though they have no thought of purging the party of the liquidationalists). To gain a majority, branches and districts must be won; to do this, conspiracy is organised - manoeuvre, subterfuge.

The problem of this outlook is not the sincerity of those who are forced to operate in such a fashion, but the inevitability of defeat. The results of this organisational fetishism is the suborganisation to the organisational tasks of everything else, including principle. In itself there is as much chance of reversing the growth of opportunism in this way as King Canute had of reversing the tide of the oncoming sea. For the tide of opportunism that is drowning the party is based on far more powerful forces than organisational wheeling and dealing. Opportunism is the result of the existence of capitalism itself — it is thus a social force. The domination of this force over workers in Britain should surprise no-one, especially those guided by Marxism-Leninism. For Britain's imperialist position creates a labour aristocracy which sacrifices the long-term interests of the workers for the crumbs from the table of the capitalists, who have grown fat on the plunder of imperialism. Attempts to fight opportunism through organisational methods alone are doomed to failure: *opportunism can only be defeated as a result of relentless ideological struggle.*

The New Communist Party

The New Communist Party was formed in July 1977, the largest split from the Communist Party in its history. It sprung into existence ready-formed, like Athena from the head of Zeus, but instead of being fully armed ready for war, the NCP was nothing more than an epigone, quickly degenerating into a small 'pro-Soviet' sect with

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similar features and psychology to the zany Socialist Party of Great Britain. Despite thus, it is an excellent example for us to use to illustrate the futility of organisational methods of struggle alone, when fighting for the regeneration of communism in Britain, or for that matter anywhere else.

The NCP is a living example of Centrism; as such we can use it in order to try to persuade those who are attracted to such tendencies inside the party that such a course is futile. The NCP has its own press; despite itself, it therefore exposes its ideological and organisational bankruptcy for all who care to see.

The **leaders** of the NCP and the vast majority of the rank and file fought over many years in the Communist Party to defeat what they call the 'revisionism' of the party. In this fight, ideological struggle was reduced to the almost ritualistic incantation of the 'holy trinity'. Proletarian Internationalism, Democratic Centralism, Dictatorship of the Proletariat they chanted, as if that was enough to exorcise the devil of 'revisionism'. Having done this, they then got down to the business they really understood, plotting, for theory was the icing on the cake, not a living guide to practice. Try as you might, you will find no documents relating to ideological struggle from the leaders of the NCP when they were in the Communist Party. **And**, in case you think things are different, now they have been liberated from the fetters of the 'revisionist' Communist Party, you would be seriously mistaken. No, the leaders of the NCP have proved incapable of developing living theory.

When in 1977 the leaders of Surrey District Committee decided, in the face of the prospect of the District being 're-organised', to desert the ship and set sail in their own craft, it was nothing other than an organisational decision. There were no pamphlets, books, or even *honest* articles in the party press heralding the break. The split was therefore an opting out of struggle in the Communist Party and nothing to do with the needs of the working class in its struggle against capitalism. So, let's look at the NCP.

In terms of its operation of democratic centralism, let us not say anything here, save that there is precious little sign of anything except bureaucratic centralism. Its press is turgid and shows not the slightest trace of life, yet alone intellectual dynamism. As for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, this seems to have been used as a code word for defending the Soviet Union from its detractors in the Communist Party and to have had nothing to do with tasks in Britain in the minds of the NCP leaders.

The final element in the theoretical trinity of the NCP is Proletarian Internationalism. Many in our party, passing a casual eye over the NCP press, would praise it at least on that account, and yet if we take more than a casual look at the matter, the supposed 'principled Internationalist' position of

the NCP vanishes like a mirage.

What is Internationalism? Lenin said:

"There is one, and only one kind of internationalism and that is working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own country*, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) *this struggle* this and *only this line* in every country without exception." (V.I. Lenin CW Vol 24 p74)

The NCP shows no signs of theoretically understanding the path to, or the necessity of, revolution. Instead it wallows in the mire of Economism, calling on the Labour Party to do this, and the TUC to do that, discarding its supposed 'vanguard' role casually into the dustbin.

It is impossible to have an internationalist party which at the same time is not a genuinely revolutionary party. In case anyone disagrees, let us take a slight detour before leaving the NCP and look at their position on the events in Poland in 1980, when the country was rocked by political and economic crisis.

Proletarian Internationalism, which means fighting for revolution in your own country and supporting that fight in every other country, has been turned into a hollow shell in the hands of the NCP. Instead of voicing an honest opinion to comrades in difficulty, instead of explaining honestly, to workers in Britain the source of our comrades' mistakes, the NCP followed faithfully every zig and every zag of the leadership of the PUWP. The result, monstrous in less fraught times, became in the case of Poland a farce. The readership of the *New Worker* was told at the time of the strikes at the Gdansk shipyards, and just before the government reached initial agreements with the workers that there would be "No Concessions, No Compromises" and that "Communists Slam Gdansk wreckers" (*New Worker* No.147). Then, the readers were told that the economic problems in Poland were those of "boom" and that foreign debts should not be "exaggerated" (*New Worker*, No.148). But, worse was still to come. Hitting the nail on the head, the Editor of the *New Worker* wrote "There will not, repeat not be more than one trade union structure in Poland... no 'new' unions are being formed." (*New Worker* No.149)

This diplomatic internationalism has nothing in common with Proletarian Internationalism - it is its diametric opposite. Contrast the approach to the question of the crisis in Poland of the NCP with that of Gus Hall, who writing on the same subject states that, the demand for "independent trade unions must be seen in the context of the workers' frustration and loss of confidence in the established trade union leaders", who were "often selected through undemocratic methods" and that "Poland's weaknesses.. are weaknesses that have appeared in a number of socialist countries in the past.. basically the causes are internal... socialist democracy was weak in Poland... a change in leading personalities in and of itself will not result

in the reestablishment (of) confidence." (*Political Affairs - What's Happening in Poland*. October 1980 see page 36 in this edition of *The Leninist*) In contrast with comrade Hall's attempts to grip the bull by its horns, the NCP, after gripping its tail for all its worth, came out of the affair not merely with mud on its face but covered from head to toe in stinking diplomatic 'internationalism'.

The Leninist Struggle

Leninists stand for a mass revolutionary party, solidly based on democratic centralism, guided by scientific theory. Such a party is vital if socialism is to be transformed from a dream into concrete reality, if the revolution is to be consolidated and counter-revolution crushed. *To build a revolutionary party that can lead the working class and its allies into a victorious battle against capitalism requires protracted ideological struggle against all alien ideologies inside the working class movement.* No mercy can be shown — the struggle must be unrelenting and ruthless.

It is for this reason that *The Leninist* has been published. *The Leninist* has unfurled the banner of revolt against opportunism, to save the Communist Party. *The Leninist* will wage an uncompromising ideological struggle, will demand the purging of the greatest threat to the party, liquidationism. This struggle has to be and will be open, in front of the masses, not a secret conspiracy hidden from view. Yes, an Open Ideological Struggle!

This will have three immediate effects:

1) The various trends and shades that exist in the party today, under the surface, will be forced into the open. This will mean that they will all have to state their views clearly for all to study and judge. The liquidators, at present undermining the party's foundations in the dark, will be forced out into the blinding light of the sun. There, they will be exposed, to the scrutiny of the entire membership. In the open, they can be fought effectively and exterminated. As well as the liquidationists, every other trend will end its troglodyte existence; slander, gossip and rumour will become useless weapons and lose their power. All will have to fight in the open, only with their ideological view, something that no communist fears — on the contrary, something that every communist welcomes.

2) The removal of the veil which conceals the present struggles would mean that the mass of the party, becoming fully conversant with the various trends that exist, would be able to judge between them. Instead of hearing about the differences that exist in the party in fleeting snatches and through the dubious channel of rumour, thought and balance can be introduced. An open struggle would mean an end to the present mass disillusionment in the party through the deadening domination of the party by various cliques of opportunists. Open struggle would also have the

most important effect of drawing new forces into the party from the working class, for the ideological struggle in the party is not the preserve of intellectuals but the vital concern of the working class itself. The aim of the Leninists is to purge the party of all forms of opportunism, thus equipping the party to lead the workers in their struggle for revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

3) In this bitter ideological struggle, comrades will be as a man who for the first time rises to his feet after spending his life on his knees. The ideological struggle will draw many comrades into battle for the first time. In doing so, the rate of development of activists will proceed apace. The development of cadres is vital for the party. While there is conspiracy in terms of ideology, their development is distorted, they appear stunted. Open ideological struggle will enable them to assume their full stature.

Lenin writing about the situation in Switzerland, a country of which he had first hand knowledge, as a result of years of exile, said to the communists:

"Nor can we avoid hard struggle within the party. It would be sheer make-believe, hypocrisy, philistine 'head-in-the-sand' policy to imagine that 'internal peace' can rule within the Swiss Social-Democratic Party. The choice is not between 'internal peace' and 'inner party struggle'..."

"... The real choice is this: either the present concealed forms of inner-party struggle, with the demoralising effect on the masses, or open principled struggle between the internationalist revolutionary trend and the Grutli trend inside and outside the party.

"... the Grutli trend... will be forced openly to combat the left, while both trends will everywhere come out with their own independent views and policies, will fight each other on matters of principle allowing the mass of party comrades, and not merely the 'leaders', to settle fundamental issues—such a struggle is both necessary and useful, for it trains in the masses independence and ability to carry out their epoch making revolutionary mission." (V.I. Lenin, *CW* Vol23, pp159-160)

What about the Tories?

Some militants, honest party members, find the prospect of an ideological battle in the party an appalling one. Faced with the savage onslaught on the working class by the Tory government, sensing the possibilities of a massive upsurge against that government by the masses, the ideological struggle in the party is regarded as betrayal. These comrades have no time for the petty bourgeois opportunists who hawk themselves around the party, the Feminists, the Pacifists, the 'open-minded' intellectuals whose role in life seems to be entirely devoted to proving why Marx and Lenin were wrong, and that all would have been well if only they had been around at the time, to correct Marx or Lenin in the more 'sophisticated' areas of Economics, Philosophy, History... or whatever they happen to lecture in.

Ignoring these 'nuisances' that increasingly dominate the pages of the party press, our comrades

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battle gallantly on, organising the day-to-day struggle in their town, factory or office. This attitude and practice is increasingly common in the ranks of the party activists. It represents the increasing separation of theory and practice - inevitable with the growing power of opportunism.

For the theory of the opportunists is by its very nature an acceptance of bourgeois ideas, and thus the role of theory is not to act as a revolutionary guide, but something that is used to dismantle the more embarrassing elements of Marxism-Leninism, in order to replace them with liberalism.

The result, in party activists, is that they develop what they regard as a 'healthy' contempt for theory in general, regarding it as woolly and academic. The prejudice against theory is nothing new for the working class in Britain — Lenin was particularly shocked by it when he stayed in Britain. He located the cause for this 'English disease' in the domination of the movement by opportunism which was fed by the existence of British imperialism.

It is opportunism that produces contempt for theory amongst the militants: it is thus something that must be overcome in the course of the struggle against opportunism itself. Using the same arguments as Michael Foot and Denis Healey and their friends in the bourgeois press, the opportunists call for party peace and unity, because of the necessity to use all energy in the fight against the Tories. Whilst they would totally reject such an argument about the Labour Party, they almost unconsciously repeat the very same arguments as the reactionaries.

Let's be quite clear: even if the Communist Party did not exist, there would be resistance by the working class to the onslaught of the Tories - just look at Brixton if you doubt this. There the community supported the rising by the Black youth against the forces of the state. In Ireland the Nationalist section of the population in the Six Counties have taken up arms against the British occupation. All this, without in either case the communists playing a leading role. In the coming period we should not doubt for a moment that the working class, desperate but determined, can stage a concerted wide-ranging offensive.

Such was the case in 1912 and 1913 when the workers in Britain launched a strike wave that was almost unprecedented in the world, only Russia had experienced a more dynamic upsurge. The workers can by themselves swing to the extreme left, to syndicalism; - although the workers could overthrow the state, the dictatorship of the proletariat could never be consolidated, unless there was a revolutionary party. Syndicalism may be 'extreme', anti-parliamentary, even anti-political party; but presented with power, its leaders would only end up handing it back to the capitalist class.

Without the leadership of a consistent revolutionary party, based on the most advanced scientific theory, representatives of workers can be placed in power, only to betray the workers who

placed them there in the first place. *Without the revolutionary party leading the masses, the revolution itself is doomed*, bound to retreat. Such was the case in Russia in 1905 and February 1917, as well as Germany in 1919. The Bolshevik Revolution contained within it a struggle to prevent capitulation which the leaders of the February revolution were enacting.

The lessons for us today should be clear to see - we have the luxury of hindsight. While there will be a whole series of skirmishes and battles on the road to revolution, communists must never for a moment lose sight of the ultimate aim — socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Theory must be used in this, like a mariner of old, who, while tacking in the wind, constantly referred to the Pole Star in order to give his momentary day-to-day actions overall direction, to ensure that the ship arrived at its destination and did not merely sail endlessly in pointless circles.

"As we see it, the task of Social-Democracy is to organise and help carry on the class struggle, to point out its essential ultimate aims, and to analyse the conditions which determined the methods by which the struggle should be conducted.

"The emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working classes themselves. But while we do not separate Social-Democracy from the Labour movement, we must not forget that the task of the former is to represent the interests of the movement in all countries as a whole, that it must not blindly worship the particular phase in which it may find itself at any particular time or place. We think that it is the duty of Social-Democracy to support every revolutionary movement against the existing state and social system and we regard this aim to be capture of political power by the working class, the expropriation of the exploiters, and the establishment of a socialist society." (V.I.Lenin, *Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra and Zarya 1900*. C. W. Vol.4 p.327)

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The Leninist is being published to fight for the survival of the party and to win it back to a consistent Leninist position. The publication marks a qualitative development in the struggle against opportunism — it is an historic event. It is no light decision; we are aware of the 'consequences' that may result, but our step is determined by the situation in the party and the overall development of the class struggle in Britain.

The success of *The Leninist* depends on supporters selling it, providing finance, letters and articles. But above all it depends on *The Leninist* being used in the ideological battles that lie ahead of us. *The Leninist* can and must become a dangerous and deadly weapon in the hands of our supporters.

The Bolsheviks triumphed, not despite the ideological battles that they fought, being most intense inside the Party itself, but because of those struggles.

"One of the essential conditions for preparing the proletariat for victory is a prolonged, persistent and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, and social-chauvinism and similar bourgeois influences and tendencies, which are inevitable as long as the proletariat acts under capitalist conditions. Unless such a struggle is fought, and unless a complete victory over opportunism in the working class movement is preliminarily gained, there can be no hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat." (V.I.Lenin *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* 1919 C. W. Vol. 30 p.275)

On the success of *The Leninist* hangs not only the party's survival but the victory of our class.

The road from Thatcherism, or the road from Marxism?

Frank Grafton

It is obvious to most people today, that the world capitalist economy has begun to show signs of crisis again, after a period of unprecedented expansion and prosperity during the fifties and sixties. Crisis was a word that bourgeois economy thought had become redundant, until the seventies ushered in a period of class conflict, mass unemployment, inflation and major recessions *on an international scale*. In Britain, this has certainly taken a more severe form than other major imperialist powers. Already, unemployment is at its highest level ever, of over 3 million; the working class is suffering a forced reduction in its living standards due to incomes policy and inflation; the British army has been carrying out the suppression of revolutionary forces in Northern Ireland, who have the mass support of the Nationalist population; and finally, in the summer of 1981, we saw an heroic spontaneous outburst of violence in all the main cities by the oppressed, unemployed youth (black supported by white) against the forces of the British capitalist state. The class antagonisms which are opening up in Britain have certainly been sharpened by the advent of a Tory government under Margaret Thatcher; and in response to these developments, the economist Sam Aaronovitch (a member of our party) has written *The Road from Thatcherism*, in order to analyse Britain's crisis and "... to put forward such an alternative in the most practical and credible way possible." (*The Road from Thatcherism* p.2)

To begin with, comrade Aaronovitch addresses himself to the question, "What is wrong with the British economy?" (*T.R.f.T.* Chapter 2). We agree, that in order to resolve the problem, it is necessary to analyse what the crisis is. However, assuming

comrade Aaronovitch calls himself a Marxist, and that the crisis may have something to do with the laws of capitalist development, it was a remarkable omission that comrade Aaronovitch didn't once refer to any major work of Marxism, either by Marx himself or Lenin, or any more recent authors; all we got was a quote at the end from William Morris and some 'borrowed language' from Gramsci on page 123 (three words to be precise). In our opinion, it is impossible to proceed without looking at the general laws of capitalism developed by Marx in *Capital*, and which still apply today.

Importance of Theory

What we will attempt to show, is that theory for Marxism is no luxury, which is merely repeated as a dogmatic incantation; theory must become a guide to action. Marx laid the foundations, by analysing the 'inner workings' of capitalism, and providing scientific proof that its ultimate destiny is determined by *general laws*: these include the tendency of capitalism to move into crisis, and the irreconcilability of classes, which forces them into a historic struggle for power. It is from these scientific observations, that Marxists determine the principles for which they struggle — the strategy and tactics of socialist revolution. It is important that these principles are adhered to at all times, even when the objective conditions do not favour class war and revolution. It is during such periods, that the ideological struggle takes pre-eminence, so that preparations for *future* revolutionary opportunities are maintained, especially the ideological and organisational integrity of the workers' vanguard party.

There are relatively few general laws determining the development of society, or of Nature for that fact. Both would be rather straightforward if

shaped solely by these general laws, but complexities are added by factors which counteract the overall tendencies, sometimes partially, sometimes fully and sometimes not at all. For instance, the law of gravity states that all bodies must be drawn towards the Earth's surface. However, a number of 'bodies' exploit factors which counteract gravity, and serve to *delay* their ultimate downward course. Birds and aeroplanes use the pressures derived from airflow to generate lift; rockets use propulsion; feathers and dandelion seeds use wind and air resistance; and gases such as hydrogen are able to escape the Earth's atmosphere due to their atomic kinetic energies. All of these factors create variety, but are unable to prevent gravity from acting as the most observable force shaping the universe.

Similarly, with the development of capitalist society, certain periods occur, when the general tendencies of crisis and class struggle are countered. Opportunism takes advantage of this, by saying, "Look, society no longer operates the way Marx said. We don't need these old 19th century dogmas; let's throw them out!". Inevitably, when the situation changes, and not even opportunism can deny the existence of crisis, it hardly turns around and cries, "We were wrong, we now support the revolution!". Opportunism is a product of capitalist society, and either acts consciously or unconsciously, as the agent of capitalism within the workers' movement. Opportunism is not interested in the truth, but inflicts its damage, by dissuading the working class from the road of revolution. The role of the workers' vanguard party is to retain the support of *at least* the vanguard of the working class for the principles of Marxism, *at all times*; and to fight for the leadership of the majority of the working class and its allies during revolutionary times. It is in this light, that we now proceed to look at the ideas developed by comrade Aaronovitch, and stand them against the principles of Marxism - Leninism.

Falling Rate of Profit

By far the most important law underlying the development of capitalism through crisis, is 'The tendency for the rate of profit to decline'. This is fully explained in Part III Vol.3 of *Capital*, but we can quickly outline the essential points which Marx makes, without burdening the reader with too much detail.

1. Living labour is the source of all commodity exchange value. Although value is also transferred from machinery and raw materials to the finished commodity during the production process, this value is the result of labour being previously employed to produce this machinery and raw materials. If we take the value produced by a single worker in one day, we can divide it into two. One part is consumed by the worker and his family i.e. wages, and is equal to what Marx

termed the variable capital (we will write this as v); the second part is expropriated by the capitalist as surplus value, which we will write as s . The capitalist can expand surplus value which is his prime motive, by reducing the time spent on producing v (consumed by the worker), and this often results in the worker's consumption also being reduced; or the length of the working day is extended, so that although v remains the same, the time spent producing s is expanded. The ratio s/v is a measure of the rate of exploitation, and tells you what proportion of the working day the worker is forced to produce surplus value. The total social mass of surplus value is determined by the number of workers employed by the capitalist simultaneously. A measure of total labour is the total variable capital employing the workforce, which we will write V . Therefore the total mass of surplus value S is equal to:

$$S = a/v \times V$$

Total surplus value in mass can therefore be expanded either by increasing the rate of exploitation, or increasing the number of workers simultaneously employed. The capitalist class worldwide, always try to expand the mass of surplus value, and if they can't, then production is contracted until the rate of exploitation is sufficient to expand it again i.e. a crisis develops. However, the capitalist uses another index to measure the production of surplus value, which is the ratio of surplus value over the total capital required to set up the production process. This includes the cost of buildings, machinery, raw materials and productive labour. If the total capital outlay is written C , and surplus value S , then S/C is called *the rate of profit*. The rate of profit becomes the motivating force of capitalist production; its rise inaugurates expansion and prosperity, and its fall leads to crisis and contraction.

2. Now we look at the factors which determine whether the rate of profit rises or falls. The most obvious historic change brought about by capitalism, is the development of the technique of production through increasing productivity. The essential reason for this is that a capitalist doesn't necessarily realise the surplus value produced by the workers in his employment; infact, another capitalist may outcompete him, and thus expropriate part of his surplus value. For example, if we look at a company like British Leyland, it is competing to manufacture and sell saloon cars to the market in Britain with rival companies like Fords, Datsun, and Honda. The company which can produce higher quality for lower costs has the advantage. If British Leyland is the least efficient company, then in order to compete and sell its cars, it must reduce the price of its product to a competitive level, whereas the more efficient company like Datsun, can even sell above the value of its product before it reaches the same competitive price level with British Leyland. In

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reality, what is happening is that the force of competition transfers surplus value from the least efficient capitalist like British Leyland, to the most efficient capitalist like Datsun. It is this premium which rewards efficient production, that forces capitalism to continually revolutionise the technique of production. It is called increasing productivity.

So what is the essence of increased productivity? It is the reduction of value incorporated in the individual commodity necessary for its production. This relies primarily on the reduction in living labour (both variable capital and surplus value) required for the production of that commodity. For instance, it takes ten workers to turn out one hundred machined products in a day. The value of those hundred products will consist of the value of raw materials used in one day, the value of wear and tear in machinery and buildings for one day, and the value of capital employing ten workers for one day, *plus* the surplus value produced by the workers in one day. Now a new automated machine is installed, which requires the attendance of only one worker, yet doubles the output of products to two hundred per day. The value of one hundred products is reduced, firstly because the labour of nine workers (both paid and unpaid) is dispensed with, secondly because it takes only half a day's labour of one worker to turn out one hundred, and thirdly, because the wear and tear transferred to each commodity from the machine may even be reduced. It is this reduction in the value of the individual product which is important, despite the fact that the new machinery may cost a great deal to buy and install; so long as it reduces the amount of labour required in attendance, and increases the production of commodities in a given time, then the cost of machinery and reduced labour are spread over a greater number of commodities.

3. Having revealed the reason for increasing productivity, as the competitive struggle for surplus value, we now look at the effect it has on the rate of profit. The obvious tendency is that the capital invested in expensive automated machinery expands, whereas the proportion of capital employing labour is reduced in relation to the former. Capital which employs labour is called variable capital, and capital invested in machines, buildings and raw materials is called constant capital. If we look at the ratio of variable capital V over total capital C (equals variable + constant capital) i.e. V/C , then increased productivity tends to reduce this ratio. Remember that surplus value is only produced by living labour, and therefore has a closer relation to variable capital than to total capital. This means that as the ratio V/C declines as a result of increasing productivity, *then the rate of profit S/C will also tend to decline.* Although the tendency is for surplus value to decline in relation to total capital, it is still possible for the *mass* of surplus value to rise, by increasing the rate of exploitation and increasing the amount of labour employed.

Industry in 19th century Britain would have had a higher rate of profit than industry today like car manufacture, which has a far higher capital outlay in machinery etc; but a single company like British Leyland employs over a hundred thousand workers, and possibly produces more surplus value in a year, than whole branches of 19th century industry did in a decade (whether BL realises it through competition is a separate matter). So our conclusions from Marx's studies are that the falling rate of profit is a result of increasing productivity, and yet the mass of surplus value may simultaneously rise. It must be noted that these are only *tendencies*, which can be temporarily countered. Marx lists a number of these counter-tendencies, which under favourable conditions can bring about a temporary rise in the rate of profit, and a period of expansion and prosperity. This was the case with the fifties and sixties, which although was a long time in a man's life, has only constituted a quarter of imperialism's lifespan this century — the rest showing signs of crisis, wars and depression.

We don't apologise for having reiterated these points, because a Marxist analysis of Britain's crisis is impossible without them. It is surprising that comrade Aaronovitch made no real mention of them as principles, for surely they must be 'old hat' to him, having written books on Marxist economy since the 1940's. He does give a list of symptoms due to the British economy having "... continued its relative decline accentuated by the world economic crisis." (*T.R.f.T.* p.8). One of these symptoms are:

"A substantial fall in the rate of profit in manufacturing in the case of firms mainly producing within the U.K. — the cause and consequence of low rates of investment and its productive use." (*T.F.f.T* p.9)

The first point to note, is that comrade Aaronovitch recognises a falling rate of profit, but relegates it to a mere 'symptom', and secondly, he gives the reason for it as a *failure* to increase productive investment. Here is what Marx has to say on the matter:

"A fall in the rate of profit and accelerated accumulation are different expressions of the same process only in so far as both reflect the *development of productiveness*." (Our emphasis - F.G. Marx, *Capital* Vol. 3, p.241, L & W 1974).

Marx quite clearly states the exact opposite to comrade Aaronovitch, as to the reason for a declining rate of profit. If we read the paragraph that follows this statement, we will see that Marx hardly considers the tendency for the rate of profit to fall to be a mere 'symptom' of capitalist crisis—he takes it to be its very *essence*.

"On the other hand, the rate of self expansion of the total capital, or the rate of profit, being the goad of capitalist production (just as self expansion of capital is its only purpose), its fall checks the formation of new independent capitals and thus appears as a threat to the development of the capitalist production process. It breeds overproduction, speculation, crisis, and surplus capital alongside surplus population. These economists, therefore, who, like Ricardo regard the capitalist mode of production as absolute, feel at this point that it creates

a barrier itself, and for this reason attribute the barrier to Nature (in the theory of rent), not to production. But the main thing about their horror of the falling rate of profits is the feeling that capitalist production meets in the development of its productive forces a barrier which has nothing to do with the production of wealth as such; and this peculiar barrier testifies to the limitations and to the merely historical, transitory character of the capitalist mode of production; testifies that for the production of wealth, it is not an absolute mode, moreover, that at a certain stage it rather conflicts with its further development." (*Capital*, Vol. 3, pp. 241-242, L&W. 1974).

To call oneself a Marxist, and not subscribe to Marx's theory of crisis due to the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, is like saying you're a Darwinist but don't agree with the theory of Natural Selection; the two are contradictory. Comrade Aaronovitch not only ascribes entirely wrong reasons for the rate of profit to fall in the *only* time when he does mention it, but as we shall now see, goes on to describe alternative reasons for British imperialism's crisis, with the developing world economic crisis as coincidental, and merely accentuating Britain's crisis.

Britain's Crisis

It would be dishonest to try and misrepresent comrade Aaronovitch's real position, through pedantic word plays on isolated quotations. That is not our intention. We want to use the following quotes in order to establish his position as accurately as possible. First of all, does comrade Aaronovitch think there is a crisis?

"By deliberate government action the British people are being made to endure the worst economic and social crisis since 1929." (*T.R.f.T.*, p. 123).

From this statement, we presume the answer to our question to be yes. However, we note that he believes the crisis not to be caused by the laws of capitalist economic development, but to have been 'deliberately' engineered by government policy. This is no distortion of his opinion on our part, as he repeats this sentiment elsewhere in the book. In the chapter on *What is wrong with the British economy*, he begins to reveal the crux of Britain's crisis, as he sees it:

"It is a crucial assumption that Britain is essentially a capitalist society i.e. one in which the drive to accumulate profitably by the owners and controllers of capital is and has been the major force. The question for them has been: how are they to do this and deal with the obstacles in their way? But the question also arises: why is the British capitalist economy less able to expand than others, such as the West German and Japanese?.. The dominant forces of capital and governments have sacrificed the productive base of the British economy at all critical stage (except for world wars). This has been in striking contrast with, for instance, the policies of the ruling groups of those of our main rivals who have grown faster." (*T.R.f.T.*, p.5).

The points to note are firstly, that he recognises Britain is capitalist and that the development of its economy has something to do with profitability,

and that obstacles do arise. However, from this point onwards, he totally ignores this question, not even mentioning Marx's *Tendency for the rate of profit to decline*; instead, he goes on to develop his second point, of Britain's relative decline in relation to other major imperialist economies, and makes it in reality, the subject of his book! He states quite categorically, that the crisis of Britain's economy is due to the 'sacrifice and neglect' through 'deliberate policy' by government and capitalism. He repeats this on page 40, as the *essence* of Britain's crisis.

"The key to our difficulties is the systematic neglect of Britain's productive base which has proceeded through periods of boom and slump, inflation and deflation and indeed through periods, as now, of stagflation. This is rooted in the way in which British capitalism has developed and is the outcome of the strategies adopted." (*T.R.f.T.*, p.40).

Our disagreements with comrade Aaronovitch, so far, have been his unmarxist analysis of the crisis of capitalism on a world scale, which he admits exists on page 8. He ignores the basis of crisis as being the falling rate of profit brought about by *increasing* productivity.

This is the primary factor. Secondary to this is the competition for surplus value, which provides the main driving force for increasing productivity; within the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, the most productive, efficient capitals derive an advantage, by forcing the re-distribution of surplus value from the least efficient to themselves. This is why the crisis takes on a more severe form in Britain. Comrade Aaronovitch merely looks onesidedly at one feature of the world crisis. His 'cure' could offset British imperialism's weak position in relation to other imperialist powers, but doesn't resolve the crisis of world capitalism as a whole; in fact by increasing productivity, it accelerates it.

Imperialism

Comrade Aaronovitch's opinion, that British imperialism's declining position in the world imperialist economy is due to incorrect 'policies' and strategies carried out by British governments and the capitalist class, allows him to put forward an 'alternative strategy' in order to correct the mistaken attitudes of past governments. In reality, what he's saying is that capitalist crisis is **not due to the objective laws of capitalist development**. This line of thought is continued on page 6, where he describes the historical development of British capitalism, from when it had a trade and industrial monopoly in the 19th century, to its 'imperial expansion' in the 20th century. Comrade Aaronovitch essentially argues that the development of capitalism to the stage of imperialism (although he *never* actually uses this word once in the whole book!) was a result of policy, rather than being determined by general laws:

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"The British response to this challenge (of capitalist rivals — F.G.) was critical. Essentially it chose further imperial expansion, taking advantage of privileged markets and connections; and it expanded and exploited the financial resources and skills focussed in what is conventionally called the City of London. The significance of this response was far reaching... This 'evasion' of the reconstruction of its domestic base has been characteristic of British capital ever since the 1880s and has been continued since 1945 ... At a number of critical points British big business and finance, together with governments, sacrificed the domestic economy to their international role and to international pressures." (T.R.f.T., p.6).

This is where we really get worried about comrade Aaronovitch, because *all* the arguments about imperialism being a 'policy' of capitalism, which could be avoided by alternative 'policies', were decisively attacked by Lenin as opportunist, over 60 years ago! Either comrade Aaronovitch is ignorant of who Lenin is, because like the word 'imperialism', he doesn't mention him once; or he is developing an acute case of opportunism. The same as we had to make up for comrade Aaronovitch's 'omissions' of Marx, so now it seems we must lecture our 'veteran Marxist economist' on what Lenin says about imperialism:

"Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is (1) monopoly capitalism; (2) *parasitic, or decaying capitalism*; (3) moribund capitalism." (Our emphasis — F.G. Lenin CW Vol. 23, p.105)

Imperialism is decaying, parasitic capitalism because:

"More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the 'rentier state', the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie to an ever increasing degree lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by 'clipping coupons' ... capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (Britain)." (Lenin, CW Vol. 22, p.300).

One gets the sneaking suspicion, that comrade Aaronovitch, in his long career as a 'Marxist economist' and member of our Party, may have at least once read a copy of Lenin's *Imperialism - The Higher Stage of Capitalism*. His ideas bear a very superficial resemblance to Lenin's; for example, what Lenin terms 'decaying capitalism', comrade Aaronovitch terms 'deindustrialisation', which he describes on pages 7-9 as being a result of "concentration and rationalisation" and of "growing interest in investment abroad". The gist of his argument is that the British economy has declined in its competitiveness and that major industries have become decayed due to lack of productivity and a flow of capital abroad. He states:

"... of the fifty largest UK manufacturing firms showed that one third of their output is now produced overseas... British capital has been investing overseas at a faster rate than its main rivals ... British capital is the second largest foreign investor in the world. If anything, the scale of its investments overseas has been increasing in the last decade, especially into Western Europe and North America." (T.R.f.T., p.82).

All of this seems to back Lenin's second specific characteristic of imperialism as decaying, parasitic capitalism, yet he makes no reference to Lenin. This is basically because of the conclusions he draws. He describes this process as 'deindustrialisation', which may express the material effect, yet hides the fact that it is caused by the essential character of monopoly capital to decay; it is not simply due to 'policies' of government ministers and company directors, but the result of the general laws of capitalism at its monopoly stage. Comrade Aaronovitch states:

"It is hardly surprising that the neglect of the industrial base of the British economy has led to the now accelerating deindustrialisation of the economy... Here we must briefly answer the questions: is it inevitable?... (T.R.f.T., p.9)

Put this way, comrade Aaronovitch then goes on to open up the argument, that if British imperialism's tendency to decay is due to the shortsighted 'policies' of government and capitalists, then the answer to his question is: No, it is not inevitable — this decay of imperialism can be reversed by alternative, more sensible policies (assuming of course, that it remains capitalist and doesn't involve anything undesirable like revolution — God forbid!).

What is Lenin's opinion of 'comrades' who think imperialism is the result of 'policy' and want to reform it out of crisis?

"Advancing this definition of imperialism brings us into complete contradiction to K. Kautsky, who refuses to regard imperialism as a "phase of capitalism" and defines it as a policy "preferred" by finance capital, a tendency of "industrial" countries to annex "agrarian" countries. Kautsky's definition is thoroughly false from the theoretical standpoint. What distinguishes imperialism is the rule not of industrial capital, but of finance capital, the striving to annex not agrarian countries, particularly, but every kind of country. Kautsky divorces imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he divorces monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics in order to pave the way for his vulgar bourgeois reformism, such as "disarmament", ultra-imperialism and similar nonsense. The whole purpose and significance of this theoretical falsity is to obscure the most profound contradictions of imperialism and thus justify the theory of "unity" with the apologists of imperialism, the outright social chauvinists and opportunists." (Lenin, CW, Vol. 23, p. 107).

This quote by Lenin from *Imperialism and the split in socialism* was written in 1916 during the First Imperialist World War, against Karl Kautsky, also known as 'the Pope of Marxism' for his leading ideological position within the Second International prior to 1914. Kautsky's crime was his refusal to come out openly against 'his own imperialism', and split from the social chauvinists in the German Social Democratic Party, who *did* openly support 'their own bourgeoisie' in the carnage being carried out in the trenches. As Lenin states, Kautsky's position was derived from a false theoretical understanding of imperialism; he believed that the road to 1914 was a result of ill-chosen 'policies', and that the tendency for imperialism to go to war could be avoided by reforms, such as plans for disarmament and ultra-

imperialism (where the imperialists divide the world 'peacefully'). Comrade Aaronovitch's resemblance to Kautsky can be seen from his opinion that the crisis of imperialism and British imperialism in particular (for which he shows a touching concern), is not a result of the specific character of imperialism, but due to the 'policies preferred' by a section of "British big business and finance" who have "sacrificed the domestic economy to their international role and to international pressure." (*T.R.f.T.*, pp.6-7). This reasoning totally ignores the distinguishing feature of imperialism, which is the rule of finance capital, for which the export of capital and the international plundering of *all* countries for the highest profitable return is not simply a chosen 'policy', *but its very nature*. This is why British imperialism is decaying! Comrade Aaronovitch, the 'Marxist' economist, couldn't possibly recognise these Leninist principles upon which our Party was founded in 1920, because he seems to have chosen the 'policy' of ignoring them altogether. We wouldn't trust comrade Aaronovitch to know whether leopards have spots, because they chose to have them, or were born with them; maybe we could give him a job 'helping' leopards to become pussy-cats, by painting ginger stripes on them. This would not be too dissimilar to how he wants to disguise British imperialism.

Politics of Imperialism

Finally, we look at another feature of imperialism, the ignorance of which leads comrade Aaronovitch to some remarkably naive opinions, if not opportunist ones. This concerns the class antagonisms which develop to a high pitch during the epoch of imperialism. Lenin states in *Imperialism and the split in socialism*, "... finance capital strives for domination, not freedom. Political reaction all along the line is a characteristic feature of imperialism." (Lenin C. W. Vol.23 p.106)

Funnily enough, comrade Aaronovitch backs up Lenin with his own observations, but again perverts them with his own conclusions: "One of the most prominent features of the Labour and Tory governments since 1970 has been the extent to which they have convinced themselves that they cannot combine even limited modernisation with Britain's role, unless they weaken decisively the bargaining capacity of the trade union movement." (*T.R.f.T.* p.11)

Comrade Aaronovitch notes the intensifications of class antagonisms throughout the seventies, but again, we see the same tone creeping into his language, implying that these 'silly' governments keep pursuing ill-advised policies, which only leads to nasty class conflict! He develops this theme further on page 12:

"But big business and right wing political circles (including those within the Labour Party) came increasingly to believe that they could not sustain even their limited modernisation and world roles without removing this major obstacle (trade union intransigence F.G.). The fact that the Labour government had to abandon 'In place of Strife' in 1969, that the miners defeated a key aspect of Edward Heath's strategy in 1973-4, that the public sector workers broke through government wage restraint policies in 1977 — these events and others created a mood amounting to an obsession that the impasse created by the strength of the trade union and shop steward movement had to be broken." (*T.R.f.T.* p.12)..

The general theme which emerges from comrade Aaronovitch's analysis of the political developments during the past twelve years, is essentially the same as his conclusion for the economic developments: that they are not the result of imperialism as a system, with finance capital *having* to intensify class antagonisms because of its reactionary nature and reactionary interests; but are due to a failure to implement correct policies which could have prevented the capitalist class having to resort to breaking the resistance of the trade union movement, with which it is so 'obsessed'. According to Lenin, the essence of finance capital is to strive for domination and impose "reaction all along the line". Intensifying class antagonisms is not simply a whim or an 'obsession' with imperialism, but its only method of existing as a system. It is the same as leopards having to kill in order to eat meat; comrade Aaronovitch however wants them to give up this beastly behaviour and eat grass!

In order to give British imperialism the flexibility of extricating itself from these unsociable habits, comrade Aaronovitch tries to show how the Labour government from 1974-79 carried out 'policies' *which it could have avoided*, and only paved the way for the 'radical remedies' of Thatcherism. So what does comrade Aaronovitch say about the Labour Party? Does it, for instance, carry out the *interests* of imperialism (we use that word purposefully, and not 'policies')? Comrade Aaronovitch denies that the Labour party carries out the interests of imperialism when in government, like the Tory party. He states this because "The Labour Party remains predominantly **a** party of the organised workers and their families; its main base is the trade union movement." (*T.R.f.T.* p.14). He then goes on to say how the Labour Party has implemented numerous reforms etc. With all his drivel about improving welfare and passing reforms, comrade Aaronovitch admits that the Labour party..."accepted the logic of Britain's dominant capitalist groups"; that the costs of adjustment it imposed..."had to be carried by the working class"; that ... "the main thrust of Labour Government policy was to cut real wages and redistribute resources from labour to capital." (*T.R.f.T.*, p.14-15). Comrade Aaronovitch continues to state that:

"If the causes for Labour's defeat and the victory of the Tories are not understood (referring to 1979 F.G.), we are in fact depending upon the 'swing of the pendulum' for a Labour victory: the same, or worse, mistakes will be repeated and must in due course lead to even greater disillusion." (*T.R.f.T.*, p.14)

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What comrade Aaronovitch admits, is that Labour governments somewhat 'mistakenly' carry out the 'policies' of imperialism. In fact, they become so 'mistaken' and confused about their role, they even go to the point of conducting imperialist wars, like in Malaya, Aden and N.Ireland. Perhaps comrade Aaronovitch should ask, why does the Labour Party *consistently* carry out imperialist 'policies', which always lead to its unpopularity and disillusion amongst its own members and supporters? But then, comrade Aaronovitch has also failed to say what the Labour Party *actually* is. What does Lenin say?

".. the labour party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie. It is an organisation of the bourgeoisie, which exists to systematically dupe the workers with the aid of the British Noskes and Scheidemanns." (Lenin, C. W. Vol 131, p.258).

This quote from a speech made at the Second Congress of Comintern was written in 1920, before the advent of a Labour government, and in fact the experience of MacDonald, Atlee, Wilson and Callaghan administrations has confirmed it a hundred times over. The Labour party has been faithfully carrying out the *interests* of British imperialism for the last sixty years, and 'duping' the workers with the sort of reforms that comrade Aaronovitch says makes the Labour party a 'genuine' workers' party. So long as the working class is tied to the Labour party ideologically, it will continue to believe that the Labour party can **change imperialism in its own interests**, by implementing 'policies'. It is this illusion in the Labour party which comrade Aaronovitch prolongs, and he actually states on p.14 that such 'disillusion' *should be avoided*.

We are now beginning to see the full picture of comrade Aaronovitch's thoroughly unmarxist analysis of British imperialism's crisis — both politically and economically. We totally disagree with his view. We believe the economic crisis to be the result of the general laws of capitalism, and that its features coincide with the specific characteristics of imperialism observed by Lenin. Similarly, the 'policies' of both the Tory and Labour parties are the result of them being bourgeois parties, and carrying through the reactionary interests of finance capital. The 'disillusion' of workers with the Labour party is absolutely necessary, if they are to learn to defend their interests in a revolutionary manner, and to fight to *overthrow* imperialism, not simply reform it. Comrade Aaronovitch's false 'Marxist' analysis of the crisis has prepared the ground to enable him to *reform* imperialism with his Alternative Economic Strategy. Our disagreements are not simply for the sake of theoretical purity; his strategy not only 'dupes' the working class, it also disarms them, which, in the conditions of intensifying crisis, as is bound to develop, will have disastrous and tragic consequences. Before

going on to comrade Aaronovitch's Alternative, we shall have one more quote from Lenin on 'reforms of imperialism'. Make your own conclusions where comrade Aaronovitch fits in:

"The question as to whether it is possible to reform the basis of imperialism, whether to go forward to the further intensification and deepening of the antagonisms which it engenders; or backward, towards allaying these antagonisms, are fundamental questions in the critique of imperialism. Since the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere and increased national oppression due to the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition, a petit-bourgeois democratic opposition to imperialism arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in nearly all imperialist countries. Kautsky not only did not trouble to oppose, was not only unable to oppose this petit-bourgeois reformist opposition, which is really reactionary in its economic base, but became merged with it in practice, and it is precisely where Kautsky and the broad Kautskian trend deserted Marxism." (C. W. Vol. 122 p.287).

Alternative Economic Strategy

In order to clarify what comrade Aaronovitch's Alternative Economic Strategy is we must first determine what it isn't. Does the Alternative Economic Strategy involve the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling monopoly capitalist class i.e. 'smashing' of the bourgeois state, and its replacement by a state expressing the armed rule of either the proletariat, or the Proletariat in alliance with other revolutionary democratic classes? We use this language, so there is no ambiguity by what we mean as 'revolutionary', as comrade Aaronovitch does believe the AES to involve a 'revolutionary process' (*T.R.IT.* p.115). According to the way comrade Aaronovitch dismissed such concepts on pages 112-115, in his 'reply to the leftist', then the answer must be 'no'. Secondly, does the AES involve socialist construction of the economy, assuming of course the Proletariat still gained power, but without 'smashing the bourgeois state' or by any other vile, undemocratic methods? Again, according to the following statement, the answer is 'no':

"The AES is not an economic system but part of a broad strategy to advance the interests of the majority of the population. The proposals in themselves do not amount to a programme for the socialist reconstruction of Britain..." (*TRIT.*, p.3).

Ana again on page 108, he states it not to be for socialist reconstruction but "... a programme of radical reform." In reality, the AES involves no transfer of state power. We shall return to the question of revolution later.

So what does the AES do? The argument outlined in chapters four, five and six, is to reverse the deterioration in Britain's industrial base "caused by low productive investment"; and to bring about sustained economic growth through reversal of 'policies' implemented by past governments. In this way, comrade Aaronovitch argues that British imperialism's relative decline to other imperialist economies such as W.Germany and Japan can be halted. His proposals are limited, which he admits himself, to bringing about a

programme of productive investment, and in which economic growth will still be determined by capitalist profit:

"The proposals presented are limited in scope; even if they were carried through, the bulk of manufacturing, trading and agriculture, and what is now currently non-public services (opticians etc) would, as we shall see, still be in private hands." (*T.R.f.T.* p.5).

On page sixty-one, he lists the percentages of production which would be privately owned and controlled, constituting 70-75 % of industrial output. He certainly believes that... "nationalisation of the 250 largest firms... is unnecessary for the kind of changes this book proposes." (*T.R.f.T.* p.56).

In general, comrade Aaronovitch argues that state intervention is only necessary in order to gain control of key sectors of the economy, such as "The main infrastructure: energy, transport and the construction industry... investment goods... and financial institutions which channel internal and external flows of funds." (*T.R.f.T.* p.53). In this manner, he argues that the state can co-ordinate new productive investment and bring about economic growth. Furthermore the major companies, including the multi-nationals which would still be retained under capitalist control, would be integrated into the overall plan by means of "planning agreements" (*T.R.f.T.* p.65-68).

We are not 'criticising' comrade Aaronovitch's proposals, with the thought in mind that only nationalisation of the whole economy would make this alternative workable; we are only trying to construct an accurate picture of what his proposals are attempting to do. Our only conclusion is that in order to revitalise the British imperialist economy and make it more competitive, without changing its capitalist relations, the AES is a programme for a *massive extension of state monopoly capitalism*. This is nothing new, as most imperialist powers pursued a similar strategy during the thirties, such as the 'New Deal' in the US and state corporatism in fascist Italy and Germany (we are not suggesting the AES is fascist, in fact comrade Aaronovitch draws technical parallels between the NEB and Mussolini's IRI, on page 71). His belief that this strategy can overcome the tendency of capitalism to go into crisis is drawn from his erroneous, unmarxist conclusions, that the rate of profit rises through increased productivity. For example:

"The profits will be there but they will arise from more efficient and increased output." (*T.R.f.T.* p.42)

"But if these conditions were established, policies designed to expand the economy would benefit privately-owned firms: there would be growing markets and opportunities for investment, with, where appropriate, substantial financial and other support. Profitability would come from improvements in volume and efficiency, not from profiteering and monopolistic pricing". (*T.R.f.T.* p.64)

We have already stated why this is a false and unmarxist statement.

State Monopoly Capitalism

The intervention of the state in the development of

monopoly capitalism arose initially from the necessity to organize and control the economy for the needs of conducting the First Imperialist World War; this was extended even further during the second Imperialist war. Secondly, the inability of capitalism to overcome the collapse in the depths of the economic crisis in the thirties posed major problems of instability, with unemployment over 20 % in all the main imperialist countries. The state intervened in both fascist and bourgeois democratic imperialist countries, to co-ordinate finance, to implement capital investment projects, and, more importantly, to prevent social revolution, as was the case in Italy and Germany. The development of state monopoly capitalism was reflected at a conscious level by the emergence of bourgeois ideologies, which overthrew the nineteenth century ideologies of Laissez Faire and Free Trade, and which proclaimed state management and planning as a means to eradicate crisis from capitalism. The most important of these ideologies was, of course, Keynesianism. The credibility of Keynesianism came not from its ability to prevent imperialism from sliding into continuous crisis between 1914 and late 1940's, but because it claimed credit for the post-war recovery which lasted throughout the fifties and sixties. It wasn't only the bourgeois politicians of Social Democracy like Attlee, Morrison and Wilson who claimed to be Keynesian, but also Tories like Macmillan, Butler and in reality, Ted Heath. Comrade Aaronovitch describes this consensus as 'Butskellism' (*T.R.f.T.* p.18)

With the re-emergence of the signs of crisis in the 1970's, imperialism has set out to offset the falling rate of profit, by increasing the rate of exploitation, which means a forced reduction in the standard of living for the working class. An important aspect of this has been the move to cut public spending in Health and Education, as both constitute part of the 'social wage'. This change in tactic by imperialism is again, reflected by a 'new' ideology in the guise of monetarism or Friedmanism. It is important to clarify the role of bourgeois ideology like Keynesianism and Friedmanism; neither of them determine the direction of capitalist development, but are merely designed to justify the course taken, and to confuse and 'dupe' the masses. Marx made the point that Capitalism doesn't have theorists, but only apologists. Friedmanism resuscitates many of the 19th century ideologies of laissez faire and Free Trade, but it would be ludicrous to suggest that imperialism has adopted Friedmanism in order to dismantle state monopoly capitalism. Imperialism uses Friedmanism like it uses Keynesianism, to disguise and justify its course of development, which it must take through *necessity*. Therefore, Friedmanism can overthrow Keynes, but rather than expressing a retreat from state monopoly capitalism to 19th century capitalism, it reflects the further development of state monopoly capitalism into crisis and class conflict. The necessity for a new turn for imperialism in the

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1970's was not only recognised by Tory monetarists like Thatcher: Comrade Aaronovitch also points to the statement by Callaghan (p.30), where he basically says Keynesian economics are no longer applicable. The Labour Government of 1974-79 essentially carried out a 'monetarist strategy' of public spending cuts and a forced reduction in living standards, and Ted Heath before that, got the chop for failing to carry through that same strategy. The Thatcher Government has merely continued this in a more severe form. In so far as the interests of imperialism are to increase the rate of exploitation, then this is the inevitable task of *all bourgeois governments*, whether they claim to rule in the interests of the working class or not.

To return to Comrade Aaronovitch's book. The essence of Keynesianism, is that the crisis of capitalism can be overcome by the state intervening to expand growth and increase demand: that this can be achieved within the confines of capitalist relations and most important, that profitability can be restored. This is a purely bourgeois ideology and argues away the inevitability of capitalist crisis and the necessity of socialist revolution. Does comrade Aaronovitch counter this view as a 'Marxist' economist? No, he actually supports it. He puts Keynes position in the following way; —

"Keynes intention was not to change the fundamentals of the system but to overcome what he saw as major defects. He argued that, if unemployed resources existed, the state could expand the economy by increasing demand (which would stimulate output), making investment more profitable." (T.R.f.T. p.30)

Remember, there is no suggestion that economic development is being freed of the constrictions of capitalist relations, as happens with socialist construction. Yet, comrade Aaronovitch *also* argues that the crisis of capitalism can be offset *within* the confines of capitalism, and that such a programme is profitable: -

"...Economic growth to some degree finances itself as unemployment falls and output and income rise; industries become more profitable and government revenues increase." (T.R.f.T. p.35)

Is this changing the fundamentals of the system, or trying to overcome some of its major defeats? Any body who reads pages 30-31 of comrade Aaronovitch's book, where he deals with Keynesian economics, will not find one sentence actually rejecting Keynesianism as a bourgeois ideology; infact there is nothing but support against the attacks of monetarism. Comrade Aaronovitch, if anything, doesn't think Keynes goes far enough: -

"...one weakness in the Keynesian view is its belief that fiscal and monetary measures alone are all that are need to bring about sustained expansion and that investment will grow." (T.R.f.T. p.31)

Comrade Aaronovitch corrects this by adding,

".. the most powerful and desirable way to economic expansion is a large scale increase in public spending..." (T.R.I.T. p.31)

Comrade Aaronovitch is putting forward bourgeois Keynesian economics, for he retains the 'crux' of Keynes' arguments, that capitalism can be

reformed out of crisis. Many people may say, "Well, didn't capitalism emerge into a period of prosperity after the war?"

We must obviously answer, Yes. Marx never argued that capitalism remains in *permanent* crisis. But in order to prepare the conditions for its cyclical upturn, capitalism uses the period of crisis. We must then ask the question: what is the price of the period of crisis? In order to 'enjoy' two decades of crisis-free prosperity (forgetting about the numerous colonial wars during the fifties and sixties), the world endured two Imperialist World Wars with 50 million dead in the second one alone; continuous mass unemployment and poverty throughout the twenties and thirties; the murderous barbarity of fascism throughout Europe; and the equally ruthless suppression of national democratic rights in Asia and Africa by British, French, Italian and Japanese colonialism; plus the continuous threat of imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union since its foundation. We are quite sure imperialism can improve upon this record when it enters general crisis for a second time.

Comrade Aaronovitch's arguments so far have not been, that imperialism can emerge from a crisis into a period of renewed prosperity — that is a fact; his argument really boils down to the crisis being avoided altogether, whilst retaining capitalism. *The Leninist* bases itself on Marx and Lenin, who continuously fought, not for the reform of capitalism, but for its overthrow by social revolution. Comrade Aaronovitch stands opposed to the revolutionary traditions of communism and the Communist Party. He is accused of opportunism by the past revolutionary struggles of Communists. Emile Burns, a longstanding member of the CPGB Political Committee, wrote in his book, *The Crisis — The Only Way Out*;

"In developing revolutionary consciousness among the workers it is necessary to break down a number of illusions, both about the crisis, and about the difficulties with which a socialist Britain would be faced. All the various gold and credit theories, all the schemes of industrial reorganization and planned production while capitalism still survives, are merely illusions covering up the realities of capitalism's way out of the crisis, which is through intensified exploitation and imperialist war." (The Crisis-The Only Way Out 1932 M.Lawrence p.62)

Is comrade Aaronovitch's book breaking down illusions or creating them?

Maybe this quote is a bit before comrade Aaronovitch's time. Well, this is what John Eaton says in his book, *Marx against Keynes*, written in 1950, when he was Secretary of the Party's Economic Advisory:

"In common with all bourgeois theory the Keynesian theory has as its central feature the defence of the profit system. In fact, the causes of crisis, the causes of imperialist expansion, the causes of imperialist rivalries, the causes of war stem from this profit system which compelled by its inner contradictions, generates sharpening antagonisms between capitalist and worker, between imperialist power and subject peoples, between imperialist and imperialist, between the camp of imperialism and the camp of socialism. To these real clashes of the imperialist world, Keynesian theory shuts its eyes." (Marx against Keynes, 1951. p.136 Law & Wish)

Is comrade Aaronovitch's book attacking the profit system or defending it?

Social Chauvinism

We have yet to look at chapters 6 and 7, which deal with import controls, and contain the most dangerous seeds of opportunism, notably social chauvinism. Anybody who has read comrade Aaronovitch's book may have noticed some of his phrases, which make a comment on his psychology. These phrases consist of a profusion of references to 'we', 'us', and 'our'. For example: --

"We can and need to take advantage of specialisations and the division of labour on a world scale, but what is not in the popular interests is for *our* economy to be at the mercy of trade and financial decisions taken by giant industrial and financial multinationals and by blocs of rival capitalist groups..." (T.R.f.T. p.79. Our emphases F.G.)

Who are 'we', whose is 'our economy', and whose 'rivals' do you speak of, comrade Aaronovitch?

"...which in effect means linking the exchange rate of the pound to the German mark, trying it to *our main rivals* in Western Europe. An exchange rate fixed in that way would weaken the ability of Britain to decide its own economic policy". (T.R.f.T. p.78. Our emphases — F.G.)

Again, whose rivals are the 'Germans'?

"The fact has to be faced that if British manufacturing is inefficient, and its products not what customers abroad want, *our* exports will not prosper and *our* ability to finance the expansion of the economy must suffer". (T.R.f.T. p.79. Our emphases - F.G.)

Whose exports and who is the financier?

This is appalling language for a communist to use. There is no attempt by comrade Aaronovitch to differentiate the imperialist ruling class from 'us'. We assume he's not only implicating himself in close relationship with that class which owns and controls Britain, lock, stock and barrel. Comrade Aaronovitch directly links the interests of the working class with the success of British imperialism to compete with *its* main imperialist rivals. He argues it is in the interests of the people, that foreign trade should, ".... provide jobs and increase employment in industry and services which have been or could be built up to serve markets abroad. Third, to contribute to the development and industrialisation of the less developed countries. This is a moral duty; at the same time it can provide expanding markets abroad for UK industry and secure necessary imports." (T.R.f.T. pp.76-77)

This kind of statement makes 'us' wonder whether 'we' should have given up the Empire. By embroiling 'us' up to our necks with British imperialism through 'democratic controls' and 'planning agreements', comrade Aaronovitch identifies the interests of the working class with the interests of British imperialism, *in all its activities*. For example: —

"Planning agreements should negotiate the extent to which profits are brought back into the UK or exported from the UK." (p.53)

Comrade Aaronovitch is not attempting to prepare the working class for the class struggle

with British imperialism; comrade Aaronovitch is not attempting to deepen and sharpen class antagonism by making demands which raise the condition of the working class, to enable it to fight a revolutionary struggle. He is calling for the amelioration of working class conditions at the expense of its independence from the ruling class, which reconcile class contradictions, and which tie the interests of the working class to the interests of British imperialism. Comrade Aaronovitch's import controls ensure that the working class saves "British" jobs by supporting British imperialism against Japanese imperialism. It's so easy to be 'anti-imperialist' when the enemy is the US or Japan, and when the *Daily Mirror* supports your position. There's no question that Japanese workers are encouraged to see the defense of their jobs as a question of countering the activities of 'rivals', which amount to: —

"... aggressive and disruptive behaviour on world markets..." (T.R.f.T. p.29)

It is the same with the Common Market. Why does comrade Aaronovitch want Britain to leave? Is it because the EEC is designed to extend and consolidate state monopoly capitalism and to fortify imperialism as it enters a period of intensifying class antagonisms and crisis? Is it because he wants to mobilise the working class against an institution which is *crucial* to the survival of British imperialism, in order to weaken the class enemy and to educate and strengthen the working class by advancing demands *in a revolutionary manner*? No, comrade Aaronovitch's argument is that, "In the broadest terms, membership of the EEC has reinforced the relative decline of UK industry." (T.R.f.T. p.90) And that, "The essential fact is that whatever advantage the EEC may have for some of its members, the British economy can, on balance, only suffer from being in it." (T.R.f.T. p.89) Comrade Aaronovitch's only argument seems to be that it's bad for the British economy, and what's bad for Britain is bad for 'us'.

If comrade Aaronovitch is calling for withdraw from the EEC on the basis that the British economy would improve outside of it, then he is creating a very dangerous illusion. There is no question that the crisis of British imperialism will grow, inside the EEC or out; the working class has no interest in the EEC, precisely because it is designed to strengthen state monopoly capitalism. To promise the working class, however, that its condition will improve, simply by being outside the EEC whilst Britain still remains capitalist, is misleading and untrue. British imperialism's position in the world market has declined primarily because of its loss of traditional markets inherited from the Empire. There is no reversing that fact. British imperialism joined the EEC, because it had to, as a result of its weakness. Britain's withdrawal from the EEC would not necessarily improve the conditions of the working class; the working class *must* learn that, this depends on how determined it fights for its own interests, and ultimately

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depends on its strength and ideology to carry through a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of imperialism. One thing is for sure, the withdrawal of British imperialism from the EEC would *weaken and destabilise it*; and if the working class was not prepared, it could result in a *worsening of its condition*. To say otherwise only creates illusions, which disarms the proletariat, and the subsequent demoralisation would result in a collapse of support for the original dream-makers. It is in such conditions that the danger of fascism grows. Communists must call for withdrawal from the EEC, as a means of weakening British imperialism and as a demand which can strengthen the working class, if put in a revolutionary manner, thus breaking its support for bourgeois ideology.

We call on Lenin to summarise comrade Aaronovitch's position so far: —

"Petty-bourgeois democrats are distinguished by an aversion to class struggle by their dreams of avoiding it, by their efforts to smooth over, to reconcile, to remove sharp corners. Such democrats therefore either avoid recognising any necessity for a whole historical period of transition from capitalism to Communism, or regard it as their duty to concoct schemes for reconciling the two contending forces, instead of leading the struggle of one of these forces." (Lenin, *Coll. Works* vol. 30 p.108)

It is at this point, we turn to look at the case of two 'gentlemen', who concocted very similar ideas for comrade Aaronovitch inside the International socialist movement 80 years ago!

The Revisionism of Eduard Bernstein

Eduard Bernstein was a leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany during the 1880s and 1890s, and lived in exile in Britain after 1888. He collaborated closely with Engels in London, who died in 1895, and was named one of the executors of Engels' Will. In 1898, Bernstein published his book *Evolutionary Socialism*, where he argued against Marx's theory of crisis and revolution, and went on to develop the idea of 'municipal socialism' emerging as a peaceful process from 'civilised society'. To a large extent, he had been influenced by the ideas of the Fabians, and in particular, the writings of the Webbs. Although many non-Marxist ideas of class struggle and socialism had emerged before, they either predated Marx, or developed in parallel to his works. This was the first time such ideas had been put forward from the centre of the movement dominated by Marxism, and which attempted to 'revise' Marxism. Although Bernstein was denounced universally by the international socialist movement, his revisionism eventually came to dominate the European Social Democratic Parties in the form of social chauvinism, when they capitulated to their own ruling classes with the onset of World War I. Even the 'Pope of Marxism' — Kautsky, who led the ideological offensive against Bernstein, also surrendered to centrism, by vacillating between the revolutionaries in the Party and the out and out opportunists.

Bernstein was developing an aversion to a number of ideas central to Marx's analysis of class struggle and revolution. For example, he questioned the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, which has also become fashionable in more recent times:

"Is there any sense, for example, in maintaining the phrase of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' at a time when in all possible places representatives of social democracy have placed themselves practically in the arena of Parliamentary work, have declared for the proportional representative of social democracy have placed themselves practically in the arena of parliamentary work, have declared for the proportional representation of the people, and for direct legislation — all of which is inconsistent with a dictatorship." (*Evolutionary Socialism* - p.146. Schocken Books, 1961).

One can see his point - why impose an unconstitutional revolutionary regime representing the armed Proletariat, when you can elect a 'genuine' worker's party to Parliament? Bernstein showed the validity of that strategy by entering the social democratic government formed after 1918, which strangely enough, was replaced by Hitler in 1933. His undying confidence in bourgeois constitutional politics is only superseded by our comrade Aaronovitch's faith in "the sovereignty of the House of Commons". (*T.R.f.T.* p.94).

Bernstein's ideas of peaceful transition are illustrated by the following quotes:

"The whole practical activity of social democracy is directed towards creating circumstances and conditions which shall render possible and secure a transition (free from convulsive outbursts) of the modern social order into a higher one." (*Evolutionary Socialism*. p.146).

"There is not the least doubt (and it has since then been proved many times practically) that the general development of modern society is along the line of a constant increase of the duties of municipalities and the extension of municipal freedom, that the municipality will be an ever more important lever of social emancipation." (*Evolutionary Socialism*. p.159).

Bernstein is consistent in his arguments, that what is necessary is not preparation of the proletariat for revolution, but for the reforming of capitalism and its structures as they exist now:

"I am not concerned with what will happen in the more distant future, but with what can and ought to happen in the present, for the present and the nearest future. And so the conclusion of this exposition is the very banal statement that the conquest of the democracy, is the indispensable preliminary condition to the realisation of socialism." (*Evolutionary Socialism*, p.163).

In this statement, comrade Aaronovitch and Bernstein have a great deal in common. Both are putting forward the idea, that instead of being the agent of revolution, the working class should carry through the tasks of liberalism. We have already seen comrade Aaronovitch's exposition of Keynesian economics. For Bernstein, it was a question of adopting 19th century liberalism, and he openly states it: —

"There is no really liberal thought which does not also belong to the elements of the ideas of socialism. Even the principle of economic personal responsibility which belongs apparently so entirely to the Manchester school cannot, in my judgment, be denied in theory by socialism nor be made inoperative under any conceivable circumstances." (*Evolutionary Socialism*, p.163).

tionary Socialism p.151).

"Liberalism had historically the task of breaking the chains which the fettered economy and the corresponding organisations of law of the middle ages had imposed on the further development of society. That it at first strictly maintained the form of bourgeois liberalism did not stop it from actually expressing a very much wider-reaching general principle of society whose completion will be socialism... In this sense one might call socialism 'organising liberalism', for when one examines more closely the organisations that socialism wants and how it wants them, he will find that what distinguishes them above all from the feudalistic organisation, outwardly like them, is just their liberalism, their democratic constitution, their accessibility." (Evolutionary Socialism p.153-154).

In the sense that comrade Aaronovitch doesn't implicate Marx or Lenin in his grandiose liberalistic plans, it doesn't formally warrant him an overtly revisionist label — maybe we are just supposed to forget that he is a 'Marxist' and a member of the Communist Party. The similarities with Bernstein's reformism are there however, and are derived from a common intent towards bourgeois liberalism. This leads both to the same chauvinist conclusions of having to defend their 'national interests'. We already know of comrade Aaronovitch's opinion of 'our foreign rivals' and 'our interests in foreign markets'. Bernstein also has some interesting things to say:

The doctrine of the European balance of power seems to many to be out of date today, and so it is in its old form... I consider it a legitimate task of German Imperial politics to secure a right to have a voice in the discussion of such cases, and to oppose, on principle, proper steps to that end, I consider, falls outside the domain of tasks of social democracy. To choose a definite example. The leasing of the Kiauchow Bay at the time was criticised very unfavourably by the socialist press of Germany... But if some papers went still further and declared that the party must under all circumstances and as a matter of principle condemn the acquisition of the Bay, I cannot by any means agree with it... But the German People has a great interest in this — that China should not be the prey of other nations; it has a great interest in this — that China's commercial policy should not be subordinated to the interest of a single foreign power or a coalition of foreign powers — in short, that in all questions concerning China, Germany should have a word to say. Its commerce with China demands such a right to protest. In so far as the acquisition of the Kiauchow Bay is a means of securing this right to protest, and it will be difficult to gainsay that it does contribute to it, there is no reason in my opinion for the social democracy to cry out against it on principle." (Evolutionary Socialism p.172-173)

Having set out on a course to back 'our national interests' now, as Bernstein did, and as comrade Aaronovitch is doing, who is to say what 'our national interests' will be in the future. Having been caught in this sticky trap, the logic of it makes it very difficult to extricate oneself. Perhaps the best example of a socialist drowning in the mire of social chauvinism is the second 'gentlemen' we refer to, better known as Henry Maynard Hyndman.

The Social Chauvinism of Hyndman

H.M.Hyndman was recognised internationally for over 30 years, as the leading Marxist in Britain. He became the dominant figure in the Social Democratic Federation after its founding

conference in 1883, which adhered to an 'official' Marxist position, if not a secretarian one. Despite the inability of the SDF to achieve a central, leading position in the labour movement, it did acquire some influence through leading members like Tom Mann, John Burns and Will Thorne, who were responsible for the establishment of general unions after 1889. The SDF took part in the establishment of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900, but withdrew support in 1901 after its motion for adopting a socialist programme was defeated. The weakness of the SDF, which later became the Social Democratic Party in 1911 and the British Socialist Party during the First World War, was its failure to transform itself from a propaganda sect to a mass campaigning vanguard party. Much of the reason for this was Hyndman's control over the organisation; his idea of winning the masses to socialism took a somewhat sectarian, purist view, refusing to intervene in any real way into the mass organisations like the trade unions and the ILP. His concept of Marxist education was more akin to Sunday school, in which the masses came to him when they were ready. His arrogant, authoritarian attitude towards the party more than once caused dissent and splits within the leadership. For instance, William Morris, Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling broke away as early as 1884, to form the Socialist League, which didn't survive into the 1890s. After the turn of the century, when capitalism emerged into the new phase of monopoly capitalism in the most advanced economies, the differences within the SDF precipitated around Hyndman's position of supporting the superiority of British imperialism's navy, as a deterrent against its closest rivals, mainly Germany. Bernstein even refers to Hyndman's position in Evolutionary Socialism to support his own similar views — Hyndman stated his ideas in the SDF paper *Justice* in 1898, but was criticised by another SDF leader Belfort Bax, for being jingoistic. (Evolutionary Socialism p.179).

This process finally matured, when Hyndman followed the logic of his support for 'Britain's national interests', and backed British imperialism against German imperialism in the holocaust of 1914-18. He finally split with the true socialists and proletarian militants in the party in 1916, when he formed the ominous sounding National Socialist Party. The fullest account of his views are expounded in his book published in 1915, called *The Future of Democracy*. It's worth examining some of the ideas in this book, for their similarity with comrade Aaronovitch's. Hyndman's support for a great navy, lay with his concern for the protection of 'our' imported food supply, which of course, was in the interests of 'the British People', as they all presumably ate food:

"The necessity for a very powerful navy, in the face of another powerful navy growing up to threaten Great Britain with starvation and invasion on the German side of the North Sea, was so obvious that, in spite of the agitation of Radicals and Labourists in favour of disarmament, a sufficient fleet in

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being was kept at the disposal of the country. Even so it was more by accident than design that the nation had this fleet ready for battle in the right place at the critical time. But for this lucky chance, a large proportion of Great Britain would probably have shared the fate of Belgium and our food supply would have been seriously endangered at the time." (The Future of Democracy p.13).

Besides a sideswipe at 'shortsighted pacifists', Hyndman then went on to develop the argument that the ruling class was unprepared for war, due to its incompetent 'government policies' and that the navy retained its strength virtually by accident. Like comrade Aaronovitch, he makes the following observations concerning the economy:

"Great Britain has fallen behind more than one of her rivals in the world market, not because she has ceased to be a protectionist power, but because she has failed to organise her inventions, her industry, her agriculture, her transport, her government in the interest of the productive and trading fortunes of the community, and has failed to see in time the dangers of this happy-go-lucky policy. It may be necessary, if the competitive system is maintained, to extend protection and state assistance to certain industries which have been allowed by our ignorance and apathy to decay;" (The Future of Democracy. p.216-217).

This is marvellous stuff! We see the very same bleatings about British economic decline being due to the same old idiotic 'policies', and what's his answer? . It's not revolution, but the same programme in embryo which comrade Aaronovitch is hawking about. Hyndman, as with comrade Aaronovitch, doesn't see the decay of industry as a specific character of monopoly capitalism; and he doesn't see the imperialist war as the emergence of crisis, presenting the proletariat with an opportunity to overthrow it. Hyndman welcomes the war as an agent which forces the ruling class to reverse its 'ruinous policies'; he actually sees the emergence of state monopoly capitalism from the necessities of war — as a step on the road to socialism!

"As a consequence, not England alone, but all the nations engaged in the war, whatever their stage of economic development, are now acting under a system of State Collectivism. This collectivism in Great Britain is ill-considered and ineffective, because our rulers themselves had no previous conception of the form the transition organisation must take... Nevertheless, the inchoate State Socialism which has come upon us, unconsciously and unintentionally, is an inevitable step towards organised Social Democracy." (The Future of Democracy p.203).

What is instructive about Hyndman, is that he illustrates the transition from merely projecting chauvinist 'solutions' to the economic hardships of the proletariat, to where he is proudly cheering 'our' boys onto victory in an imperialist bloodletting; and all from the position of being a so-called socialist. Hyndman was the filthiest form of class collaborator imperialism could buy. His only good attribute was honesty, by openly proclaiming himself a jingoist for sixteen years, while other more 'principled' socialists denounced him as a crackpot, only to surpass Hyndman in their own sickening subservience to imperialism with the

outbreak of war. Hyndman openly preached the unity of interests between workers and capitalists — for the good of the British economy:

"Meanwhile it is beyond dispute that the 45,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom will undergo terrible hardships and sufferings unless they can hold their own in years to come on the markets of the world. As matters stand today, bitter though the class war between labourers and capitalist, employed and employers in the field of profiteering maybe, the interests of the wage-earners, so long as the present system endures, must be to secure as large and as continuous a demand as possible, for the commodities they produce. This prior to the outbreak of war, had grown increasingly difficult against the admirably organised and state-aided antagonism of German manufacturers, German financiers, German merchants, and German shipowners. We were relatively losing ground against the ordered attack upon our industry, our finance, our commerce, and our carrying track." (The Future of Democracy p.129-130).

Hyndman acknowledges, seemingly without embarrassment, that the class struggle is intensifying, yet who does he point out to the workers as the main enemy? As the advance of gangrene is accompanied by the putrifying smell of decomposing black flesh, so in the rotting body of opportunism, we begin to see the words 'we', 'our' and 'us'. Once the disease has advanced to its final stage of social chauvinism and social imperialism, then its agents finally become imperialism's most vocal recruiting sergeant:

"War, I say is teaching us much. But we have had to learn in a terrible school, and our lessons have just begun. What a different position we should have been in from the commencement had the unceasing warnings of social democrats for the past generation been listened to and acted upon! Instead of clammering wildly, at the last moment, for hundreds of thousands and even millions of untrained men (most of whom we could neither arm nor equip for months upon months), a National Democratic Citizen Army of at least 5 million of stalwart soldiers, physically fit, militarily equipped and personally capable, would have at once stepped forward; as ready as our sailors were to deal with any enemy they might have to encounter. We should, even under capitalism, have been able to reckon upon a large organised body as citizens and women who knew their duty to the state both as citizens and soldiers, and were ready to perform it." (The Future of Democracy. p.205)

The AES and Revolution

Our examination of Bernstein and Hyndman has attempted to illustrate, that what comrade Aaronovitch has outlined in his book, is neither new nor Marxist. It is an excellent example of over-ripe opportunism, which in a period of maturing crisis, proposes a recipe of bourgeois reformism which includes everything but revolutionary Marxist-Leninist politics. It also indicates signs of the most advanced form of opportunism — social chauvinism, which ultimately is the only barrier preventing the proletariat from succeeding to carry through a revolution (unless an ideological struggle purges the labour movement, and especially the Communist Party, of this bourgeois infection). Comrade Aaronovitch dedicates a 'generous' three and a half sides to his 'leftist' critics. Rather than criticise this section from the

point of view of an amorphous 'leftist', we shall stand it against Marxism and in particular Lenin. Comrade Aaronovitch first of all states:

"So far from being a revolutionary programme (as the right wing believe), the leftists regard the AES as reformist and collaborationist. They see its aim as the regeneration of capitalism, making it work more efficiently. In addition, it is said to be chauvinist and nationalist, regarding the British crisis as unique instead of as part of a world capitalist crisis to which there cannot be a British solution. The AES, the leftists claim, proposes to tear Britain out of the world market, or alternatively to make British capitalism more competitive as well as more protectionist." (*T.R.f.T.* p.112).

Quite frankly, we couldn't have put it better ourselves. This is precisely what our conclusions have been upto now. Having pre-empted the 'leftists' with a 'I know exactly what you're going to say', comrade Aaronovitch proceeds with a devastating critique of this position in the remaining three sides and illustrates decisively what a bunch of 'simple-headed' dreamers we all are. He outlines the fantasy which all 'leftists' delude themselves with in the following way:

"The leftists are still stuck with the model of the revolutionary uprising of the Russian October Revolution of 1917. A revolutionary situation comes about because of mounting class struggle leading, for instance, to a general strike, which will create a chaotic situation in which the capitalist class cannot rule. In the course of this struggle, new bodies are built up which are centres of worker's power (giving rise to a situation of 'dual power'). If a revolutionary party is present and sufficiently strong it can lead the workers to seize state power, upon which these 'new bodies' (workers' councils or soviets) become the foundation of the new socialist state.

There are many difficulties with this view." (*T.R.f.T.* p.113)

What are the difficulties with this view, comrade Aaronovitch, unless of course, by putting it over in such a flippant manner, you are suggesting that 'leftists' believe all revolutions to follow exactly the same form and time course as the 1917 revolution? What you have listed quite correctly, are the two *general* conditions necessary for a successful proletarian revolution. The first is a revolutionary situation, which comprises a crisis within the ranks of the ruling class, and an intensifying class struggle where the oppressed classes no longer wish to be ruled in the old way. There is nothing specifically Russian about revolutionary situations, which constitute the *objective* conditions for revolution to be possible — Lenin is quite emphatic about this point:

"To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is an increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly

allow themselves to be a robbed in 'peace time', but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the 'upper classes' themselves into independent historical action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only individual groups and parties, but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible." (*Lenin Coll. Works.* vol.21 p.213-214)

The second condition for a revolution is the subjective factor. Comrade Aaronovitch mentions soviets, or workers' councils, which are formed when the working class conducts its struggle at its highest, most political level, and mentions the necessity of a vanguard party (as a 'leftist' illusion of course), which encompasses the most advanced revolutionary, ideological leadership of the proletariat. Lenin continues on this point:

revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, 'falls', if it is not 'toppled over'.

Such are the Marxist views on revolution, views that have been developed many, many times, have been accepted as indisputable by all Marxist, and for us, Russians, were corroborated in a particularly striking fashion by the experience of 1905." (*Lenin Coll. Works.* vol.21 p.214 *Taken from The Collapse of the Second International*, written the year before 1917).

Maybe if there are some 'difficulties with this view', then perhaps comrade Aaronovitch would like to come out openly and say which part of Lenin's statement, he would wish to revise. What a proletarian revolution involves is the 'toppling' of bourgeois rule and its replacement with the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. Marxist are 'stuck' with the model of the Russian Revolution, because it is the richest living expression of how the proletariat seizes power and keeps it. There is much in this revolution, which is peculiar to the Soviet Union, but the general lessons to be drawn are the leading role of the Communist Party, and the establishment of soviet power which is one form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without this, you are not talking about revolution, and as comrade Aaronovitch makes no mention of it as part of the AES, he is not talking about revolution.

Comrade Aaronovitch is actually pooh poohing the idea of a revolutionary situation arising in an 'advanced' capitalist society. He doesn't actually give a straight answer to why these societies are exempted from the Marxist view of revolution as expounded by Lenin, except for a paragraph of waffle about being 'extremely complex systems' (p.113). When have societies not been complex? Paris 1871, Russia 1917, Germany 1918, Europe 1945, China 1949 — all are extremely complex. The fact is, that given an intense enough crisis, any class society can undergo a revolution — even the U.S.. Comrade Aaronovitch says of the view concerning revolution:

It tends to envisage modern capitalist societies as cauldrons of discontent only contained by a conspiracy

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between right wing social democrats and big business: the content of the cauldron boils over and, with the revolutionary party at its head, blows off the lid. But this is not what such societies are like." (*T.R.f.T.* p.113)

Is comrade Aaronovitch arguing that 'advanced' capitalist societies never develop crises or discontent? Comrade Aaronovitch must be contemplating more tranquil times like the fifties and sixties! Surely he's not referring to Britain in the eighties — otherwise, why on earth did he write *The Road from Thatcherism*? Why can't Britain become a cauldron of discontent? Cast your mind back to that week in July, when television screens were filled with discontent and repression — from Belfast to Brixton, from Toxteth to Southall! It wasn't revolutionary insurrection, but neither was it one of those "extremely complex systems, bound by a network of institutions and relationships... undergoing a process of adaptation." (*T.R.f.T.* p.113). You have stated yourself, comrade Aaronovitch, that Britain is declining fast; Britain is no longer protected by the luxury of being the dominant imperialist power in the world.

The State

Comrade Aaronovitch raises another point of disagreement (or difficulty, with the 'leftists', over the nature of the state:

"The leftists see the state as an entirely capitalist instrument (isn't it — F.G.) which must be 'smashed', including the system of parliamentary and local government and all other apparatuses, including presumably those of education and welfare, and certainly the armed forces, police and judiciary as they now exist. How is all this 'smashing' to take place in, for instance, British, West German or American societies?" (*T.R.f.T.* p.114)

Comrade Aaronovitch is now coming over as a naive virgin, who couldn't possibly imagine that revolution actually involves the replacement of the capitalist state by *the armed people*. He's too young to remember armed partisans running around cities like Paris and Rome in 1945; and he doesn't read history books, so he doesn't know of any revolutions in places like Paris 1871, or Russia 1917, when armed workers absolutely flooded the streets; and of course he's deaf and blind as well, so he doesn't know of a hundred thousand 'citizens of the United Kingdom' cheering armed revolutionaries, as they fire a volley over the body of Bobby Sands MP! Events like these, where youths throw petrol bombs at soldiers and police, don't happen in societies like Britain. Such impossibilities flow from comrade Aaronovitch's illusions about the state:

"... the state has become a vast network involved in every aspect of people's lives; a 'place' where the democratic struggle is and needs to be conducted in addition to all all other forms of struggle." (*T.R.f.T.* p.114).

This is a remarkable piece of 'Marxist' erudition; ever since Marx broke from Hegel, the state has literally filled volumes of Marxist

literature and none of it has any relation to this tatty, poverty-stricken sentence, which is so 'Marxist', it totally ignores Lenin's classic on the subject *State and Revolution*, where he puts the Marxist position; "the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of 'order', which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes." (*C. W.* Vol. 25, p.392).

But comrade Aaronovitch surpasses that with the scientific term 'place' you can almost see the masses enjoying themselves in Belfast and Toxteth, as the state enters 'every aspect' of their lives, so that they may conduct 'the democratic struggle'.

By transforming the state from an organ of oppression of a particular class into 'a place', where all classes can freely participate, comrade Aaronovitch attempts to construct the charade of the state under monopoly capitalism, as being a genuine democratic order. This is precisely the fiction that state monopoly capitalism wishes to dupe the masses with, and this is precisely the role of *social democracy*. Comrade Aaronovitch's definition is attempting to extend this bourgeois mystification of the entire state into the ranks of the Communist Party. He states, "The simple identification of the entire state apparatus with big business is false." (*T.R.f.T.* p.114)

What is simple and false, comrade Aaronovitch, is the way you attempt to undermine the Marxist definition of the state. Marxism is a bit more precise than 'identifying' the state with a class, which you term vaguely as 'big business'. Marxism states categorically that Britain is an imperialist power, ruled by monopoly capital, which *totally dominates* the state ideologically and organizationally, using it to retain its class rule through a system of coercion and lies. It demonstrates that fact every day, most clearly in cities such as Belfast and Brixton, and it is no thanks to the veil of mystification spread by comrade Aaronovitch, that the true nature of monopoly capitalism and its state are disguised. By scraping together such an unmarxist, illusory conception of the state, comrade Aaronovitch uses it to further confuse the difference between reformist and revolutionary demands, and between reform and revolution; it is upon this deception that comrade Aaronovitch hopes to sell the AES as really 'A revolutionary process'.

Reformist and Revolutionary Demands

Comrade Aaronovitch seems to criticise 'leftist's for drawing a 'sharp distinction' between revolution and reform. Infact, it was both Marx and Lenin who always insisted on defining the role of demands, as being a means of raising the condition of the working class, in order that it strengthens its position and independence, in its

revolutionary struggle against capital. Reforms must always be fought for, as subordinate to the overall aim of revolution comrade Aaronovitch states:

"But what distinguishes the reformist from the revolutionary is that, for the latter, the gains are seen as points from which to advance towards a fundamental change in the class and property relationships in society." (*T.R.f.T.*, p.115).

Comrade Aaronovitch certainly has got something against sharp distinctions, or even plain language. This hazy terminology distinctly hides what comrade Aaronovitch means by 'fundamental change'. The Marxist viewpoint is that the 'change' sought after by revolutionaries is the overthrow of the ruling order, and its replacement by the armed rule of the oppressed classes led by the proletariat, whereas the 'change' sought by reformists, leaves the ruling order intact and merely reforms it. There is no question that there have been 'changes in the class and property relationships' in Britain over the last two hundreds years; for instance the proletariat have won the right to organize themselves legally, but has this at any stage involved the overthrow of capitalist rule? The answer is no, because the changes have been restricted within the confines of capitalism i.e. they were reformist changes. From this definition which restricts the meaning of revolution to merely seeking 'fundamental changes', comrade Aaronovitch's AES is made to become 'revolutionary', even though he has already admitted that the AES doesn't actually involve the transformation of capitalism into socialism! Comrade Aaronovitch continues:

"The role which any given demand will play depends on the circumstances: 'bread and peace' may be revolutionary in one set of conditions and lead to reforms (only modifying the social structure) in another." (*T.R.f.T.* p.115)..

Again, comrade Aaronovitch is attempting to deceive us into believing that, although the demands he puts forward may look reformist, they are in fact revolutionary. Any Marxist will tell you comrade Aaronovitch, that it is not the "conditions" which determine the revolutionary content of a demand, *but the intention of the individual, party or class which is putting forward that demand.* The conditions existing in Russia in 1917, and throughout Eastern and Central Europe in 1918 — 1920 were of a maturing revolutionary situation. The objective conditions of class struggle were threatening the very existence of capitalism in Russia, Germany and Austria - Hungary. In this situation, the Bolsheviks raised the demand for 'bread and peace' with the *intention* of leading the proletariat and peasantry in the overthrow of the ruling order and its replacement by the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no reason why this same slogan could not be used by reformists in the same situation. There is no doubt, that when the workers' and soldiers' soviets in Germany appointed the Ebert government in 1918, that a major demand was that it should negotiate a peace treaty, and that it should

provide the people with food as a basic right. No doubt, the reformist leaders of that government made speeches to that end. The point is, that all the governments brought to power by revolution outside of Soviet Russia, used demands and even carried them through, but only to divert the revolutionary movement into reformist channels and save capitalism. In reality, the demand for 'bread and peace' was achieved more by the masses outside of Russia than in. The coming to power of the Bolsheviks brought neither 'bread' nor 'peace', but three more years of civil war and famine. Maybe comrade Aaronovitch thinks that Lenin and the Soviet Government should have resigned for not keeping their election promises! But then, that would be the opinion of a narrow-minded opportunist and not a revolutionary, who always subordinates demands to the real aim - the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marxism and Opportunism

The objective of comrade Aaronovitch is quite simple; to project the idea that a reformist path is the only realistic way out of the crisis, and that revolution in the Marxist sense, is a mere fantasy. This perspective is nothing new to the British labour movement, which has been dominated by such ideas for nearly a century and a half. What is different however, is that comrade Aaronovitch is attempting to drown the Communist Party in reformism, the Party which originally came into existence to fight for the revolutionary perspective, the Marxist-Leninist perspective, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marxism analyses the world on what life actually brings into existence, and struggles to change the world on that basis. The class struggle is no invention of Marxism — it is a reality for the whole world to see, even comrade Aaronovitch has seen it; revolution is no invention of Marxism — it has been the dominant force shaping the history of the world, and no century has seen more revolutions than the twentieth century; the dictatorship of the proletariat is no invention of Marxism — the Paris Commune gave birth to it in 1871. for it was Marx's genius which foresaw the *need* for it as early as 1847, but never stated what form it should take, life would reveal that secret. All of Marx's writings on capitalism, revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat have been confirmed this century, with the most brilliant example of the October Russian Revolution. *Socialism is a fact in the world today.* These are the realities of the world, which Marxists must base themselves on, and yet,, the 'Marxist' comrade Aaronovitch is an exception. He denies the necessity of revolution as the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

He recognises the crisis of capitalism (or more likely its symptoms, without attempting to understand its true nature), and he recognises the

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class struggle; but what does he draw from these observations? Comrade Aaronovitch draws the conclusion that the contradictions and class antagonisms of capitalism must be reconciled and smoothed over through reforms; comrade Aaronovitch doesn't speak anywhere of *intensifying* the class struggle, he doesn't mention the role of the Communist Party as being to prepare the proletariat ideologically and organizationally for the revolutionary seizure of state power, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He puts forward the Alternative Economic Strategy as the most 'practical and credible way'; okay comrade Aaronovitch, show us the proof. Show us the country where the working class has become the dominant class force, through implementing reforms. Show us this country where monopoly capital doesn't still rule with the iron fist, often hidden by the velvet glove of petty reforms. It is a fact that the aristocracy of labour can be bought off by imperialism in return for reforms most of the time, and that even wider sections of the working class can benefit during certain periods like the fifties and sixties, but does this offset the crisis and negate the necessity for revolution? We put to comrade Aaronovitch that there is no such country; what we do see are imperialist countries able to secure the rule of capital by implementing reforms and fostering opportunism within the working class. Marx recognised this bourgeois infection in the British working class as early as the 1850s, and Lenin observed the generalisation of this disease to all major capitalist economies in the epoch of imperialism. Both Marx and Lenin fought against opportunism and reformism all their lives, as bourgeois ideologies which attempt to dominate the working class and render it harmless.

Imperialism and Opportunism

If as Marxists we look at what already exists, we can certainly say for Britain that opportunism and reformism has a dominant grip over the labour movement. This is also true for other major imperialist powers like the US, Japan and West Germany. This dominance internationally goes back to at least the outbreak of World War I, when virtually all European Social Democratic Parties capitulated to their own imperialist rulers. It was in response to this filthy victory of social chauvinism, that the Third International was founded, to lead the world's working class to a revolutionary way out of the Imperialist General Crisis. The dominance of opportunism and reformism, despite all its plans for reforming capitalism out of crisis, didn't prevent that crisis from continuing for over thirty years, through two imperialist world wars and economic depression, with its resultant mass unemployment and widespread poverty. What opportunism and reformism did prevent, was the ability of the working class to achieve the revolutionary

alternative (outside the Soviet Union) of overthrowing imperialism.

Comrade Aaronovitch glibly dismissed the 'leftist' charge that the AES could result in "... a Chile type solution". Comrade Aaronovitch never actually answers this point fully. because nowhere in his book, does he deal with the danger of fascism; he doesn't say what it is and he doesn't say why it comes into existence. Again comrade Aaronovitch comes over totally 'practical and credible' by ignoring fascist barbarism which became the dominant force in Europe during the Second Imperialist War, and is now raising its head again in a number of countries like Chile, Argentina and Turkey — *and why?* Fascism is counter-revolution in the epoch of imperialism. Fascism and imperialist wars are the ultimate way out of crisis for capitalism. The only way to put an end to the threat of fascism and imperialist war once and for all, is to put an end to capitalism. Fascism came to power in Italy and Germany precisely because the working class failed to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in those imperialist countries which suffered most acutely from the effects of the general crisis of imperialism; and similarly in Chile, the lesson to be learnt is that the working class struggle for as many improvements as it likes, but so long as the butcher has his knife, then the proletariat is lying on the slab, and reformism ties it there. Opportunism and reformism are the main reasons for the proletariat failing to seize *armed* power, given the opportunity of a revolutionary situation. Opportunism and reformism disarms the proletariat, *and it is by feeding upon this weakness that the threat of fascism grows.* It is upon those real life observations that Marxists draw the conclusion, that when a revolutionary situation develops in Britain, and if the working class is still dominated by opportunism and reformism in whatever form (especially the AES), then the greatest danger in Britain will be "... a Chile type solution".

Essentially, the basis of opportunism today is imperialism. The history of opportunism in Britain goes back a lot longer than any other imperialist country, due to its former position as the first industrial country to have a trade monopoly in the 19th century. The strength of opportunism to some extent has a relation to the strength of the imperialist power. Whilst Britain was the most powerful imperialist economy, then opportunism had its strongest grip over the British proletariat. Today that position is held by the US with the result that the US working class is totally dominated politically and ideologically by reformism, and doesn't even have a bourgeois labour party — but this situation won't last for ever. What is important to note about British imperialism is that its dominant position was challenged consistently from the turn of the century, and its monopoly was finally broken by US imperialism during and after the Second Imperialist War. From 1945 onwards, British imperialism underwent a relative decline to other

imperialist countries, and since the re-emergence of the signs of crisis in the early 1970s, this decline has been accelerating. Comrade Aaronovitch recognises this, and his book in reality, is a reformist plan to offset the decline of British imperialism. *The Leninist* draws a different conclusion to comrade Aaronovitch's salvage job. *The Leninist* recognises that for the first time in its modern history (virtually since 1848), British imperialism is looking extremely vulnerable within the world market, and its position is visibly getting worse by the year. As world imperialism approaches general crisis, British imperialism will begin to show more severe signs of crisis than other imperialist countries like the US and West Germany, because of its developing weakness as an imperialist country. Once upon a time Britain ruled a whole empire, now it is straining itself to put down a rebellion by the nationalist population of Northern Ireland; the US bought off the Black riots in the sixties with massive welfare schemes and Senatorial jobs for toads like Andy Young, but the chance of British imperialism being able to afford this solution is negligible. For 130 years, revolutionaries and communists in Britain have recognised the strength of opportunism in the British labour movement, to have its roots in the ability of the ruling class to buy it off; now that British imperialism is showing signs of *real* weakening and destabilisation, comrade Aaronovitch seems to want to sentimentally retain that romance at *all costs*.

The Communist Party and Opportunism

With the decline of imperialism, so subsequently, the base for opportunism is eroded. This doesn't mean that opportunist ideologies cease to exist; infact, the necessity for imperialism to use them increases. Russia before 1917, provided the least amenable conditions for reformism and opportunism to flourish; yet after the February 1917 Revolution, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries were the dominant parties representing the workers and soldiers in the soviets. It was only after seven months of revolution that the proletariat switched en masse to the Bolsheviks. The masses could only break from their illusions in opportunist leaders, by a combination of their own experience of those leaders' treachery and seeing the vanguard party, comprised of the most advanced workers, consistently putting forward the revolutionary alternative — the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. A weak base for opportunism and reformism means that the capitalist crisis takes on such an intense form, that the existence of capitalism itself is threatened, and the ruling class are unable to even accord the smallest concession to the masses.

For the Leninist Party to be *capable* of winning over the masses to revolution at the critical moment, it must be steeled by years of disciplined

experience, and purged of all ideological opportunism. Lenin's party struggled for 14 years, before having to meet the tasks of the October Revolution. It is no surprise, that the German Spartacus League, later to become the Communist Party of Germany, failed to grasp the opportunities available to it between 1918-1923, precisely because of its lack of preparation, having only been formed immediately after the outbreak of revolution. '

Britain is on course for great revolutionary opportunities for the working class. In order to seize those opportunities, the working class needs the Communist Party armed with the ideas of Lenin, and steeled through an ideological struggle to win the vanguard of the working class, *well before the decisive struggle for power*. The Communist Party *must* purge itself of all forms of opportunism and in the case of comrade Aaronovitch, this means a total rejection of his ideas, which are nothing less than an insidious attempt to dissolve the revolutionary vanguard role of the Communist Party with the bourgeois baggage of reformist plans and illusions.

The task of Communists, comrade Aaronovitch, is not with you, but against you.

Your road to reformism and opportunism is not the Communist road to revolution; and if you insist on that road, then the place for you is certainly not the Communist Party.

The Communist Party must clearly differentiate itself from all forms of reformism and opportunism in the labour movement as a whole; but most important, it must insist on parting ways with voices that sing the same song from within, for they act to destroy the vanguard role of the Party — such freedom is fatal..

Ireland and the opportunists

James Marshall

On the rare occasions that leaders of the Communist Party speak at meetings on the subject of Ireland, *one* question is persistently asked of them. 'If we support the ANC in South Africa, why shouldn't we support the Provisional IRA?' Twisting and turning in order to extricate themselves from the awkward position they have found themselves in, they say the question is a conundrum, and squealing like a trapped rabbit, they declare the situations in Ireland and South Africa to be 'fundamentally different'

This claim is constructed on thin ice, and it has no basis in truth. It is an attempt to conceal the social-chauvinism of opportunism behind a veneer of 'internationalism' and 'solidarity'.

Supporting liberation movements in every country and winning the workers in the imperialist countries to that position is a fundamental tenet of Leninism. Workers have no interest in the long term in siding with 'their own' bourgeoisie; they have every interest in the victory of the liberation forces and the defeat of 'their own' country. Even risings in small countries oppressed by imperialism can act as a spark for the explosion of revolution in the oppressing country; for in the era of imperialism, the world is ripe for revolution.

Lenin, like other internationalists, castigated those who would only support risings in countries oppressed by other imperialist powers, never their 'own'. For the nearer an oppressed country is the more important, economically and politically, the more vital it is to actively support the risings of

the oppressed; and above all for the workers to develop and maintain a political position on the risings completely independent of the ruling class.

Now that world imperialism stands at the precipice of general crisis, the crucial question for communists is the necessity of preparing the working class for the struggle for power. As part of this, risings in oppressed countries are of major importance; to allow the working class to remain subservient to the bourgeois view of the 'national interest' is to court disaster.

Cracks and cracks

When Edward Heath called for 'one man, one vote' in South Africa, the *Morning Star* did not attribute this to the fact that Heath had developed a sudden sympathy for the aspirations of the masses. No, it was a direct result of the victories of the liberation forces. The differences in imperialist circles on how to defuse the revolt of the masses "should be a spur to further solidarity action with the ... liberation struggle." (*Morning Star*, Editorial, 1.9.81)

Claims that the Provisional IRA is finished militarily are met with the death of eighteen soldiers of the British Army and an explosion which finished the bloody, war-mongering career of Mountbatten.

Claims that the Provisional IRA has no mass support are met with scenes of an estimated 100,000 taking to the streets to honour Bobby Sands and his cause.

Claims that the Provisionals only understand

the gun are met with the election of H-Block prisoners both North and South of the border.

The result of these victories by the liberation forces in Ireland is the same as in South Africa - it produces cracks in the unity of the enemy camp.

Callaghan, the man who ordered British troops to intervene to prevent 'anarchy', now advocates an independent 'Ulster'. His old friend and colleague, Shirley Williams, proposes a role for the EEC, for something must be done or "the running sore of Northern Ireland" will mean that it will be impossible to deal with explosions in Britain's inner cities, she warns (*The Times*, 10.7.81). The Labour Party NEC also had its own proposals. A United Ireland! But all that glitters is not gold. For, this must be achieved with the "consent of the people of Northern Ireland" — in other words, Ian Paisley. The Labour Party NEC's proposal is fools' gold, a sop, for its designed to encourage the IRA "to cease its activities and seek through its political arm, Sinn Féin, the support of the people through the ballot box." (*The Times*, 24.7.81).

These proposals all have one thing in common: they are all designed to further the interests of Britain, defusing the situation in the Six Counties, by offering sops to the Nationalist population. They differ in tactics, but no more; there is no difference in principle.

The unity that exists around the Irish question in Britain was attested by Margaret Thatcher, who, speaking in the House of Commons about her government's Irish policy said: "I believe we have the support of virtually the whole House in the actions and stand we have taken... the unity with which this House has approached the problem in its determination to stamp out terrorism will help the cause of the Government, of the parliamentary system, and democracy the world over." Confirming this to "Loud cheers", Michael Foot, leader of Her Majesty's loyal 'opposition' stated: "We believe matters in Northern Ireland and all parts of this country should be settled democratically and not at the point of a gun." (*The Times*, Parliamentary report, 6.5.81).

Since the revolt in the Six Counties burst to the surface in 1969, the forces of liberation have grown ever stronger. Like the Hydra in Greek mythology, every time the British state strikes off one of its heads, two grow in its place. Despite the banks of computers, rubber bullets, water cannon, internment, no-jury courts, and pure terror, the 'sophisticated' might of the British state has been unable to defeat the Provisional IRA, a force that has in the past been dismissed as a 'bunch of fanatical bully-boys with no popular base'. For, despite the massive disparity in resources between the Republican Movement and the British state, it is the latter which is losing both militarily and in terms of propaganda.

The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

The demand for self-determination is in the interests of a number of classes: *it is therefore a democratic demand*. It is not a demand that contradicts the struggle, either in the oppressed or the oppressing country, for socialism and working

class power. The workers can take the lead in the struggle for national liberation and it can therefore become a stepping stone towards socialism in the oppressed country. In the imperialist country itself the uprising in an oppressed country can become synonymous with the fight against the bourgeoisie, can become a weapon with which the proletariat can attack the bourgeoisie. Conversely, if the workers accept the bourgeois view of a rising in an oppressed country, it will become a stick in the hands of the ruling class with which they will beat the workers into line, forcing them into

submission. This is the danger of social-chauvinism. It is not a moral question, but one on which the workers' struggle for power can go aground. A principled position recognising the right of nations to self-determination is not self-indulgence, or posing as holier than thou, but a necessity for every revolutionary party to adhere to rigidly. For once social-chauvinism grips the masses, they pass into the camp of the oppressors, and, in the words of Marx "A nation that suppresses another nation can never itself be free."

Both left and right opportunism belittle the question of the right of nations to self-determination. Each in its own fashion bends principle and thus undermines the overall world struggle of the working class.

Left-opportunism: Claims that national boundaries are outmoded and therefore the working class should regard them as a reactionary obstacle. The working class should engage in revolutionary class struggle, they should not fight for national independence as this will compromise them with the bourgeoisie. Such was the position advocated by Rosa Luxemburg; it led her to dismiss the national struggles in her native Poland and in Ireland.

Right opportunism: Advocates that the workers in the oppressed nations emulate those in the advanced countries. What needs to be learnt is trade unionism, normal politics. If this is done the national question will recede into the distance as an historical anachronism, something that advanced workers should look on with disdain. This 'class politics' advocated by the rightists is fundamentally different to that advanced by the leftists who call for revolutionary class politics — the right are content with stodgy reformism.

A right-opportunist, if pressed, would, with pious sincerity place hand over heart and with all the rhetoric they could command, accept 'self-determination' for some colony or oppressed nation of another imperialist power. And, if the question of their own imperialist power and its colonies were raised, "self-determination" would be conceded: 'Yes, they can use their own language - if they really wish'. But, if faced with mass demonstrations 'Autonomy in local affairs' may be conceded, and if the worse came to the worst and there was an insurrection, then our 'fearless fighter for democracy' would solemnly declare in favour of independence and then add quietly, in the hope that no-one but the bourgeoisie hears,

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'Well... in the long run... when they are ready for that heavy responsibility of governing themselves'. Our 'democrat' would then remind us all of how before colonisation 'all they did was fight each other — we brought law, civilisation and industry'. To strike fear of god into the hearts of the oppressed they then reel out a long list of figures and statistics which show how much money is spent by the imperialist power in developing the resources of 'your backward, barbaric pig-sty of a nation — do you really think you could run it without us?'. If in the end the insurrectionists kill any soldiers, then they will be condemned as 'murdering criminals'.

Lenin struggled unremittingly against both left — and right-opportunism, but of the two, the most dangerous was right-opportunism as it was solidly based on the development of the labour aristocracy and labour bureaucracy. These elements betrayed the long term interests of the proletariat for the benefit of their short term gains. This tendency was eloquently championed by Bernstein, the arch revisionist of the German SDP. He opposed 'capitalist colonialism', which he branded as heavy-handed and rapacious; in its place he advocated 'a positive colonial policy', which would play a civilising role. He regarded the demand for immediate and unconditional independence of the colonies as utopian nonsense.

This was the position he advanced at the 1907 Stuttgart Congress of the Second International. It was only after a bitter struggle that he was defeated. But despite losing 128 votes to 107 it was the right-opportunist trend that triumphed in the end, for in August 1914, the mass of leaders of the Social-Democratic parties betrayed the working class and went over to the camp of their 'own' bourgeoisie. The carnage of the war and above all the throttling of the revolution following the war must be placed at the feet of the right-opportunists.

"If we do not want to betray Socialism, we *must* support *every* rebellion against our main enemy, the bourgeoisie of the big states, provided it is not the rebellion of a reactionary class. By refusing to support rebellions of annexed territories we objectively become annexationists. Precisely "in the era of imperialism", which is the era of the incipient social revolution, the proletariat makes special efforts to support the rebellion of annexed territories today, in order that tomorrow, or simultaneously with the rebellion, it may attack the bourgeoisie of the 'Great' power which is weakened by that rebellion." (V.I.Lenin, *Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*, July 1916, C. W. Vol. 22, p.333)

This principled position outlined by Lenin is not a dead doctrine, but a living example we must follow today.

Ireland's long fight

Since the emergence of capitalism in Britain, Ireland has been systematically raped, pillaged

and plundered not as in pre-capitalist times, by marauding armies, but by the incalculably more savage forces of the market mechanism. Subjected to a forced marriage in 1801, the country's wealth and population were sacrificed on the altar of profit.

Resistance was constant and desperate, repression chillingly savage, but despite the overwhelming superiority of forces, the Irish masses refused to be cowed, refused to surrender the dream of a Free Ireland.

Following the 'Black and Tan' war and the creation of a 'Free State', Ireland was according to the Centrist Karl Kautsky "with one blow... transfered into the ranks of the freest nations in the world" the result of the "endless patience and outstanding skill of Lloyd George" (Karl Kautsky, *Ireland*, B&ICO reprint, p.1'7).

The truth was different from this glowing account. In the South, a twenty-six County 'Free State' neo-colony was established, while in the North, a Six County statelet remained under the direct control of British imperialism. The gerrymander perpetrated by Britain in Ireland took place because of the 70% vote for Sinn Fein in 1918; the result as augured by James Connolly was "a carnival of reaction both North and South", thus facilitating Britain's domination over the country as a *whole*. Ireland straddles and epitomises the fate of much of the world following the 2nd World War; exchanging colonialism for neo-colonialism. This development after 1945 was the result of the mutual but contradictory forces of the national liberation movement and US imperialism, which was demanding the dismemberment of the old Empires, that had squeezed US capital in the 'thirties. It insisted that colonialism be replaced with neo-colonialism, a transformation that would above all benefit US imperialism. The oppressed countries replaced their slave status not with freedom and genuine independence, but with a new type of slavery.

The Twenty-six Counties of Ireland remain a neo-colony of Britain, in spite of the appearance of competitors; 46.4% of its exports go to Britain, and 50% of its imports come from there (*Financial Times*, 6.3.81). In the North the picture is even more extreme; a massive 73% of all exports go to the British market (Liam O'Dowd et al. *Northern Ireland Between Civil Rights and Civil War*, p.35 CSE Books).

The task that hangs over Irish politics like an ever present black storm cloud is national unity. The Irish bourgeoisie, crippled, cowardly and spineless, is unable and unwilling to shoulder this burden. The lead has been taken by the class that has historically fought British imperialism — that is the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie. This class has attempted to rally other forces around the banner of national liberation; they have most successfully united the mass of the nationalist population in the Six Counties.

Why Britain Fights

Britain has fought numerous colonial wars in the twentieth century in order to preserve its Empire, but in the end, the world's largest Empire was consigned to the history books, over which ginsodden Empire loyalists weep bitter tears. Why with this history, why when countries like Nigeria, India, Aden, Cyprus and Malaya have gained independence, should Britain still hang on to the Six Counties of Northern Ireland with such stubborn determination?

The answer is simple!

"The Ulster question goes to the heart of allegiance and national identity. That is the root issue of political society, prior to and surpassing in importance all other issues." (*The Times*, Editorial, 2.7.81).

Enoch Powell has similar views on the matter.

"Ulster is Britain's test of its own will to be a nation. A nation that will not defend its own frontiers or recognise the rights of its own people is well along the road to being no nation." (*The Guardian*, 18.2.80).

Leading Tory John Biggs somewhat prophetically:

"What happens in Londonderry is very relevant to what can happen in London, and if we lose in Belfast we may well have to fight in Brixton or Birmingham." (AP/RN, 17.5.81).

Britain will fight tooth and nail to win in Northern Ireland, for the unity of the United Kingdom itself is at stake. The Six Counties are not just near home, they are regarded *as* home by the ruling class. It is rightly thought that the consequences of a defeat in Ireland would have a potentially cataclysmic effect in Britain; for not only would social forces be unleashed in Ireland as a whole, but the ruling class would be seriously weakened, and if there was a revolutionary party leading the masses in Britain the effect could be *revolutionary*.

Lenin was fully aware of what possibilities a defeat for Britain in Ireland could unleash for workers:

"The struggle of the oppressed nations in *Europe*, a struggle capable of going to lengths of insurrection and street fighting, of breaking down iron discipline in the army and martial law, will 'sharpen the revolutionary crisis in *Europe*' infinitely more than a much developed rebellion in a remote colony. A blow delivered against British imperialist bourgeois rule by a rebellion in Ireland is of a hundred times greater political significance than a blow of equal weight in Asia or in Africa." (V.I. Lenin, C. W. Vol. 22, pp.356-7).

The British state has no illusions of why it is fighting, it is perfectly aware of what is at stake. It is for this reason that the Labour Party, the bourgeois party of the working class as Lenin called it, is so 'constructive' when in 'opposition', and when in office is if anything more brutal in dealing with the Irish than the Tories, something that has earned praise from bourgeois observers

in London and Loyalist politicians in the Six Counties. The Labour Party can parade its 'socialist' credentials in front of the masses when it comes to far away places that pose no direct threat to the British state; condemn the South Africans in Angola and Namibia, the Americans in El Salvador, or the French in Zaire. But Britain in Ireland? That is something the Labour Party would only do on tactical grounds: in order to make British control in Ireland more acceptable, or in order to divert mass pressure in Britain itself. It would be expecting the impossible for the Labour Party to fight against the interests of the British state — it identifies with British imperialism totally. It sees its task to be more effective in advancing the interests of British imperialism than the Tories.

Communists and Ireland

In 1968 a new edition of the Communist Party programme was published. It had this to say about Ireland:

"The enforced partition of Ireland should be ended and British troops withdrawn from Northern Ireland, leaving the Irish people free to realise their united republic." (BRS. 1968, p37).

And yet less than a year later it was as if this had never been written for while thousands clashed with the 'B' specials and loyalist thugs launched attacks on Nationalist areas the Communist Party of Great Britain, the Irish Workers' Party and the Communist Party of Northern Ireland issued a call for a "democratic solution" to the problems in the Six Counties. This *did not* include the withdrawal of troops from the area yet alone a United Ireland; *instead of these democratic demands* the plea was made to Harold Wilson to 'carry out 'progressive' reforms on the basis that Britain had caused the problem and so "the British government must therefore take action to solve it without delay." (CPGB leaflet, 3.8.69)

Why was the party programme overthrown? the position it outlined in 1968 had been enshrined in *every other* edition of the *British Road to Socialism*, so why the about face? Could it have anything to do with opportunism? — The answer can only be a resounding Yes!

For as soon as the Irish struggle had crossed the Rubicon, the opportunists deserted their past loyalties; as soon as the first bomb exploded, that British soldier, and the first bomb exploded, that was the time for principles to be thrown aside, in a mad rush to the safe ground that does not commit anybody to anything.

The latest (1978) edition of *the British Road* has been transformed when it comes to Ireland. No longer do we have troops out and a united republic. In place of these principled democratic demands, we are presented with the usual recipe of opportunism: a utopian shopping list. It states that a left government would enact a Bill of Rights, end all repressive measures, withdraw

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troops to barracks, and enact financial measures in order to begin "to tackle the appalling problems of poverty and unemployment." These steps, it is claimed, would create conditions in which sectarian strife would be ended and British troops withdrawn completely." In other words, 'positive socialist colonialism'.

It continues: "The British government should recognise the right of the majority of the people of Ireland to rule the whole of their country, and should co-operate with their representatives in bringing this about by *consent*." (our emphasis — JM). Unfortunately, like the Labour Party, the Communist Party now calls for '*consent*' thus giving credence to British imperialism's claim to be defending the rights of the majority in the Six Counties; for imperialism has constantly justified its occupation of countries as being a defence of minorities or majorities, creating one or the other with a new line on a map as they did in the case of Ireland itself.

This position is recommended because it would "lay the basis for a new relationship of co-operation between the peoples of Ireland and Britain." (BRS 1978, p.43). Nothing, not a thing, about co-operation in defeating British imperialism, about joint revolutionary action in Britain and Ireland: no, instead of that, all that remains is Bernsteinism.

The Provisionals

According to Irene Brennan, it is the military campaign of the Provisional IRA that keeps the working class divided, that alienates potential allies for the Nationalist population, and not just that, but they have also "provided the British Government with an excuse for even more brutal measures of repression... it has made political activity around vital demands for democratic reforms much more difficult and (has) hindered the development of a broad united front against unionism... Progressive(sic) opinion in Britain was alienated." (Irene Brennan, *Northern Ireland a programme for action*, p.17).

Irene Brennan should remember next time she confesses, that it is a sin to cover your own crimes by blaming another. She blames the IRA for the brutality of the forces of occupation and what is the greatest crime of all, the lack of a mass solidarity movement in Britain, that too is the fault of the Provisionals! But a few 'Hail Marys' will not wash away this monstrous claim. Opportunism must pay for its transgression by being expelled from the ranks of the workers' movement, never to return.

What the opportunists want above all in the Six Counties is a return to 'normal politics'. This, it is believed, would create the basis for building a united working class, through essentially economic struggles. It is from this basis that Britain could withdraw and a united Ireland be created, and lastly at the end of this long road, the battle

for socialism could commence. This *Yellow Brick Road to Socialism* is utterly utopian; it is this fantasy that the Provisionals are condemned for preventing. The theory presented by the opportunists is the theory of stages. It is a classical Menshevik position, a position of capitulation to the bourgeoisie in practice.

Working class unity considered within the confines of the Six Counties is an impossible dream, something that only opium smokers and opportunists could now seriously consider. The loyalist working class, like white workers in South Africa, not only acquiesce in the suppression of other sections of the working class, but actively participates in it. The loyalist workers gain material benefits from the alliance they have with the bourgeoisie; again like white workers in South Africa, it is an alliance that can only be broken by all Ireland action. The Provisional IRA like the ANC(SA) is in no way responsible for the division in the working class. The sectarian system developed by British imperialism in Ireland, and the apartheid system in South Africa, are to blame for that.

The crime of the- Provisionals is that they have transcended 'normal politics', and like the rioters in Britain in the Summer Uprising, must be brought back into the fold. Violence is permissible, but only if this condition applies, that factor is fulfilled, if, if, etc. According to Gordon McLennan, it is a matter of whether it is in the "interests of the working people. Does it strengthen their unity? Does it increase their participation in activity for their own future? Is it the most effective way to advance their cause?" (Gordon McLennan, *Britain and the Irish Crisis*, p.10). Applying these criteria to Ireland, comrade McLennan gets his predetermined answer. No!

If it were a question of communists considering a path that advanced our struggle to the armed stage then the questions comrade McLennan asks might be relevant, but this is not the case. We are confronted with an armed struggle in Ireland that is in *progress*, a struggle against 'our' ruling class. We must ask only one question: is it the violence of the oppressed? If the answer is yes, then we as communists *must support it*. Fraternal criticism is one thing: a scientific analysis of a struggle perfectly admissible, but it would be rightly regarded as criminal and an abject surrender to the bourgeoisie if a campaign against violence was made the central plank of 'solidarity' work.

Bert Ward, secretary of the Communist Party advisory committee on Ireland, writing in the *Morning Star*, attempting to justify the Party's chauvinism on Ireland, contrasts the situation in Ireland with that in South Africa. The "opportunities to conduct political struggle in Northern Ireland and South Africa" are, comrade Ward claims, "qualitatively different" and "the opportunity to organise in Northern Ireland was and is far superior to that in South Africa" (*Morning Star*, 5.8.81).

This is the reason we do not support the

Provisionals, comrade Ward announces with the pride of a child who has just betrayed his classmates to the teacher. He will carry the mark of shame with him the rest of his life; for the dead of Ireland, the victims of hundreds of years of British reforms, the massacred marchers from Derry in 1972, the hundreds of Republican H Block prisoners, the Fenians — all point an accusing finger at comrade Ward and say with one voice - Traitor!

What makes violence acceptable for comrade Ward is the lack of freedom to organise, not whether it is the *violence of the oppressed*, not even whether it will weaken the imperialists. Using the criteria outlined by comrade Ward, would he support the Easter Uprising in 1916?

Could Connolly not stand in elections?

Could he not organise workers into open legal trade unions?

Could he not print a workers' newspaper?

Could he not organise an armed workers' militia?

Where would our opportunists have stood in 1916? With Connolly, like Lenin, or with the ILP pacifists, and the social imperialists in the Labour Party?

Scraping the bottom of their barrel of slander the opportunists are in the habit of pulling out the fact that the Provisional IRA is not a socialist organisation. Does the ANC(SA) claim to be socialist? No, it like the Provisionals claims to be a liberation movement, that is the basis on which we judge it. As a last effort we are told that they are terrorists, and that communists do not support terrorism. Who says communists do not support terrorism? We do not support terror if it has no mass basis to it, if it is an individual act. But this is not the case with the Provisional IRA — they have mass support, their violence is not isolated individual protest. Their main targets are economic and the forces of the state — the same as the ANC(SA).

Leninists and Ireland

Would the Communist Party of Great Britain under today's opportunist leadership be allowed to affiliate to the Communist International of Lenin? We will not deal with its fulfilment of all 21 conditions demanded in 1920; we will confine ourselves to condition eight. It states:

"On the question of colonies and oppressed nationalities, the parties in those countries where the bourgeoisie possesses such colonies and oppresses other nations must have a particularly distinct and clear line. Every party that wishes to affiliate to the Third International must ruthlessly expose the tricks of 'their' imperialists in the colonies; they must support not merely in words but by deeds, every liberation movement in the colonies, imbue the hearts of the workers of their respective countries with a truly fraternal attitude toward the toiling population of the colonies and of oppressed nationalities and carry on systematic agitation among the armed forces of their own country against all oppression of colonial peoples." (V.I.Lenin, C. W. Vol. 31, p.209).

This was the line that the Communist Party followed in relation to Ireland following the party's formation. This is made abundantly clear in the passage below:

"The Communist Party of Great Britain hails the dauntless fight of the Irish Republicans in their successful struggle against the British Government. Unlike the Labour Party, which does not desire to harass the Government during the present negotiations, we defiantly declare that we will gladly yield all the demands made by the Irish Republicans. In lending every assistance to Ireland, it is not only necessary for us to attack the Government, but also to warn our Irish friends that the political and trade union leaders of the British Labour Movement are as dangerous to them as even a Lloyd George or a Hamar Greenwood. The cowardly ineptitude of the Labour Party in the House of Commons so far as Ireland is concerned, is at once humiliating and treacherous. The barefaced betrayals of Ireland and her workers by the British trade union leaders is on a level par with that of the Labour Party. We assure our Irish friends that these elements are being exposed by the Communists." (William Paul, *The Irish Crisis*, 1921, Cork Workers' Club reprint, p.12).

Has the nature of the Republican movement changed, or is it British Imperialism that has reformed? No, it is *the Communist Party that has degenerated under the domination of various opportunist cliques*. As a result, the Party today has repudiated its past, the Communist International, proletarian internationalism. Instead it advocates that imperialism play the role of fairy godmother to the Irish masses, making up with a wave of the reformist wand the wrongs it has perpetrated in the past. The oppressed, instead of being supported, find themselves being blamed for the brutality of the occupation forces for the division in the working class. The Provisional Republican movement is branded for going beyond 'normal politics' but in reality it is the opportunists who should be branded for repudiating revolution, for trying to foist on the Irish masses their opportunist prejudices.

There is little likelihood that this will have any effect on the Nationalists in the Six Counties, but there is no question that this milk-and-honey outlook advocated by the opportunists has been successful in disarming communists. It has prevented genuine solidarity work. This has helped to maintain the myth that British imperialism is fighting in Ireland for reasons of humanity, against frightful terrorists, for the protection of majority rule and other such lies. In practice, the opportunists *reject* revolution in both Ireland and Britain.

"For to imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie with *all its prejudices*, without a movement of politically non-conscious proletarians and semi-proletarian masses against landlord, church, monarchal, national, and other oppression — to imagine that, means *repudiating social revolution*. Very likely one army will line up in one place and say 'We are for socialism', while another will do so in another place and say 'We are for imperialism', and that will be a social revolution. Only from a ridiculously pedantic angle could one label the Irish rebellion a putsch." (V.I.Lenin, C. W., Vol.22, pp. 355-6)

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Leninists fully support those oppressed nations fighting to defeat British imperialism — their victory will make ours that much nearer.

We place no conditions on our support for the Irish Republican movement; we accept it for what it is, a national liberation movement. This does not mean that we do not look forward to the Irish working class taking its proper place in that movement, in its vanguard.

We demand *the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Britain* and British troops from Irish soil, leaving the Irish people as a whole *free* to realise their united republic.

In this and future editions of *The Leninist* we will be reprinting selected articles from the press of the world Communist movement, and though we may not necessarily be in complete agreement with their political content, we nevertheless consider they contribute to the strengthening of the Socialist system, and the struggle against revisionism and opportunism.

It is in this light that we reprint the following article on Poland by comrade Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USA, first published in the October 1980 edition of *Political Affairs*. We feel that despite some important differences we have with comrade Hall's assessment, we nonetheless consider it an important contribution, an honest attempt to analyse the underlying causes of the recent developments in Poland, and hence merits close study by all revolutionaries.

The question of Poland is one of great significance for communists worldwide. The protracted economic and political crises in Poland has opened a Pandora's box of forces hostile to Socialism in Poland, bringing forth the real danger of counter-revolution. For though, as comrade Hall makes clear, there exist very powerful forces based outside Poland (such as the CIA et al) working to undermine and ultimately destroy Socialism within Poland (and all other socialist countries for that matter), we must seriously ask why, after 36 years of working-class power in Poland, large sections of the working-class have turned against the Communist Party's leadership and the established trade union organisations. It is not good enough to blame the Polish crisis solely on foreign imperialist subversion. For such a crisis could not have arisen had there not been deep-rooted problems within Polish society itself.

Communists cannot close their eyes to such tragic and important developments, but must arrive at an objective, scientific analysis of the causes of the Polish 'explosion' and draw the correct lessons therefrom. This is so that firstly, the problems may be effectively overcome, secondly that they never arise again, and lastly in order to win workers worldwide for solidarity with the forces of socialism in Poland and all socialist states, a reservoir of their working-class power in the world.

We believe that the following article to be a first step towards such an analysis.

What's happening in Poland?

Gus Hall

Before beginning, I would like to suggest that we all keep in mind that we are viewing the recent developments in Poland from afar and that this may colour our judgements. Not having the experience or responsibility of building socialism, our observations, therefore, must be considered in a sense as partisan observations from the sidelines.

It is necessary and important to discuss these developments because of the unprecedented efforts of US and world capitalism to exploit these developments. The recent developments in Poland have become a focal point for all the anti-socialist forces in the United States and, for that matter, in the whole world.

These reactionary, anti-socialist elements are working overtime to convince people that the developments in Poland are proof positive that socialism does not and can not work. They have seized upon the difficulties in Poland to "prove" that the socialist system has failed. And they are using every tactic, every variation of the Big Lie and every public outlet to peddle their vicious slander.

We are interested in Polish develop-

ments for the very opposite reasons. We know that the truth and the real facts are proof that the problem does not lie in the socialist system itself. Rather, the problems are a result of some mistakes and weaknesses of the leadership, mistakes which are in a sense contrary to some of the principles of socialist development. The weaknesses and errors made by the Polish leadership are not weaknesses and errors which are inevitable in socialism. They are products of conditions unique to the construction of socialism in Poland.

Historic Framework

To understand what happened in Poland it is necessary to first place the current developments in their proper perspective within a historic framework. No measurement of the quality of life in any society is possible without a consideration of the basic human rights enjoyed by the people.

In Poland, there is no unemployment. Every Polish citizen is constitutionally guaranteed a job of his or her

own choosing, without fear of ever being jobless.

In Poland, there is equal pay for equal work and guaranteed equality of opportunity. This is one of the results of the elimination of the racism and especially anti-semitism left from pre-socialist Poland.

Every Polish citizen is entitled to an old-age pension, to disability benefits, fully paid for by the government.

Every Polish citizen has the right to housing costing no more than about 5% of his or her income. There is no hunger, no poverty, no real slums.

These achievements must be seen within the framework that Poland was one of the countries almost completely destroyed during the Second World War. When the Nazis were defeated and driven out by the Soviet Red Army, Poland's industries, cities, towns and villages, hospitals, schools, farms and livestock had been devastated and their land lay in ruins.

After the war, the Polish people — minus the millions who were murdered and maimed by the Nazis — began heroically and resolutely to rebuild their country on a socialist foundation.

They began to build a modern socialist society in a backward,

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industrially retarded country inherited from capitalism and the remnants of feudalism.

Restricted by limited natural resources and burdened by the devastation of war, within a short span of 36 years the Polish people — with massive assistance from the Soviet Union — succeeded in building a developed socialist society.

Today Poland is a modern society with a highly productive material and technical base. Today's Poland has surpassed most of the old capitalist countries of the world in production and overall quality of life. It has built modern cities and towns, huge apartment complexes and industrial enterprises, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and dams. It has a modern power base and transport industry.

The problems and weaknesses in today's Poland — as in all socialist countries — must be viewed in the context that mature socialism has not yet reached its final stage. It is a social system in the process of development. In the building of a new socio-economic system there are always some elements of trial and error.

However, socialism in Poland has unique features, including unique weaknesses.

Socialism in Poland still faces severe problems, such as the collectivisation of the agriculture. It must still resolve the question of church-state relations. And at its own level, Poland faces unique problems in the development of a higher level of socialist consciousness.

We shall discuss these in more detail later.

Thus, although a critical assessment is appropriate and necessary at this time, we should keep in mind that sometimes criticisms of specific weaknesses eclipse the great and unquestionable achievements in the course of socialist construction. To permit this to occur would be to aid the enemies of socialist Poland.

A Strike Against Whom?

In discussing the strikes in Poland it is necessary to keep in mind that while the number of strikers was large and the strikes did create serious problems, the fact remains that the great majority of the 15-million-member Polish working class did not go on strike. The majority of Polish workers remained at their jobs, which tremendously limited the amount of economic damage and served to maintain internal peace.

We should note here that in a real

sense any strike in a socialist society is a contradiction. Under normal circumstances a strike is not necessary because management and workers are on the same side. The means of

production are publically owned. They are the property of all the workers and people. All production is for ..the common good and the well-being of all. There are no private corporations and no private profits. There is no class contradiction between management and workers. All profits, all wealth produced, go to advance the living standards and to satisfy the cultural and spiritual requirements of all the people.

So when there is a strike, in a sense workers are striking against themselves, against their own self-interests. When settlements are negotiated, the negotiations are not between adversaries but are discussions about mutual problems, mutual interests, mutual benefits and, therefore, mutual solutions.

When a strike does take place the basic cause is either lack of understanding in management or a lack of socialist consciousness by the workers. In the Polish situation, it seems there was a lack of understanding by both sides.

What made the situation ever more explosive was the lack of contact, the lack of communication with the workers on the part of the people in management, the Party and trade union leaders. Because of this missing link corrective measures were not taken in time to prevent the explosions. Tensions and resentment had evidently built up for a period of time until — rightly or wrongly — the workers felt they had no other alternative but to take drastic and dramatic measures to call attention to their grievances.

The demand for independent trade unions must be seen in the context of the worker's frustration and loss of confidence in the established trade union leaders. It must also be seen in the context that they are not asking for trade unions independent of the socialist structure of Polish society. It is most important to take note of the fact that the strikers and the strike leaders made it absolutely clear that they were not striking against the socialist character and foundation of the socialist state. They were not denying or challenging in any way the leading role of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). They were asking for redress of grievances within the existing socialist structure of Poland.

This was so despite the fact that anti-socialist elements, both internal-

ly and externally, were very busy indeed. These anti-socialist elements included the subversive activities of the CIA and the counter-revolutionary forces throughout the world, and especially those working out of West Germany.

These reactionary forces have a long-term strategy for destabilising the socialist world, for pushing individual socialist countries off the socialist path and out of the socialist orbit. They have not given up on Poland or any of the socialist countries. But they now think they have a foot inside Poland's door. So the counter-revolutionary, subversive efforts will continue and even escalate. This is not to deny or in any way diminish the very real internal weaknesses and errors of the Polish leadership, and especially the trade union leadership, including the fact that the union leadership itself was often selected through undemocratic methods. However, we want to take note at this point that all the propaganda, the slander and falsehoods being spewed out in media headlines, by monopoly circles and their ideologues and by the AFL-CIO leadership can not negate the progressive role of the unions in Poland.

Hypocritical 'Friends of Poland'

It is difficult to compare unions and trade union rights in socialist countries with those in capitalist countries because American workers do not even dream of such extensive social rights. They could not even imagine their rights being upheld by laws.

As we know, workers in the United States must wage war with the monopoly corporations for even small benefits, for every improvement in their working conditions, for every advance in living standards, for every wage increase. American workers would not even entertain the thought of getting paid full wages while on strike, as the Polish workers were. US workers are blocked, restricted and hamstrung by such anti-labour laws as the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin Acts, a multitude of right-to-work laws and every conceivable obstacle in union organising and the right to strike.

The support of Polish strikers by monopoly circles, Carter and Reagan and the top union leadership is nothing but the height of hypocrisy. They have never supported strikes in the United States, or in any other capitalist country for that matter. But when strikes occur — as they rarely do — in socialist countries, they are the

first to pick up the picket signs.

The anti-socialist forces cover up their real motives with hypocritical rhetoric about concern for the human and trade union rights of Polish workers. It is interesting that even the most reactionary forces find it necessary to hide their anti-socialist aims. It is a back-door admission that open anti-socialist criticism would not be welcomed by Polish workers.

Even Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, in his appeal to the AFL-CIO unions to set up a 'Polish Workers Aid Fund', felt compelled to defend the statements and actions of the AFL-CIO leadership: "The AFL-CIO was not involved... in the strike by Polish workers". And to cover up the anti-socialist aims of his appeal he even felt forced to disclaim any attack on Poland's socialist system:

"We are not interested in attacking, undermining or calling into question the economic system that prevails in any other country in this world, including Poland... whether it be capitalist, communist or whatever. And our quarrel, insofar as the AFL-CIO is concerned... does not relate in any way to such matters as who owns the tools and means of production. To us that is really irrelevant."

Kirkland claims that his only interest is the 'humanisation of the system' which would 'serve the cause of peace... detente... or normal constructive relations between nations.'

If this is so, why then has the AFL-CIO leadership never in a generation supported any strikes in capitalist countries, including the United States? Why didn't they appeal for strike funds for the workers of South Africa and Chile and, as a matter of fact, for workers right here, where workers have frequently been involved in long, hard strike battles — often without the help of strike funds? And since when has Lane Kirkland, one of the most outspoken advocates of bloated military budgets, war production and military superiority over the Soviet Union, become the spokesman for 'peace, detente and normal constructive relations between nations?' Support for policies of US imperialist aggression can not lead to 'constructive relations between nations'.

The truth is that monopoly and its labour stooges will exploit every problem, every weakness, every mistake to undermine Poland's socio-economic system, the political and social basis of Polish society.

The Sources of the Mistakes

What then is the truth about the real, underlying causes of the strikes and disturbances in Poland?

The fact is that there is no single cause. Each element in and of itself would not have caused the explosion. What brought it to a head was the coming together — the convergence — of a number of factors.

The causes are mostly internal domestic problems, but there are also some external factors. While there is no question that foreign counter-revolutionary forces were at work, basically the causes are internal.

The weaknesses and mistakes are not the product of any evil intent. In fact, the mistakes of Poland's leadership flow from the very best of intentions. And interestingly enough, they are weaknesses that have appeared in a number of socialist countries in the past.

The intent of the Polish leadership was and is to build a modern industrial economic base as fast as possible in order to raise the living standards and overall well-being of the people accordingly. There is nothing wrong with this motivation. It is most admirable. In fact, it is the ultimate and loftiest goal of every socialist society and every Communist Party.

However, such an approach and the accompanying policies and practices must not attempt to skip stages of reality, to ignore what is economically and socially realistic and possible. It does not matter how good the intentions are if they lead to policies that create instability and imbalances.

When the subjective factors override and dominate the estimate of objective reality, imbalances will necessarily follow. As a result of an unrealistic approach in Poland imbalance occurred between the rapidly increasing aspirations and expectations of the workers and people and the ability of the society's productive capacities to satisfy them. A distortion developed between the plans, designs and economic decisions and the ability of the economy to implement them.

An imbalance arose between the forced acceleration of economic growth and sweeping modernisation of industry and the resources, funds and capabilities of the existing economic, scientific and technological base to carry them out. Concretely, how did these imbalances develop in Poland?

Especially after 1970, the Polish leadership instituted a massive drive

for accelerated industrialisation. This was based mainly on loans. Loans from the Soviet Union are granted at very low interest rates. But the loans from the banks in the United States, West Germany, Great Britain and France are short-term loans, with much higher interest rates.

The total debt owed to capitalist countries rose to over \$20 billion dollars. Just the interest on these loans was \$2 billion per year. Over one-third of Poland's income from exports went to pay interest on past loans. To get an idea of how the capitalist banks viewed and used these loans, let me quote from a recent *New York Times* article:

"In a far-reaching action early last year (1979) the Polish government agreed to supply the Western banks with more economic data, and to provide it more rapidly, under confidence-building arrangements designed to keep the money flowing to insure repayment of loans. The more active monitoring has given the banks the opportunity to press their case for changes in the mix of Polish economic policy. Banks have been concerned for some time over the stress of the Poles on policies such as food subsidies that lead toward higher consumption instead of increasing foreign exchange reserves... It could have been pressure from Western banks in the latest credit negotiations that led to the Polish decision to increase meat prices which in turn triggered the strikes."

It seems the stacking of loan on top of loan had a point of diminishing returns. An increasing percentage of the new loans went to pay for the interest on old loans.

Much of the loan money went for the import of grain and other food products and as payment for new industrial plants, tools, machinery and other means of production. It was intended that the huge new enterprises and industries would largely pay off these loans. However, many of these plants were not yet producing when payments became due.

Within a five-year period, from 1970 to 1975, Poland's investment in plants and machinery increased two and one-half times. It is now obvious that such a rapid pace of development was not a true reflection of the realities, the real possibilities and potentials of Poland.

One of the measures taken by the Polish government to help correct this situation was to withdraw government subsidies for meat products, which resulted in a rise in consumer prices. This was the immediate factor that triggered the strikes.

Within a 10-year period the wages of basic workers were increased by 109%, while the productivity of the

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workers increased by 58%. This increase in productivity was excellent. But it was not good enough to match the 109% wage increase. Also the wage increases were outpacing the consumer goods available at the market. Here again, good intentions were clearly the motivating force.

The wage increases were seen as material incentives. A socialist society needs a well-balanced mix of material and moral incentives. As the socialist personality develops the part played by moral incentives becomes an increasingly greater motivating force.

Balance Between Objective and Subjective

It is now clear that a socialist economy can not function normally and efficiently for long with such imbalances. Wages and production, loans and production must be in balance. There can not be a large discrepancy between consumer demand and the actual supply of goods. There must be a stable ratio between the accumulation fund — a fund that is necessary for payment of debts, expansion and modernisation of industry, new construction and accumulation of necessary reserves — and the consumption fund, the resources available to satisfy the material and cultural needs of the people in a given year.

In other words, there needs to be a rational way — based on a realistic, objective assessment — of combining the goal of improving living standards today with the goals of tomorrow, of balancing the supreme goal of satisfying more fully people's material and cultural requirements not only in the current fiscal year, but in the future. Thus, under socialism the supreme goal of social production must form an organic unit with the means available for its achievement. At all times there need to be adequate methods of assuring that the subjective factors do not override the objective conditions, those arising in the economy irrespective of human will.

Economic planning and management need to be based on an analysis of objective processes, trends and available possibilities for growth and expansion.

In order to accomplish this in a socialist society needs mass participation in planning, management, administration and implementation at all levels. There must be constant discussion, consultation and exchanges, and above all there must be active

participation of the workers at the factory level in the process of decision making. The workers must be deeply involved in deciding matters pertaining to management, improvement of working and living conditions, use of funds for both developing production and for social and cultural purposes and financial incentives. This is the deepest meaning of socialist democracy, of democratic centralism. This vital link was weak in Poland.

Some people ask: why did good intentions and the drive for maximum industrialisation get out of touch with reality? One reason is lack of good, sound planning. Another is some useful thinking translated into economic planning and decisions that could not be realistically implemented. In other words, subjective wishes outstripped objective possibilities. And much of the unrealistic good intentions were fed by feelings of unrealistic nationalism.

Additional factors that added to the negative developments in Poland were: severe droughts which led to lower than usual harvest yields; the problems in the import of raw materials and grain and the rise in prices for these items; the increasing price of oil Poland buys from the OPEC countries. The economic crisis in the capitalist countries had a negative effect on Poland's export sales. These were all factors that converged to create the crisis in Poland.

The Need for Socialist Consciousness

These developments in turn brought to the surface many other bothersome questions which the leadership of the Polish United Workers Party is now looking into and discussing. This includes the problem of an over-reliance on material incentives and a tendency to leave advancement in the ideological arena to spontaneity.

It is true that the socialist economic system creates the material basis for how people will think. But socialist thinking does not then develop completely automatically or spontaneously. And of course ideological developments, in this case socialist consciousness always lags behind developments in the economic arena.

In the period of building socialism material incentives necessarily play an important role. But they do not and can not replace the need for constant and consistent education, the struggle in the ideological and political areas of life. Appeals to national pride are also not enough.

The experience of 60 years of building real socialism is witness to the fact that with the process of building the economic structure of socialism there must be some necessary parallel processes taking place. One of the most fundamental of these processes is the need for a constant struggle to draw ever greater numbers of the people into the planning, management and especially the governing and decision-making processes.

This must be done by way of constantly increasing the role and responsibilities of people's organisations, including and especially the trade unions. People in ever greater numbers must be drawn into the process of finding solutions to the problems in every area of life. They must be drawn in not merely for discussions, consultations and exchanges of opinion. They must become full partners, an integral component in the actual decision-making process. They must become part of the power structure and governing apparatus. It is a process of expanding the mass base of socialist democracy.

It seems there were some real weaknesses in this area in Poland. When there is an overemphasis on material incentives and weaknesses in the ideological struggle it will result in a lag in development of socialist consciousness.

The people must fully and deeply understand the difficulties and problems, and how and why they arise. They must know what the limits are in each stage of development. Only then will they be prepared and motivated to wholeheartedly fight for solutions and their implementation.

The development of socialist personality, based on socialist consciousness, takes place only as a result of continuing stubborn and relentless struggle. At no stage of socialism does such a personality emerge without an ideological struggle. Naturally, the socialist way of life, socialist consciousness, does not take shape overnight. Establishing a new way of life, new ways of thinking, involves a complex and lengthy struggle against old habits and traditions and the mentality inherited from the past.

The new society — the new socioeconomic system based on public ownership and the social relations arising on this base (which eliminates the antagonism based on the irreconcilable interest of opposing, hostile classes) — lays the objective basis for socialist consciousness. It stimulates the birth of new ideas, new social relations.

Socialism lays the basis for new attitudes to labour and new moral

ideas and goals. But these do not grow and develop without constant struggle, without cultivation on many levels.

The fact that some 70% of the farms in Poland are still privately operated is not only a drag on agricultural production. It is also a drag on the development of socialist personality.

It seems obvious that material incentives, without a political and ideological struggle, will continue the very slow transition to collective and state farms, which is the only basis for modernisation of a large-scale socialist agriculture.

Weaknesses in the ideological sphere create a vacuum which other ideologies rush to fill. This creates fertile soil for anti-socialist elements.

In Poland, the Catholic Church remains not only a religious, but also an ideological force. Its ideological influence will not diminish without a conscious struggle. The statement that the Party in Poland must reestablish a relationship of confidence in the PUWP is a most serious self-criticism. And of course there is the important question of why the people lost confidence in the first place. It will help, but a change in the leading personalities in and of itself will not result in reestablishing that confidence.

A socialist society has a distinct advantage in that it has the means and the structure to correct mistakes and recover from weaknesses. This is because the relationships among the workers, the Party, the trade unions and the government are not based on inherent contradictions between a worker and a boss and because their mutual self-interests are served by the continued building of socialist society.

What Next?

So the capitalist ideologues are whistling in the corporate graveyard if they think the workers and people of Poland are going to veer from the socialist path. Poland will make changes and correct many mistakes. But the one mistake it will never make is to reverse its socialist path of development.

There is no question that the strikes in Poland were negative developments. But they are being transformed into their opposite because the Party, the trade union leaders and the government are drawing the necessary conclusions.

Socialism will be the winner! II