

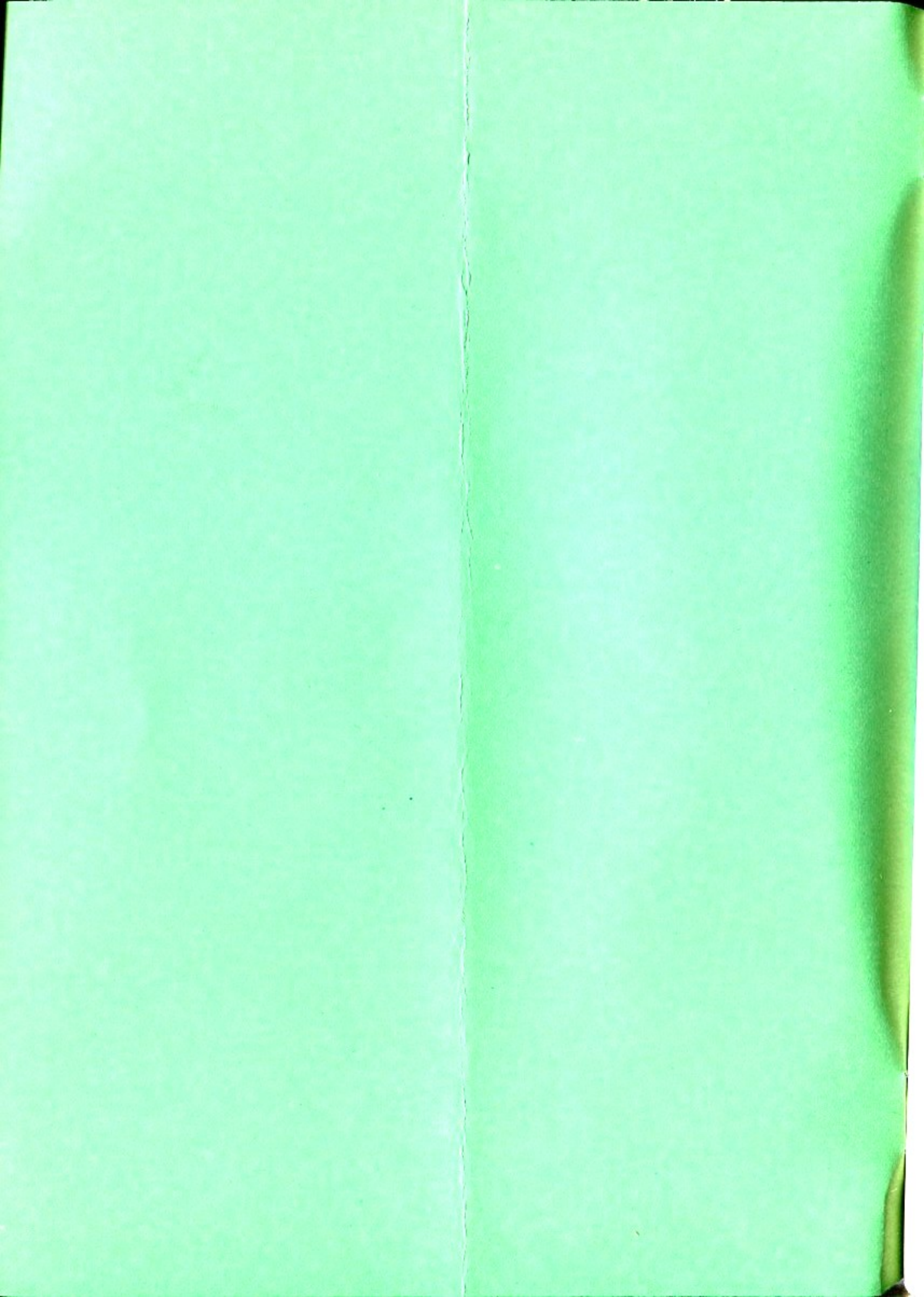
CONGRESS '85

REPORT OF THE
SEVENTH CONGRESS

COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN
(MARXIST-LENINIST)

Foreword by Reg Birch

20p



FOREWORD

The two papers published here are amongst those adopted at the 7th Congress of the Party. They are presented for your information and reflection.

The preoccupation is with "absolute decline", and in particular with its effect on Britain.

It is as though at present there is an interregnum, with the working class to one side sometimes vacillating over their revolutionary role, with the counter-revolutionary force fronted by the "fille de chambre" Thatcher together with the rest of the myrmidons of capital up front, and with capitalism behind in centre back hopefully expecting that she will be a good "bed maker" for their homecoming.

Among other papers and matters at the Congress, the new Central Committee was elected and our new Chairman, Les Elliot. We know that the comrades will give guidance and support to him and to the Central Committee in the formidable task facing our class and Party - the seizure of power.

Fraternally

Reg Birch

Know the Enemy

In 1979 the Party said Thatcher Out. The correctness of its saying is to be seen as we look in 1985. The compounding of failure to effect this line was shown in her re-election in 1983. To truly assess that failure is necessary if we are to move forward at all.

Our hesitations and vacillations are but an expression of the working class as a whole. Nevertheless in a Communist this is inexcusable.

The arguments and doubts against adoption wholly of that line were not revolutionary but in part showed allegiance to parliamentarianism, to bourgeois democracy. Disappointment at the record of successive Labour Governments lies behind the argument now ("Can we vote Labour?", etc), showing a tendency and wish to expect more from a Labour Government than it can ever deliver.

The danger of not taking "Vote Labour" in our stride is that it opens the more readily attempts to rationalise with substitute calls for revolution unrealistic today. If Chinese peasants could see Japan the enemy greater than Chiang Kai-shek why not we here? To know always the enemy is our duty.

Acknowledging the absolute decline of capitalism is imperative so that we may know the strategy and tactics of the enemy in this their dilemma. Since absolute decline produces a revolutionary situation so does it throw up a counter revolutionary position. We see here the revolutionary situation being surrendered, and the counter revolutionary forces temporarily the stronger.

The strength is not truly possessed by the counter revolutionary force of Capitalism (in vain defence against absolute decline); but given in part almost gratis by a divided and confused working class.

We the Party have not fully estimated the guile, shrewdness and ferocity of Capitalism in decline. (Here perhaps we forget our Lenin).

For years the campaign against Unions assisted this partial class disaffection, which has proved not so difficult to procure as would seem, in spite of centuries of class struggle.

The Unions in each separate combination impose a collective voluntary discipline, rejecting individual inclination for the collective will of the whole. Against the environment of centuries of Capitalism, this is the very antithesis of its avowed role and function - individual freedom and singular wealth. Rubbish as that is, and understood so well for so long by the working class, what is surprising is the deliberate acceptance of this opium now by so many of our own class.

Taking this into account requires us also as a Party to examine ourselves to see, are we so infected? And if so, how?

Understanding the development and evolution of Capitalism, bringing with it both good and bad, does not permit the Party to desert its revolutionary role; notwithstanding the confusion, deliberate and subjective too, within that history.

If we understand bourgeois democracy is the veil and shield of a Capitalist ruling class which permits their functioning, then we should also discern the Janus face. Just as Liberalism was the immediate other side in face of Capitalism, so is Social Democracy the other face of Liberalism - all Capitalism.

Does this entitle us to concede the revolutionary rôle and task of the Party?

To know the enemy is still our task.

It is not that Capitalism in Britain deliberately produces economic destruction to destroy a working class; it is but an inevitable and unnatural function (within social evolution) of that foreign body in society when in absolute decline.

The turning to coupon clipping more and more, and away from the concept of manufacture - the source through Labour Power of Surplus Value - is but Capitalism's enforced path in absolute decline: an attempt to extend, temporarily to live a little longer.

The continued survival of Capitalism is contingent solely on our working class strength to permit it.

At the present time such are the twists and turns of Capitalism that it is imposing, enforcing changes in part in our class structure. Within an anachronism comes also a demand in defence to fight anachronistically by both classes.

Witness the dying manufacturing area with its workforce fighting for survival in a contracting arena.

Witness the transposing of labour use in bodies in other spheres, and the disposing entirely of surplus (alleged) labour (read in this change by unemployment).

Witness the organised and unorganised labour force perforce changing in spheres of employment and function as required, and wherever and whenever possible, in order to survive; but always in diminishing numbers, lesser strength and purpose in function, and with less power in class.

To look at the structure change in one central body, the TUC, is to note the loss of strength in manufacture numbers, and therefore leadership role, and temporary increase in other membership of workers joined in Union; but of much less class decisive power and strength. This brings also intellectual change, change in purpose, and change in the nature of class struggle.

To return to our beginning -

Thatcher out is still our purpose and more so.

Know the enemy.

That Thatcher is a product created by Capitalism and selected especially so for the ignorance - vulgarity and assumed ruthlessness is self-evident (like Hitler).

But the Party must examine more closely the tactics employed by Capitalism at this time through Thatcherism. It is possible that we underestimated their awareness of their (Capitalism's) problems and their recognition of decline; certainly we did not anticipate and perceive their strategy at this time quickly enough.

The attack on the working class has been very adroit and able in its conduct to bring about a degree of isolation of sections of our class in struggle. We have to see the attack on the working class clearly. This attack strikes deliberately so at the very homogeneity of the working class. Where Labour has been employment intensive it has also been generally geographically sited by the very nature of the work undertaken, creating great communities of the working class with all its life and culture.

To list some:

Dockers and dockland communities (at all ports sea and inland, early under attack and eroded),

Shipbuilding,

Mining,

Steel (to a large degree),

Heavy engineering industry.

All of this is not just a loss of job but of root and culture to family and community as a whole.

The loss to the working class of large numbers in shipbuilding, general engineering, construction, steel, mining, and those serving the manual force in docks and transport has been very damaging. The preservation of the remaining force in this sector of industrial activity is all the more imperative.

There must be recognition by the Party of the design in Capitalism's attack and our work to preserve that vanguard

force and rally others must be our priority.

To date these forces have been picked off one by one, with too little recognition of the nature of the struggle, and too little solidarity.

The miners today fight for an industry, because they cannot fight for a Revolution. There is too little solidarity and understanding of the former for the latter to be.

The design of attack does not stop at geographically sited industrial areas, but enters in the widest possible Metropolitan areas also, aimed at the communal existence of a working population.

One of the shrewdest and most enervating tactics is that on Council House Estates and Communities. The selling of Council dwellings is an attempt to create a very Fifth Column in the heart of the working class, striking at the root and strength of Labour. "You too can be a noble not a serf."

The Party must see every struggle in industry against shut down, contraction, closure, unemployment as a life and death struggle of the proletariat and must seek to unify all such.

We must see the prior claims made upon us in this special sphere at this time, which sets aside all other tasks (not to be disregarded, but in terms of strategic import).

So far, with a dying Capitalism, the plot is in hand - a dying proletariat. It is the revolutionary task to hasten the funeral of the enemy. It is we who must be the undertakers.

Britain is being denuded of spinners, delvers and weavers. We cherish what is left to rebuild.

You shall say -

We abhor and oppose Capitalism.

We abhor Bourgeois Democracy.

We abhor Parliament.

We are for Revolution.

In the meantime, dear comrades, use it! No weapon against Capitalism is too trivial.

So far we have permitted -

Highest level of unemployment in history.

Imports of manufactured goods exceeding exports.

Unprecedented legal pursuit of Unions at a time when the Unions generally show less vigour, and some more passivity, than at any period.

We have seen the prohibition of Unions at GCHQ; privatisation (=Theft of public purse); a growing comprador role of a ruling class in our homeland; that defence by workers is defined as violence.

You shall say like Cromwell

"Show me the judges..."

"Take away this bauble."

But struggle is long and we must get on with it.

It is still Thatcher out -- because she is still there.

Since we permit a Bourgeois Democracy we have Parliament and elections. In such 'Democracy' you cannot vote against. To vote against you must vote for -- if there still be elections!

It must be remembered, only the working class can reject its own creation, the Labour Party. This will not be until a conscious choosing of Revolution, which will destroy their own creation as obsolete. That is not the Party's role; ours is to assist and accelerate the Revolution pace.

Through this state power the government of Thatcherism has come to expound anarchy to the mass.

Not even the hypocrisy of morality is now advanced by them. No lie, no deceit, no theft of public asset, no loss of liberty, no violence is too unpalatable or too great for them to effect.

It is every man for himself, and Private Enterprise over all. The majority becomes the minority and the enemy within. Picketing equates with terrorism. Strikes are unlawful but

employers' strikes, closures -- in a word lockout -- is praiseworthy and a proper contribution to unemployment.

The government say they cannot be responsible for unemployment, it is not their role or function or concern.

"We wash our hands of it."

Private Enterprise is and has long been a myth; not since the pioneers, and innovators in the early days of the Industrial Revolution (the innovators in the main entrepreneurs) has there been Enterprise Private.

No project of substance, industrial and social, is undertaken through Private Enterprise. Ports and harbours, roads and bridges, waterways, building of great ships and luxury liners, railways, mining, water supply, fuel (gas, electricity, oil) -- much of these, and in certain cases all, have been paid for from the public purse, now to be stolen back, as British Telecom.

This also applies to civil aviation, airports and transport too (the Concorde) -- all come from the public purse, to be seized by Thatcherism and dispersed to Private Enterprise again. As in Rolls Royce, Leyland, oil, etc., much of these assets are to be owned by foreign Capital.

The mass are, in part, even persuaded that inflation is ended. With no price restraints, double and treble tax, and price rises on basics such as water, gas, electricity, oil and communications, these are all the more ripe and more profitable for plundering to Private Enterprise.

"We will never give in to violence", says Thatcher. Yet, "Rejoice! Rejoice!" at Falkland onslaught and Belgrano sinking says she. There were murders at the Maze Prison through starvation imposed to assert political power.

Since she and those with her voice all for self, no social responsibility, all for Private Enterprise, a law and order of Private Do It Yourself, she makes a case for no government.

Then let us exhort the working class to impose upon this Capitalist Ruling Class in absolute decline abdication.

That they may then seize power and establish working class law and order and social existence.

This is now before the Party and the time, the tasks show themselves. To turn away opens to disaster for humanity. The preservation of the remnants of industry is essential for survival as a nation, for building of socialism.

To advance and to achieve we shall be obliged to be as in the USSR: we must have industry, we must be as self-sufficient as is materially real.

We must, as part of the real New World of Socialism, end the function and role of Aircraft Carrier of Imperialism and become the Turnpike of Socialism.

So great is the terrifying dilemma of World Capitalism, and precisely because of the strength of the USSR, that the old dream in desperation is dusted off; indeed they are almost helpless in their madness in the face of inexorable

social evolution and progress.

Just think, the colonisation of the USSR, all in the name of "freedom", "civilisation", "Christianity"! What a prize -- one-sixth of the world to be ours, Capitalism's, to be enslaved, our serf and domestic servant. And such a prize -- a well educated and skilled millions of proletariat. (Why do we need people, workers here?) Our granary, our industrial and mineral resource! To obtain which we must tame, put down and dispose of the recalcitrant among our own.

If we the Party recall our beginning in 1968, accelerated by that fool Krushchev and the Polemic International (oh, so easily distorted in vanity and chauvinist fear), then we should admit that we did not so much begin a Revolutionary Party as believe that we were joining the big battalions (Bolsheviks, Chinese, Vietnam, Cuba et al). We did not recognise that we are not in the club (have not won our spurs). We are a little, alone, and must make our revolution.

They the Thatcherites, Reagans and all vainly in decline seek rebirth, a return, a resurrection based on destruction. The USSR is the evil, the enemy to Capitalism.

To call for the disarming of the Soviet Union is to call for the destruction of the socialist bastion, the murder of the Russian people, and the decimation of the working class.

It is to have invited the people of Vietnam not to fight. That is Khrushchevism, Thatcherism, Reaganism, Capitalism.

The Second World War, while created by Capitalism, like all such wars, was not controllable by the creator. Nevertheless the devastation of the USSR and the death of millions was an enormous bonus bequeathed by Hitler to Capitalism. He paid his debt to his master and creator.

He had to attack first in the west to protect his back against treachery of his creators. All but delivering the great prize Russia for them, he kept his faith. Only in defeat by the Red Army did he betray his masters.

Only nuclear desert, scorched earth in the promised land and where we live, in return deters such madness.

But for Hitler read Thatcher/Reagan in 1985.



Internationalism Begins at Home

Communists have a proud and matchless tradition of internationalism, a tradition of which our Party has been the main guardian in this country for nearly twenty years. Our responsibilities as internationalists have never blinded us as to our supreme international duty, namely to limit and eventually destroy the power of British Imperialism. In today's world this duty requires the swiftest possible removal of the Thatcher Government and Thatcherism, which so precisely articulates the ideological viciousness of an international system in absolute decline. We must analyse and understand the role played in international matters by British governments, particularly Thatcher's, and strive to end the process. In no other way can we fulfill a duty that we have to other workers in other lands. No amount of flag-waving or badge-wearing can compensate for the lack of this simple act of solidarity.

Since 1979 and Thatcher's entry on to the world stage and particularly since Reagan's election in 1980 it has been fashionable to talk of a "new Cold War". It is important for us to understand the basic falsity of such a description. True enough that recent years have seen an intensification of anti-Sovietism as the logical concomitant of capitalism in decline, but this must be understood in the context of an era which has dominated the twentieth century. This is the era of socialism in reality, as opposed to the "spectre" talked of by Marx in the nineteenth century. This reality manifested itself in 1917 with the advent of the October Revolution and the reaction to it (in the true sense of the word reactionary) by the international bourgeoisie. The ideals that had inspired workers for decades were now transformed into practice - health, welfare and education were taken out of the realms of theory, and written into a

constitution. A bourgeois nightmare, and the fear engendered by this achievement, was summed up in a letter from the American Secretary of State to President Wilson: "The Bolsheviks appeal to a class and not to all classes of society, a class which does not have property but hopes to obtain a share by process of government rather than by individual enterprise. This is of course a direct threat to existing social order in all countries....."

Thus was born the anti-socialist offensive which has characterised the modern era. There never was anything "cold" about it as the heat from fourteen intervention armies amply demonstrated within months of the revolution. Then too was born the policy later misnamed "appeasement", where the unsuccessful interventionist powers built up and encouraged a dynamic Germany to compensate for their failure to destroy the young socialist state. Bourgeois historians have long pretended that this policy was based on weakness confronted with the strength of fascism. This is the opposite of the truth. It was in fact the weakness of fascism which worried the imperialist powers and they nurtured it as a weapon to beat the Soviets with, and which hopefully would not be turned against them. Ultimately this policy was a failure paid for in blood, not by imperialist but by workers, particularly Soviet workers.

In this fortieth anniversary year we must allow no artificial dividing line between pre-war, war, and post-war periods to obscure our understanding that the crucial events of the second world war and the disproportionate suffering of the Soviet Union were the result of this anti-Sovietism. So too was the new offensive launched after 1945 heralded by the dropping of the atom bomb on an already defeated Japan. This new offensive has primarily concerned itself with Eastern Europe, an area twice betrayed by the imperialist powers - once at Munich and later by their refusal to open a second front in 1942 and 1943. Current propaganda about reversing

Yalta is the most recent manifestation of this offensive. This anti-Soviet strategy soon broadened out from its East European base and encompassed every continent of the globe - millions of people killed in hundreds of wars, and always the same mission, the destruction of socialism and all that it stands for. The old concept of "strategic areas" has been replaced by a simpler strategy - anywhere and everywhere that health, welfare and education raise their banner then the NATO powers led by the USA will intervene. Industry too is now perceived as a threat to imperialist rule - the EEC, conceived in the 1920s from anti-Soviet motives, illustrates perfectly the link between the destruction of industry at home, and anti-Socialism abroad.

The role played by the British bourgeoisie in this process has always been one disproportionate to its strength - US imperialism has long been the economic and military powerhouse but we British workers have too often allowed British politicians to provide an ideological articulation for the anti-socialism of "appeasement" and the "Cold War". Lloyd George in 1919 with his blueprint for a resurgent Germany, Churchill in 1946 at Fulton laying the basis for the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, and, more recently, Thatcher giving direction to a stumbling Reagan and limited European leaders like Mitterand and Kohl. This encouragement for reaction abroad has been paralleled by attacks on our class at home and more and more with a diminution of our national sovereignty. We stand solidly with the great twentieth century communists - Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh - who clearly understood that national independence is a precondition of international solidarity, not an alternative to it. And just as socialism and nationalism are inter-related, so too socialism and peace.

War is endemic to imperialism; therefore those who fight for peace have to challenge the ideological base of imperialism. In this sense the NUM have become the peace

movement, for their challenge to Thatcherism strikes at the very root of her divine right of destruction whether at home or abroad. British capitalism clearly in absolute decline (increasingly an international phenomenon) wreaks destruction everywhere irrespective of national boundaries, a policy which leads directly from Bergamo to Cortonwood. No room for making things but bases for weapons of destruction. Britain turned into an unsinkable aircraft carrier for the only power ever to have used nuclear weapons, a power whose vicious hatred and fear of socialism leads inexorably to a first-strike strategy. Our friends in the peace movement must realise that mere possession of nuclear weapons is not in itself a threat to peace - indeed the threat of war has only been averted in the last forty years through the strength of Soviet weaponry.

Thus our slogan must be, peace with the Soviets, war on Thatcher. Internationalism requires this priority. We British communists do not have a blueprint for development of foreign struggles; we express our solidarity with all those who are building progressive societies or are struggling to establish them, all threatened by US imperialism and its chief accomplice Thatcher. Above all we extend this solidarity to the people of Ireland struggling for national liberation. Thatcher the destroyer of Irish patriots, the destroyer of British industry - in engineering her downfall we will be living up to the highest ideals of international solidarity, that real internationalism begins at home.





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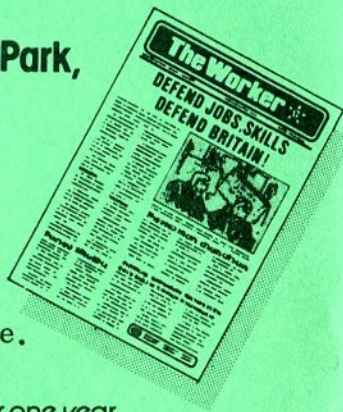
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ISBN 0-947967-19-2

Printed and published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)
155, Fortess Rd., London, NW5