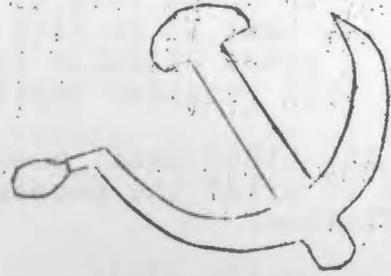


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THE CND MARCH

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament "Protest and Survive" march on October 26th was very big.

However, it was mainly middle class in appearance. There were very few union banners. Among these, NALGO predominated.

The usual Turkish pro-Soviet contingent was there plus a few Iraqis. Otherwise, immigrants, whether as organisations or individuals, were conspicuous by their absence.

A significant new addition to the ranks of English middle class protest is the Ecology Party. A whole network of shops has sprung up throughout Britain where one can pick up ecolit and anti-nuclear propaganda with one's healthy wholemeal loaf. Blending idealism with the desire to save one's own skin makes a heady mixture.

Nice people leading nice easy lives have no immediate worries. They just want to stay as they are. Faced with the increasing danger of war, they want to contract out, please. Hence the growth of CND in the past year.

60,000 is a lot of marchers. But a national rally is usually the climax, not the beginning of a campaign. There would need to be a lot more than that for the pacifist rot to have set in.

THE SLUMP AND THE CRISIS IN THE LABOUR PARTY

From 1945 to 1979, with a few short breaks, Britain relied on the following policies to prevent a return to the slump conditions of the thirties. These policies were mainly identified with Keynesian economists and the Labour Party.

- 1) Cheap money Money could generally be borrowed at low rates of interest, or at rates of interest which, if not low, were certainly

lower than the rate of inflation. If anybody had got any idea at all what to do with it, it paid to borrow money. Cheap money was a great stimulus to all kinds of development and enterprise. All this provided employment for workers.

On the other hand, cheap money meant that the Bank of England had to print the necessary notes to meet the demand. This caused inflation.

- 2) Government expenditure The Civil Service expanded. Many new hospitals, schools, roads and council homes were built.
- 3) Increasing purchasing power by subsidies and by taxation designed to redistribute incomes in favour of lower income groups. These groups tend to spend a greater proportion of what they earn and therefore keep money in circulation.
- 4) Improved social services and benefits In 1948 retirement pensions were 26/- a week. Compare that with today's pension, even allowing for inflation.
- 5) Government intervention through nationalization Nationalizing the Bank of England was essential to carry out the cheap money policy. Coal, rail freight and steel prices were kept artificially low for years to provide a service to private industry.
- 6) Aiming at an export surplus If a country exports more than it imports it keeps more workers in employment than if exports simply balance with imports. Industry was encouraged to "earn precious dollars". A Buy British policy was fostered.
- 7) Exchange control This meant that money earned in Britain had generally to be invested in Britain.
- 8) Wages and prices policies After the war there was a prolonged attempt to enforce a wage freeze. Food was heavily subsidized and many prices were controlled. Since then there have been numerous attempts to limit pay increases by various "norms"; £6 a week, 10%, etc.

These eight policies, it must be added, are a single package; this package is the only effective alternative that has been worked out to the old-fashioned economics which prevailed prior to 1930 and led to a massive slump on a world scale. By effective we mean that it carried majority support and got results. Unemployment sank to well below pre-war levels. Living standards improved all round. There were plenty of goods in the shops and the people had the money to buy them.

Even before the Conservative party won the election in 1979 several of these policies had broken down. Britain joined the Common Market. Inflation had led to a return to free collective bargaining. Bang went the export surplus, exchange control and an incomes policy.

Other policies had unexpected results. Cheap money was a boon to property speculators. Government expenditure got out of hand leading to unparalleled waste and inflation.

Cheap foreign oil and steel led to the ruthless pruning of the "unprofitable" coal, rail and steel industries. Nationalized concerns increased their prices substantially.

The Labour Party was in disarray before and after the 1979 election. The Right did not know what had hit it. The Left advocates getting out of the Common Market so that the pound can be devalued, imports can be kept out, and the economy can be stimulated by really heavy doses of cheap money and government expenditure. Groups of workers will be able to choose between free collective bargaining, comparability, incomes policy or a minimum wage, according to what will benefit them most. The Right has no coherent policies itself apart from regarding those of the Left as completely unrealistic.

The only way finally to determine whether Left Labour's policies are effective is for it to try and win support for them. Likewise Right-wing Labour will never develop new policies while it remains tied up to Left Labour.

There are thus at present no effective alternative policies to those of Mrs. Thatcher.

AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY

Marxist-Leninists, such as are left of them, realize that neither the Tories, Right-wing or Left Labour can come up with policies that will solve Britain's problems in the long-term; or, probably even in the short term either.

The Marxist-Leninist movement now has an excellent opportunity to develop a realistic viewpoint on the way forward in the British Isles.

Marxist-Leninists have had to swallow several large doses of reality in quick succession in recent years. This has caused some to retreat into their shells, others to drop out and yet others to split with their erstwhile comrades. All this is a process of sorting out. Revisionist ideas have long ago been ditched. Now is the time to get rid of the ultra-left illusions which have plagued the movement since 1967.

In one way the Marxist-Leninist movement starts at an advantage over the Labour Party. Labourites, Right and Left, are worried about what is going to happen to eleven million voters if the party splits up.

One can hardly say that there are no vested interests in the

Marxist-Leninist movement. But none of the groups are so large that there cannot be a frank exchange of opinions within and between them, aimed at developing realistic policies. And there is certainly no mass support to bother about losing.

PSST - "CHINA NOW"?

The publications of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, including its magazine "China Now", are eminently respectable. None of them would bring a blush to the cheeks of Mrs. Thatcher. That is quite as it should be. China is now effectively an ally of the West against potential Russian aggression. In addition, there is widespread interest in China for its own sake.

According to SACU's Annual Report "New Era Books handle wholesale distribution on SACU's behalf except for some London bookshops with whom we deal direct". (Publications Committee).

New Era Books is the name of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain's publication distribution service. Its main job is to distribute the RCLB's paper "Class Struggle".

Distributing ultra-left material is not easy. One has to sniff out the poorly-patronised little left bookshops whose proprietors will point mournfully to the piles of unsold "revolutionary" literature they already have on their hands. Anything lacking local appeal stands little chance of a quick sale. In addition, the sort of people who frequent left bookshops regard SACU as "bourgeois".

SACU's Publications Committee says in the Annual Report "Despite a wider general interest than ever in China, it is common experience among Friendship societies that there has been a falling-off in sales of specialized literature and books on China."

Perhaps it is time that the Friendship societies started to move out of the ultra-left ghetto.

FROM "THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNIST" JUNE/JULY 1980

"Some "Marxist-Leninists" in England say there are only two classes - those who sell their labour power and those who exploit the labour of others. This view was put forward also in Australia. It is the most utter rubbish. It has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism and it is designed to protect the privileged position of the upper section of the workers, managerial staff, intellectuals who have identified themselves with the bourgeoisie".
(Published by Communist Party of Australia. (Marxist-Leninist)).