

don't quite know what to do about Dave Cook, Pat Devine, and others (perhaps JB himself?) who fought for the alternative proposals (the matter is on record) on Inner Party Democracy in 1979, proposals which Dave Pnscott argued would liquidate the party.

Not only some of the 16% of the 1977 opposition, but even many leading comrades had difficulty in seeing quite the sharp difference between 'broad democratic alliance' and 'anti-monopoly alliance' which Bloomfield makes a test of sectarianism. For example, Dave Priscott in MT October 1981 — '. . . a different, democratic, anti-monopoly, road forward'. I note that Bloomfield's own quotation from the 1983 Congress resolution falsifies it. He stops short with 'the main enemy, the Tory government. . .'. The resolution goes on '. . . which, acting on behalf of monopoly capital. . .'. Many other leading comrades have taken the same, correct, line of treating democratic as having the same content as anti-monopoly. Indeed, if the democratic struggle isn't directed against, or hindered by, monopoly capital, just who is the main enemy?

Not only does this kind of divisive polarising seem to be consciously sought, but it is spontaneously generated by the Bloomfield-type emphasis on 'non-class issues'. In the historical development of class societies there are no issues which are not influenced, directly or indirectly, by class interests. The phrase 'not reducible to class' sounds so anti-dogmatic. But it means either: a) 'not connected *at all* with class' — in which case it is a non-Marxist, idealist position from which it would follow for example that men rape women in any and every society, and rape is ineradicable except by eradicating men; or b) 'connected with class, but not in a simple or direct way'. This is a mature Marxist position, but quite inconsistent with the concept of 'non-class' issues. No serious Marxist that I know of has ever sought to argue that women's oppression arises solely from capitalist class society, though crucial concrete forms — unequal wages, unequal access to higher forms of wage employment — can exist only in capitalist society, as can the treatment of women as bourgeois property.

The 'new'

Next, as to the so-called 'conservative' elements who have not appreciated 'the new', and have a 'narrow, go-it-alone, sectarian approach', unappreciative of the possibility of broad movements, I don't know whether to laugh or to feel insulted

by the arrogance. Already as a communist student I took part with the president of the Conservatives, (a later Prime Minister) in joint activity against Nazi Germany, and fought to build a broad alliance of 'peace-loving democracies' (ie, three major imperialist powers) with the USSR against the fascist alliance. This initiated a continuing communist tradition of building broad movements to defend democracy against the most reactionary forces of the time. Nor did those of us who had taken part in hierarchical organisations called armies ever confuse democratic forms with democratic content and aims. So that alibi, tjjat some of us are afraid of broad alliances, or new social movements, is without basis.

As an historian, Jon Bloomfield should, indeed must, know just how much 'new thinking', how much replacement of the working class by 'new revolutionary forces' has had to be combatted by our own and other communist parties during his own lifetime. His failure to refer at all to opportunist trends can therefore only be deliberate. Let me remind him.

In 1956-7 (in the wake of the 20th Congress and Hungary, perhaps more understandable) the 'bureaucratic, sectarian' leadership of Pollitt, Gollan, McLennan, Matthews *et al* was to be replaced by 'new thinking' of the critical comrades, and democratic centralism to be abolished. This was followed in the early 60s by the leading role, on a world scale, of the new revolutionary forces, the peasantry, or that of the lumpen proletariat. In the late 60s it was student power, and black power, replacing the corrupt and decadent industrial proletariat. It was to combat these tendencies that Jack Woddis wrote his *New Theories of Revolution*, exploring their social roots, their impatience, their individualist anarchism, their contempt for working class discipline. In the mid and late 1970s there was the 'new thinking' that led to class collaboration over industrial democracy and the social contract, confusing the working class, and retrading the exploitation of the gains made from earlier shifts to the left. In 1979 came the new revisionist attempts to liquidate democratic centralism.

The parade of the word 'new' neither impresses nor intimidates. It has so often meant the passing novelty or fashionable trend adopted by unstable ideological positions.

The Communist Party does not need to find a 'new identity'. It has long had an identity of developing continuity reflected since 1951 in the *British Road to Socialism*.

RON BELLAMY Trends in the CP

I have been asked to comment on Jon Bloomfield's April 1984 article 'Communists in search of an identity'. I do so with reservations about its status, since he is not a member of the elected national CP leadership. However, with one fifth of his space, I am forced to limit my disagreements to a single issue, 'trends in the Communist Party'.

What Jon Bloomfield ignores, perhaps as inconvenient, is that the 'opposition' to the BRS at the 1977 Congress was about one sixth of the delegates, whereas at the 1983 Congress the 'opposition' to the majority decisions had risen to 40%. Has a quarter of the party suddenly moved from pro-BRS to anti-BRS positions? His so-called second trend of oppositionists are 'a combination of some who *originally opposed* the 1977 BRS with conservative elements who *nominally supported it*' (Italics added RB). Since all these must have *voted for* the BRS in 1977, the assertion that they '*originally opposed it*' is simply inconsistent with the 1977 voting figures and is therefore untrue. '*Nominally supported*' is a category of Bloomfield's imagination. He means they voted for the BRS. If so, the other remark is simply a smear.

But in any event, even supposing they originally opposed, I hope that Bloomfield will allow what is consistent with our rules and principles, namely that they reserved their opinions, or changed them, or fought for them in legitimate ways. Otherwise, I