

Communist Capers

Following a period of internal strife, the hard Left of the British Communist Party headed off into exile after the expulsion of their leaders in 1985. Their hope remained, though, that the party could be regained for traditional marxism-leninism, sectarian class politics and unadulterated pro-Sovietism. To create the basis for such an about-turn the exiled communists set up the Communist Campaign Group (CCG).

At this autumn's Communist Party congress the CCG's hopes of regaining some influence within the party were finally dashed, and it has now turned its attention to 're-establishing' the Communist Party. The breakaway party's most precious assets will be a daily paper - the *Morning Star* - and a well-placed group of activists in the trade union movement. But they face enormous problems.

The *Morning Star* is now inextricably linked with a tiny faction of a small movement and its UK sales continue to plummet. The CCG's activists remain divided too. Many who are implacably opposed to the present direction of the Communist Party are nonetheless fearful of what they see as a political wilderness outside their old party.

An important factor will be the attitude of the Soviet Union. A romantic attachment to the USSR has effectively determined the shape of the communist hard Left. In the pre-Gorbachev days a breakaway could have been engineered with a good chance of Soviet support. But these are the days of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

Nevertheless the USSR continues to take some 12,000 daily copies of the *Morning Star*. By disowning the minority split, the Soviets would not only deliver a mortal blow to the CCG's romantic Sovietism, but also to their financial solvency. The attitude of the Soviets to this situation will be an immediate test of *perestroika* for the British Communist Party. •

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