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UK: Paul Mason is wrong, but less wrong than Nick Wright

Wednesday 26 October 2022, by [DENHAM Jim](#) (Date first published: 19 October 2022).

Nick Wright is a frequent contributor to the *Morning Star* and prominent member of the Communist Party of Britain. Back in the 1980's, he was one of the unreconstructed Stalinists grouped around the *Straight Left* newspaper in opposition to the then leadership of the Communist Party. The Straight Left people reckoned the CP had gone soft ("revisionist"), distanced itself from the Soviet Union and other "socialist" countries, while at home it was paying insufficient attention to workplace and union organisation. Things would get even worse, as the openly reformist Eurocommunists gained control of the party and then dissolved it.

Since then, the "revisionists" and Eurocommunists have mainly disappeared, the CP has been re-established (as the Communist Party of Britain) and former Straight Left-ists like Nick Wright and Andrew Murray are happily back in the party (Murray after a brief sojourn in Labour so that he could join Jeremy Corbyn's inner circle).

But the battle against "revisionism" continues and the ever-vigilant Wright has identified a new enemy: Paul Mason. In a *Morning Star* article (13 October) taking up most of a centre-page spread and denouncing a *New Statesman* [article](#) by Mason, Comrade Wright denounces him for "consigning to invisibility all those uncomfortably proletarian elements — the actual working class in its complexity and movement — ... who refuse to fit into Mason's new Nato-friendly constellation of EU-enamoured liberals."

We'll come on the stuff about Nato and the EU in a moment, but first let's deal with the claim that Mason (an ex-Trotskyist who has undoubtedly moved rightwards and has massive illusions in Starmer) now — unlike the proletarian champion Wright — ignores "the actual working class".

Here is what Mason wrote (in the *New European*) in June: "... it's essential to support the strikes. They are one way — if not the only way — to redress the fundamental sickness facing the economy... As you hear the mouldy old rhetoric come out — about union bullies, dinosaurs and barons — remember: almost everything workers have, from the time-limited working day to anti-harassment rules to the very existence of the weekend, was won by doing what those teachers, railway workers and baggage handlers are about to do."

In other words, what Wright says about Mason "consigning to invisibility" the "uncomfortably proletarian elements" is simply rubbish — and, given that Wright can read and is not unintelligent, deliberately dishonest rubbish.

Wright's evident hatred of Mason has nothing to do with the proletariat — it's about Europe (Wright's hostility to the EU is obsessive, even by the standards of the CPB and *Morning Star*) and about Ukraine.

The *Morning Star* is formally opposed to Russia's invasion, but Wright is among many contributors who make little secret of where their sympathies lie. In an article published on 24 March, Wright gloated that anyone joining the military defence of Ukraine would "encounter a trained military force [i.e. the Russians] equipped with armour, superior communications and effective air support ... this cause is attractive principally to an international alliance of the foolish and fascist."

By 9 April, he was asking, in obvious disappointment, "why the Russians did not deploy their undoubted capacity to take out Ukraine's air defences and deny the Ukrainian airforce the capacity to intervene? And despite the highly visible material damage why are civilian casualties so low?"

That tells you all you need to know about Wright's denunciation of Mason: little or nothing to do with Mason's rightward drift, or his illusions in Starmer or, indeed, Nato: it's because Mason is pro-European and backs Ukraine, whereas Wright is a Stalinist isolationist who hates the EU and has (shall we say) a lot of sympathy for Putin when it comes to Ukraine.

Jim Denham

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