

# Workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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**THE REAL DOLE  
QUEUE: 3.6 MILLION**

**WORST RECESSION  
FOR 60 YEARS**

**THE TORIES** have launched their long awaited "red scare" against the Labour Party. Virtually the whole Tory press has joined in the exposure of "Kinnock's Kremlin Connection". Helped by their new friend, Boris Yeltsin, Tory journalists have dug up files of conversations between Labour leaders and Soviet ambassadors.

The hypocrisy is breathtaking. When Margaret Thatcher declared she could "do business" with Gorbachev she was acclaimed as a great stateswoman. Because Labour leaders met Soviet government representatives they are being paraded as the next best thing to KGB agents.

Unfortunately for us, branding Kinnock as any kind of "red" is about as accurate as calling the *Sun* a quality newspaper. Kinnock has spent the last ten years going out of his way to prove he is a trustworthy candidate for running British capitalism.

The problem is that, in the process, Kinnock is undermining the very basis of the Labour election victory he so badly wants.

### Confused

As the opinion polls show, Labour's confused and inept tax proposals have allowed the Tories back into a narrow lead. After thirteen years of misrule, with real unemployment standing at 3,647,000 and growing according to Unemployment Unit calculations, with the economy in recession and public services in ruins, it is a scandal that Kinnock is unable to muster more than 40% in the polls.

And, as Tory pundits gleefully point out, these polls cannot measure the thousands of Labour votes lost from the register due to poll tax non-registration, or the droves of white South Africans entitled to vote in the coming elections.

The simple reason for this sorry state of affairs is Labour's refusal to spell out an alternative to Tory misery.

The Tories have spent the last 13 years cutting taxes for the rich and piling them on to the poor. That is what reducing income tax and raising VAT means.

In their 10 March budget it is likely they will cut income tax further, raise public spending and challenge Labour on how it is to

# Tories must be beaten



Wipe the smile off Major's face

pay for any further improvements in services.

It is a clever tactic. The Tories were able to buy off a whole section of better-paid workers from the proceeds of privatising state owned monopolies. Labour will not carry on the privatisation programme. So where will the money come from to improve housing, health, education, transport and kick-start the industrial recovery Labour promises?

Labour's answer to this problem demonstrates the perpetual dilemma of a reformist party which will not attack the wealth and power of the bosses.

There is a ready source of all the money needed to fund a massive programme of improvements in services, housing, training and job creation: the profits of the

bosses.

The de-nationalised industries alone—Telecom, Electricity, Water etc—are raking in billions of pounds in profits. The giant multinationals are squeezing billions more every year from the labour of the working class.

Nationalisation, under workers' control, of the biggest monopolies and the banks, coupled with a steep profit tax and income tax for the rich would provide enough money to fund not only recovery and prosperity for British workers but to send millions of pounds to the needy of the third world.

But because it has promised in advance not to harm a hair on the head of the capitalists, Labour has to look somewhere else to scrape together the money for

its £35 billion worth of public spending promises.

Characteristically it has decided to tax the middle class and skilled workers. Everybody earning over £20,280 a year will see their National Insurance contributions rise. Whilst this salary is way out of reach of the vast majority of workers it is not only bosses who earn this kind of money. Skilled workers and some "professional" clerical workers earn this much. So do sections of the middle class which Labour has to win to gain a majority in parliament.

By refusing to attack the bosses, and instead attacking the middle class, Labour has handed the Tories an important electoral weapon.

No one should underestimate the devastation the Tories will wreak if they are given a fourth term:

- under their tax plans the rich will carry on getting richer and the poor will get poorer
- the unions will be attacked again, with every Colonel Blimp who has money for the solicitors' fees able to sue striking workers
- the majority of working class children will be guaranteed a second class education in the new two-tier system. Two thousand schools are lining up to opt out as grammar schools
- the two tier NHS will grow as well, with hundreds more hospitals opting out of the system, and local doctors under pressure to do the same
- services will continue to disintegrate with the new Tory council tax starving local government of its resources
- the racist Asylum Bill will go

through, sentencing countless refugees to deportation and massively increasing the powers of the racist state

In short there will be five more years of plenty for the Tory gents and city slickers and five more years of misery for us.

The Labour left, who told us they were going to transform the party into a vehicle for socialist change, stand by helpless while Kinnock threatens to squander the chance to get the Tories out.

Some of them, like Ken Livingstone are clearly content to bide their time for a leadership bid after it all goes wrong. Others sink away into oblivion, having presided over the Tory cuts in local government and the poll tax, massively damaging Labour's standing amongst inner-city workers.

### Campaign

But the situation is not hopeless. Labour supporters all over Britain should get active to campaign for a Labour victory. Not with the methods of the staged rally and poster campaign favoured by the Labour leaders, but through getting organised at work, in the colleges, on the estates.

Everywhere there should be meetings organised to campaign for a Labour victory. Workers should put Labour candidates on the spot, demanding they spell out what they are going to do about the attack on jobs, services, wages and conditions. We should use these meetings and the coming election campaign to get organised to fight for what we need, whoever wins. ■



# Judge gives "nagged" men licence to kill



## Stop violence against women!

**I**N JANUARY Bisla Rajinder Singh, a shop owner from Kent who strangled his wife, walked free from the Old Bailey. The judge said that he had suffered enough from his "nagging" wife and should not be jailed.

Singh was given an 18 month sentence suspended for a year. The judge told him that he had borne his wife's shouting and swearing "better probably than most people would have done until finally your self-control snapped".

The judge also commented that "I do not see that sending you to prison is going to do you any good and, more importantly, is going to do your children any good". On this at least he may have been right.

But compare this case to the way the law treats women.

### Abuse

Sara Thornton suffered 14 years of torment, physical abuse and threats of murder from her husband. She was sentenced to life for killing him.

Kiranjit Ahluwalia and Amelia Rossiter also received life sentences for killing violent husbands. In court their years of physical and psychological torture counted for nothing. Putting them in jail for years will do neither them nor their children any good either. But women are systematically discriminated against in the legal system.

The Singh judgement was not an isolated case. Two days after Sara Thornton's appeal against her sentence was turned down, Joseph McGrail was given a two year suspended sentence for killing his alcoholic wife. The judge commented: "that woman would have tried the patience of a saint".

Labour MP Jack Ashley has called for the Lord Chancellor to examine these "crazy, contradictory sentences". Other legal reformers argue for a change in the law to allow years of domestic violence to constitute grounds for provocation. "Provocation" can be grounds for reducing a charge of murder to manslaughter. At present this can only relate to something that has just happened. So two hours of "nagging" counts as provocation. But ten years of violence does not.

A change in the law would be important, but it would not alter

BY CLARE ROBERTS

the fact that millions of women suffer violence in their homes.

- Twenty per cent of all violent incidents reported to the police are domestic, but that is a gross underestimate as the majority of incidents are never reported.
- The Metropolitan Police estimate 750,000 cases of domestic violence a year in London. In 90% of divorce cases brought by women physical abuse is a factor.
- Seventy per cent of wives who petition for divorce have suffered "serious brutality".
- Home Office figures from 1972-82 show that the largest single category of murders were those committed against a partner, with women being 80% of the victims.
- Sixty per cent of all female murder victims are killed by their husband or male lover.

These limited statistics only reflect physical violence. They do not include all the emotional and sexual abuse which women suffer. This includes being constantly put down,

### Seventy per cent of wives who petition for divorce have suffered "serious brutality"

being told you are useless or that you nag. It includes being forcibly imprisoned in the house, being kept short of money, as well as being slapped, punched, kicked, strangled, burnt, raped or beaten.

The double standard of the judiciary towards sentencing men and women for domestic violence is confirmed by the facts on convictions. Forty per cent of women who kill their husbands receive life sentences yet only 25% men who kill their wives do.

This discrimination against women is no accident. It reflects their legal and social position under capitalism not just the outdated bigotry of a few judges.

Society regards women first and foremost as mothers, wives and daughters. They are brought up, conditioned, to maintain the family, care for its members and children. Women are constantly undervalued economically. They are systematically low paid and de-

pendent on their husbands or partners. Socially they are regarded as second class citizens.

The sexuality and labour of women are presented as naturally at the disposal of men. Until this year the right of husbands to rape their wives without fear of prosecution was enshrined in law.

This reflects the hypocritical dual standard of morality under capitalism—women's bodies and their sexuality are not for the expression of their own wishes and personalities but are objects of men's pleasure. The church, education system, and advertising industry all churn out images and ideas to show men that their superiority is inevitable and convince women that they must submit to this.

This lack of economic independence, this responsibility for domestic labour, this ideology of women's inferiority is why Marxists say women are oppressed.

Domestic violence and rape are just a part, but an integral part, of women's oppression.

That is not to say that all women suffer domestic violence, nor that "all men are rapists". But the tol-

eration of such violence is not surprising in a situation where women are regarded as objects for the production of children and for sexual gratification.

The recent outcry from sections of the media against the legal inequality of treatment for women indicates a growing acceptance by sections of the ruling class that such blatant discrimination must be ended. But a change in the law would not actually tackle the root of the problem, which is the nature and role of the family in capitalist society.

To many people the family is the only refuge in a hostile and unpleasant world. But the family is also the social institution on which women's oppression is founded.

As long as the early years of child care, the task of feeding and clothing people, looking after the sick and elderly take place as private tasks in the home, women will be oppressed. This work is performed

unpaid, and for most women it comes on top of a day's work in a factory, office or shop. And it is essential to the profit system. Without women's domestic labour in the family the whole system would break down.

That is why, whilst capitalism can grant legal reforms for women, it can never free them from the drudgery, boredom and often violence of family life.

### Independence

One of the common questions asked about women in violent relationships is: why don't these women leave?

The answer is that economically they have few alternatives but to stay. Since the 1970s sections of the media have promoted the idea of independent women. This is due largely to the bosses' need to draw women into the workforce because of a declining number of young workers. But the reality for thousands of women is still one of extreme dependence.

Women have been forced by cuts in services to take an ever greater responsibility for caring for children and other dependents. Most women who work remain low paid compared to men. Single women with children find it particularly difficult to get work due to their domestic responsibilities, and often have to take part-time low paid jobs. Tory policies have made it increasingly difficult for women and children suffering from violence to escape. It is almost impossible to get housing in the Tories' "home-owning democracy". Council house building has virtually ceased. Women who leave violent men are often told they have made themselves "intentionally homeless".

Women's refuges have been established and provide a temporary respite for a minority of women. But these have now been cut back from 400 in 1979 to about 200 today. A recent Women's Aid Federation survey showed that about six thousand women had been given refuge in 1990-91.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. In Scotland alone, Scottish Women's Aid estimated that last year they turned away 10-15,000 women who applied for places because of lack of cash. BBC Scotland's "Focal

Point" (9.1.92) claimed that fifty Scottish women walk out of violent homes every night. In Manchester there are four women's refuges. Each can accommodate about eight families and they are always full. This year they all suffered a 5% cut in their city council grant.

### Separatism

Women's oppression, including domestic violence, is a class question.

Radical feminists blame "patriarchy" and the violence inherent in men. They argue that women have to organise separately and to live separately to avoid the threat of violence from men and the state. Most feminists now reject the most extreme separatist arguments, but they still consider that it is men and patriarchy rather than capitalism and the family which are the enemy.

But whether feminists are radical, socialist or even liberal, they share the same approach to fighting against domestic violence. They demand legal reforms and argue for women's refuges, support centres and counselling. They argue for improved access to housing for women. All of these are correct, but they are not enough. We have to fight the fundamental causes of women's economic and social oppression, the existence of the family in which all women are subordinated.

We have to fight for the complete socialisation of domestic labour, progressively freeing women from the burden of their role in the family and allowing them to lead fully independent lives. The only way to achieve this is the destruction of the profit system which perpetuates women's oppression in the family.

That is why the campaign against domestic violence cannot be separated from the general campaign for women's liberation. It has to take up the issues of low pay, of jobs, of equal conditions of employment for part-time workers and of equal opportunities in education and at work. That means building a campaign in the trade unions, the workplaces and on the estates.

Women will not be able to defeat domestic violence, and the capitalist system which perpetuates it,

International Women's Day  
Conference  
Campaign Against  
Domestic Violence  
(Free Sara Thornton Campaign)

Sat 7 March 11 am to 5 pm  
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without taking the arguments to male workers. The unions must take up a campaign against domestic violence in which men are forced to confront the issues, to look at their own sexism and abusive behaviour towards women. They should be encouraged to discuss these issues openly, with women and men in the labour movement.

At the same time the unions should fight for women's right to self-defence, the right to carry defensive weapons, and should provide training and advice to cope with violent assaults. There must be no toleration within the labour movement of men who are violent towards women.

We need a mass movement of working class women to defeat oppression on all fronts: in the unions and workplaces, in the courts and legal system and in the home. ■



# Troops out now!

"I HEAR people saying, 'Troops out of Ireland'. It's like 'Troops out of Aden'. We need to make a positive decision now about ending the war in Northern Ireland, otherwise it will go on for another twenty years and another twenty years. If that involved withdrawing the troops, then yes, take the troops out."

This is not the voice of a socialist, a republican, or any other opponent of British rule in Northern Ireland.

It is the voice of Lieutenant-Colonel Derek Wilford, former commanding officer of the paratroops who shot dead 14 unarmed civil rights marchers on the streets of Derry twenty years ago.

His comments, broadcast by the BBC on 28 January, came after the total failure of the peace talks initiative of Tory Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Brooke.

British imperialism is incapable of finding a solution to the conflict in the Six Counties. Its trusted former operatives are among those despairing that it ever can or will.

The government's entire strategy in the six years since the Anglo-Irish Accord has been unsuccessful at stabilising the situation. Cross-border collaboration has not prevented the IRA from conducting guerilla operations, and the republicans retain significant support in the North. The Unionist parties have failed in their objective of breaking the Accord. But this has not given rise to any visible or substantial movement among loyalists for a more conciliatory or pragmatic approach towards a negotiated imperialist "solution" on terms which Westminster might be prepared to sponsor. The failure of the Brooke talks is only the most recent evidence of this.

The only alternatives for imperialism are to launch a further repressive assault aimed at the destruction of the nationalist resistance, or to contain the conflict at current levels. The latter is no solution at all.

The former solution is being openly discussed by some within the military, as well as by Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party. Paisley is demanding the reintroduction of the death penalty, ID cards, curfews (in nationalist areas only), internment without trial of suspected republican activists and IRA volunteers and the banning of Sinn Féin.

At present it seems unlikely that the hardline

option will be adopted. But in a future hung parliament, requiring a deal between a minority British party and the Unionists, both Labour and the Tories are capable of giving their support to "one big push" by the security forces in order to keep the Unionists in a coalition.

Meanwhile violence, murder and repression continue to be meted out to opponents of British occupation and partition. In the pre-Christmas period a spate of vicious sectarian killings by pro-British loyalist terror gangs left two men dead and an eight year old boy critically ill. Selected at random by the Ulster Freedom Fighters, their sole "crime" was to belong to Belfast's nationalist community.

Nor is it the case that these sectarian killings are, or have been, merely the work of illegal loyalist terrorists. The recent prosecution of Brian Nelson threatened to expose to the public eye the long and sordid history of collaboration between loyalist death squads and the security forces.

In the meantime resistance to British rule continues unbroken. The Provisional IRA's ability to mount guerilla actions has been demonstrated in a bombing campaign in Britain during December, disrupting rail and tube transport in London, mounting their second assault on Whitehall within a year, and bomb attacks in Manchester and Blackpool.

Workers Power does not believe that such bombing campaigns are the correct strategy. They have not forced Britain out of Ireland and will not do so in the future.

But, as internationalists in Britain, our main aim must be to fight for real solidarity from British workers with those who are struggling to remove the troops. British workers and the IRA have a common enemy in the bosses' state. As the miners' strike of 1984-85 showed, Ireland is a laboratory for repressive techniques which are then unleashed on British workers.

The Northern Ireland state was an artificial creation of British imperialism. It was consciously designed, as with so many other British-drawn borders, to divide and rule. It provides a built-in loyalist majority who identify with British rule because it maintains their marginal but significant privileges.

The border has no historical justification: it vio-

## EDITORIAL

lates the desire of the majority of the Irish nation for independence. It imprisons the minority of Northern nationalists in a state which treats them as second class citizens in jobs, housing and rights. That is why the IRA's war against the forces who maintain partition is just. While we may criticise the IRA's targets, and the entire guerillaist strategy, we do so from the standpoint not of chauvinist outrage but of revolutionary expediency. Wrong tactics do not alter the character of the war. Our support for the IRA is therefore unconditional.

As Trotskyists we believe that the only way to unite Ireland and defeat British rule is through the mass political struggle of the whole Irish working class, backed by the broadest possible solidarity from British workers. Only such a movement, linking national, democratic and anti-capitalist demands, could create the scale of resistance needed to drive the troops out. Only an anti-capitalist, anti-clerical movement could demonstrate to protestant workers that their interests lie not with the Orange bosses but with their fellow workers in the nationalist areas and the South.

For this reason we believe that the Teebane ambush, in which the IRA killed eight construction workers engaged in re-fortification of a British military installation in Omagh, was a serious mistake that will set back the struggle for national liberation.

The short-term military advantage attained by the disruption of re-fortification works is outweighed by the additional obstacle placed between the anti-imperialist movement and workers.

Even if it were to prevent civilians entirely from carrying out such tasks, this would ultimately serve only to increase the number of soldiers sent to the North, not to develop a strategy to get them out.

At a time when Britain manifestly has no answers to the continuing crisis, when more and more establishment and military figures are prepared to admit this, the republican movement's failure to focus on mass action, its adoption of tactics which cut across mass action, shows the bankruptcy of their strategy and the crying need for a revolutionary workers' party in Ireland, North and South. ■

IWG on Labour/ Workers Party unity manoeuvres - pg 13

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## where we stand

WORKERS POWER is a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the documents of the first four congresses of the Third (Communist) International and on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Capitalism is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human need.

Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organised into workers' councils and workers' militia can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

The Labour Party is not a socialist party. It is a bourgeois workers' party—bourgeois in its politics and its practice, but based on the working class via the trade unions and supported by the mass of workers at the polls. We are for the building of a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

In the trade unions we fight for a rank and file movement to oust the reformist bureaucrats, to democratise the unions and win them to a revolutionary action programme based on a system of transitional demands which serve as a bridge between today's struggles and the socialist revolution. Central to this is the fight for workers' control of production.

We are for the building of fighting organisations of the working class—factory committees, industrial unions councils of action, and workers' defence organisations.

The first victorious working class revolution, the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, established a workers' state. But Stalin and the bureaucracy destroyed workers' democracy and set about the reactionary and utopian project of building "socialism in one country". In the USSR, and the other degenerate workers' states that were established from above, capitalism was destroyed but the bureaucracy excluded the working class from power, blocking the road to democratic planning and socialism. The corrupt, parasitic bureaucratic caste has led these states to crisis and destruction. We are for the smashing of bureaucratic tyranny through proletarian political revolution and the establishment of workers' democracy. We oppose the restoration of capitalism and recognise that only

workers' revolution can defend the post-capitalist property relations. In times of war we unconditionally defend workers' states against imperialism.

Internationally Stalinist Communist Parties have consistently betrayed the working class. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) and their stages theory of revolution have inflicted terrible defeats on the working class world-wide. These parties are reformist and their influence in the workers' movement must be defeated.

We fight against the oppression that capitalist society inflicts on people because of their race, age, sex, or sexual orientation. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of all of the oppressed. We fight racism and fascism. We oppose all immigration controls. We fight for labour movement support for black self-defence against racist and state attacks. We are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

We support the struggles of oppressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. We unconditionally support the Irish Republicans fighting to drive British troops out of Ireland. We politically oppose the nationalists (bourgeois and petit bourgeois) who lead the struggles of the oppressed nations. To their strategy we counterpose the strategy of permanent revolution, that is the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle by the working class with a programme of socialist revolution and internationalism.

In conflicts between imperialist countries and semi-colonial countries, we are for the defeat of "our own" army and the victory of the country oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. We fight imperialist war not with pacifist pleas but with militant class struggle methods including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. The last revolutionary International (Fourth) collapsed in the years 1948-51.

The LRCI is pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International and to refound a Leninist Trotskyist International and build a new world party of socialist revolution. We combine the struggle for a re-elaborated transitional programme with active involvement in the struggles of the working class—fighting for revolutionary leadership. If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism; if you are an internationalist—join us!

## LETTER

# Cardiff 3

Dear Workers Power,

In your January edition you carried a short article on "Free the Cardiff Three", correctly asking for support for a campaign to free the three men framed for the murder of Lynette White.

The article draws attention to the fraudulent nature of the convictions as "the jury relied on often contradictory evidence given by two prostitutes, a convicted armed robber and a prison supergrass".

It is unfortunate, to say the least, that there is an implication being drawn here that prostitutes are liars and inherently untrustworthy.

OK, prostitutes are quite likely to be vulnerable to threats by the police and others to be forced to lie, but that is a different issue.

Also its dodgy to term someone "a convicted armed robber" because as we all know there have been plenty of "convictions" by the British state for their own ends that are completely wrong.

By all means let's support the Cardiff Three Campaign, but don't let's imply that if the witnesses had all been fine upstanding peo-

ple i.e. not prostitutes or convicts, then the trial would have been "fair".

Yours G Doyle, Leicester

We reply:

The article in no way intended to imply that prostitutes are inherently dishonest or condemnable. The point was that all these wit-

nesses were people who the police could lean on to give a false statement.

Prostitutes in Cardiff, as elsewhere, suffer continual harassment and humiliation at the hands of the police and courts. The irony of the Lynette White case was that the state only shed false tears for her after her brutal murder.

The article in no way suggested that, had the Cardiff Three been convicted by "the evidence of fine upstanding people" it would have been fair. It simply intended to point out the hypocrisy of the "fine upstanding" legal system which draws its pliant prosecution witnesses from the same stratum of society that it systematically victimises. ■

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## MARXISTS AND ELECTIONS

*How can you possibly vote Labour? That is the question increasingly heard from socialist activists disillusioned by the defeat of the Labour left and the resistible rise of Neil Kinnock. Richard Brenner explains why and how revolutionaries use the tactic of critical support for Labour in elections.*

**F**ACED WITH parliamentary elections in democratic capitalist countries revolutionaries, where it is practically possible, stand candidates on communist policies. An election campaign (and the gain of any parliamentary seats) provide a platform from which to conduct the most widespread propaganda possible against the profit system and for socialism.

We do not seek to use parliament to transform society. The parliamentary road to socialism is an illusion, peddled by reformists in order to divert the working class from a struggle for the seizure of political power.

Real power in capitalist Britain does not rest in the ornate chambers and committee rooms of Westminster but in the boardrooms, in the courts, the corridors of Whitehall, the offices of the chief constables and the headquarters of the armed forces.

To bring about a genuine transformation of society in the interest of the workers, this state apparatus needs to be smashed and replaced by a workers' state based on workers' councils and a workers' militia: a state which for the overwhelming majority would be infinitely more democratic than anything capitalism can offer, and which for the minority of exploiters would be a merciless dictatorship.

### Fight

The formation of such a state will need a violent revolution to defeat the ruling class. The reason for this is not that revolutionaries are blood-thirsty maniacs who want violence for its own sake. It is because our capitalist rulers won't give up their wealth and power without a fight.

In the miners' and printers' strikes of the 1980s they deployed ruthless riot police to smash workers fighting to save their jobs. Imagine the scale of violence they will use to smash workers fighting to destroy the whole capitalist system.

Short of this all-out struggle for power revolutionary communists use every opportunity provided by capitalist society to spread the anti-capitalist message. Elections are one such opportunity. The number of votes won in a communist election campaign is an important indicator of support for revolutionary ideas. But winning votes is not the main purpose of the campaign. As Lenin, the leader of the Russian Revolution, explained:

"... the Communist parties must issue their slogans; true proletarians, with the help of the unorganised and downtrodden poor, should distribute leaflets, canvass workers' houses and cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages... they should go into the public houses, penetrate into unions, societies and chance gatherings of the common people, and speak to the people, not in learned (or very parliamentary) language; they should not at all strive to 'get seats' in parliament, but should everywhere try to get people to think, and draw the masses into struggle..."

### Minority

In Britain today, our organisation represents only a small minority of the most advanced workers and socialist militants. We would be unable, because of our small size, to conduct the range of agitation that a communist election campaign demands, even in one constituency.

We have no intention of apeing the antics of certain small sects (e.g. the RCP and the Leninist) whose electoral excursions serve to reveal nothing to the mass of the



# Put Labour to the test!

workers save for the utter isolation and self-delusion of the organisation concerned.

Instead we are obliged to take account of the existence of that party in which the broad mass of workers express deep illusions: the Labour Party. Labour was originally established by the trade union bureaucracy and retains the affiliation of the biggest battalions of the organised union movement.

The Labour Party has hundreds of thousands of individual members, the vast majority of whom are manual and clerical workers. In the coming general election millions of working class people will vote Labour. These are the organic links with the working class that make the Labour Party a workers' party.

But the Labour Party's policies are thoroughly capitalist. The Labour Party will always defend the bosses' system against the interests of the workers. It is a workers' party that serves the bosses. This contradiction determines how revolutionaries relate to Labour in elections.

Millions of workers have illusions in Labour. Many of them believe that the party will legislate to provide them with a better life—that it will carry through reforms to

ameliorate the ravages of the profit system. They believe that Labour will offset the worst of the recession by better protecting jobs and employment rights.

In the sphere of taxation and local government finance most workers look to Labour to ensure that the poorer and more vulnerable sections of society will get a fairer deal. They believe that a Labour government will improve the lot of the low paid. They believe that Labour will expand and improve public services such as transport and education and that it will stop the decline of the NHS. After 13 years of Tory government, millions of workers who have been hammered, believe at the very least that the attacks will stop.

### Unsocialist

Under Kinnock, the Labour Party has never been so categorically unsocialist when in opposition. Some sections of workers and youth have seen the realities of Labour in local government: vicious cuts in services, imposition of the poll tax and the use of Tory laws against workers who try to resist either. They have seen the lack of even empty promises from the Labour shadow ministers, and they no

longer have illusions that Labour in government would be in their interests.

But these workers and youth are, unfortunately, a small minority. They must not rest content with the fact that they have seen through Labour's false promises. Unless they find a way to relate to the millions of workers who retain profound illusions in Labour they will remain a tiny minority—and Labour with its hold on the mass of workers, will remain an obstacle to any transformation of society.

Socialists should not peddle the notion that Labour in office can be forced to overthrow capitalism, or that it is possible through winning a Labour majority in parliament to establish a "Socialist Labour Government". This would be to reinforce and deepen illusions in the parliamentary road to socialism and in the potential of the Labour Party to act in the interests of the working class. Instead we need to break illusions in Labour.

This is more than just a literary or propaganda task. Deep seated ideas cannot just be pushed out of peoples' heads, as if the entire working class could be assembled in a single schoolroom and convinced to abandon their existing beliefs through the power of reason and

argument alone. The trust that millions feel towards the Labour Party is in part a reflection of the commitment of British workers to the system of capitalist democracy. Only through experience can workers see that this system, and the Labour Party that defends it, is not in their interests.

The living experience of the masses of the British workers in struggle will be the key to overcoming the stranglehold of Labourite reformism.

That is why in the 1992 election Workers Power will argue within the working class movement to put the maximum pressure on a Labour government to take concrete steps in the interests of the working class. We will argue for what the working class needs, not what the bosses think they can afford.

Any reform we can win is welcome, but we will always explain that as long as capitalism is not directly challenged such reforms will always be temporary. For our organisation alone to raise such demands would have little effect. But if a real fight were launched in the trade unions, Labour Party wards and constituencies and throughout working class communities in Britain the effect could be enormous.

### Demand

For example, the broadest possible pressure needs to be brought to bear by British workers for Labour to abide by its pledge to introduce a national minimum wage, which should be index linked to inflation. We should demand that this party, which relies on workers' votes, should unconditionally abolish every vestige of the anti-union laws which have been used to break resistance to closures and sackings throughout the 1980s.

We should aim to raise the demand on Labour voting estates the length and breadth of Britain for a complete amnesty for all poll tax non-payers, and for a tax on the wealth of the super-rich instead of raising revenue from workers through VAT, council tax and taxes on workers' income.

We know that however many reforms workers pressurise Labour to grant, whenever the interests of capitalism are under serious attack a Labour government will always attack workers. We want the working class to understand this too. We want to kick the Tories out and put Labour to the test of office.

That is why, with only a few exceptions (see opposite), we will be calling and campaigning for a vote for Labour in the coming election. It is why coming issues of Workers Power will argue for a series of working class demands on any future Labour government, demands that must be taken up and fought for by the working class movement as a whole.

### Pro-capitalist

In this way we can show that the interests of Labour's supporters are in no way represented by Labour. Its pro-capitalist policies can be revealed in practice to wider sections of the class as directly antagonistic to their struggles and aspirations.

This election provides us with the opportunity to get the Tories out of office after 13 long years of vicious anti-working class policies. It gives us the chance to take an important joint step with the mass of British workers by voting Labour into office and putting them to the test in the full view of the working class. In this way we will seek to break illusions in Labour and create the conditions for a real broadening of support for revolutionary politics. ■



## SCOTLAND

# Separation no answer

ENGLAND HAS suddenly discovered Scotland. The media is awash with articles about devolution, Scottish Assemblies, constitutional conventions, and even the break up of Britain. Opinion polls showing the growth of separatist sentiments amongst the Scots sent the ruling class into a panic at the end of last month. One poll showed that 51% thought they would be better off in an independent Scotland, with 40% willing to support a fully independent Scotland.

The reasons for this desire to be rid of "rule from Westminster" are not hard to find. Support for the Tories has collapsed in Scotland, where they cling to a mere nine out of 72 MPs. Yet Scotland continues to feel the brunt of Tory policies. It was the test bed for the Poll Tax and it was here that resistance to its implementation was greatest. Consistently high unemployment and the closure of many of Scotland's traditional industries, most recently the Ravenscraig steel works, has fuelled hatred of the "English" Tories.

The policies of the Labour Party in Scotland have only contributed to the growth of support for nationalist solutions to the crisis. Despite

having the overwhelming majority of Scottish MPs and consistently achieving around 45% support in the opinion polls, Labour has done nothing to mobilise the Scottish workers against the Tory attacks. Quite the opposite—they refused to support the Poll Tax struggle, notably the mass non-payment campaign, and then Labour controlled councils went on to actively enforce the Tory law through the courts, resulting in warrant sales and the jailing of non-payers.

This has allowed the Scottish National Party (SNP) to put on a left face in an attempt to break the hold of the Labour Party over its

urban and industrial heartlands. Under the leadership of Alex Salmond they outflanked the Labour Party in supporting protests against the Poll Tax. They even called for the nationalisation of Ravenscraig while Labour merely blustered against the Tories while giving no commitments to Scottish steel workers' jobs.

### Bourgeois

Yet despite its "left turn" the SNP remains a thoroughly bourgeois party. Its right wing might for tactical reasons have decided to take a back seat for the moment but it

remains committed to uniting all classes in Scotland around the single aim of an independent capitalist state.

Labour has sought to counter the influence of the nationalists by proposing devolution with a "Scottish Assembly". Over the last two years the Scottish Labour Party and STUC has been sitting in a Constitutional Convention along with the Liberal Democrats, church leaders and some employers. The Convention has come out in favour of an Assembly with control of education, housing, health, and social security, with the power to raise taxes, leaving only defence and for-

eign affairs under Westminster control. The Labour Party nationally is committed to introducing some form of Scottish Assembly in its first year in office.

Revolutionary communists are opposed to demands for independence or a national assembly for Scotland. Neither offer any solution to the problems facing workers in Scotland—unemployment, poverty, poor housing, low wages, and collapsing public services. These are not the result of "England exploiting Scotland" as the nationalists would have us believe, but of the system of capitalism which exploits workers throughout Britain. To remove these curses of capitalism workers in Scotland, England and Wales need to unite in a determined struggle, to smash the British capitalist state and replace it with a workers state and the democracy of workers' councils.

### Talking shops

For Marxists real power does not rest in parliamentary bodies but with the armed force and unelected bureaucracy of the ruling class. We do not aim at the proliferation of democratic talking shops within the state itself. Even if a Scottish Assembly were to take over powers from Westminster, this would not provide an instrument through which the struggle for a British workers' republic could be better fought for.

It would necessarily deepen and reinforce divisions between the working class in England and Scotland, a class which is organised on an all-British basis and which has proved itself more than capable of united action across the border on many occasions, notably in the miners' strike of 1984-85. A Scottish Assembly would direct the attentions of the Scottish workers away from joint struggle against the British capitalists and towards all-class "Scottish solutions".

### Antagonisms

Although the bosses do not in the main favour separation, they are more than happy to foster divisions within the working class. That is why the arch-reactionary Murdoch has been using his press empire to stoke up national antagonisms. While the *Sun* in England can convey disgusting anti-Scottish sentiments, at the same time, and to the acclaim of the SNP, it launches a vile jingoistic crusade in its Scottish edition, drawing on all the foul vapours of national prejudice.

If, despite our arguments, the workers of Scotland decide definitively for independence, then we are absolutely in favour of supporting them in exercising that right, even though we believe it would be a tragic mistake to do so. Indeed we are in favour of putting that question before the Scottish workers right now, giving them the democratic right to express their desires for or against independence. We believe with the question posed directly and with a vigorous socialist campaign against independence the vast majority of workers would reject the nationalist argument.

A Scottish Assembly or parliament will offer no solutions to the workers of Scotland and revolutionaries must say this clearly and openly. If they do not it will be the Scottish nationalists who reap the benefits when the Assembly solves none of the problems facing the Scottish masses, when it delivers the same rotten housing and crumbling health services, when it uses the Scottish police to break workers' strikes and enforce Tory trade union laws, when it continues to allow 250,000 Scottish workers to rot on the dole.■



The great debate: Labour's Donald Dewar (2nd from right) has no answer to the challenge of the SNP

# Support Dave Nellist

EVERY WORKER should welcome the decision of Dave Nellist MP to stand in the forthcoming general election. On 7 December last year the Labour leadership expelled Dave for the "crime" of supporting policies associated with *Militant*.

Despite this, Coventry South East Constituency Labour Party has voted to endorse his decision to stand, and to refuse to back down in the face of Kinnock's anti-socialist witch-hunts.

From the outset *Workers Power* supporters in Coventry Labour Party argued that he should stand if the right wing decided to expel him or to impose an "official" right wing candidate on the constituency. For years Kinnock has been allowed to get away with trampling on the democratic rights of party members and then accusing the left of splitting if they refuse to comply.

### Splitters

The real splitters and disrupters of working class unity are the right wing and any capitulation to them on this could only strengthen them. If Dave had decided to give in and not stand he would have set back the struggle of the left against the bureaucratic rule of Walworth Road.

When Dave was first suspended, *Workers Power* supporters met some resistance in the party to our pro-

### BY COVENTRY WORKERS POWER SUPPORTERS

posal that he should stand against any imposed national Labour candidate. This suggestion was clearly uncomfortable for the numerous left MPs that were prepared to come to Coventry and support Dave's right to be a member of the party, such as Jeremy Corbyn, Alice Mahon, and Ken Livingstone. Dennis Skinner in particular was furious at the suggestion that he should come off the fence and indicate his support for Dave in the election.

There is no room for fence-sitting. The decision has been made and Dave is standing against the Walworth Road puppet. All MPs who oppose the witch-hunt must back his campaign without delay. The threat of an embarrassing division prior to the general election and the prospect of having to discipline an important group of left MPs would be a powerful deterrent to Kinnock's witch-hunt.

But it is likely these "left" MPs will now show what they are really made of. They will continue to mutter about democracy and Labour being a "broad church" whilst supporting the official candidate or maintaining a discreet silence about Dave's election campaign. Such is their record of "fighting" for socialist ideas.



The Labour leaders are traitors to the working class and Dave should say so at every opportunity in the election campaign. The entire responsibility for the possibility of a split in the Labour vote should be laid at the right wing's door.

But instead of this unambiguous and bold approach Dave Nellist has been dodging the issue already, trying to wrap up his arguments in diplomatic language. He has suggested that he is standing "to keep the Tories out" because the official candidate could lose the seat for Labour. A child of ten could see through this evasive argument. There can be little doubt that if Dave backed down his supporters in the constituency would vote for the official La-

bour candidate, albeit under protest. But he should not back down.

The point of his campaign must be to fight Kinnock's bureaucratic dictatorship over the movement and to campaign for real fighting policies. No concessions should be made to the right by maintaining any commitment to the pro-capitalist programme put forward by Walworth Road.

### Campaign

*Workers Power* supporters in Coventry will be campaigning for Dave Nellist in the election and will be calling on him to fight around a revolutionary action programme of resistance to the bosses' attacks. Nobody claiming to be a Marxist should stand on anything less. Around the country our supporters will be intransigent opponents of Kinnockism, arguing that left MPs who are bureaucratically de-selected should stand.

If the remaining lefts in the Labour Party are to find any voice against Kinnock's pink Toryism they need to fight for a revolutionary tendency, prepared to resist Kinnock's bureaucratic machine at every turn, committed to defending the working class against all the bosses' attacks, whether Tory or Labour, and prepared to utilise the fight against Kinnock to build a new revolutionary party.■



## PIT CLOSURES

# One more step towards privatisation

**T**HE LATEST round of vicious job cuts and closures in the mines is paving the way for all-out privatisation. Over three weeks in January British Coal announced the cutting of 1,100 jobs at four pits in the Selby complex in Yorkshire, the closure of Bickershaw Colliery in Lancashire, and the intended closure of Sherwood Colliery in Mansfield (Not-

BY LOUISE FERGUSON

tinghamshire). Sherwood employs 800 miners and is still profitable.

No offer was made to transfer men to other pits. Union leaders have rightly seen this as a precursor to compulsory redundancies.

A report by consultants for the Department of Energy says that at "competitive world prices" less than

thirty pits could survive. This report backs an earlier study from the British Association of Colliery Managers. The journal *Coal UK*, which published the report in its 24 January issue, claims that British Coal will have to cut nearly half of its 55 remaining pits, which currently employ 55,000 miners.

But this is mild compared to plans drawn up for the Energy Secretary John Wakeham which propose the privatisation of 14 pits.

The scheme would result in more than 40,000 miners losing their jobs: 80% of the workforce. Job losses would occur within two years of a Tory election victory. A grand total of 11,000 miners would be left in work, compared to 162,000 in 176 pits at the end of the Great Strike of 1984-85. The South Wales and North West coalfields would be closed entirely.

The butchery of the mining industry is designed to pour money into the pockets of the bosses who own the newly privatised electricity industry. Not that they are short of profits already. The twelve electricity generating companies have increased their profits by 34% in the first six months of the current financial year, from £788 million to £1,059 million. They are on target to reap over £3 billion in profits this year.

## Privatisation

Since privatisation five years ago, the price per unit for domestic customers has increased on average by 40%.

Now the electricity companies see the possibility of making a further killing by ending British Coal's privileged relationship as the main coal supplier. The threat of massive foreign coal imports leaves the electricity generators free to dictate prices to British Coal. That is one of the main reasons underlying the job cuts. Take the example of Selby, which boosted British Coal's profits by £25.9 million in the last quarter of 1991. British Coal director, Alan Houghton, declared:

"The group is performing extremely well, but manpower reductions are needed to improve efficiency."

This efficiency drive is a desperate attempt to win new contracts with the privatised electricity generators when the current contracts expire in March 1993.

In response the Labour left and miners' leaders have argued that "mining is now at the mercy of foreign imports" which are "artificially subsidised". There is a clear implication in their statements that import controls are needed—a demand that they have made countless times before.

It certainly makes a mockery of the Tories' claim to be Britain's "defenders" against Brussels that they are importing subsidised coal from



Striking miner 1984: over 100 pits have gone since then

other EC countries to undercut mines with some of the cheapest prices of production in Europe

But import controls carried out under capitalism are no answer. Import controls export unemployment to workers abroad, they do not fundamentally solve it.

Of course under a workers' state, in a planned economy, all foreign trade is subject to state control. But so are wages and all aspects of the economy. Under capitalism controls on trade and wages are aimed at securing maximum profits at the expense of all workers.

Instead we need to fight for the total re-nationalisation of the electricity producers (without compensation) and the complete integration of the power generating industry by a plan which eradicates "market forces" at every stage between the coal face and the plug on the living room wall.

**11,000 miners left in work, compared to 162,000 at the end of the Great Strike**

We need to fight for workers' control throughout the industry—a fight which would aim to destroy management's "right to manage".

Then production could be geared to human need instead of profit. There is nothing rational about closing down rich seams of coal and efficient production. There is nothing rational about destroying entire communities, squandering millions of pounds in dole and redundancy payments to support miners

## NALGO

# Broad Left must fight merger!

**T**HE GOVERNMENT is set to continue attacking public services right up to the day of the general election. The "Citizens' Charter", more hospital opt-outs, councils in financial chaos, new privatisation proposals—all these threaten the jobs and conditions of thousands of public sector workers and the services they provide.

Faced with this, public sector workers need a united fightback bringing all the workers in each service together. On this basis we could fight for industrial unions: one union for the NHS, one union for local government. But the leaders of NALGO, NUPE, and COHSE, the biggest unions in the public sector, are busy trying to save their own jobs by stitching together a bureaucratic merger between the three unions. The merger proposals will stifle rank and file initiative and make the leadership even less accountable.

The NALGO Broad Left (BL) AGM on 8 February should give rank and file members of NALGO an opportunity to fight back. It must launch a campaign against the bureaucratic merger proposals, for industrial unions and for the unity in action that is necessary now to fight the cuts.

However, BL members who want this will first have to overcome its SWP dominated leadership.

This leadership, for all its statements about "unity, but not at any price" still suffers from the illusion that "one big union" can best meet the needs of public sector workers. The merger was never designed to meet those needs. It was always intended to strengthen the bureaucratic chains that prevent health and local government workers from defending themselves.

Another urgent problem for the AGM is the functioning of the BL. The SWP won leadership from Militant, who then "took their ball home" and refused to participate at all! Since then the BL leaders have failed to provide a clear programme of action which explains today's aims and the steps needed to win them.

At every turn NALGO members are prevented from taking effective strike action by the trade union laws and the NALGO officials who cravenly obey them.

While many NALGO activists are

BY CLARE ROBERTS

demoralised and there has been no generalised resistance to the Tory-dictated, Labour executed attacks, a wide range of disputes continue to flare up, from Strathclyde's education department to Camden's social workers. In the East London borough of Newham, NALGO members were at the forefront of a council-wide strike on 29 January which embraced the manual unions and NUT members against £13 million in cuts and over 3000 job cuts.

In every instance, however, full-time officials have been able to contain such militant eruptions, confining the action to isolated sections, one day strikes and token protest.

To lead effective action the BL must organise the rank and file independently of the officials. It must mercilessly expose every hesitation, sell-out and undemocratic manoeuvre of the bureaucrats, and challenge them at a local and national level, kicking out the time-servers and replacing them with those willing to fight.

But the BL leadership has been unwilling and unable to organise this fight. Irregular meetings (often only publicised to those the SWP wish to recruit) and even more irregular and minimal propaganda are the standard practice of the BL leadership.

Clearly the SWP has decided that, if it is to "fill the gap left by the Communist Party" on the trade union scene it has to start acting like the CP did in the old Broad Lefts!

As long as the BL's propaganda is limited to the current concerns of its SWP leaders it will never be able to mount an effective challenge to the bureaucracy. A real rank and file movement would encourage open and democratic discussion of tactics and strategy. It would use regular meetings to organise independently of the bureaucrats and as a base to challenge them wherever possible.

NALGO members who recognise the gap between the BL leadership's radical words and their virtual inaction should support Workers Power in the fight to turn the Broad Left into a fighting rank and file movement, as opposed to an electoral machine or a party front. ■

who want to work.

Only under workers' control and under an internationally agreed workers' plan could energy production be progressively integrated across Europe and the world.

## Dangerous

The bosses' control will always perpetuate the cheapest labour and the most dangerous conditions whilst destroying skilled and well organised workforces. The NUM should strengthen its links with other miners in struggle and become a more internationalist fighting force—not make calls which, stripped of their rhetoric, are a call for unity with British bosses at the expense of miners outside Britain.

In the next period miners need to gear up for a fight against the closures and against the planned privatisation. That means a campaign for strike action in defence of every job and colliery, and to demand that Labour commit itself to scrap privatisation, stop all job losses and renationalise not just the national grid as currently proposed, but also the generating companies, under the control not of capitalist boards but of the workers themselves.

The scab miners' union, the UDM, supported the closure of Sherwood, saying that it wanted to protect its members' bonus redundancy payments. That is typical scab behaviour. But unless the NUM leadership starts to do something, instead of just protesting and waiting for a Labour government the result will be the same: closed pits, devastated communities and the bosses laughing all the way to the bank. ■



# THE "DEBT BOOMERANG" Who is to blame?

**T**HE LARGEST commercial bank mistake in history". That is how Susan George describes the \$100 billion worth of losses accrued by the imperialist banking system in the 1980s, following its lending boom to the "Third World". George's new book *The Debt Boomerang* attempts to analyse the catastrophic consequences of the debt crisis in the semi-colonial world.

It contains a penetrative analysis of the debt burden for the peoples of the semi-colonial world, and vivid descriptions of the consequences. It brings into stark relief the need for an international working class struggle to repudiate the debt.

On the eve of the 21st century 100,000 children die from starvation every week, a death rate exceeding the carnage of the First World War. One billion human beings live in abject poverty, millions of them refugees.

And despite the crocodile tears of capitalist politicians and media personalities wealth continues to be transferred out of the third world into the pockets of the imperialist bankers!

As the book explains:

"According to the OECD, between 1982 and 1990, total resource flows to developing countries amounted to \$927 billion. This sum includes . . . all official bilateral and multilateral aid, grants by private charities, trade credits plus direct private investment and bank loans. Much of this inflow was not in the form of grants but was rather new debt, on which dividends or interest will naturally become due in the future.

During the same 1982-90 period, developing countries remitted in debt service alone \$1345 billion (interest and principal) to the creditor countries." (pg xv)

Susan George explains how, looked

Brian Green reviews  
*The Debt Boomerang*  
by Susan George  
Pluto Press £7.95

at historically, debt servicing during the 1980s represents the largest ever transfer of resources from the third world to the major industrial countries of the north. She shows that under the tutelage of the IMF and World Bank, the third world has been exploited mercilessly, but without the overhead cost of a colonial administration.

But *The Debt Boomerang* is not only about the effects of debt on the third world. Susan George seeks through this book to show the negative impact that the debt has had on the populations of the imperialist world as well—hence its title.

She cites six consequences: the environmental destruction which has led to global warming, the blossoming of the drug trade, the extent to which taxpayers in imperialist countries are bailing out the banks who have written off third world debt, the jobs lost in the "north" because the collapse of markets in the "south", the growth of mass migration and finally the conflicts and wars that have been spawned by the drive to escape the noose of debt, notably Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The object of demonstrating the common interest between the populations of the north and south is commendable. But Susan George's arguments and solutions are shaped by the classless, reformist politics of the Transnational Institute of which she is an associate director.

This institute draws support from all classes and sections of society, from the churches, through governmental agencies to the unions. All of these are wedded to capitalism—the

system which has spawned third world debt—either directly or through their leaderships.

The Institute seeks not to abolish capitalism but reform it through a programme of redistribution on a world scale. The theme of the book is that redistribution, primarily through writing off the debt, will free economic development in the south, benefiting everybody on the planet.

Like all reformers of capitalism, George ends up appealing to the "enlightened self-interest" of the capitalists. Get rid of debt and you won't have immigration, drugs, Saddam Hussein etc.

The problem is, imperialist capital-

ism can only live by sucking the life out of the semi-colonial world. The book fails to understand that the debt problem is merely a facet of the unfolding crisis of capitalism on a world scale. It cannot be solved outside the abolition of capitalism itself.

The book claims the problem of debt flowed from irresponsible bankers, who were encouraged by lax governmental controls and was aggravated by the "short-termist" dogma of neo-liberalism. This superficial analysis leads to a superficial solution—more government intervention and controls on the banks coupled with enlightened long term lending policies.

The Marxist view is different. The international crisis of capitalism re-emerged in the early 1970s. It presented capitalism with a lack of investment opportunities, particularly in the developed countries. Banks were desperate to find outlets for their surplus funds. Less developed countries appeared a good bet because inflation during the 1970s had

propped up the prices of raw and semi-processed materials.

But no sooner had these investments come on stream than capitalism entered into its third post-war generalised recession in 1979-82. This reduced demand and the price for raw materials plummeted, never to recover. Capitalism used the recession and then the recovery of the mid-1980s to modernise its industries by, amongst other things, economising on the use of raw materials and energy. It was this reduced demand for materials which gave impetus to the sharp fall in prices that underlay the debt crisis.

The collapse of demand cost the south far more than the burden of debt repayment. For example, the fall in oil prices from the level of the late 1970s and early 1980s has cost the oil producers nearly \$200 billion a year, nearly triple the average debt repayments of the semi-colonial world. It is precisely because Susan George has no appreciation of the nature of capitalism that she ends up personalising the problems. She lumps together irresponsible "northern" bankers and unscrupulous "southern" dictators who siphoned off up to a third of these loans to salt away in their Swiss and Cayman Island bank accounts.

The 1990s promises to be a period of grinding economic stagnation. The 20% of the population in the south that can make ends meet will contract, while the 20% of the population in the north that already cannot make ends meet will expand. For a growing majority of the world's population therefore, the fight for socialism is not an option, but the fight for survival.

Susan George however cannot let that dreaded "S" word—socialism—pass her lips. At times, her outrage at the catastrophe unfolding seems to drive her towards a criticism of capitalism, but she always pulls back. Her crusade is against neo-liberalism under the banner of an informed and enlightened capitalism. At a time when capitalism is killing millions through poverty, starvation and war, the academic intelligentsia's failure to take up the banner of socialism speaks volumes for their historic bankruptcy. ■



Children in Bangladesh wait for food: but imperialism takes far more than it gives to third world countries

**EDMUND SAMARAKODDY** died in Colombo General Hospital on 3 January after a brief illness. His death stands as a sad reminder of the failure of Sri Lankan Trotskyism to root itself amongst the working class in the first generation, or to make a successful fresh start in the second.

Edmund was born into a well off low country aristocratic family, and practised law in the Mount Lavinia courts. He joined the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) not long after its formation, and he was already helping to lead strikes against the Vavasseur Coconut Mill and the Colombo Commercial Company in 1937, when he was arrested for the first time. He supported the "T" group which ousted the Stalinists from the LSSP in 1939. Unlike the Stalinists he opposed support for British imperialism throughout the war.

Active in a strike wave in Uva province in 1940, he was arrested on 19 June. He escaped along with the others during a Japanese air raid in April 1942, but whilst they went off to India he elected to remain behind. He was duly arrested and jailed for a further term in 1944.

When the party split between 1945 and 1950, Edmund remained with a group which functioned as the Ceylon unit of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, Ceylon Section of the Fourth International, as opposed to the grouping around N M Perera and Philip Gunawardena.

When the first post-war elections took place in 1947 Edmund was chosen by the party to contend the seat of the future UNP Prime Minister, Mr Dudley Senanayake in Mirigama. He gained more than

Last month we reported the death of Edmund Samarakoddy, the veteran Sri Lankan Trotskyist. **Al Richardson**, editor of *Revolutionary History* and a historian of the Trotskyist movement, offers a personal assessment of Edmund's life and work.

## Edmund Samarakoddy 1914-1992

10,000 votes compared to the latter's 16,000. He entered parliament during the early 1950s where he served as MP for Dehiowita and Bulathsinhala, as well as becoming chairman of the Debiwela—Mount Lavinia Urban Council.

Edmund was the leader of the minority of the LSSP which opposed its entry into the coalition government of the SLFP, led by Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike in 1964.

Since Marxism in the LSSP was mainly discussed in English by its leading group of western trained intellectuals—LSSP conferences being little more than rallies where the leadership exhibited their considerable rhetorical skills—the leadership won nearly three-quarters of the conference for their coalition.

The 125 who walked out included Edmund and his fellow MP, Meryl Fernando, 14 members of the Central Committee and seasoned trade union leaders like Prins Rajasooriya and Bala Tampoe. They set themselves up as the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), which became a section of the

United Secretariat of the Fourth International, with Edmund as its General Secretary.

The resulting grouping was neither homogeneous, nor stable. It included supporters of Frank and Mandel, supporters of Pablo who was splitting from them at the time, and even supporters of Gerry Healy's ICFI.

Its possibilities for further growth were wrecked when on 3 September 1964 the SLFP-LSSP-MEP government presented a Press Bill to parliament. Edmund and Meryl voted for an amendment proposed by Dahanayake, a right winger. Seeing their chance, the right wing UNP, switched their votes at the last minute and the government was defeated. In the ensuing election both Edmund and Meryl lost their seats, never to be regained.

That was the signal for the disintegration of the LSSP(R), as its most capable theoretician V Karalasingham, went back to the LSSP after denouncing Edmund's position as "senile leftism" in a famous pamphlet. The pro-Healy

group, led by Wilfred Perera, decided that there were no more pickings to be had and set itself up as the International Committee's section.

Karalasingham's contention that they should have undertaken entry work within the old LSSP received full confirmation within a decade when a mass left did indeed split away from it to set up the NSSP led by Vasudeva Nanayakkara. But Edmund preferred to stand by his principles, alone if necessary.

Within a couple of years Edmund had been ousted from the leadership of the LSSP(R) by Bala Tampoe, a trade union bureaucrat who wished the party to function as an appendage of his monolithic Ceylon Mercantile Union.

Edmund, Meryl Fernando and Malawarachchi now founded the Revolutionary Workers Party, and appealed to the World Congress of the USFI in 1969 against the Tampoe group, which had by now gained an unenviable reputation for scabbing upon strikes.

The case was heard by a special

Ceylon Commission of the USFI. Even though this commission agreed that there was much truth to Edmund's case, the Congress—with the minimum of deliberation—ratified the Tampoe group as its official representative.

Disillusion with this obviously false outfit turned Edmund towards pure propagandism. He became involved with the Spartacist League of the USA from 1970 onwards. He objected to their sectarian passivity and abstention over such matters as the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, where they denounced both sides equally. He was subjected to a purge by the Spartacists in 1979. They excluded him for "nostalgic links to the stinking corpse of the reformist Lanka Sama Samaja Party". Although this relationship had gone on for a decade they subsequently denied that they had been involved in anything more than a "literary collaboration".

As he was a true internationalist from the roots of his hair to the soles of his feet he then sought further international links with the Trotskyist movement, becoming allied with the GOR (Voce Operaia) in Italy. He greatly appreciated the contribution to the historical evaluation of the Trotskyist movement made by *Revolutionary History* magazine.

All Edmund's past antagonists were present at his funeral, some of them claiming his struggle as their own. But Edmund died practically alone after a recent split in the RWP. If transparent integrity and unflinching revolutionary principle were enough to build a revolutionary party this would not have been the outcome. ■



**MALCOLM X**

**T**HE POLITICS of Malcolm X can only be understood against the changing background of the anti-racist struggle in the USA. We have to understand how Malcolm himself underwent a rapid political evolution in the last two years of his life, as the struggle developed.

In the late 1940s and early 50s, when Malcolm became politically active, the racist system of segregation was already facing active opposition.

By 1946 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had 450,000 members in 1,073 branches. This was the main black political movement in the USA.

In the South, blacks faced apartheid style segregation and deep poverty. Against this background Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) had come to the head of the desegregation struggle, initially around the Montgomery County bus boycotts of 1955 and 56.

King's movement, dominated by the church and wedded to peaceful and legal means, sought to use non-violence to extract piecemeal reforms from US capitalist society, despite being faced with a reign of terror from white supremacists, including lynch mobs and beatings.

**Strand**

But another strand of black organisation was developing, one which totally rejected white society, believing it could not be reformed. This was Elijah Muhammed's Nation of Islam, founded in Detroit in 1930.

Muhammed's strategy was unequivocally nationalist and separatist. He taught that white society and white people in general were inevitably racist, US blacks should separate and form their own nation. Muhammed called for a return to Africa, and stressed black Americans' international links with the peoples of the third world. But he also preached the possibility of a separate black territory in North America.

The strength and attraction of the Nation of Islam for many young black people was its emphasis on black pride. It taught that God was black, that whites were an inferior race, encouraged the establishment of black businesses, celebrated African civilisation etc.

As long as black people had not attained national independence, Muhammed's "Muslim Programme" demanded freedom, justice and equality of opportunity. It stated:

"As long as we are not allowed to establish a state or territory of our own, we demand not only equal justice under the laws of the United States, but equal employment opportunities now!"

Yet, as the Nation of Islam grew from a sect to a mass organisation in the 1950s this commitment to the struggle for equality within white society remained a dead letter. In practice the Black Muslims, as they were known, abstained from the actual struggle for desegregation and civil rights. Instead most of their resources were channelled into recruiting from amongst the poorest sections of the black working class and from the large black prison population.

**Converts**

One of their converts was Malcolm X, who had grown up as Malcolm Little, a petty crook in Harlem. On his release from prison in 1952 Malcolm became one of Muhammed's leading followers. His magnetic personality and popular speaking style allowed the Nation of Islam to reach out to new layers of students and youth. By the late 1950s Malcolm X had become, through lectures, articles and televised debates, an international symbol of revolutionary black nationalism.

But both Muhammed's black nationalism and King's reformist integrationism were being put to new tests as the struggle intensified.

By 1963 King was at the head of a powerful coalition of black organisations. Alongside groups like the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE)



and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the NAACP and King's SCLC were mobilising hundreds of thousands in direct action to defy segregationism in the South, and increasingly the racism and state brutality faced by blacks in the northern cities. A March on Washington organised that year mobilised 250,000.

The civil rights movement was no longer simply a black protest movement. It had begun to win influence in white liberal circles and amongst organised white workers. At the same time it faced a vicious racist backlash, particularly in the South which, for thousands of youth, increasingly called into question non-violence as a strategy.

Yet the Nation of Islam remained on the sidelines. Muhammed repeatedly vetoed moves to get involved in civil rights activism. He even became embroiled in collusion with white-supremacist US fascists.

While hundreds of thousands were

heeding the call to mass action by the civil rights movement the Black Muslims' revolutionary words remained only words.

In 1964 Malcolm X broke with the Nation of Islam, amidst much acrimony, and started a process of political rethinking which was to lead him to a much more radical, anti-capitalist formulation of his politics. It is a tribute to Malcolm X's political courage that he made not one but two political evolutions in his life. From small time hustler to national political leader, then from abstentionist black nationalism to an attempt to combine black separatism and socialism.

It was an evolution cut short when Black Muslim assassins, probably in collusion with the FBI, killed Malcolm, aged 40, on 21 February 1965.

His development away from the Nation of Islam had lasted less than two years. In this process Malcolm produced several reformulations of his political programme and philosophy and often made contradictory statements even within a single speech or interview.

This is what has allowed many differing strands within black nationalism and socialism to claim Malcolm X as their own. Even at their most developed point of evolution away from Elijah Muhammed, Malcolm's politics remain contradictory: not a fusion of the struggle for black liberation with socialism but a confusion, about both ends and means. ■

"Malcolm X—Angel of Harlem" read the slogan on one black youth's leather jacket on the January Asylum Bill demo. Malcolm's famous slogan "By Any Means Necessary" adorns the best-selling T-shirt, along with a photograph of him with a high velocity rifle. Later this year Spike Lee's controversial film about the life of Malcolm X will hit the cinemas. For a generation of young blacks Malcolm X has entered popular mythology as a symbol of militant black resistance. But he remains misunderstood.

Overt black nationalists and anti-Semites like Louis Farrakhan claim Malcolm as the inspiration. Others praise Malcolm's attempt to combine black separatism with socialism. Some even claim he had become an "unconscious revolutionary socialist before he was gunned down in 1965."

Who is right? What is the truth about Malcolm X? How can socialists, black separatists and even middle class black nationalists all claim to be his followers? Laura Watkins explains.

# From black nationalism to socialism

**M**ALCOLM X's split with Elijah Muhammed resulted from a combination of organisational, political and personal differences.

Malcolm was impatient to enter the mass movement, not in order to tail behind the pacifist leaders but to revolutionise the struggle. Muhammed wanted the Muslims to remain on the sidelines—a primarily religious sect with radical rhetoric.

In Los Angeles in April 1962, police shot seven unarmed Black Muslims, killing one. Sixteen Muslims were charged with criminal assault against the police. Malcolm X set about organising united actions against this outrage with the city's black integrationist leaders, and even appealed to whites for financial support. Muhammed quickly vetoed this, insisting on a purely legal defence campaign and no joint activity with non-Muslim blacks.

The inevitable split came in March 1964 and Malcolm announced he was setting up a new organisation, the Muslim Mosque Inc. But soon it became clear this was not just an organisational break.

George Breitman, Malcolm's biographer and a leader of the American Socialist Workers Party, divides Malcolm last years after the split into two phases. Firstly the "transition", from the split until Malcolm's return from a trip to Mecca

in May 1964, and then the "final period" from June 1964 to his assassination.

Whilst there are clear political differences between Malcolm's statements in these two phases, to call only the first "transitional" is misleading. Right up to his death Malcolm's politics were changing and remained contradictory. Breitman wanted to defend Malcolm from critics who simply labelled him a black nationalist. But his analysis also fitted in with the SWP's belief that Malcolm in effect became an "unconscious" revolutionary socialist and internationalist.

**Broken**

Today, with black nationalism and separatism gaining popularity, it is important to emphasise that Malcolm, the cultural icon of black nationalism, had consciously broken with it by the time he died. But equally we should not idealise his later political philosophy, dressing it up as a form of Marxism, or claim it was an adequate guide to action for those who followed him.

Phil Frampton, writing in the British Militant's black paper Panther says:

"Those who killed him underlined the sanctity of his ideas. His death spawned the Black Panthers. They developed his ideas further, to the conclusion of a united black and white revolutionary struggle for

socialism."

That judgement distorts the Panthers' actual politics (see WP 114) and is misleading about Malcolm X too. No real revolutionary Marxist should be sanctifying his ideas. Our task is to separate what was positive from what remained confused and mistaken.

Immediately after the break with Elijah Muhammed, Malcolm's project amounted to implementing all the secular and social aspects of the Nation of Islam programme:

"I still believe that Mr Muhammed's analysis of the problem is the most realistic and that his solution is the best one . . ." he told reporters. "But 22 million of our people who are still here in America need better food, clothing, housing education and jobs right now. Mr Muhammed's program does point us back homeward, but it also contains within it what we could and should be doing to help solve many of our own problems while we are still here."

Like many subsequent black nationalists and separatists, Muhammed's politics sounded radical when he talked about a return to Africa or a separate state for blacks in America, but he stumbled when it came to changing things within racist US imperialism. The question he had to confront was: how?

Malcolm had for years castigated white liberals for their duplicity and the white working class for its racism. He now had to face the

problem of how to win black liberation in a society where white liberals ruled and white workers formed the majority.

When he launched the Muslim Mosque Inc. Malcolm declared: "Whites can help us, but they can't join us. There can be no black-white unity until there is first some black unity. There can be no workers' solidarity until there is first some racial solidarity. We cannot think of uniting with others until we have first united among ourselves."

**Popular**

This "two stage" theory of black liberation is popular amongst black nationalists and separatists today. There is a kernel of truth in it: black people do need to organise themselves within the wider working class movement in order to defeat racism and fight for their own agenda. But the idea that a joint struggle between black and white workers had to be put off until after "black unity" was achieved proved no guide to action.

If "black unity" meant a separate black state, as it did for Muhammed, then black people would have a long time to wait. Uncle Sam had no intention of granting that state, and blacks themselves were dispersed as a minority amongst the northern industrial states of the USA.

If "black unity" meant a single



## OLM X

## What strategy for black liberation?

**W**ORKERS POWER stands for black liberation as an integral part of the working class struggle for socialism. The root cause of racism is the profit system and the imperialist system of exploitation and oppression it engenders.

As well as the black populations brought to Europe and America by slavery there are millions of immigrant workers in these countries. There are also indigenous peoples such as the Australian Aborigines, native Americans etc. All of these groups suffer a specific form of social oppression and generally super-exploitation as a result of systematic racism.

Imperialism, whilst creating an international world economy has proved unable to overcome the system of rival nation states that divides and strangles the potential of that world economy. Consequently nationalism, chauvinism, genocide and race hatred are more prevalent in this century than ever before.

That is why the struggle to eradicate racial oppression must go hand in hand with the struggle against capitalism itself. Only the working class can successfully and finally destroy capitalism. In Europe and the USA black people form a militant minority of that class. Therefore the road to black liberation cannot bypass the task of winning white workers to the struggle against racism.

But does this mean black people should not organise themselves, or that they should put off their own struggles until "after the revolution"?

No. Self-organisation is a vital weapon to empower black working class people. We fight for black caucuses in the unions and in all working class parties, including our own organisation. We fight to link up every element of black workers' self organisation into a black working class movement, a united front for action in which revolutionaries would fight for leadership.

Those who say black self-organisation "undermines workers' unity" are mistaken. It helps black people play a full part in the working class movement. If black people have to fight alone while no white workers, or only a minority, recognise the problems of racism, then that is better than "unity" at the price of passivity.

Black people need to organise now around a programme that starts from what is needed for defence against racist attack, immigration controls, job discrimination, police harassment, but points towards the ultimate solution: the removal of all the property from the hands of the profit-makers and putting it in the hands of the workers and their families.

With a clear, anti-capitalist programme of action black workers and youth can put to the test the self-appointed leaders of the black com-

munity. Who will fight consistently for the militant tactics needed to win? That is the question black people need to ask—not who talks the most militant, or who has the most influence with the white liberal and Labour establishment.

For all these reasons, revolutionary communists reject black nationalism, separatism and the all-class "autonomous" black movement.

But wherever black people are in struggle we will unite with all those prepared to carry out actions which take the struggle forward.

We reject the need for a separate black party. A black revolutionary party would have exactly the same strategic aim as an integrated one. Whilst the revolutionary party should do special forms of work amongst black people the only way black and white revolutionary workers are going to achieve their ultimate aim is in a common struggle under a common discipline, with black cadres as part of the leadership.

We urge all black revolutionaries to take their place in an integrated revolutionary workers' organisation. We say to every black person engaged in struggle: if you are sick of the Labour leaders' patronising racism, if you are fed up with being sold out by self-appointed community leaders, if you want an alternative to religious fundamentalism and to empty nationalist rhetoric—join Workers Power! ■

enslaved them.

But Malcolm's economic programme contains no orientation to the workplace, strike action, occupations and picket lines—even over the specific question of job segregation and discrimination. Still less is there any strategy for building unity in action with white workers.

If at an economic level the programme is totally inadequate and reformist, it does contain a revolutionary challenge to racist state violence. All of Malcolm's programmatic statements are clear on the right to black self-defence against racist attack.

Sickened by a succession of racist murders and beatings, police attacks on peaceful marches and widespread repression against civil rights activists, Malcolm's outspoken support for black self-defence struck a chord with many young people at the time:

"In areas where the US government has shown itself unable and/or unwilling to bring to justice the racist oppressors, murderers, who kill innocent children and adults, the OAAU advocates that Afro-American people ensure ourselves that justice is done—whatever the price and by any means necessary."

### Naïvete

But even here Malcolm's programme fails to show how to link this defensive struggle with the offensive against the whole capitalist state machine. In fact the statement of aims betrays a startling innocence about the US constitution and various pan-national imperialist bodies. The OAAU was:

"... persuaded that the Charter of the United Nations, the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', the Constitution of the USA and the Bill of Rights are the principles in which we believe and these documents if put into practice represent the essence of mankind's hopes and good intentions."

All the democratic rights in the world are not enough to end the system of exploitation which starves Africa and reduces America's black ghettos to killing fields. Nor are they enough to overcome the imperialist state machine that is supposed to embody and protect such rights. It is impossible for US imperialism to systematically uphold these fine declarations of "hopes and good intentions" because it is committed to defending private property and the bosses' profits which rely on this exploitation.

### Myths

Once we remove the myths about Malcolm X his anti-capitalism has to be seen as a mixture of utopian and reformist socialism; his internationalism as a laudable desire to help the bourgeois nationalist revolutions in the third world, but not proletarian internationalism; his revolutionary opposition to state racism devoid of a strategic goal.

Unfortunately the left has failed to point this out. In particular George Breitman and the American SWP have spent the years since Malcolm's death peddling the myth that he was "a black nationalist plus a socialist", or at least in the process of becoming a socialist. Breitman argues that Malcolm was on the road to a "synthesis of black nationalism and socialism" and that others must complete it.

No. The best tribute to Malcolm X we can pay today is to complete the break Malcolm was making with nationalism and separatism, not dress up the confusion as a "synthesis".

It is the duty of every Marxist to point this out in order to win new fighters for revolutionary socialism—the only consistent strategy for black liberation. ■

# ationalism

# n?



organisation, likewise it would not be achieved. The black integrationists and reformists like King and James Farmer recognised their white liberal allies feared Malcolm X, and therefore distanced themselves from him.

In fact, despite the repression meted out to them, the leadership of the civil rights movement represented an embryonic black middle class, even a nascent black bourgeoisie. It was this layer which would benefit most from President Johnson's reforms in the late 1960s, while for the masses there remained poverty and oppression. Prison and assassination were awaiting Malcolm's followers. The divergent strategies of reformist integrationism and militant struggle proved fundamentally incompatible.

Grappling with these problems, Malcolm evolved away from nationalism as a political principle. In March 1964 he had announced:

"Our political philosophy will be black nationalism. Our economic and social philosophy will be black nationalism."

But already he was using the term nationalism not to imply the struggle for a separate state but for black people's struggles to control their own lives and communities:

"The political philosophy of black

However Malcolm remained a black separatist in the organisational sense. Though he collaborated with elements on the predominantly white left his project remained to build a black organisation to fight for black liberation.

After returning from Africa he posed this in a more international way. He founded the strictly secular Organisation of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) (he himself remained a Muslim to his death). But its aims were confused from the beginning. On the one hand he conceived it as an umbrella organisation which could unite all the civil rights and black nationalist groups. On the other hand Malcolm was obliged to build the OAAU as a separate political organisation which precisely challenged the programme and tactics of the King/Farmer integrationist leaders.

The statement of aims (June 1964) and programme of the OAAU (February 1965) contain Malcolm's most developed statements of his political analysis and strategy.

The central flaw of the programme is its failure to understand the causes of racism—capitalism and imperialism—from a class standpoint. Consequently it contains no strategy to remove these roots of racism.

Malcolm made a number of anti-capitalist statements towards the end of his life:

"There can be no freedom for our people under capitalism, and fur-

ther you can't operate a capitalist system unless you are vulturistic; you have to suck someone else's blood to be a capitalist."

But Malcolm's programme was not overtly anti-capitalist.

The OAAU programme does expose the sham of US capitalism's "emancipation" of black people from slavery. The statement of aims identifies the "economic exploitation" of black people as "the most vicious form practiced on any people in America. It denounces poor housing, job discrimination and the high cost of living in the ghetto. But nowhere does it set itself against the whole system of wage slavery: the exploitation of the worker by the employer.

Consequently its solutions to the economic plight of black people are couched as a series of reforms to the capitalist system, and militant self-organised tactics to achieve them. The statement of aims proposes a housing self-improvement programme and a rent strike to win it. The only real economic demand in the section on "Economic Security" is for the establishment of a pool of black technicians, which would be available to the developing independent African countries, and provide work for black Americans:

"Thereby we will be developing an open market for the many skills we possess and at the same time we will be supplying Africa with the skills she can best use. This project will be one of mutual cooperation of benefit."

This is a form of utopian socialism, reliant on the capitalist "open market" to create some form of economic stability and livelihood for the black working class in the USA. It is naive and inoperative as a strategy for economic liberation.

Like all utopian socialist programmes, Malcolm's emphasises education over class struggle. It outlines a series of reforms in education black people must fight for: control of 10% of all schools, the right to write the textbooks, etc. The OAAU wanted to develop a skilled black working class able to compete with whites for jobs, and a black population able to overcome ignorance as one of the chains that

nationalism means we must control the politics and politicians of our community. They must no longer take orders from outside forces. We will organise and sweep out of office all Negro politicians who are puppets of outside forces."

After Malcolm returned from a trip to Africa he changed that view. Describing a meeting with a white Algerian revolutionary nationalist Malcolm said:

"He showed me where I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries, dedicated to overthrowing the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary. So I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of black nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as black nationalism? And if you've noticed, I haven't been using the expression for several months." (16 January 1965)



## MIDDLE EAST

# No to the imperialist peace

**B**ORIS YELTSIN failed to show up to the latest round of the Middle East Peace Talks held in Moscow at the end of January. Whether he was away on a cruiser in the Black Sea or under the table in a Moscow bar, he did not miss very much.

There were 22 delegations present, including Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. The Palestinian delegation was barred for daring to include in its delegation members who lived in Jerusalem and those forced to live in exile outside of the Occupied Territories.

The multilateral talks are meant to discuss problems such as water sharing, refugees, economic development and arms control. US Secretary of State James Baker's idea is that progress can be more easily made on less contentious issues to help along the real talks over the Occupied Territories.

In the event Syria and the Lebanon refused to attend on the basis that Israel had refused to even discuss withdrawal at the bilateral talks. Algeria and the Yemen left when the Palestinians were excluded. The item on Refugees mysteriously disappeared off the agenda along with the Palestinian delegation. And Israel made clear that it had no intention of discussing nuclear weapons under the arms control item because as is well known Israel does not have any!

Nevertheless Israel had achieved its objective of bringing countries like Saudi Arabia into discussions face to face, an event that would have been unthinkable before the Gulf War.

Despite the exclusion of the Palestinians their delegation has made no move to break off the talks, carefully distinguishing between the bilateral and the multilateral ones. The results so far of the Washington based bilateral talks show how far the Palestinian leaders are willing to compromise on their historic demands. Having first abandoned their demand for a democratic secular state of Palestine in favour of a two state solution the demands now put forward at the bilateral talks with Israel do not even ask for this. Instead the Palestinian delega-

tion has accepted the US proposal for a five year "transitional period" leaving the question of any future "independence" for this state hanging in the air. The delegation proposed a parliament to be elected by all Arabs in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, with authority over all people, land and resources in these areas until the final status of the area was "finalised".

The Israelis of course were having none of this. Jerusalem has been annexed and is the untouchable capital of Israel. The Israeli delegation offered an "Interim Self-Government Authority" (ISGA) a local assembly with control limited to agriculture, education, taxation, trade etc. The ISGA would have no control over security, foreign affairs or of course the Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

The offer of this powerless Bantustan to the Palestinians was not even made in writing, so as not to offend the Likud government's even more right wing coalition partners. This did not stop the two extreme right wing parties, the Tehiya and Moledet immediately denouncing the offer (they wanted any such offers to be preceded by the annexation of the territories!) and pulling out of the government leaving the Likud without an overall majority.

All this suits Israeli Prime Minister Shamir. If the talks do not go his way he can engineer an election to end them. But at the same time the Israeli government must be seen to be willing to negotiate in order to persuade the US Congress to cough up the \$10 billion loan guarantees which it desperately needs to carry through its immigrant settlement programme.

**T**HERE IS growing speculation in the US media that George Bush is preparing an "April surprise" for Saddam Hussein.

Embarrassed and infuriated by the continued survival of the Iraqi dictator the US-dominated United Nations has decided to keep up punitive sanctions against Iraq. These sanctions are directly responsible for the mass outbreaks of cholera, dysentery and other diseases arising from the destruction of the drainage and water supply in Iraq.

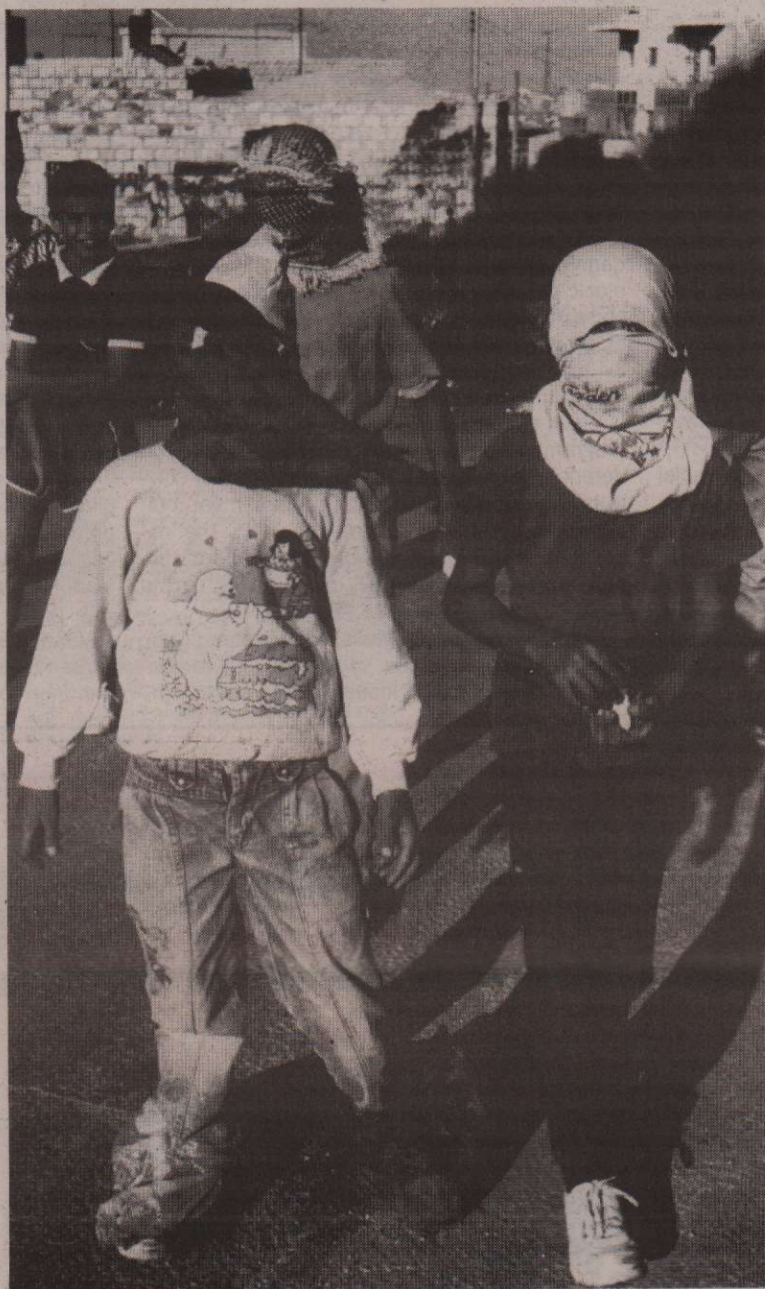
Bush's message is clear. Iraqi children will continue to die until Saddam's regime collapses and a friendlier unelected dictator can be found to take his place.

But Saddam's regime still has more than enough military hardware and disciplined troops to repress any revolt by the unarmed population.

Bush has been caught on the horns of a dilemma.

In order to avoid a revolutionary upheaval by Iraqi workers, Kurds and the southern Iraqi Shi'ite population, Bush and his generals allowed a major part of the Iraqi army to withdraw to the cities at the end of Operation Desert Storm.

Bush made no move to intervene when Saddam turned the troops against the civilian uprising and



Reject the sell-out of the Intifada

Israel is expanding rapidly both in population and in the number of settlements in the Occupied Territories. Over 300,000 new settlers arrived in the 18 months up to the end of June 1991. The government

hopes that over a million will have arrived by the end of 1991 mostly from the old USSR. This would represent a 20% increase in Israel's population in four years.

Israel's settlement building pro-

gramme in the occupied territories quadrupled from the summer of 1991, when talks looked on the cards: from 200 house starts a month to the current 800.

So concerned is the USA to keep track of this massive programme that it has placed a spy satellite over the area in order to be able to count the settlements. In this way it hopes to be able to control the Israeli's building programme by linking it to the advancement of funds and thus show the Palestinians it still has some leverage over Shamir's government.

Indeed because of the very nature of the Zionist state the USA retains enormous influence over it. Israel will only remain a magnet for economic migrants if it can provide these Jewish settlers with a "first world" standard of living. Only by the massive input of dollars from the USA on top of its annual \$3 billion a year routine aid can Israel provide this. Already it has problems—10% unemployment, high inflation etc.

It is a demonstration of the bankruptcy of the bourgeois and petit bourgeois leadership of the Palestinians over the last decades that they are now totally reliant on US imperialism to "make" Israel deliver a settlement. Any such solution delivered by the USA will be a fundamentally reactionary one which deprives the Palestinian people of their national rights.

The heroic Palestinian youth who have faced the Zionist murder machine throughout four years of the *intifada* should reject the leadership of the Palestinian bourgeoisie and the petit bourgeois opposition of the "rejectionists" and the Islamic fundamentalists.

Only the working class in the region can overthrow all the reactionary regimes gathered in the Middle East peace talks. Only a workers' state in Palestine, as part of a Socialist United States of the

## US Gun Law rules

mutinies within the Iraqi armed forces. America became the silent ally of the Hussein regime against an even bigger threat to imperialist stability in the region. The threat of a Kurdish national revolution across the borders of Iran, Syria and Turkey—the USA's allies in the victory over Iraq—united Bush with the "Butcher of Baghdad".

Bush staked everything on a palace coup to produce a "clean" Iraqi general who would do a deal with Washington.

Now the International Atomic Energy Authority has revealed that the Iraqi nuclear weapons programme was not disrupted by the nightly bombing raids and sabotage missions.

How convenient it would be if Bush was able to use these findings to carry out further air strikes against Iraq at a moment when his electoral popularity has hit an all time low.

Whether or not Bush decides to bomb Iraq it is clear that the White House is determined to go on flexing its muscles in the Middle East. After "reliably informing" the world that Syria was responsible for the

Lockerbie bombing US security services have now discovered that it was Libya all along. What a coincidence: Syria joined in the Desert Storm coalition, whilst Libya remained neutral.

Already the imperialists are preparing a co-ordinated ban on flights to Libya because Libya has refused to hand over the "suspects" nominated by the CIA. Clearly we are living in a world where "international law" increasingly means American gun law.

Backed by US military power Bush and his allies are determined to impose an imperialist peace on the region.

The imposition of a reactionary peace deal on the Palestinians is one example.

Another is the creation of an expanded gendarme role for Turkey in the whole region, especially in the disintegrating border republics of the Middle East.

The creation of a Kurdish Front to sell out the Kurdish uprising within the framework of the imperialist "order" in the Middle East is yet another. All show just how imperialism

wants to run the region from Washington and New York.

The bourgeois/landowner leaderships of the most oppressed masses of the Middle East—the Palestinians and the Kurds—have never been able to lead them to full national independence because they have never been prepared to break with capitalism. Now they are preparing a once and for all time sell-out deal with imperialism that will cement the poverty and national oppression of the people they are supposed to represent.

The collapse of Stalinism, its enormous prestige amongst the masses of the Middle East in ruins, creates the possibility of renewing the fight for independent working class organisations, and a revolutionary working class solution to the crisis in the region.

Unless this opportunity can be seized a whole generation of the most committed fighters and the most desperate and downtrodden masses in the region will be lost to the dead-end strategies of Islamic fundamentalism and clerical fascism.■

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**O**N 16 January representatives of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the President of El Salvador, Alfredo Cristiani, officially brought the twelve year long civil war to an end.

The war had started with a massive upsurge of popular movements including trade unions, peasant and community organisations, following the overthrow of Somoza in next door Nicaragua.

The military-civilian junta responded with fierce repression. Death squads linked to the army and security services operated at will, torturing and assassinating thousands of trade union and opposition leaders.

In the countryside peasant demands for land reform met similar repression. By 1982 an estimated 36,000 civilians had been killed. The leadership of the left, heavily influenced by "guerrillaist" theories of struggle, retreated from the cities into the countryside. Their political/military strategy was greatly strengthened by the success of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. In El Salvador five separate organisations were united under a single command, the FMLN, which launched a series of offensives against the army aimed at repeating the Sandinistas' route to power.

The USA, determined to prevent a re-run of Nicaragua, gave an estimated \$4 billion in economic aid, arms and training to the El Salvador army. The army grew massively, as did its influence and corruption. But the army only just held its own against the FMLN, which came to control whole areas of the countryside. A military stalemate existed. But this did not stop the army meting out murderous repression. By the time the peace accords were signed last month 70,000 had died and 20% of the population had been displaced.

The peace accords signify a serious retreat by the FMLN. The stated aims of the movement since its foundation were to smash the military dominated government which represented the interests of the landowners and big capitalists. The FMLN has not only failed to achieve these aims. It has also backed off a long way from its original negotiating position in the talks.

The FMLN entered the negotiations demanding:

- The country should be "demilitarised" with the army being replaced by a "police force"
- The FMLN should be integrated at all levels into this force
- The land reforms and expropriations in FMLN areas should be recognised through the legal process.

The UN-sponsored peace talks looked set to break down on precisely these issues, which Cristiani's extreme right wing ARENA government refused to countenance.

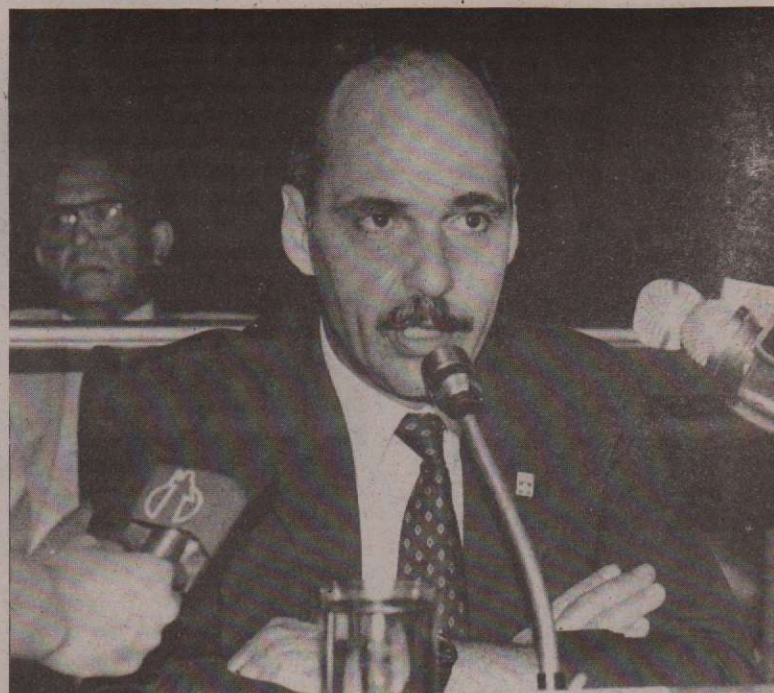
### Promises

Perez de Cuellar's last minute success at the end of the year was based on a series of "confidential promises" by the FMLN which brought Cristiani back to the negotiating table. The FMLN, it appears, dropped its demands for a clear quota within the new police force and its call for explicit guarantees on land tenure. It was also willing to abandon its "demilitarisation" demand and even its call for a binding timetable of military reductions.

The peace accords call for an immediate ceasefire from 1 February which will be monitored by 1,000 United Nations (UN) police. By 31 October the FMLN is meant to be "demobilised". A national police force under the control of a civilian minister will be established including an unspecified number of FMLN forces. The army will be reduced by 50%. A series of economic, electoral and land reforms have been promised.

But promises come cheap and all of these are pledged by an extreme right wing government inextricably bound up with the military high command and the Salvadorean landed ruling class.

The FMLN is relying on the UN and above all the USA to deliver these reforms by putting pressure



Above: El Salvador's President, Alfredo Cristiani  
Left: "Revolution or Death!" reads the slogan. The FMLN's capitulation is the latest in a long line of failures for Stalinist guerrilla strategy in Latin America.

## EL SALVADOR

# The failure of guerrillaism

BY JOHN MCKEE

on Cristiani's government. This alone shows how far the FMLN has moved from its anti-imperialist and socialist rhetoric of the 1980s.

Like the rest of the Latin American guerrillaist left, the FMLN is revealing the fundamental weakness of its political programme and strategy. The FMLN, in common with the Sandinistas, was never committed to the overthrow of capitalism. It never aimed to place political and economic power in the hands of the workers and peasants.

The FMLN leaders were democratic and anti-imperialist revolutionaries. Their armed struggle was aimed at breaking the power of a government they saw as acting in the interests of imperialism and the forces in their own countries most closely connected to them—the agrarian capitalists, mine owners and the import-export industrialists.

Their immediate aim, reflecting the influence of Stalinism, was of establishing a democratic state which would encourage and support the existence of "indigenous" and "patriotic" capitalism. This state would be committed to developing the country for the benefit of the people, independent of imperialism. But as the Sandinistas in Nicaragua rapidly discovered, that kind of capitalism cannot exist.

The only loyalty the capitalists have is to profits, and in the semi-colonial world these profits come through exploiting the masses of workers and peasants in collaboration with the imperialists. Making "mixed economy" capitalism work means allowing capitalists to make their profits at the expense of the workers.

In Nicaragua reliance on the military and economic support of Cuba and the USSR could only offset the crisis, not resolve it. And indeed these two Stalinist states were the most fervent supporters of the strat-

egy of an alliance with the "progressive bourgeoisie".

The defeat of the Sandinista regime, precipitated by the dramatic decline in living standards of the masses, combined with the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and then the USSR, has led to a dramatic rethink of strategy within the Latin American guerrilla movements.

However, like the Stalinists, far from changing their programme and perspectives in a revolutionary direction, they have turned rightwards, advocating co-operation with capitalism and imperialism and moving away from any

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subjective allegiance to Marxism.

Shortly after the March 1990 election defeat in Nicaragua one wing of the Sandinistas was already drawing these conclusions. Comandante Victor Tirado Lopez declared:

"I think the cycle of anti-imperialist revolutions in the sense of a total response, military and economic, to imperialism, is in the process of closing. It is necessary to seek other options."

Sections of the FMLN leadership in El Salvador were quick to follow. Joaquin Villalobos, head of the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) went on record in the New York Times in 1991 arguing that Marxism as a political theory had had its day. "In El Salvador," he said, "it was necessary to isolate or

cut off extremes". El Salvador had to base itself on the model of Japan, Germany and Costa Rica. Other leaders of the FMLN have made similar comments, referring to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the need to "fit into the capitalist system".

Even the so-called left of the FMLN, the El Salvador Communist Party (PCS), has refused to distance itself from these rightist moves. Its leader, Shafic Handal, was a co-signatory of the peace accords. The PCS, despite its continued occasional references to "socialism", remains an integral part of the FMLN.

Meanwhile the FMLN has announced its intention to turn itself into a legal political party as soon as possible. It will fight in the 1994 elections as part of a "progressive alliance", its hoped-for partner being the thoroughly capitalist Christian Democracy.

Workers and peasants who supported the FMLN need to draw very different lessons from the Nicaraguan events and the collapse of Stalinism.

Stalinism is bankrupt. Its strategy of alliances with "progressive" capitalists in the semi-colonial world is a disaster. Attempting to battle against imperialism on a national basis—a consequence of the Stalinist theory of building "socialism in one country"—leads to defeat.

The Nicaraguan revolution's very survival could only have been guaranteed by spreading the revolution to the rest of Central America. The success of the struggle in El Salvador in the early 1980s also rested on such a strategy. The struggle against imperialism and capitalism had to be an international one, based on mobilising the international working class against imperialist intervention. But the Stalinist and petit bourgeois nationalist guerrilla leaders refused

to carry out such a strategy.

As a result they have led the masses to a serious defeat, despite their heroic struggles and sacrifices. The revolutionary movement needs to be rebuilt in Central America by drawing the correct lessons. This means not turning away from Marxism but turning to the programme and strategy that represents its revolutionary continuity in the twentieth century, Trotsky's permanent revolution.

Permanent revolution brings the class question to the fore of the struggle against imperialism, fighting for the expropriation of all capitalists, not just the imperialists.

### Struggle

It places the working class and poor peasant struggle high on the agenda, focusing on the struggle at the point of production, on the building of workers' councils, militias, on factory and estate committees. It subordinates the military struggle to the rhythms of the political mass struggle of the organised workers and peasants.

The revolutionary seizure of power would lead not to a left junta of unaccountable "commanders", but to the empowerment of millions through real workers' democracy. It means no joint government with the bourgeoisie, and only strictly limited tactical agreements in action with bourgeois forces who are episodically prepared to fight the imperialists.

Above all, permanent revolution means the internationalisation of the struggle, not the trading off of support for a neighbouring revolution in exchange for peace with imperialism.

That is the Trotskyist strategy for defeating imperialism in Latin America. The FMLN peace deal is just the latest proof that anything else leads to total failure. ■



## GEORGIA

# No to either clique!

A GROUP of Georgian envoys is roaming Spain in search of a 47 year old Marbella playboy, Jorge Bagration de Mukhrani. They hope to take him and his son back with them to help restore order in their strife-torn homeland. That he cannot speak Georgian, his family fled in 1801 and his only training is as a rally driver count for nothing. He is heir to the Georgian throne.

The envoys hope to restore a constitutional monarchy. Others argue that Eduard Shevardnadze should be brought in to rule the republic and lead it through the difficult economic reconstruction which lies ahead. The search for a strong man is an indication of the failings of the fledgling parliamentary democracy in Georgia.

In October 1990 the Round Table/Free Georgia coalition won a decisive victory in parliamentary elections. They stood for Georgian independence from Moscow and a programme of economic and social reforms, drafted by the World Bank, aimed at the restoration of capitalism. They were also committed to retaining the autonomy of the South Ossetian and Abkhaz areas.

## Government

In May 1991 Zviad Gamsakhurdia, head of this Round Table government, was elected President by an overwhelming 86% vote. This exercise in "popular democracy" and anti-Stalinism should have delighted the West in their drive to restore capitalism throughout the region.

Eight months later the imperialists stood quietly by and allowed that same government to be overthrown in a military action, without so much as a critical comment.

During his period in power Gamsakhurdia had indeed broken many election pledges: he abolished the autonomous status of the South Ossetian Oblast, postponed local elections, muzzled the press and arrested political opponents. He carried out none of the promised reforms, political or economic. His opponents declared him mad, referring back to a report of a Stalinist Psychiatric Institute which labelled him insane in the late 1970s.

The opposition who seized power,

when Gamsakhurdia fled after a two week siege of parliament, is made up of many of his former allies in the Round Table government, plus two organisations who have formed the Military Council. They have formed a Consultative Council led by Tengiz Sigua, and plan to restore the Constitution of 1921, carry out a series of privatisations and land reforms and call new elections in the spring.

They appeared to have successfully defeated Gamsakhurdia and his base of support in the west of the country, and are in the process of consolidating a unified military power. This is no easy task, as the opposition itself is based on two separate, frequently rival, forces.

On the one hand a rebel section of the national Guard which split from Gamsakhurdia after his failure to sufficiently oppose the August coup, and on the other the *Mkhedrioni*, a paramilitary political organisation led by Dzhaba Ioseliani. Ioseliani is an intellectual who had been thrown into jail by Gamsakhurdia last year for organising opposition to the restrictions on the press.

## Authority

The provisional government has to try and place every paramilitary group under the authority of the military council and incorporate them into a unified army, national guard and interior ministry.

This will involve disarming many political groups which have devel-

oped over the past two years. The level of arming of such groups led one western journalist to comment that "in a sense, the civil war is just a continuation of Georgian politics by other means".

The leaderships of the contending groups in the Georgian power struggle are largely made up of intellectuals, poets, sculptors and academics, who were at one time or another in opposition to the Moscow bureaucracy. But they are in reality intimately connected to the Georgian bureaucracy, even those who were not actual members of the old Stalinist party.

## Popularity

Gamsakhurdia was known for, and his electoral popularity largely based upon, his thirty years of opposition to Moscow. His credentials were tarnished somewhat by the fact that in the 1970s he was arrested, recanted his opposition and informed on many other oppositionists. Once in power he put forward a very reactionary form of nationalism, and attempted to mobilise mass support, particularly amongst the peasantry and the urban middle classes, for his chauvinistic plans. In his first speech to the parliament he preached:

"The Almighty has imposed a great mission on Georgia... the day is not far off when Georgia will become an example of moral greatness for the whole world."

The first act of this divine mission was to overthrow the autonomy

*Georgia's President Gamsakhurdia was overthrown in a military coup last month. Workers could take no side in the conflict between two wings of the fragmenting Stalinist bureaucracy, writes Clare Heath.*

of the South Ossetians. Later Gamsakhurdia's moral greatness led him to propose that land reform and citizenship must be based on those people who could trace their ancestry back to residence in Georgia in 1801. That may include the regal playboy from Marbella but would exclude 1.5 million Georgian residents.

Gamsakhurdia did not only base himself upon the popular support of backward sections of the peasantry, however. He ensured that he was firmly backed by the old Georgian Stalinist apparatus, and incorporated much of the old KGB (50% of whom went over to his payroll). They, along with many of those who are now in the provisional government, backed him all the way. They granted enormous powers to the presidency.

## Oppression

They turned against him not because of his anti-democratic acts, or over the oppression of the South Ossetians, but only after he failed to oppose the August coup. In the aftermath of the coup Gamsakhurdia tried to disband his own National Guard because it had split and a rebel faction refused to subordinate themselves to the Republican Ministry of Internal Affairs.

At this point the opposition to Gamsakhurdia grew to include a significant section of the armed forces and the political opposition consolidated itself. A series of armed clashes in August and September failed to resolve the situation of dual power within the Georgian bureaucracy. At that time Gamsakhurdia still had considerable popular support amongst sections of the masses and the opposition were unable to topple him.

The creation of the CIS gave them the pretext they required to step up their action and finally kick him out. Gamsakhurdia had refused to participate in the CIS.

## Opposition

On the day of the formal dissolution of the USSR the opposition began a siege of parliament, apparently after Gamsakhurdia refused to take up their call for his resignation. During the two week siege there was far less popular support for Gamsakhurdia than in the past, and the opposition clearly felt strong enough to finally kick him out.

In addition to the heads of the two military groups, the Provisional Government includes such characters as Prosecutor General Vakhtang Razmadze (Prosecutor

from 1985 until November 1991), Minister of Defence Major General Levon Sharashenidze (Georgian Military Commissar from 1982) and Minister of Internal Affairs Roman Gventsadze (Tbilisi police chief in the late 1980s).

This bunch of Stalinist bureaucrats have used the excuse of a rabid nationalist president to reimpose their rule and are offering to take over the job of restoring capitalism which they think they can do better than Gamsakhurdia. The power battle which looks to be resolved at least for the next few months, has resulted in one elected dictator with close links to the old Stalinist apparatus being replaced by another set, this time of military dictators, who promise democracy in the future.

## Interests

Both sides in this battle have the same class interests. Neither represent the interests of the workers and peasants of Georgia, far from it. Both sides are seeking to restore capitalism in a way which preserves their own privileges, either as part of the military-administrative bureaucracy, or as part of the intelligentsia which co-existed with that bureaucracy for so long.

The silence of the imperialists and the leaders of the CIS in the face of this anti-democratic military seizure of power is deafening. Yeltsin and his imperialist backers have argued for democracy throughout the former USSR and eastern Europe. The campaign of the imperialists for the restoration of capitalism has taken the form of promoting parliamentary democracy with the promise of market reforms and consumer goods for the masses. But when this democracy breaks fire, they are more than happy to sanction totally anti-democratic means to install a government they believe will be more effective.

The interests of the masses in Georgia have not really been voiced in this latest battle. There have been demonstrations in support of Gamsakhurdia in certain areas, demonstrations against him in others, and of course the massive vote for him in the presidential elections. But these do not represent an organised and collective view of the workers or of the peasants.

## Dictatorship

Workers and peasants in Georgia had no interest in the defence of Gamsakhurdia's parliamentary dictatorship, but neither do they gain from the victory of the provisional government. In opposition to both sides of the inter-bureaucratic struggle the workers need to have their own forms of representation. Unions and workers' councils are needed which can represent them through working class action.

A party which fights for leadership of such organisations on the basis of class independence and a socialist programme is urgently needed in Georgia as in the rest of the states that formed the USSR. Such a party must fight against the restoration of capitalism through the proposed privatisations, the parceling up of the land and the introduction of imperialist joint ventures. It must defend the right of the South Ossetians and the Abkhaz to self-determination and separation. It must fight for the interests of women in opposition to the growth of reactionary Christian ideology.

To carry this out the workers and peasants of Georgia need their own workers' government and a revolutionary leadership. The last thing they need is to replace a deranged poet with a playboy prince. ■



Pro-Gamsakhurdia militiaman



# Workers Party in crisis



Workers Party leader De Rossa

**T**HE LEADERSHIP of the Workers Party had intended the annual *Ard Fheis* in May to adopt new structures and rules to complete its "reform" into an open electoral party. Since 1989 Proinsias De Rossa had led it to abandon its programme of nationalisation, guaranteeing a central role to the market, rejecting the class struggle, and recognising a need for "some kind of" defence integration in the EC.

In mid-January, however, a consciously Stalinist faction—with eight out of forty votes in the National Executive—came out against De Rossa's package. Led by Des O'Hagan from Belfast and based mainly in the North, they voiced their opposition to the re-organisation proposals. They spoke against the domination of the party by its seven Dáil deputies and rejected the proposed automatic admission of new recruits without ideological criteria or probation. They insisted on holding to the party's aim of "revolutionary democratic socialism". This particular muddled formulation was kept in the party constitution by a narrow margin last year, despite all the other conference decisions which ratified De Rossa's nakedly parliamentary "programme for democratic socialism".

For all his rhetoric about the "central-

ity of the class struggle", however, O'Hagan's actual politics have never gone beyond the limits of left reformism, different only in degree from De Rossa's.

De Rossa had welcomed the prospect of the traditionalists decamping after the next *Ard Fheis*. But when they indicated their determination to dig in, he called a special party conference for 15 February to push through a new constitution.

Crucially, De Rossa is seeking a mandate from that conference to stand down the entire membership and make them apply for readmission on the basis

of support for the new constitution! Another special delegate conference would then take place in March to push through the organisational changes.

De Rossa has attacked the "old guard" for clinging to "the discredited Leninist concept of organisation, in which the principle of democratic centralism is used as a device by a small self-appointed political elite to manipulate the party and frustrate the democratic wishes of the majority of the members".

His own purge manoeuvre, however, is typical of the *bureaucratic centralism*

which he, O'Hagan and the rest of the party leadership have imposed for over twenty years—with the backing of the Official IRA for the first decade!

At least one significant local leadership, in Waterford, has come out against De Rossa. They reject the new constitution as "parliamentary dictatorship" and defend the existing regime as Leninist "democratic centralism".

Bureaucratic Stalinist control of the organisation has guaranteed that there is no voice within it capable of offering a genuinely Leninist revolutionary socialist alternative. Individuals in it who genuinely seek to develop a class struggle programme for socialism must turn away from the parliamentary aspirations and bureaucratic manoeuvres which are the core of its reformist politics.

They should begin to organise action and solidarity on the key issues of the day for the working class and the oppressed—fight for work for all, resist the cuts, oppose trade union collaboration in wage restraint, stand clearly against censorship and political repression, and campaign for unrestricted access to divorce, contraception and abortion.

But they must also decisively reject O'Hagan and co., who offer warmed-up Stalinism in the guise of Leninism and empty phrases about "class struggle", while in practice capitulating to the bosses at every turn. For twenty years they have been courting electoral respectability and grovelling to the trade union bureaucracy. At the same time they have supported state repression against the republican movement—from which they themselves came—while defending instead the "rights" of the reactionary Unionists.

The alternative to both the "old guard" and De Rossa will only be found if members of the Workers Party open up to democratic debate and discussion with all tendencies on the left. Genuine revolutionary socialism cannot be rediscovered anywhere *within* the Workers Party. The rich legacy of Bolshevism and the Communist International under Lenin have been perverted and distorted beyond recognition by nearly seventy years of Stalinism—and the Workers Party has systematically retailed those distortions and poisoned its members against any form of open programmatic debate and discussion with those who opposed Stalinism—from the left.

The Left Opposition in the USSR and internationally in the 1920s, and the political legacy of Trotsky from the 1930s are the *only* unfalsified tradition of Bolshevism and Leninism. Without turning to that tradition, represented by the Irish Workers Group and the LRCL, genuine anti-capitalist militants in the Workers Party will find no way out of the cynicism and despair which O'Hagan and De Rossa's "alternatives" will inevitably breed. ■

## CONNOLLY A Marxist Analysis

by Andy Johnston, Edward McWilliams and James Larragy

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## United reformists?

**T**HE IRISH capitalists hate the Workers Party. And so do their loyal friends in the Labour Party and affiliated trade unions. Media smear campaigns against the Workers Party have focused on its links with the Stalinist regimes and its origins in the Official IRA.

Bosses and Labour leaders alike cannot stomach the "left" economic arguments of the Workers Party which threatened to revive radical criticism of capitalism just when Labour had given up such rhetoric.

The old rivalry between the two parties has a political basis. The Workers Party had split in a radical left reformist direction from republicanism and turned to working class politics. At the same time Labour, from 1970, was abandoning its "radical" 1969 programme and preparing to enter coalition with Fine Gael in 1973. For twenty years the two parties have competed as left reformist versus reformist in the elections.

The antagonism deepened as the Workers Party captured bureaucratic positions in the white

collar strata of the unions. The union bosses, traditionally tied to Labour, even went so far as to sack Workers Party officials who were elected to public office, while continuing to allow sabbatical leave to officials elected as Labour candidates. The Workers Party's response was, typically, to go the High Court where action is pending.

In 1989 the Workers Party outstripped Labour's vote in Dublin, but Labour has a much greater influence nationally. Polls show Labour's support up to 16% over the past year, with the Workers Party's national average down from 6% to 4%. This is despite the widespread perception that the Workers Party has played a much more prominent parliamentary role recently. At present the Workers Party has seven seats and Labour 16 out of 160.

These rivalries, quite bitter during elections, are a scandal to the minority of workers who have at least taken a step to the side of their own class by rejecting Fianna Fáil populism. Their instinct is that Labour and the

Workers Party should unite. And it is a sentiment widely echoed in the ranks of the Workers Party. De Rossa's overtures for co-operation with Labour, however, have been coldly spurned by Dick Spring who echoes all the indignation of the bourgeoisie at the "undemocratic" regime and supposedly "communistic" elements of the Workers Party.

The tiny and timid "Labour Left" grouping in Spring's party naively seek co-operation and fusion with the Workers Party as the great historic hope of the left in the labour movement. This grouping, led by Dáil deputy Emmet Stagg, has now pledged to break the Labour whip if (more likely when) Spring tries to enter a coalition government after the next election (probably in 1993). The Workers Party for the moment is claiming to be opposed to coalition, but De Rossa's trajectory is undoubtedly towards Spring's position—that entry to a capitalist government is merely a tactical question.

In reality there is no fundamental difference in the respec-

tive brands of *class collaboration* of the two parties. Separately or together they will sell us out. But whilst workers have illusions in one or both of these parties, and in so far as workers believe that a united party would be in their interests, they must demand that any such "party of the working class" reject in principle any coalition with, or support for governments of the openly bourgeois parties.

Such a party must be democratically open to all currents and publications committed to struggle for the needs of the working class, with the fullest internal democracy, and the full accountability of all leaders and parliamentary candidates.

Workers should fight in such a party to turn it out to struggle, to the test of action and to the test of governmental office. In the face of such tests the reformism of either party, or even a united party, will be exposed in its class collaboration. The best workers must then be won to a real workers' party, a revolutionary Leninist Trotskyist party! ■



# Unity in action to smash the fascists!

FOR YEARS the SWP insisted that fascism was not a problem in Britain. Its leaders dismissed Anti-Fascist Action's (AFA) attempts to mobilise against the fascists in the East End as at best a waste of energy, at worst "squadism". Less than a month before the launch of the ANL MkII it claimed that "the far right is growing all over Europe except in Britain".

But the success of initiatives like AFA's September carnival in Hackney, followed by the successful protest against Le Pen's visit to London, obviously convinced the SWP's leadership that there were members to be recruited from anti-fascist work.

At first the SWP sponsored the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) but they were obviously unhappy with playing second fiddle to ARA's established leadership—a coalition of black nationalists, Stalinists and *Socialist Action* supporters. Hoping that ARA would tolerate a division of labour, the SWP decided to set up the ANL with the "narrow perspective" of isolating the hard-core "Nazis" from the "soft racists".

There is nothing wrong with a specific united front campaign to smash fascism. The problem is that several already existed, and had been mobilising thousands to actively oppose the fascists.

The SWP made no attempt even to contact the organisers of these campaigns. When AFA distributed a press release calling for a united anti-fascist movement at the ANL launch, SWP organisers attempted to rip it up and threatened to call the House of Commons Sergeant-at-Arms!

Following this inauspicious launch, things have gone from bad to worse. ARA has been built as a cross-class, legalistic campaign involving hordes of (white) trade union bureaucrats, liberals and church figures. But since the ANL launch ARA's most outspoken representatives have decided to attack the ANL by playing the "black leadership" card. The ANL, they claim, is an attempt by white organisations to dictate the agenda of struggle to black organisations. In reality what they object to is the fact that the ANL is a rival alliance of celebrities, footballers, Liberal and Labour politicians.

This is a conflict of the SWP's own making. It relaunched the ANL on exactly the same pacifist, popular frontist basis as ANL MkI. It deliberately avoids a commitment to "No Platform for Fascists", in order, as Peter Hain has explicitly said, that the

*The SWP's relaunch of the ANL has hardly been an unqualified success. It has split the anti-racist movement, and seen the SWP subject to allegations of racist assaults. Rarely can a tactic have misfired so badly.*

*Colin Lloyd chronicles the painful birth of the ANL MkII and spells out an alternative way forward.*

movement will provide an alternative to punch-ups on the streets.

On the Asylum Bill demonstration in London in January the SWP managed to inflame the divisions further. Determined to make sure the ANL hit the headlines the SWP got involved in a jostling match with the Anti-Racist Alliance as to whose banner would "lead the march".

According to the march co-ordinator, Kevin Blowe of London NUS:

"ARA had been asked to march at the front of the demonstration with other anti-racist organisations, black community groups and refugee groups. However they were persistently denied the right to raise their banner and were jostled and kicked by supporters of the ANL, whose contingent was predominantly made up of members of the SWP. On at least two occasions I tried to get the ARA banner in its proper place and was also pushed around and kicked. In effect control of the front of the march had been wrested from its organisers and taken over by the ANL." (NUS London Press Statement)

battleground to give out leaflets. The participants were virtually all SWP members.

The ANL has refused to organise a national democratic structure. You can affiliate but you cannot send a delegate to the steering committee or propose action. The political platform and activity of the ANL has been decided in advance, behind closed doors, in a cabal between the self-appointed leaders.

Instead of this caricature of democracy we need labour movement based committees in every town and an accountable national steering committee of a united anti-fascist organisation.

Workers Power will continue to build AFA and mobilise for the ANL's activities on their merits. We call for all labour movement bodies and local anti-fascist campaigns to affiliate to AFA. Where unions, trades councils and other bodies are asked to affiliate to the ANL they should do so only on the basis of "No Platform" and demand representation on a national steering committee.

We will place no conditions on unity in action other than the commitment to drive the fascists off the streets. With the ANL's celebrity sponsors continuing to desert, with the SWP publicly accused of assault and with the ANL not only failing to build a mass movement against fascism but merely contributing to divisions in the struggle, SWP members should call their leaders to account and fight for a united anti-fascist campaign. ■



IT IS true that with creeping old age you begin to lose your memory. But surely it can't have happened to a whole generation of anti-fascist fighters at once!

The SWP's claims that the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) single-handedly beat the National Front (NF), that it did so without organising local groups, that it was a fine example of the united front tactic in practice, must have left many participants scratching their heads.

The ANL relaunch statement talks of the rise of the fascists' electoral support in 1977. What the statement doesn't mention is the growing movement of anti-fascist committees in towns and cities which had been fighting the fascist presence for five years before the birth of the ANL. Many of these affiliated to the ANL, or sponsored it. Others correctly refused to join. Nevertheless there were ANL groups not only in every town but also in colleges and workplaces. The idea that local groups were a hindrance to the anti-fascist struggle is a self-serving rewrite of history.

At Lewisham in 1977 a coalition of anti-fascist groups successfully put "No Platform for Fascists" into practice. The importance of Lewisham was that thousands from the local community joined the anti-fascists to prevent the fascists from marching through their area.

This showed the need and the possibility for a national anti-fascist united front.

But the SWP diverted the anti-fascist movement into the blind alley of a popular frontist campaign

which was not committed to denying the fascists a platform.

The ANL was committed to making propaganda about the fascists and to drawing as many people as possible into "active opposition". SWP members today claim that the ANL was committed to "No Platform" and implemented it. This is a fallacy. Alex Callinicos made the SWP position quite clear at the time: "Opposition to all immigration controls and 'No Platform' must be opposed as policy positions because if adopted it would kill the ANL dead."

The SWP consistently refused to fight for "No Platform" within the ANL. The ANL was designed as a propagandist alliance with pop stars, liberal politicians and football players, most of whom would never have

put their name to a call to drive the fascists off the streets. It included, and was designed to retain, at all costs, racist members of the Labour and Liberal establishment. The Young Liberals were part of the SWP's "united front", and the Young Conservatives were consistently targeted by the ANL's affiliation drive.

Consequently the ANL became a roadblock to implementing "No Platform".

What did the growth of the ANL mean in practice? It built some very successful carnivals attracting lots of youth to Rock Against Racism. There is nothing wrong with that in itself. But led by the SWP such carnivals became an alternative to mass mobilisation to stop the fascists.

The fascists marched unopposed

## Lessons of the ANL MkI

*The relaunch of the ANL was accompanied by various claims about the history and record of the original campaign in the 1970s. Jane Potter, a participant in the major anti-fascist demonstrations of that period separates fact from fiction.*



Lewisham 1977: No Platform means driving the fascists off the streets

through London the day after the first major carnival. The carnival organisers were "too tired" to do anything about them.

On the day of the second carnival in Brockwell Park there was clear evidence in advance that the fascists planned to march through Brick Lane, the main Asian area in the East End. The ANL and SWP were approached but refused to mobilise the Carnival against the fascists. In the end only 200 people defended Brick Lane. The NF marched while a hundred thousand were drinking and listening to bands on the other side of London.

Today the SWP claims that these tactics were responsible for the almost total eclipse of the British fascists.

This is wrong. The idea that fascists will crumble in the face of protests junks the lessons we have learnt from Cable Street, Lewisham and the rest. In 1979 it was primarily the Tories that cut the ground

from under the fascists feet by playing the race card in the election.

Many SWP members were involved in physically stopping the fascists but this was confined to a small number of combatants and was completely separate from the ANL.

Leicester 1978 was a classic example. The SWP refused to get involved in the local trades council mobilising committee to stop the NF march through Leicester. The ANL's separate campaign was to "make Leicester a Nazi Free Zone". This meant assembling in the town centre and giving out leaflets, well away from where the fascists were grouping. Meanwhile small bands of SWP members tried to stop the fascists.

The policy of "No Platform" is the central action any anti-fascist united front has to carry out. Fall short of this and we will be destined to stand on the sidelines with our banners making powerful protests but watching the fascists grow in strength and influence. ■



# APPEAL TO MILITANT SUPPORTERS

*Militant has split. Its long-time political leader Ted Grant has left, taking an unknown number of supporters to form a new organisation. Reportedly the majority of Militant's sympathising groups internationally have sided with Grant. Only three years after publishing Grant's writings as the "unbroken thread" of continuity with Lenin and Trotsky, Militant members now face the task of a thorough re-elaboration of Trotskyism.*

Dear Comrades,

The split with Ted Grant, while as yet a small event in terms of numbers, is a major event for every Trotskyist. It calls into question the whole history and politics of the Militant.

There are only two ways of explaining what has happened. *Either* Grant was essentially correct in his perspectives, strategy and tactics but veered away from applying them in the recent period. *Or* the method itself was always wrong and led to Grant's errors.

In short, has the "unbroken thread" snapped only recently? Or was it broken long ago?

Clearly the Militant Editorial Statement (24 January 1992) is an attempt at the former explanation. But it will not stick. Unless you now begin an honest re-examination of the politics which have guided your organisation for decades further splits and disorientation are guaranteed.

## Labour and the workers

The "Scottish turn" is a case in point. The whole rationale given by the majority for the need to launch an organisation independent of the Labour Party is the emergence of new, special conditions. These are the deep economic crisis in Scotland, heightened discrediting of Labour, radicalisation of workers outside the workplace through the massive non-payment campaign and the need to prevent left-talking nationalists from reaping the benefits of this situation.

There are differences between this situation and the class struggle in the rest of Britain. But aren't the Scottish conditions precisely the conditions in which Grant's old schema was intended to work? Crisis, the radicalisation of the masses in struggle, the reformist Labour leaders found wanting in the eyes of workers: wasn't it in this situation that Grant expected the masses to "turn to their old organisations and transform them"?

According to Grant's schema we should now be witnessing a mass influx into the Scottish Labour Party and its left transformation. Instead we are witnessing a movement away from Labour towards the SNP. The expected influx and transformation of the Labour Party—the rationale for decades of strategic entry work—has failed to happen.

And why should we expect anything different in the rest of the British labour movement, once the crisis and radicalisation of the workers reaches the same intensity? It is necessary to base our tactics on the actual development of the class struggle, not on barren schemas. The experience of the class struggle in Scotland and indeed Britain as a whole should teach us that Grant's whole perspective was false from the outset.

The fact that you are now having to orientate to new layers of youth, and new issues, in the rest of Britain proves that we are not just dealing with a Scottish phenomenon.

This is also the case internationally. In Spain, Greece and South Africa new layers have failed to turn *en masse* to the existing organisations. The blinding need for an independent revolutionary organisation to save radicalised youth from alien class parties is a fact which Militant's sympathisers are having to confront.

You have yourselves described Grant's counterposition of "the organised workers" to the anti-poll tax struggle as: "based on an abstract rather than a living working class and on a mechanical schema of the way workers will move into mass struggle". These very words describe Grant's whole political method. Yet you have advanced no criticisms of that method, nor accounted for where and why Grant went wrong.

On the contrary, we are told that Militant is only engaged in a "detour through which we can strengthen the forces which in the future will lead the transformation of the Labour Party and the trade unions".

# Now the thread has broken . . .

This ignores the question: why have the masses of radicalised workers and youth taken that "detour" in advance of Militant and in complete contradiction to the schema around which your organisation has been built? And why, during a decade of tumultuous struggle has the Labour Party been transformed *rightwards*?

Events prove that there is nothing inevitable about the masses turning to reformist parties, still less about their transformation into vehicles for socialism.

The remnants of Grant's method can also be seen in Militant's impressionism about the level of support for an independent Marxist candidate in Scotland. It was Taaffe's supporters who told us that Mahmood's 2,600 votes were "a victory for socialism". This simply parrots Grant's old, one-sided, perspectival optimism as an antidote to his new-found pessimism. Neither is a useful guide to action.

Militant must deepen its criticism of Grant's politics and turn to the flexible but principled tactics advanced by Lenin and Trotsky. The indispensable instrument of revolutionary action remains the revolutionary party. In building the party, and broadening its support, entrism as a short term tactic remains valid in particular circumstances. So does consistent fraction work within the reformist parties. But entry work must at all times be carried out around revolutionary politics.

Because he believed it was necessary to remain within the mass parties whatever the cost, Grant's method brought with it systematic adaptation to their politics.

## State and revolution

The most serious adaptation in Britain was to the parliamentarist reformism of the Labour Party. As Peter Taaffe has written in *Militant*:

"We have proclaimed hundreds, if not thousands of times that we believe that, armed with a clear programme and perspective, the labour movement in Britain could effect a peaceful socialist transformation."

The whole course of the British revolution was tied to the schema of a left wing Labour government facing undemocratic resistance from the employers. But this is only one potential scenario for a revolutionary crisis. Of course the leaders of Militant have accepted that if such a government faced the threat of a coup it would then be necessary to arm the workers. But they always fail to make this clear in advance. They have refused to state that, however the situation unfolds, British workers will in the end need their own militia, workers' councils and an insurrection led by a revolutionary party.

Leon Trotsky himself once had to deal with exactly the same position that Ted Grant made his hallmark. Trotsky's reply should be taken on board by every Militant supporter:

"... heroic promises to hurl thunderbolts of resistance if the Conservatives should 'dare', etc, are not worth a single bad penny.



Ted Grant

It is futile to lull the masses to sleep from day to day with prattling about peaceful, painless, parliamentary, democratic transitions to socialism and then, at the first serious punch delivered at one's nose, to call upon the masses for armed resistance . . . the masses must be prepared for such action mentally, materially and by organisation. They must understand the inevitability of a more and more savage class struggle, and its transformation, at a certain stage, into civil war."

Fifty-two years after Trotsky's death Militant comrades should realise that a halt to such "prattling" is long overdue. Even according to the opportunist logic adopted in the past, there is no longer any reason to hide the need for a workers' council state and the armed insurrection. You can be expelled from Labour now for supporting a strike, let alone the armed seizure of power.

While such positions remain you will be in a contradictory situation: a more and more decisive tactical departure from your past without a break from the method, perspective and programme that underpinned it.

## Opportunism: then and now

Yet on certain questions a re-examination has already begun. Militant's moves to take up questions of social oppression are welcome. Our organisation, as some of you will remember, was a target of vicious gay-baiting, which was tolerated for years in the LPYS. We were ridiculed as ultra-left because we opposed the call to "democratise the police" and instead advocated black self-defence supported by the labour movement. At the same time we remained staunch opponents of the feminism, black nationalism and petit bourgeois separatism of the other opposition groups in the YS.

So it comes as a shock when we now see the political concessions you are making to black nationalism and feminism. There is nothing wrong with independent party pa-

pers and organisations for work amongst the oppressed. That is not our criticism of *Panther*. But when *Panther* decides to sanctify Malcolm X and uncritically praises the original Black Panthers (see pgs 8-9) it is making a dangerous concession to the separatist mood of its periphery. This is the same method of adaptation that was applied in the past to the reformist consciousness of militant workers.

Likewise with the debate which has broken out over the question "do men benefit from women's oppression?" Because of years of failure to take women's oppression seriously as a question for Marxist theory, a section of Militant comrades has clearly become disarmed in the face of the feminists' arguments.

We only have to look at the difference between your former statements about Scottish nationalism and your current ones (e.g. *Militant*, 13 December 1991) to see the danger of a 180 degree flip in the face of new political questions. The launching of a separate political organisation in Scotland is a serious adaptation to the developing mood of separatism amongst Scottish workers and youth. The need for an organisation separate from the Labour Party is not in question. But what is the justification for a separate national organisation for Scottish revolutionaries? As your 1979 British perspectives correctly pointed out:

"It would be utterly reactionary to form 'Scottish Marxism' or 'Welsh Marxism'."

Without a serious accounting of the past, and a complete methodological break with Grant the danger is that Militant's politics will simply be made up of a series of impressionistic responses to the demands of the new milieu. This will inevitably lead to fragmentation and political disorientation as different comrades come under the pressure of different sections of the working class. Instead Militant comrades must return to the genuine method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme.

## The transitional method

In re-elaborating transitional demands under current conditions you must break from the false understanding of the role of the programme which has informed your practice in the past. You have seen transitional demands as a bridge between the existing consciousness of the workers and the demands that must be put on a future Labour government.

Trotsky himself insisted that the programme was a bridge between the *needs of the current struggles* of the workers and the need for revolution. He explained to the American Trotskyists in 1938 that this would mean, for example, advocating a workers' defence guard against strike-breaking and proto-fascist gangs, even though the mass of the American workers were miles from this level of consciousness. The consciousness of the masses would often lag behind the objective necessities of the day. The demand was correct because it was *necessary* in order to defeat the scabs, whether the mass of the workers realised it or not.

Despite the fact that it is no longer exclusively focused on a Labour government, Militant's programme remains effectively a minimum programme: transitional demands cut off from their strategic purpose.

At present Militant's leadership has made a half-hearted break with Grant. It is storing up further splits and disagreements, nationally and internationally. To those Militant comrades still prepared to give their leaders the benefit of the doubt we say: work with us in a new atmosphere of collaboration in the unions, amongst women, lesbians and gay men and in anti-racist and anti-fascist work. Demand a full accounting of the past and an orientation to discussions with Workers Power and the LRCI. ■

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## Welling 22 February

# Close down

# BNP rats' nest!

**STEVEN TYLER** is the British National Party's (BNP) election candidate in Bermondsey. This is what he told a skinhead mob assembled to break up a march against racist attacks in the area last August:

"All blacks are muggers. All blacks have got AIDS. We want them out of our country, we want white power. What we have seen in Southwark today is exactly the same as what we've seen in Russia over the past week. People power, white power, BNP power."

A few miles down the road in Welling stands the BNP headquarters. Officially styled a "bookshop", it is the centre from which filth like this is produced and disseminated. It is a rats' nest where the BNP's racist thugs organise attacks on black people throughout South East London.

The BNP's marches, paper sales, public meetings and highly visible barricaded HQ are all means by which they aim to mobilise the lowest of the low into a force to terrorise black people and smash the organised labour movement. That is the kind of people power they want. We cannot afford to let them even begin to build it.

There should be no right to free speech for fascists. They must be given no platform whatsoever.

Fascism is distinct from the other bosses' parties because of its commitment to building an active, mass movement directed against black people and the working class' organisations. It thrives on the streets. Its members are made to feel confident by military-style parades, by being organised into street-fighting hit squads, by being tough enough to give the "commies" a good battering.



A motley crew of fascist thugs at Bermondsey, August 1991

Fascism is committed to the destruction of free speech. It is committed to the denial of all democratic rights. It aims to deny black people the right to live and workers the right to organise. If it is allowed to gain strength on the streets, through its marches, its paper sales and its rallies, it stands to enlist more and more of society's desperate dregs into its murderous gangs.

In the face of this type of threat the black community and the work-

ing class need an unambiguous response—smash the fascists before they get strong enough to smash us. And this means physically taking on the fascist thugs, giving them no quarter when they try to meet, march or sell.

Not only is this necessary for the defence of black and white working class organisations and communities. It also demonstrates to those sections of the white working class attracted to the fascists' "easy

solutions and tough-guy image, that the hard men of the BNP are far from invincible and that the left, the black communities and the workers' organisations mean business on the streets.

We urgently need a united working class campaign to drive the fascists off the streets and close down their HQ. The Rolan Adams Family Campaign has called a demonstration on 22 February to protest at the presence of the BNP in Welling. In nearby Thamesmead Rolan Adams was killed in a racist attack launched by fascist-influenced local youth—the so called Nazi Turn Outs. His family has called the demo to mark the first anniversary of Rolan's death.

There is a clear link between the open presence of fascist groups in South London and the rise in racist attacks. Of course, racism is widespread and does not need fascism before it erupts in petrol bombings, beatings and harassment campaigns.

But the BNP has made its "defence of the Thamesmead white community" the main thrust of its local activity since Rolan's murder. One week after he was killed the BNP put out a leaflet claiming "The white community in Thamesmead is under attack". It organised a march last May past the very spot where Rolan died.

Tragically the counter-demonstration to the fascist march allowed itself to be side-tracked into mere protest. The futility of just protesting at the presence of the BNP was shown in Bermondsey in August. The BNP was able to mobilise a motley coalition of local white workers, Milwall supporters and its own hard-line thugs to seriously threaten the security of a demonstration against racist attacks.

This month we should launch a concerted drive to close down the BNP HQ.

Does that mean calling on the police and courts to shut it down? No. Reliance on state bans against fascists is self-defeating. The same police murder, beat and systematically harass the black community. The same courts are the ones that send black youth to jail and borstal in enormous numbers.

The capitalist state can never be an adequate protection against fascism for the very reason that fascism is the last ditch defence of the capitalist state itself. Time and again this century the guardians of law and order have turned to the strutting morons of the fascist gangs for protection.

No. We must flush out the rats' nest ourselves.

We need an organised fight to physically deny the fascists a public presence and to make their bookshop unusable. We need a concerted drive to counter the racist arguments the BNP shop churns out in print.

Against racist attacks, the labour movement needs to give full support to black people who defend themselves. We need to organise defence squads for every meeting and march. Inside the BNP rats' nest lie hundreds of their pamphlets and papers. Here you can read how the Jews were never massacred in Nazi Germany, how "all blacks carry AIDS", how the workers are best served by the outlawing of trade unions.

Join the March to protest at the BNP's presence and commemorate the anniversary of Rolan Adams' murder. Be prepared and organised to defend yourself against fascist attacks, and to carry out some pest control against the fascist HQ. ■