

Workers' power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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RIOTS, POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT

We need a workers' answer to the crisis!



REMEMBER THE election? John Major keeping a straight face while he told us all the recovery was around the corner? It was a lie. And now the government and the bosses are openly gloomy about the disastrous state of the economy.

Experts deliver their learned verdicts on why Britain is witnessing so many riots, why crime is soaring, why tension on the streets and at work is visibly increasing. But they all hedge around the basic truth about the cause of all these things—capitalism.

The system that the bosses' propaganda machine told us had triumphed over "communism" is in a mess. And in the words of one economist: "No one has the slightest idea how to escape" (Robert Skidelsky, Chair of the Social Market Foundation, 23 July)

- The facts cannot be hidden:
 - Unemployment stands officially at just under 2.7 million, nearly one in ten of the population.
 - The real figure, forgetting twenty-one Tory fiddles in the method of calculation, stands at 3.8 million—over one in eight without a job!
 - High street sales in June were down compared to the year before
 - Manufacturing output fell in the first three months of the year
 - Gross Domestic Product fell by 0.5% between February and May
- Britain is still in recession and the recession could go deeper. There is no recovery. And it is workers who are being made to pay, through high interest rates, job losses, cuts in pay and

now a deep public spending cut, including a possible cut in unemployment benefit from a year to six months after losing your job!

Major's economic strategy was to put Britain into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism at a high rate to force uncompetitive industry to attack their workers or go to the wall. To keep the pound's position in the ERM interest rates have to stay high. All this is designed to meet Major's number one target: the fight against inflation.

What it means in practice is that one out of every eight workers has to be unemployed, companies have to close, young people cannot borrow the money to buy a house. All to keep the currency stable! In effect the bosses have attacked the workers and gone to the wall! Is that the sign of a rational system? Is it in the interests of the vast working class

majority of British people? No.

And what is more it is no solution either. As soon as any government removes the obstacles to economic recovery inflation will rise, imports and borrowing will rocket, a new generation of yuppies will get rich quick and at the end of it all there will be another round of unemployment, closures and cuts. Capitalism cannot escape from this cycle. Rising unemployment and falling production are not the result of a lack of natural resources or of people able to work, they are the result of the capitalist system's total inability to rationally plan production and the allocation of resources.

There is a working class answer to the cycle of boom and bust, and it has nothing to do with the capitalist economic tinkering and inter-imperialist rivalry advocated by Labour's new pro-capitalist leader, John Smith.

- Every firm declaring redundancies should be nationalised and put under the control of the workers.
- A massive public spending programme should be launched, financed by taxing the profits of the rich and the renationalisation of all privatised industries. That way millions of houses, schools and public facilities could be built and millions of new jobs created.

- Workers should demand a sliding scale of wages linked to inflation, worked out and overseen by committees of workers and consumers. Linked to this there should be price-watch committees in every town to combat profiteering and price rises.

- Instead of the anarchy of the market, production should be planned to meet human needs nationally and internationally.

If all this seems utopian and light years away from what is possible now, it is because of years of unnecessary defeats and retreats led by the union bureaucrats. It is because even the Labour left no longer believes in, or dares to talk about, socialism. And we can see the results for a whole generation of youth: left to rot on the dole, in second class schools and on third rate housing estates they are ignored unless they are prepared to petrol bomb the police and set up barricades.

We can start the fight for a workers' solution to the economic crisis by resisting the bosses' solutions now.

Redundancies, closures and the whole management offensive at work should be met with strike action. Wherever possible strike action needs to progress from the "one day protests" that the bureaucrats always

want into all out strike action that is designed to win.

The unemployed should organise: we need a national unemployed workers' union to turn the dole and Housing Benefit offices into areas of struggle, not hell holes of misery and helplessness.

A mass working class youth movement needs to be built to turn the anger into the kind of action that can deliver a real blow to police harassment and racism.

The Labour Party is not interested even in talking about a fight, let alone organising one. The union bureaucrats are too busy "merging" with each other to lead the fight. Their big cars and fat salaries mean more to them than our jobs, wages and services.

The trade union and Labour leadership is committed to making capitalism work, even though the capitalists themselves have "no idea" how to solve their crisis. Only socialism can solve the endless cycle of recession and permanent unemployment that modern capitalism brings.

That's why we need a new, revolutionary workers' party to co-ordinate the fight—from the street barricades to the factory and office floor. Join Workers Power in the fight to build that party. ■

Once again working class youth have taken to the streets to fight the police. Estates in Bristol, Burnley, Blackburn and Huddersfield have gone up in flames and there is every sign that more will follow.

Providing crank explanations of why these uprisings occur is just about the only use the Tories have for professional sociologists these days. And so the papers are full of theories about the origins of the risings.

There conspiracy theories that put it all down to the activities of a bunch of middle class ex-students called Class War. There are the religious bigots and Tory rednecks who blame it all on the decline of the traditional family. Others blame the media for encouraging the participation of "outsiders". Concerned Labour politicians occasionally stop calling for more police on the beat long enough to mention the fact that poverty and deprivation might have something to do with it, quickly adding "that's no excuse for violence".

But whatever the explanation, few respectable politicians now offer a solution to the rioting. It is fast becoming an accepted part of the British summer.

As the *Independent's* editorial put it: when the vast majority of British people don't experience the rioting, or the conditions that produce it: "who cares?"

There is a clear explanation for the riots. Capitalism condemns an increasing minority of the working class to a miserable education, a life of unemployment in estates

Why riots happen

with poor housing and no amenities.

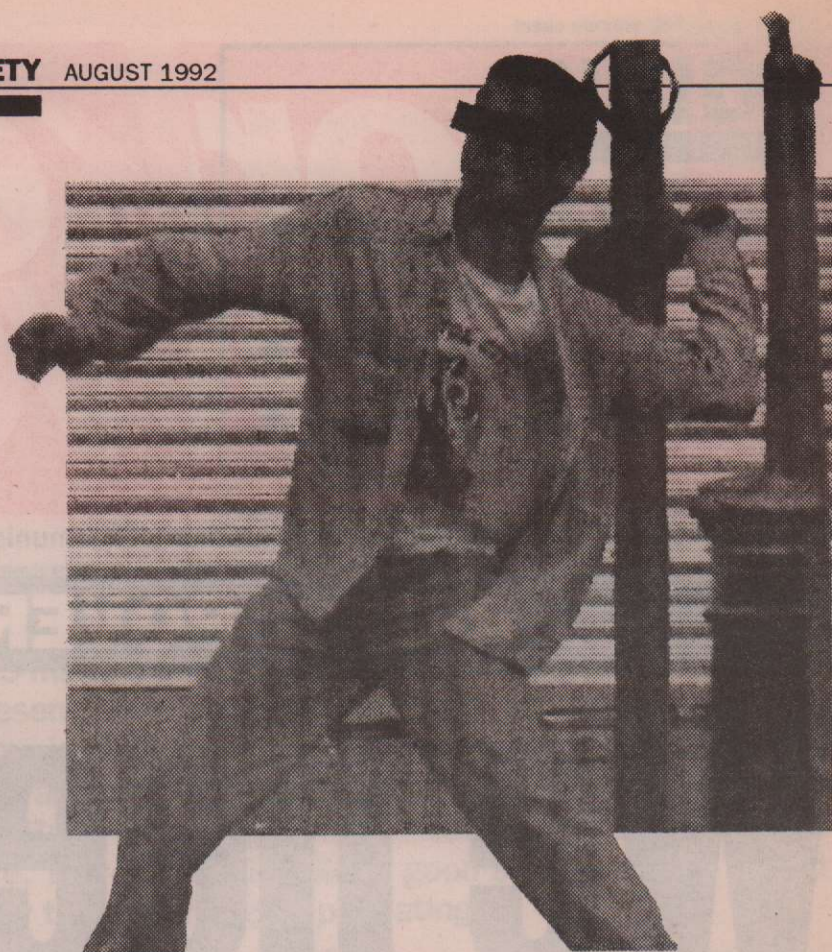
An integral part of coping with this section of the working class is "containment policing": working class youth are criminalised, and a minority even join organised criminals who provide the only flashy alternative to a life of poverty and boredom.

And while it is the daily experience of black communities in the inner cities, white and mixed estates, inner city or suburban, all now know the reality of contain-

ment policing.

What it means in practice can be gleaned from an eyewitness report of the start of the Brackenhall riot in Huddersfield:

"First the police beat up a black youth from the area in the town centre. Then a local pub was reopened with a 'community police-woman' behind the bar! She called in the CID claiming to have seen drug dealing, and they arrested a black guy in the bar, strip searched him in the car park, found nothing but put a hood over his head and



beat him up anyway. Then the confrontation developed..."

The problem with rioting is it can't solve the problem of policing or poverty.

In the early 1980s the state allocated millions to the inner cities to shore up self appointed "community leaders" and buy a breathing space. The youth called it "riot money". Overall it did little except line the pockets of a few careerists and ensure the police force time to hone its riot control skills.

Today the effects of the Poll Tax have reduced the money available. Estates now have to compete with each other for improvement grants in a grotesque poverty olympics called the City Challenge. One resident of the Hartcliffe estate in Bristol, which rioted on the very day it lost its City Challenge bid, commented: "now they will pour money in".

But only a week later Major announced his spending freeze. For the moment at least there will be no riot money.

As for the police, a spontaneous street uprising is only a temporary and inadequate solution.

Many commentators have remarked on difference between the recent riots and those of the early 80s when riot squads went in gung ho, maiming youths with CS gas bullets and landrovers.

Raids

But they have got cleverer not softer. Learning from Broadwater Farm, when they carried out Gestapo style dawn raids after the fighting had died down, they now concentrate on taking pictures not breaking heads during the riot itself. Once the energy is lost a wave of arrests and video evidenced convictions is inevitable.

Socialists do not advocate rioting. It is a dead end. Wherever it breaks out we have to organise to channel the fighting into defence of the community against police at-

tack, impose working class self discipline against acts of random violence, attacks on firefighters and ambulance staff, and against racism.

In recent "white riots" there have been racist attacks on black shopkeepers. Hartcliffe rioters expressed the view that St Pauls (a black community) was getting too much council money and only a riot could divert some of it to their estate.

We have to use the experience of the battles with the police to make inroads into this racism. Increasing numbers of white working class youth are getting the same treatment as black youth and youth from the nationalist ghettos of Northern Ireland.

Harassment

We are fighting not just the same enemy, but an enemy who can only win if we are divided. There should be no such thing as "outsiders" in a working class community except for the coppers.

Faced with constant police harassment we have to fight for the right of black self defence, and the self defence of any working class community. We have to fight for the local labour movement to support and organise that defence - and yes that means violence where necessary.

At the same time we have to fight for the immediate demand of police off the streets and the release of all prisoners without charge.

In the long run we have to rebuild the fighting strength of the workers' movement to give the youth a different model of rebellion than a Saturday night joyride or torching a local shop.

And to the concerned legalists of the labour and trade union leadership who condemn the risings of the working class communities we have to say: try living there yourselves!

ANTIFASCISM

Which way forward?

OVER THE last six months the various anti-fascist and anti-racist organisations have had their strategies put to the test. In January the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) launched the Anti Nazi League (ANL). Prior to that various anti-racist and black organisations set up the Anti-Racist Alliance.

Both organisations have flopped. Neither has created a mass anti-fascist or anti-racist movement and both have made serious mistakes. The ANL has replayed its popular frontist politics of the 1970s but without the forces that existed in those days. It has been nothing more than an SWP front. Where it has mobilised people against the fascists it has generally directed them away from confronting the BNP. It has rejected calls to base itself on "No Platform for Fascists".

Leadership

ARA on the other hand has deliberately confined itself to bureaucratic lobbying. While declaring itself in favour of black leadership it has done little in the black communities to mobilise youth against racism or fascism. Instead its self appointed black leaders have done the rounds of union conferences enlisting the sponsorship of the top brass officials. It too has refused to commit itself to No Platform.

For the building of a workers united front specifically against fascism, Workers Power supports Anti-Fascist Action. This campaign, as against the other two, is clearly committed to No Platform for Fascists and a working class orientation. Despite commanding smaller forces its record in confronting the fascists stands head and shoulders above ARA and AFA.

Nevertheless, the existence of ARA and ANL has posed problems for AFA as it has tried to develop itself into a national organisation. In addition to Workers Power the main

organised forces in AFA include the anarcho-syndicalist Direct Action Movement and the libertarian Marxist Red Action. Because of this the danger has always existed that AFA will cede the terrain of public campaigning activity to ARA or the ANL and simply concentrate on the implementation of No Platform by a much smaller number of activists.

This is a danger Workers Power has fought against, mostly successfully. But it is an approach which Red Action has argued for explicitly:

"While Anti-Fascist Action no longer has a franchise, this development is to be welcomed, for by absolving us of total responsibility we can now concentrate on the underlying problems previously identified by us that everyone else will prefer to ignore.

With some of the main organisations literally fighting each other for the centre ground, running duplicate campaigns, AFA can lay an undisputed claim, without fear of challenge, to represent the militant wing of the anti-fascist, anti-racist movement, which only came into being as a consequence of the success of AFA's initiatives." (RA No.62)

This is wrong and dangerous. It is true that AFA's work forced the ANL and ARA to do something. But it would be wrong to say, let them get on with their activities while we just act as the militant wing.

Action

Fascism must be beaten by a united front of working class organisations committed to action. AFA, despite its hard work, remains small. We need to build it. And building it means challenging the ANL and ARA for leadership of the anti-fascist struggle.

To do this means that AFA must take seriously the public mobilisation of its forces for public anti-fascist events. There must be big AFA contingents with banners, plac-

ards, leaflets on such events letting the ANL and ARA members know that AFA exists, cannot be ignored, and is challenging their strategy openly.

This can't be done by restricting AFA's activities to a limited number of attempts to implement No Platform. AFA must continue with a twin-track policy of building for mass working class action to smash the fascists where possible, and doing it with the forces available where necessary.

All of this takes on a practical meaning when we consider that AFA failed to mobilise for the demo against David Irving's revisionist seminar in London on 4 July.

Mobilisation

True, the forces around the Ad Hoc committee mobilising this event are unreliable. True there was confusion around intelligence for this event. But this is no excuse for not mobilising. There should have been an AFA contingent to make clear to everyone of the several hundred who demonstrated that AFA was prepared to lead a mobilisation against Irving. Workers Power, which mobilised its forces for the Irving demo, condemns this mistake. It must not be allowed to turn into a general abstentionism on other anti-fascist events. If it does then it will cut AFA off from many potential recruits to its ranks.

A further problem is the development of groups outside London using the AFA name. Whilst most are principled anti-fascist campaigns a few are acting completely at odds with the correct strategy hammered out by London AFA. This has led to arguments about who has the "right" to use AFA's label.

Both can be solved by making sure AFA is built as a democratic national organisation with an agreed platform and strategy for fighting fascism.■

Anti-Fascist Action UNITY CARNIVAL '92

Sept 6th Hackney Downs

With **New Model Army, 25th May, Capital DJ Tim Westwood** and much, much more!

The Unity carnival is a free festival, to make it a success we need sponsorship from union branches, political parties, solidarity organisations and community groups etc.

For information contact

AFA, BM Box 1734, London WC1N 3XX

EDITORIAL

Labour leadership farce

JOHN SMITH'S victory in the Labour leadership election was knocked off the newspaper front pages by David Mellor's affair with an actress. Not surprising really, because the election was a non-event. The result was assured in advance. There was no left wing bogey figure. The contest between Smith and Gould had all the dynamism of a bottle of sleeping pills.

Every Labour Party supporter who calls themselves a socialist should consider what this lame campaign, and its outcome, reveal about the state of their party.

Labour has suffered a historic fourth election defeat. The Kinnock strategy of turning the party into a pale pink version of a Tory party failed miserably as a means of winning office. The Tories' share of the national vote held up despite the recession, and despite the conflict in its own ranks that had led to the ditching of Thatcher.

Yet Smith and Beckett's leadership campaign did not face up to these problems. Their solution to Labour's acute crisis of electoral credibility is to carry on where Kinnock left off. They plan to make the party even more right wing than it was at the last election. They intend to package all this in a less "machismo" style—hence Beckett and five women on the front bench. But the substance will remain a party that makes no pretence of having anything whatever to do with socialism.

A newcomer to the Shadow Cabinet, Marjorie "Mo" Mowlam expressed this in her judgement on why Labour needed to "modernise":

"In 1945, trade unions and Labour gave people an aspiration that there was something there for them. In the 1990s, it does not. In fact it probably has the exact opposite effect."

The conclusion is straightforward. The new Labour Party will not be socialist and the link with the trade unions must undergo a fundamental transformation.

This is John Smith's agenda for the next eighteen months. And he is virtually assured of success.

The Labour left is no longer a problem. They were kept out of the leadership election by an undemocratic rule, but Smith's commanding victory in the Constituency section of the electoral college showed that the left no longer has a meaningful base in its former stronghold. In the parliamentary party the Campaign Group of left MPs is tiny. No left wingers got into the Shadow Cabinet. Even the so-called soft lefts, like Clare Short, got nowhere.

Now the Shadow Cabinet is full of "modernisers". The one former Bennite, Michael Meacher, is no longer a left in any sense, but even he has paid the price of his past by being demoted to Overseas Aid spokesperson in the new team. On the other hand the top jobs are in the hands of Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and other Smith allies.

Such people, along with the failed leadership candidate Gould, will be more than willing to push through new reforms, and could even become the forces for breaking all Labour's links with the working class should the current reforms fail to bring victory in the next general election. Tony Blair is forthright about his assessment of the past and vision of the future:

"There is general agreement that [the reforms] need to go further. We came only this far because we failed to define Labour's modern identity sufficiently. Nobody any more is defending the status quo, in terms of our policy development, image or organisation."

In other words it's all change—for the worse.

In practical terms the onslaught of the new regime is taking two forms. One is a continuation of the purge begun by Kinnock. All those who stand against Labour's new "image" are being kicked out.

More important, in terms of the whole future of the party, is the assault on the party's trade union link.

John Smith, a GMB member and close associate of GMB leader John Edmonds, drew back from the immediate abolition of the block vote for the selection of parliamentary candidates. This should not lull

anybody into thinking he's a friend of the unions. Edmonds decided, and Smith agreed, that it would be far better for the party to set up a committee to review the whole union/party relationship than go for piecemeal changes.

It is clear that Edmonds and other union leaders will work with Smith to weaken the trade union link over the next year. Central to this will be the changes already planned by Kinnock: abolition of the electoral college; abolition of the trade union vote in the selection of candidates; reduction of the block vote from 90% to 70% in the annual conference.

In addition we will see the transformation of the union link altogether to make it compatible with the project of a "social democratic" style mass membership party. It is a move that opens up the prospect for the fundamental transformation of the Labour Party into a European style social democratic party or even—should Labour lose the next election—an openly bourgeois "liberal" party.

This latter prospect remains remote. But the fact that Labour is offering the Liberal Party talks on electoral reform, and that the Liberals have set aside four hours of their next conference to discuss their relationship with Labour, are signs that it is no longer a completely unrealistic prospect.

To socialists in the Labour Party we say, draw the conclusion from the last thirteen years of failure: break with reformism! Reject the ideas of the fools and hypocrites on the labour left who console themselves with fantasies about a future "socialist" Labour government.

Become revolutionary socialists and help us build the revolutionary party as an alternative to Smith's Labour Party. ■

Published every month by the Workers Power Group:

BCM 7750, London WC1 3XX

ISSN 0263 - 1121

Printed by Newsfax International Ltd:

Unit 16, Bow Industrial Park, Carpenter's Rd, London E15

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!



workers power

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.....Trade union

New section for LRCI!

THE INTERNATIONAL Executive Committee of the LRCI met recently in Brussels. It welcomed a new section into the League. Workers Power (New Zealand/Aotearoa) has been in discussion with the LRCI as a fraternal group for over a year, and agreement has been reached on the fundamental positions of the League, including the Trotskyist Manifesto.

In addition we have reached agreement on the analysis of key international developments in the class struggle—the collapse of Stalinism, the growth of nationalism, international perspectives—and on the necessary tactics and strategy for revolutionaries to advocate in this period.

The addition of a new section is

an important step forward in the League in a difficult period for revolutionaries, and is testimony to the importance of the internationalist perspective adopted by the League and its sections at the first two Congresses.

We will continue to seek discussion and debate with leftward moving groups around the world with a view to principled fusion on the basis of agreed perspectives and programme.

Latin America Fund launched

The IEC agreed to launch a new drive for funds, specifically to finance the work of our sections in

Latin America.

The increasing repression in Peru and the continuing economic assaults of neo-liberalism throughout Latin America make it essential that our interventions can be sustained materially as well as politically.

We ask comrades who are sympathetic to the LRCI to dig deep in their pockets for this essential work, in order that the strength of our political ideas can continue to be translated into interventions in the fight to resolve the crisis of leadership throughout the world.

Donations should be sent to the LRCI, BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX, Britain. (Cheques payable to Trotskyist International and marked Latin America Fund). ■

TODAY THERE is an urgent need to organise militants into a rank and file movement. On the one hand the trade union leadership is dominated by right wingers who not only sabotage action that takes place, but who have a systematic policy of avoiding action at all costs.

On the other hand, in the face of the Tory and bosses' offensive, workers all over the country are fighting back. Despite a national meeting agreeing to a 4.1% pay deal in Nalگو, local government workers around the country are in dispute over pay and jobs. Despite UCATT spending more time with lawyers sorting out its chaotic record of financial mismanagement and bureaucratic chicanery, building workers in the Joint Sites Committee (JSC) have organised a series of militant and victorious strikes.

Evidence of this sort of rank and file militancy is everywhere. Revolutionary socialists need to give a clear direction to this militancy. We need to organisationally link up the militants so that the JSC, the OILC, the Tube Workers' Action Group and various local strike and stewards' committees become a real co-ordinated network.

The task this network should set itself is not merely to swap information, important as that is, but to fight for co-ordinated action, to ensure that solidarity action can be delivered, to combat the treachery of the bureaucracy and to fight to turn the unions themselves into democratic, class struggle organisations. And, after the decade of defeats that the workers' movement has suffered, such a rank and file movement needs to tackle head on the task of rebuilding workplace organisation.

Building such a rank and file movement will take a lot of work. But any self-respecting revolutionary socialist knows it is work that must be done. Any opportunity to begin to organise the militant minority needs to be taken full advantage of.

It is a measure of the complete and utter bankruptcy of the "revolutionary socialist" tendencies who

Organise the rank and file

ran the Socialist Movement Trade Union Conference, which was held on 18/19 July in London, that they made no attempt to begin this work.

About 250 militants attended the conference. The organisers sought to ensure it would be a worthless talking shop. It had been designed as a pressure point on the Labour government everyone had expected would be in office. With the Labour government's failure to materialise, this whole strategy was in ruins, or so you would have thought.

But no. The conference proceeded as planned; an audience for Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill with a few workshops on management practices thrown in. The representatives of workers in struggle, past and present, like Ronnie MacDonald of the OILC, and Mickey Fenn of the dockers, gave brilliant speeches.

But the SMTUC is not designed as an organisation that can embody the lessons learned in these struggles in an active, co-ordinated fight in the unions.

Workers Power set out from the beginning to challenge this. In a leaflet and resolution to the conference we argued for it to be a working conference, and to set itself the tasks of initiating a future delegate-based conference of rank and file groups like the JSC, Broad Lefts, OILC etc. that can co-ordinate rank and file organisation against the new realist strategy of the bureaucrats.

Under pressure from Workers Power, plus activists from the Republican Marxist Group and the WIL, Socialist Outlook and Organiser put aside their childish vendetta against each other long

enough to draw up their own resolution on a "rank and file initiative".

Don't hold your breath, however. Socialist Outlook has reported that the SMTUC steering Committee is only "investigating the possibility" of a conference of "Broad Lefts". Perhaps this would include the Nalگو Broad Left that did virtually nothing to combat the bureaucra-

cy's sell out of the national pay claim. Or the Broad Left in the CPSA, which specialises in clearing the way for the right wing's takeover of the union every few years.

Whatever the SMTUC "investigate", it won't be the initiating of a rank and file conference committed to challenging the grip of the

bureaucrats.

The SMTUC is an object lesson in what happens when small groups of centrists delude themselves about their influence by allowing themselves to become footsoldiers for left bureaucrats and Labour politicians who are unable to build a real base of their own.

The SMTUC is a "united front" only with the shadow of left reformism. It fails abysmally to organise fighting militants. Members of the Socialist Movement should keep up the pressure on its lethargic leadership to actually build a rank and file network of militant workers.

Far more important however, is the task of linking up those in action now, to hammer out a common strategy to overcome bureaucratic betrayal and start a co-ordinated fightback. ■



Support Burnsalls strikers

THE BURNSALLS dispute in Smethwick is in its second month and still solid. The twenty five workers, the majority Asian women, are on strike for better pay, conditions and union recognition.

The management continue to employ scab labour but have lost important orders and are unable to complete most of the previous work.

The workers, together with trade unionists from many local workplaces, have organised meetings and collections. Now Birmingham Trades Union Council is planning to step this up to get pledges of regular levies.

The women are the backbone of the strike, keeping up the regular picketing. Inderjit Kaur told *Workers Power* why the issue was so important to them:

"We were paid very low rates—£2 an hour—and had to work seven days a week, 65 hours a week. He

forced us to do overtime. The work was hard, even harder than the men, but he paid us less money. The conditions were bad with no health and safety, no canteen, no cleaning. We had no gloves or overalls. He treated us like animals."

The electro-plating industry is extremely dangerous because of the chemicals involved. Workers suffered bad scarring to their hands, and developed chest and stomach complaints. The strikers all say they are feeling much healthier, despite the difficulties of being on strike!

Many similar factories have a poor record on health and safety, but

Burnsalls is one of the worst. The GMB, the union that Burnsalls workers have joined, wants to win recognition at the plant and spread this to other factories as well. The union and strike committee are holding a rally and march in the area in August.

Winning the dispute at Burnsalls is vital to make the unionisation campaign a success. It means stopping the factory working, stopping supplies and orders and defying the law against secondary action if necessary—despite official GMB policy of keeping within the law.

Many orders go to other small, non-union plants. But some go to big employers like Jaguar in Coventry, and if workers there refused to handle Burnsalls goods this would strengthen the strike.

"If we win, this will help other workers like us in small factories" says Inderjit. "It is important for other workers to support us". ■

Messages of support and donations to:

Joe Quigley, GMB, Will Thome House, 2 Birmingham Road, West Midlands, B63 3HP. Phone 021-550 4888

SHEFFIELD NALGO Residential workers' strike

ONE HUNDRED and seventy Nalگو Residential Workers in Sheffield are taking industrial action. The action is in support of their claim for a council-wide career grade for residential work.

The recent Howe Report, carried out in response to a series of revelations about abuse in residential care, recommended well trained and professional residential care workers if such incidents were not to be repeated. But Sheffield council has ignored the report's implications for residential workers' pay and career structure. Workers operating a 9 to 5 only go slow (normally they work a round the clock rota) were threatened with a pay stoppage.

The next day (14 July) an all out strike of Residential Social Workers began, but was called off after a proposal to go to conciliation. Management remained intransigent as long as the 9 to 5 action continued and the strike was quickly restarted.

Despite management attempts to split the strike with small concessions to different departments the strike remained solid and was

spreading at the time of writing.

In response management have begun to harass those in residential care, ordering them to move into other hostels. In one case residents barricaded themselves inside to stop this intimidation.

Faced with an initial lock-out by management the workers occupied the hostels, to which management responded by locking fire doors.

Yes, you can rely on your friendly Labour council to act like the biggest Tory boss there is when it comes to beating workers out on strike.

A strike committee has been established, with regular mass meetings and daily activists' meetings. Sheffield residential social workers are asking for support and donations from all trade unionists.

For details and to send messages of support/donations contact:

Residential Workers Strike
c/o Sheffield Nalگو,
54 Pinstone Street,
Sheffield.
Telephone: 0742 736307

TGWU betrays Liverpool dockers

"THEY'RE TRYING to do to us now what the Port of London Authority did to the Tilbury lads three years ago."

That is how a dockers' shop steward described the new bosses' offensive in the port of Liverpool. In July dockers responded with a four day strike which was declared illegal. The 400 dockers only returned to work on 24 July after receiving letters from the management threatening instant dismissal. The dockers were to be immediately replaced by scabs.

Against a background of an official unemployment rate of 15% in the region, and without any support coming from the TGWU, the majority of the strikers decided to call off their action.

The strike started when 24 dockers refused to work with agency labour brought in by the Pandora shipping company. Since the aboli-

tion of the National Dock Labour Scheme in 1989 900 jobs have gone in Liverpool. Pandora looked set to cap the jobs massacre with the re-introduction of casual labour. So the dockers walked out.

Pandora got a court injunction against the strike, but the dockers defied it. Instead of backing this action the TGWU stabbed the men in the back. Full time official Jack Dempsey effectively ordered the strikers back to work and then washed his hands of the dispute. The union even denied port stewards access to the local TGWU offices, which dockers' subs over many years had paid for.

Now the stewards at the forefront of the dispute have been derecognised by the employers. Victimisations could follow. So it is urgent that the dockers prepare to hold the line and take up a campaign in Liverpool against the offi-

cialists who betrayed them.

Ironically this struggle was fought in the same week as the twentieth anniversary of the dockers' finest hour: the release of the Pentonville Five and the effective defeat of Heath's Industrial Relations Act. The Liverpool dockers' initial defiance of the law was a fine way to celebrate this anniversary of working class struggle. The cowardly TGWU bureaucrats, who caved in when faced with the new anti-union laws, betrayed the memory of the 1972 strike. ■

For more information contact:
The Liverpool Port Shop Stewards' Committee,
c/o Merseyside Trade Union and Unemployed Resource Centre,
24 Hardman Street,
Liverpool, L1.

NHS

Strike against the cuts

THERE HAS been no let up in the jobs' slaughter in London's health service. The ward and bed closures prompted by the NHS internal market are going full speed ahead.

- At the London Hospital Trust in Whitechapel the Board want to cut 600 jobs and close three wards.
- At the Middlesex/UCH/Elizabeth Garret Anderson hospitals, management want to cut 150 nurses' jobs plus all the ancillaries at the EGA.
- In Riverside health authority 500 jobs are threatened and one major casualty department is to close.

In the internal market hospitals have to compete for contracts from health authorities and fund holding GPs. The result has been a massive fall off in patients referred to London Hospitals where care costs, on average, 45% more than in the rest of the country.

And the Tories are considering the even more radical Kings Fund proposals to close 15 London teaching hospitals before the year 2000!

Managers of threatened London Hospitals are bailing out of their high paid jobs like rats from a sinking ship. Alan Greengross, chair of Bloomsbury Health Authority, has resigned after overseeing the build up of a £19.5 million deficit. The Unit General Managers of the UCH and Middlesex have both moved themselves "sideways", out of direct responsibility for implementing the cuts. NHS workers are left to clean up the mess.

Fortunately a fightback has begun, although it has to overcome the traditional obstacles of sell-out

BY A COHSE SHOP STEWARD

union bureaucrats and confused "left wing" shop floor leaders.

Health workers at the Middlesex/UCH/EGA staged a one day strike in June. The COHSE newspaper could only bring itself to call it a "protest".

Workers at the London Trust held an angry protest outside the hospital on 23 July and are planning to strike on 30 July when the board meets to take its final decision.

After rank and file activists picketed a joint Nupe/Cohse/Nalco meeting of the union bureaucrats on 22 June, the officials were forced to bring forward a day of action

from September to 21 August.

Action on 21 August may be too late to save some jobs, but it is vital that health workers fight to turn it into a solid one day strike across London. Not only that. Militants have to argue for indefinite action wherever possible. Over the last decade health workers have been brought out on several one or two day actions, but none of these has been enough to decisively reverse Tory plans.

The bureaucrats' excuse for limiting actions to one day is that workers wouldn't take any more radical action. But this is a self fulfilling prophecy when the same bureaucrats spend the whole time

using the union machinery and the members' money to argue against strike actions and to sabotage strikes when they occur!

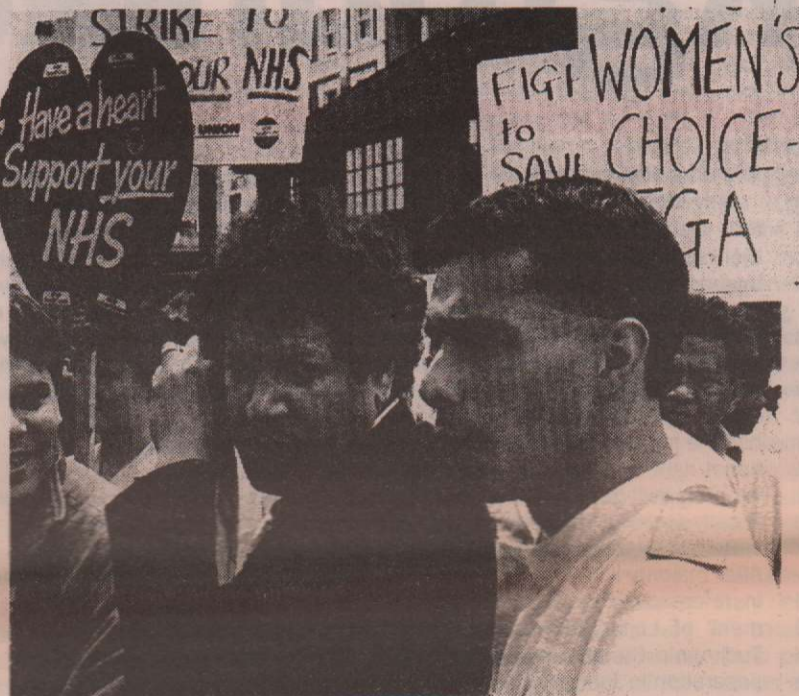
That is why it is urgent to build a London-wide rank and file strike committee, on a delegate basis. Such a strike committee could go out and argue for the necessary action, overcome the divisions between the different unions and between different sections of health workers, and organise flying pickets to ask for solidarity from non-NHS workers.

In this fight health workers will also have to overcome the misleadership of the Socialist Workers Party. The SWP has op-

posed fighting for all out action, claimed health workers cannot win without a national strike since "our dispute is with the government, not local managers".

They have substituted publicity stunt politics for organising effective action. At the Middlesex the SWP has fully supported the extension of the voluntary redundancy scheme to all workers, not just those on the wards affected!

Despite the obstacles there is a mood of anger, and a realisation that the coming struggle could be decisive. The 21 August strike should be made into the start of a real struggle, not an excuse for avoiding one. ■



London health workers fight back

RAIL Fight privatisation

BY AN RMT MEMBER

THE TORIES' White Paper on privatisation for British Rail is a threat to every railworker. Trainload Freight, Railfreight Distribution and Red Star Parcels are in line for wholesale sell off, along with the leasing or sale of many stations.

A slow-motion version of privatisation has been announced for the 24,000 miles of BR track and signalling equipment with the aim of creating a "publicly owned" track authority (Railtrack) and an, as yet unnamed, passenger service operator.

The latter will open the door wide to rival operators. Richard Branson is already making moves to take his Virgin empire onto the tracks. In terms of wages, conditions, jobs and integrated safety standards railworkers will be facing attack after attack as a result of these plans.

We can take no comfort from a report that revealed similar proposals on the Italian railways (FS) would mean 53,000 job losses by 1995. The signs are even more ominous in the wording of a recent BR letter to all staff promising to protect pensions and staff travel "privileges"—but not a word about jobs.

It is clear that BR's Organisation for Quality project was all about dividing the railway so it could be more easily butchered by the Tory errand boys and their rich paymasters.

Rank and file railworkers must not be taken in by RMT leader Jimmy Knapp's preferred parliamentary "opposition" to privatisation. This will consist of a few lobbies with the union's thirteen sponsored MPs. The Tories will laugh such "action" out of Westminster.

However, they will not laugh if railworkers begin to forge links for a united fight with mineworkers and other public sector workers faced with privatisation. NUM President Arthur Scargill seems keen to create links between his union executive and that of the

RMT, but the RMT are dragging their feet.

Here again the links are only likely to achieve anything concrete if they are forged at rank and file level.

Clearly the Tube Workers Action Group, based in London Underground where 5,000 jobs are under threat via the Company Plan (a smart term for privatisation), must play their full part in a united fight.

The current situation means that a rank and file organisation on the railways is not simply a good idea but an urgent necessity! ■

Alcan victory

LAST MONTH we reported on the Alcan strike at Kitts Green, Birmingham. This month we can report that after nearly six weeks out the 300 strikers have won a major victory.

The Alcan bosses launched a productivity and pay offensive. They tried to break the negotiating rights of the unions (TGWU, AEEU and MSF) in the plant. The solid all out strike has forced them to climb down.

Workers have won full union recognition rights, a pay increase, a 7.5% shift premium increase and the right to vote on what shift patterns they want to work.

This is an example of what can be achieved when workers stick together and wage a determined all out struggle against their bosses.

It shows up the union leaders' defeatist philosophy of New Realism for the pile or rubbish it really is. It is a lesson that every worker under attack in the public and private sector should heed—strike action can win! ■

CIVIL SERVICE

Defend all jobs

BY NUCPS MEMBER

Secretary of Companies House Campaign Committee
(in a personal capacity)

"A GOVERNMENT'S job is to govern, not to administer". Michael Heseltine's meaning is clear: the Tory fourth term will be used to destroy public sector jobs.

Workers at Companies House in Cardiff have been singled out as a testing ground for the new policies which aim to savage jobs and conditions through privatisation.

The *Competing for Quality* White Paper and the Civil Service Bill are designed to privatise and contract-out the vast majority of public sector jobs. The *Economist* estimates that £113 billion worth of civil service assets and £247 billion from local authorities can be sold off in this way. Graham Mather of the European Policy Forum reckons 500,000 civil servants can be got rid of by reducing Whitehall to a core of 10,000 policy advisors.

But the Tories and the employers are not even waiting for parliament to sanction this onslaught. With the help of Labour councils the jobs' onslaught is well under way. Labour controlled West Wiltshire district council has already declared plans to cut its workforce from 22,000 to just 200!

The tactics of management at Companies House show the way that attacks on public sector jobs will shape up. Despite years of productivity increases, Chief Executive David Durham has claimed that there is a crisis of efficiency. Although Companies House made £10 million

surplus last year, the office was still obliged to make cuts in order to fulfil an agreement with the Treasury. Forty jobs were lost in April and a further 70 to 80 announced at the end of July. Even more redundancies and cuts are on the agenda.

Heseltine then announced a "review" of Companies House, to consider the options of privatisation, major "contractorisation" or the status quo.

These threats are intended to damp down current resistance to job cuts or "market testing"—the process by which staffing, conditions and wages are driven down on the pretext of making the operation competitive with private contractors.

The message is: keep your heads down, comply with the cuts and you might avoid privatisation.

This has a lot of resonance among civil servants who are well aware that the private sector offers worse wages and conditions and fewer jobs. But to comply with the job cuts now is the surest way of being privatised in future. It will divide and demoralise the workforce, softening them up so that privatisation eventually appears not as a threat but as a potential saviour!

At a joint mass meeting of 300

members of the CPSA and NUCPS at Companies House, a vote for industrial action to defend all jobs was passed with just two abstentions. An amendment for an immediate one-day strike when the latest round of cuts is announced was defeated 60%-40%, after opposition from the branch officers.

Now that the announcement has been made, it seems likely that the unions will back the call for a one day protest strike on Friday 31 July.

A protest is good preparation to unite the ranks and reach out for support from the rest of the civil service, but it will not force management to relent. Only by shutting down Companies House indefinitely will the Tories be forced into retreat, which means building now for such a strike.

To do this rank and file members must be drawn into actively running the dispute. The cross union campaign committee is a positive move in this direction. But already it has proved cumbersome, not having executive powers and slowing down action. An elected strike committee is vital if we are to win a strike, force union leaders to support us and spread the action.

And at the end of the day jobs and conditions in the civil service will not be secured if disputes remain localised. A united fight of all civil servants is the way to force the Tories to shelve their plans completely. ■

THERE IS a famous Marx brothers' movie, *Duck Soup*, in which Groucho leads a tinpot Balkan nation—Freedonia—into a surreal and senseless war. The western media have seized on this image to describe the current war in Yugoslavia.

The *Duck Soup* comparison has served a useful ideological purpose for the bosses. It portrays the war as incomprehensible, tragic, surreal and ultimately something for the civilised world to view through the other end of a camera.

It hides the fact the imperialist countries are gearing up for a military intervention. They have already assembled a multinational navy in the Adriatic. The crisis wracked semi-colonial countries and rival Stalinist states of the region are also gearing up for a war, should imperialism fail to impose its "new world order" in Yugoslavia.

It is vital that workers everywhere understand the Yugoslav conflict. Appalled at the savagery of inter-ethnic violence, we should not allow it to obscure where the real responsibility for the crisis lies, nor the class lines that are being drawn.

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It was the "market socialist" strategy of the Titoite bureaucracy that gave impetus and a real economic basis to the resurgence of bourgeois nationalism in Slovenia and Croatia (see box). As the crisis of the Stalinist regime deepened it turned on national minorities such as the Albanians of Kosovo as scapegoats, subjecting them to an ever more systematic repression.

Then, faced with a massive strike wave in 1987-89 against the effects of the failure of "market socialism", the ruling bureaucracy turned to nationalist demagoguery, focusing the blame on the workers of rival republics, and in particular on the minorities within their own republic. Thus the reactionary projects of "Greater Serbia" and "Historic Croatia" were born, and secessionist war was inevitable.

Only if a truly internationalist working class party had been built in Yugoslavia could the present crisis have been averted. But instead the opposition to Stalinism was dominated by reactionary, religious and monarchist far-right organisations.

Once the collapse of Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe began in earnest, in 1989, the way was open for nationalist demagogues in all of the Yugoslav republics to begin to put into practice their own particular "national" road to capitalist restoration.

It is important to remember, from

The war in what used to be Yugoslavia continues, bringing a daily toll of death and destruction, hundreds of thousands of refugees and the threat of an imperialist military intervention. But what is the war about?

Paul Morris explains the changing aims of the participants, imperialism's dilemma and the class issues at stake.

Below right we reprint an article from **ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt** (Workers' Standpoint), paper of the Austrian section of the LRCI, outlining the roots of reactionary nationalism in Tito's brand of "market socialism".

YUGOSLAVIA

Background to ba

the very outset, that this includes the government of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia. Milosevic, no less than Nazi-apologist Tudjman of Croatia, is a product of the restorationist wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Essentially Milosevic's project was for a slow path to capitalist restoration and to prevent it taking the form of national fragmentation: not out of some remnant of internationalism, nor even a pragmatic desire for order, but because he realised that economically developed Slovenia and Croatia were being lined up as rich pickings for European imperialism. Under a restoration process which saw northern Yugoslavia rapidly assimilated into EC and Austrian imperialism, Serbia would be left to stagnate as a second rate semi-colony.

Though Milosevic's strategy was reactionary, and has clearly failed, it was not altogether ill founded. For the best part of a year US, British and French imperialism based their own strategy for capitalist restoration on the maintenance of a Federal Yugoslavia. The openly restorationist Federal government of Ante Markevich was to play the role of a Gorbachev in their schema—balancing between the rump of Stalinist hardliners and the demands

for nationalist separation.

Only German imperialism worked with an explicitly different strategy: the breakup of Yugoslavia and the incorporation of Slovenia and Croatia into an economic space dominated by Germany and its minor imperialist partner Austria. But it wanted to achieve this goal peacefully—not least because neither Germany nor Austria has the military power or the constitutional right to carry out foreign interventions independent of the more politically powerful imperialist countries.

Both utopias were cruelly shattered. After majority votes for independence in referenda, the Slovenian government of Lojze Peterle and Franjo Tudjman's Croatian regime declared separation in June 1991.

After a short but intense military clash the Yugoslav Federal Army was effectively expelled from Slovenia by local militias. That was the signal for the start of a full scale military conflict between Serbia and Croatia.

The military aims of the Milosevic regime were never to reconquer and forcibly reintegrate the whole of Croatia and Slovenia. They were a redrawing of the Federal borders in order to encompass the large Serbian minority population within Croatia and to ensure Serbian access to vital trade routes like the Danube (in the battle for Vukovar) and the Adriatic Sea (in the battle for Dubrovnik and the Dalmatian coast).

In the Serbian dominated areas of Croatia, guerilla attacks on the Croatian police by right wing nationalist led Serbian irregular forces (the Chetniks), followed by Yugoslav Army intervention, drove out the Croat communities and armed the Serbian irregulars for systematic combat.

But the Serbian offensive also took on a more "regular" character where it involved the fight for strategic Croatian dominated towns like Vukovar, Vinkovci and Dubrovnik.

The war aims of the Serbian-led Yugoslav Army were completely reactionary. They constituted a violation of the democratic rights of the Croat minority in the Serbian areas and of the right of self determination of the Croat people.

But Croatia's war aims were no less reactionary from the standpoint of the working class.

Tudjman, long before the war began, had managed to drive the Serbian population of Croatia's border regions into the hands of Serb nationalists with his virulent attacks on them, denying their minority rights.

Tudjman referred to the war years, when the Croatian nationalist Ustase

movement collaborated with the Nazi occupation forces, as "an expression of Croat aspirations". His war aims too were expansionist and pogromist, his nationalism encouraging the growth of Croatian fascist militias. Every objective account of the Serbo-Croat war reveals that atrocities were carried out systematically on both sides.

.....

The fact that the whole war was fought out on Croatian territory did not mean that revolutionaries had to side with Croatia. Neither did the slow restorationist policy of Milosevic mean workers had to side with Serbia against the fast-track restorationist Tudjman regime.

It was a war in which the workers should have taken no side. The workers should have struggled to carry on the class struggle against their own rulers regardless of the consequences for the war effort. Their aim should have been to turn the reactionary nationalist war into a class war, preserving the remnants of post-capitalist property relations and launching the struggle for a socialist solution to the crisis.

Does that mean workers had no right to defend themselves against the atrocities on both sides? No. The revolutionary socialist answer to this situation is to fight for the right of self-defence for civilian populations under attack or threat of pogrom. Wherever possible we fight for unified, multinational militias to do this. Where it is necessary to make a limited bloc for self defence with the armed forces or irregulars this has to be limited purely to the defence of the community itself and not to the wider military aims and pogroming of the armed forces of both sides.

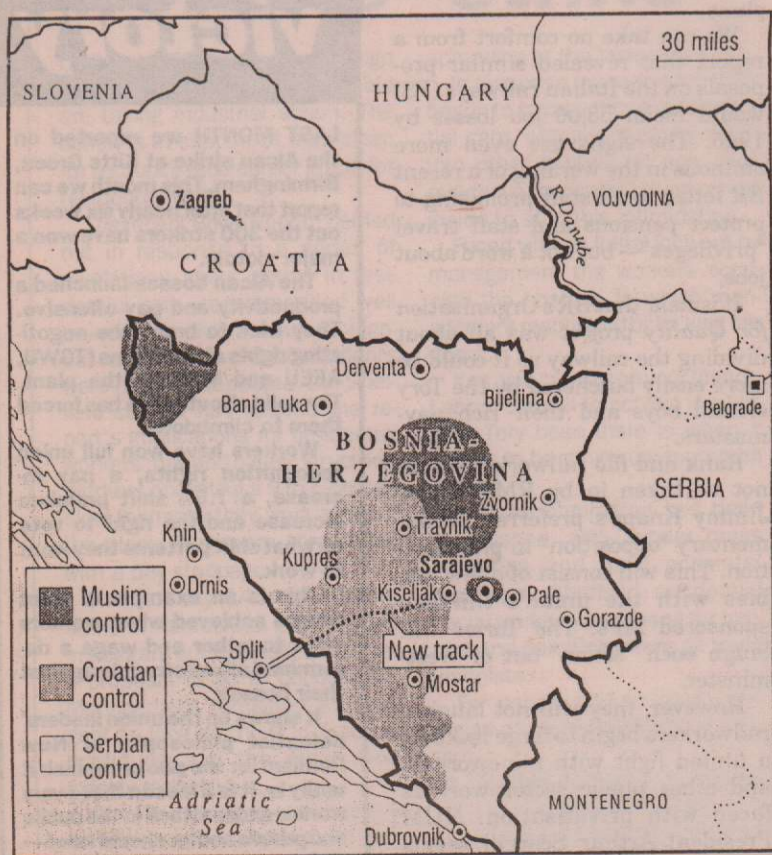
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Revolutionary defeatism in the Serbo-Croat war was far from a utopian goal. In July 1991 the Bosnian capital Sarajevo—then still at peace and part of the Serb-dominated rump Federation—witnessed a mass demonstration of 100,000 workers, led by soldiers' mothers, in the so-called insurrection for peace.

The war remained deeply unpopular in Serbia itself. Raw conscripts were sent to the front, led by reservist officers, while the military bureaucrats remained in the rear. By December 1991 an estimated 50% of reservists had failed to respond to the call up. In the capital Belgrade it was as high as 85%.



Sarajevo: civilian victim of sniper fire



The carve up of Bosnia

Seed

IN THE face of the ethnic bloodbath in the former Yugoslavia, many there are looking back longingly to bygone days when Tito personally directed the destiny of the country. At least then there was no "fraternal" war, Yugoslavia was held in high regard internationally and even in material terms things were better for most people. However, the present cannot be separated from the past. Tito's system was the incubator in which the germs of today's massacres were nurtured.

Tito was no revolutionary communist. His career at the top of the Yugoslav Communist Party (YCP) was bound up with the Stalinisation of the international communist movement. He became the party leader in Belgrade just as the Show Trials of the Opposition were being prepared in Moscow.

During the Second World War, he was a Stalinist and immediately after it he took monarchists and other representatives of reactionary pre-war Yugoslavia into the popular front government. However, his position was different from that of all the other East European CP leaders: he had his own army and already had his own bureaucracy. He was not so dependent on Stalin and was, therefore, able to protest against the one-sided trade deals with the Soviet Union and Stalin's other directives.

From the very beginning, the Yu-



Barbarism

victory for Serbia, for the moment policed and guaranteed by UN ceasefire observers.

But in Belgrade the anti-war opposition continues to grow. In June a students' strike and sit down protest against the war swelled to 20,000 strong and sparked a sympathy strike of higher education workers.

However the anti-war movement is beset by political misleadership. In Belgrade it is dominated by the Serbian nationalist opposition, supporters of Vuk Draskovic's Movement for Serb Renewal. Draskovic is a fast-track restorationist and a supporter of the Greater Serbia project, but he wants to get it through negotiations and imperialist brokerage rather than war.

In Sarajevo, the spontaneous pacifism of the mass demonstrations has brought to the fore peace movement

activists who see sanctions against Serbia and, if necessary, UN intervention as the only hope for an end to the bloodletting.

It is not certain whether there was direct collusion between Milosevic and Tudjman, but certainly secret meetings were held to discuss the "exchange of territories". This meant the turn to military conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a republic where Muslim, Serb and Croat minorities were massively intermingled.

Despite the intermixed character of its population, and the fact that there is as a result no Bosnian-Herzegovinian nation, this republic too had started out on a "national independent" road to capitalist restoration analogous to the Croatian and Slovenian examples.

Urged on by the EC and the US, the Bosnian Muslim leadership of Alija Izetbegovic attempted to impose independence on the 32% Serb minority of the republic through a bogus referendum which the Serbian population totally boycotted. In February 1992 Bosnia declared its independence from the Yugoslav Federation, handing Milosevic and Tudjman the excuse to launch the war to partition Bosnia.

In response to the declaration of Bosnian independence Serbian nationalists declared the "Serbian Republic of Bosnia" and launched the war whose military and political aims have become clearer as Serbian military victories have accumulated.

The whole of Eastern Bosnia is now virtually under Serb control, and is ripe for incorporation into a Greater Serbia. The inconvenience of large enclaves of Muslims meant that this Bosnian Serb republic could only be achieved by the driving out of large Muslim populations and the siege of large towns like Sarajevo and Gorazde.

At the same time, adding circumstantial evidence to the assertion that Serbia and Croatia struck a deal to partition Bosnia, the Croatian forces have massed in the south-west of the republic. They have brought into existence the Croat dominated "Republic of Herceg Bosna"—another fragment of Bosnia-Herzegovina ripe for incorporation into a Tudjman's "Historic Croatia": Already the Croatian military is constructing a road to link its new acquisition to the Croatian port of Split, via formerly impassible mountains.

Effectively Bosnia has been carved up between Serbia and Croatia. Only two small areas plus the capital Sarajevo remain under Muslim or multi-ethnic militia control. (See map)

This outcome of the second phase of the fighting, if it solidifies, will be another blow to the plans of imperialism.

Brokered by the US, imperialism's solution to the Serb-Croat conflict was to create a buffer zone in Bosnia, proposing the "cantonisation" of the republic into ethnically autonomous communities. This provided an imperialist sponsored recipe for "ethnic

cleansing", but it was designed to maintain Bosnia's borders as a republic and to maintain the Sarajevo regime as a diplomatic counterweight to Tudjman and Milosevic.

Now, with the exception of the battle for Sarajevo, analysts expect the Bosnian conflict to peter out as both Serbia and Croatia attain their expansionist aims.

In the meantime we have seen a marked shift in the strategy of the various imperialisms. In order to encourage the Slovene and Croat breakaways German imperialism surreptitiously armed the Croats and precipitated their recognition by the EC by unilaterally recognising these states even before the planned date of 15 January 1992.

Up to June 1991 the US, British and French imperialisms tried hard to preserve the Yugoslav Federation.

Now German imperialist strategy has triumphed, in the face of Milosevic's intransigence in fighting to construct not a united Yugoslavia but a rump Greater Serbian state committed to a snails' pace economic restoration process. US imperialism now realises that it must abandon the idea of the Yugoslav Federation as the vehicle for an orderly restoration process, and attempt to salvage what it can from the disorder which now reigns.

But the swing towards the German strategy has created new divisions amongst the imperialists about how far to get militarily involved.

The change in US policy has been the most dramatic. From advising against early recognition of Croatia it swung in March towards a policy of "collective engagement": joint action with the EC and the UN to impose the new world order on the Balkans. In June it demanded, but failed to achieve, UN permission to back up economic sanctions with military force.

In July French imperialism suddenly and unilaterally adopted a forward interventionist stance, sending in first Mitterand, then a detachment of military helicopters to Sarajevo.

Later in the same month the German parliament voted to send warships and surveillance aircraft to the Adriatic to assist the build up of EC military forces there, an unprecedented move for post-war German imperialism, whose constitution limits the role of the Bundeswehr to defence.

Britain by contrast remains the least enthusiastic about military intervention, insisting that effective intervention would bog down hundreds of thousands of troops and squander countless millions of pounds.

Meanwhile the UN, whose bureaucracy is facing huge deficits due to the failure of US and other imperialisms to meet their financial obligations, has begun to complain about the over commitment of its multinational blue beret forces to the region.

At present therefore co-ordinated imperialist intervention is limited to economic sanctions and the assembly of forces for a potential naval blockade against Serbia.

Military intervention could come in the form of an isolated and unilateral action by France, or from a co-ordinated US led attack—both of which would probably centre on Sarajevo.

It is important to understand that this might not immediately take the form of all out war.

The Serbian journalist Milos Vasic spelled out one likely course of events:

"The pressure points for likely action will be Dubrovnik and Sarajevo. The first move will be an attempt to transport food and medical aid to Sarajevo airport . . . Should Mladic's crowd on the hills be tempted [i.e. should the Serbian irregulars attack the planes - WP] the answer would be quick and firm. Protected by electronic countermeasures fighter planes would strike positions of the territorial defence of the "Serbian Republic of B-H". Then the question would be asked discreetly, is that enough?"

Precisely because of the difficulty of an imperialist imposed solution with-

out the collaboration of Serbia, the imperialists are at present wary of an all out intervention. It carries enormous financial and political risks for the imperialist governments.

So in the absence of an all out intervention the imperialists will have to live with a divided Bosnia. The limited actions around Sarajevo described above could either serve as the prelude for further involvement or the start of a negotiating process with Serbia which would close this second round of the armed redivision of Yugoslavia.

At present the war in Bosnia has a reactionary character exactly like that of the Serbo-Croat war in Croatia. All the war aims of the opposing forces involve annexation, the oppression of minority populations and the restoration of capitalism. They have set worker against worker, deflecting from the economic struggles which, as late as last September in Bosnia, were reaching mass proportions.

The UN forces guaranteeing the ceasefire in Croatia and purportedly providing protection for "humanitarian aid" in Sarajevo are in fact the advance guard of imperialist intervention.

They are not there to provide aid but to oversee a reactionary solution to the conflict. That is why we call for their immediate withdrawal.

At present, whilst there is no systematic military conflict between these troops and Serbia we should not let any sporadic military clashes alter the Marxist characterisation of the war.

However, if imperialist forces intervene in Bosnia in force, waging all out war to crush the Serbian armed forces and ultimately to overthrow planned property relations in Serbia, or to submit Bosnian Serbs to a Muslim-Croat regime, then workers would have to rally to the defence of Serbia.

Serb resistance to this onslaught would take on the character of a legitimate anti-imperialist defence of the remains of a workers' state and defence of democratic national rights. In a war between Serbia and imperialism revolutionary socialists give full military support to Serbia and seek to hamper the imperialist war effort through class struggle.

At the same time we have to fight to dissuade Croat and Muslim workers from tying their fate to an imperialist intervention. If Croatia or the Bosnian government join an imperialist backed onslaught against Serbia, then we would abandon the position of "defeat on all sides" in favour of the military victory of Serbia against these countries.

We would support the Serbian side in this war despite the presence of Chetnik fascist irregulars on the same side. At the same time we would fight for Serbian workers to overthrow the Milosevic regime and prevent the defeat of imperialism turning into an orgy of oppression against the populations of its allies.

The current conflict and the further disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation will produce new tensions and new alignments throughout the Balkan region, potentially even drawing Albania, Greece and Bulgaria into war. At present it is impossible to predict the exact course of events.

Like Trotsky on the eve of the Second World War, we can say that it is not certain which side various competing states will take. It is even possible that an escalating Balkan conflict will open deeper cracks in the imperialist alliance.

The only certainty is that, without a fight for a revolutionary working class solution, ultimately expressed in the slogan of the Socialist Federation of the Balkans, the peoples of the entire region will be condemned to years of war and poverty. ■

TITOISM bed of nationalism

REPRINTED FROM ARBEITERINNENSTANDPUNKT

paper of the Austrian section of the LRCI

Yugoslav People's Republic was not based on any democratic equality between the various nationalities but on an oppression of the non-Slavs, above all the Albanians and Hungarians.

It is true that there was approximate equality between the main nations of Yugoslavia—Slovenes, Croats and Serbs—and the national rights of the Macedonians were recognised. In this respect Tito's Yugoslavia was a clear advance on the Serbian dominated inter-war monarchy.

However, the cohabitation of peoples is a dynamic process: solidarity and internationalism must be continually renewed. This was precisely what Tito's bureaucratic system proved incapable of doing. The difference between the north and the south in levels of industrialisation, productivity and culture had to be consciously recognised as a problem to be overcome step by step.

For that there needed to be living workers' democracy. In free discussions, plans which went beyond the borders of the nationalities could have been developed, progress towards equality could have been recognised as the collective task of the workers and peasants.

Instead of that, Tito constructed a bureaucratic dictatorship which was crudely disguised by the system of self-management.

Self-management was only an appearance of democracy. Firstly, because its rights, at central level, were only minimal. Secondly, no political forces other than the Communist League (the Yugoslav Stalinist party) and its mass organisations were permitted. Political oppositionists, including lefts and Marxists, were rounded up and imprisoned.

Apart from that, the possibility of conscious planning was effectively minimised, especially after the 1960s, by the increasing utilisation of the market as the regulator in the economy. Marxists have always recognised that a market economy creates inequality and crises. But the Titoists forgot that and hoped for a general acceleration of the rate of economic growth.

The possibilities for making profits promoted the individualism and nationalism of the republics. It was not long before this law proved itself politically. Already in 1971, the "Croat Spring" strove for full "national control" over Croat foreign currency earnings. Tito suppressed

this nationalist upsurge but, again, it was not dealt with politically. It was opposed administratively, and purged bureaucratically.

Many Croat workers lost their faith in a joint workers' state at that time. Tito reacted by granting additional rights to the Republics and Autonomous Republics in the new Constitution of 1974. Thus, instead of combating nationalism and the profit logic with political arguments, he answered them with repression on the one hand and concession on the other, both equally bureaucratic.

The logic of Tito's system was demonstrated after his death by the suppression of the Albanian uprising in Kosovo in 1981. Titoism had taught the Serbian workers bureaucratic and short term thinking. This was why, despite a partially supra-national strike movement in the mid-1980s, Milosevic was able to build up a mass movement of Great Serbian chauvinism. That was the beginning of the end of the Yugoslav workers' state.

The bureaucracies of the other republics switched over more and more to nationalism. What was missing (and still is missing) was any internationalist alternative in Yugoslav society which could have shown the proletariat another way out of the bloodbath. That is the measure of how fundamentally Titoism destroyed the internationalist instincts of the Yugoslav workers.

CUBA

Castro's crisis

CUBA'S DEPUTIES in the National Assembly of Popular Power gathered for two days in July to push through 34 amendments to the country's constitution. In moves signalled by the Cuban Communist Party last October, the deputies legalised existing pro-capitalist investment measures, while at the same time reaffirming one party rule and the supreme powers of Fidel Castro.

The background to these changes is the rapidly deteriorating economic situation in Cuba. The tightening economic blockade by the USA and a collapse in economic subsidy from the former-USSR and GDR are having devastating effects on Cuba's fragile economy.

Ever since 1961, when Castro shifted his petit bourgeois nationalist regime over to Stalinist bureaucratism and liquidated capitalism, Cuba has depended for survival and growth upon huge handouts from Moscow. As recently as 1989 Cuba received about \$4.1 billion, mainly through favourable sugar and oil trade deals.

Isolated

Gorbachev cut back on the aid and Yeltsin has virtually liquidated it. Cuba now stands isolated. Its former Stalinist state allies are under the control of pro-capitalist governments which have cut off support. Rather than follow their path of pro-imperialist democratic counter-revolution, Castro seems intent on following the path of China where Stalinists brutally retain one party rule whilst undertaking ever more open pro-capitalist measures.

But China is a vast country with huge resources and a large market-based peasant economy to provide food. The Chinese Stalinists have developed peripheral pockets of capitalist exploitation in certain regions, opening up workers to foreign exploitation.

Yet the huge state industrial complexes in the planned sector continues to dominate the character of the country and provide the basis for the ruling caste's power and privileges.

Cuba, a tiny island 90 miles from the world's mightiest imperialist power, has no such scope for manoeuvre. The Stalinist bureaucracy's lease on total political power will prove to be of a far shorter duration than any of its former allies.

Rhetoric

When the National Assembly met, Castro continued to insist that "the political will of the party to continue to move forward in perfecting our Socialist society" was undiminished. But the rhetoric is hollow. Castro himself describes "adverse conditions, that are tending to worsen, during our special period of economic emergency."

To "perfect socialism" would mean the elimination of classes, material scarcity and social inequality. This hardly squares with the daily life of the Cuban people. Queues are lengthening and rationing is increasing.

Bread is rationed, Cubans are allowed five eggs a week and chicken has become a luxury. All available land in the towns and

BY KEITH HARVEY

cities is given up to vegetable plots in a desperate attempt to increase food supplies as rural production is falling and transport is crippled by the scarcity of oil supplies.

The incessant propaganda directed at the USA for their blockade and the effect it has on the country certainly works to some degree in bolstering the regime in the eyes of sections of the population.

Signs

But all the signs are that this support is fast being eroded by the effects of the economic policy that Castro has chosen to pursue in the face of the loss of aid from the ex-USSR. Castro's attempt to mix anti-US, "socialist" rhetoric with increasing concessions to the market is a hopeless strategy.

In effect Castro is trying to buy time through promoting joint economic ventures with multi-national imperialist capital. To date most of these joint ventures exist in tourism, where Spain leads the way with investment. And Castro has made the conditions very favourable—there are no taxes to pay, no restrictions on profit repatriation and a guaranteed three year return on investments. Little of lasting economic benefit directly comes to Cuba as a result.

The government's theory is that tourism will be the economic "animator" for the country, providing trickle down benefits for the population through stimulating demand for domestic products. But the evidence so far suggests that it is doomed to failure.

The first reason is the size of the earnings from tourism itself. Although it has shot up 400% in the last ten years, it earned only \$250 million in 1990. Castro plans to make this rise to \$800 million in 1995 with one million tourists pouring in.

Gap

But this would still leave a huge gap between foreign earnings and the recent collapse in aid from the former USSR. Moreover, such plans depend upon a relaxation of the ban that the US Congress exercises over its citizens from holidaying in Cuba.

It is the social effect on Cuban society that results from increased tourism and joint ventures that will prove more telling. Already a tourist apartheid has grown up as a result of a two currency economy. Cubans earn and spend pesos, tourists must bring and spend dollars. Cubans see chunks of the country being either sold off to foreign companies or fenced off for the use of tourists, but gain nothing even from increased trade with the tourists who do arrive.

Resentment grows as people see that the very existence of the apartheid economy is making their own access to resources more difficult. Since goods are already in short supply and tourists are pouring in with money, then the black market and associated crime expands. Goods are syphoned off to supply the tourist markets and away from those that serve Cubans.

But this blatant injustice is not

the only source of resentment and frustration. There has been no public debate over the economic measures being taken, even though they depend heavily on the sacrifices of the masses.

Furthermore, Cuba's famous health care system which has provided reasonable care for many citizens is now threatened. This care is also being placed at the service of foreigners in the form of "medical holidays"—specialist surgery takes place at a fraction of the costs in Europe or the USA. This may be fine for the wealthy foreigner but will crowd out the ordinary Cuban and alienate them from one of the real gains that resulted from the overthrow of capitalism in Cuba.

Despite the bluster of socialist rhetoric all the current measures

that Cuba's Stalinist rulers are undertaking are preparing the ground for capitalism, increasing social differentiation and resentment. Coming on top of continuing hardship the ground is being prepared for future social explosions.

The recent Assembly amendments did try to quell democratic discontent by providing for direct elections to the national Assembly next year. But even controlled direct elections could be used to register open political discontent with Castro and the Stalinists, and this provides the greatest danger to Castro.

Bonapartist

Castro is taking no chances. To provide a Bonapartist counterweight to the direct elections (even if only for CCP approved candidates) Castro has declared himself supreme commander of all armed institutions and increased his power to call a state of emergency in situations that "may effect internal order, the security of the country or the stability of the state".

But Castro's increasing Bonapartism combined with economic concessions to the imperialists cannot solve the fundamental

contradictions of Cuba. The tiny, isolated degenerate workers' state exists in a world dominated by hostile imperialism. The strategy of socialism in one country through making deals and concessions with the imperialists rather than internationalising the proletarian revolution was the fundamental error characterising Stalinism. This is no less true for Castro today.

The repression of workers and peasants within the state ensured that the voice of true internationalism has been stifled in Cuba, as it was for decades in all the Stalinist states. But the only answer to Cuba's present crisis lies in raising that call and overthrowing Castro with a proletarian political revolution committed to an international socialist revolution.

It is not inevitable that Cuba will fall under the pressure of the US blockade. But it is clear that Castro cannot lead the country to any form of socialism, let alone a "perfect" one. Whilst workers in the west must build for the maximum solidarity with Cuba against the imperialists, it is necessary to fight for a new revolutionary party. Otherwise, Cuba will ultimately become yet one more Stalinist domino to fall. ■

¡Socialismo o Muerte!



"Socialism or death" But which is it to be?

SOUTH AFRICA

No deals with the bosses!

THE ANC and COSATU have been working overtime to try and reach a deal with the bosses to turn the mass action in August into an agreed shutdown rather than a workers' general strike.

In the last week of July the talks broke down, but they reveal the strategy of ANC leaders. When Mandela thought that agreement, would be reached with the bosses South African Co-ordinating Committee on Labour Affairs (Saccola), he said:

"We are going to have a strike and industry itself is going to shut down for 24 hours. That is a victory because it is now not only the workers but industry as well who are protesting against what the South African government is doing."

Charter

COSATU has attempted to draw up with the bosses a common charter for peace, democracy and economic reconstruction in return for a withdrawal of some of the threatened mass action and strikes. This class collaboration is a disgraceful betrayal of the mass of workers who are locked in battle over jobs, conditions, wages and racist practices.

Six thousand car workers at the Durban Toyota plant were sacked by

BY CLARE HEATH

bosses earlier in July when they went on strike. Thousands of health workers were also sacked for taking strike action against the bosses.

Bankrupt

The idea that these workers should reach an agreement for "progress" with the same racist employers shows just how bankrupt the policies of the leadership of the ANC and COSATU are.

For workers in South Africa the enemy is not just the government of De Klerk or the security forces. The decades of oppression, exploitation and apartheid have been carried out by the government on behalf of one class—the bosses. The same people that Mandela is now trying to do a deal with.

The breakdown of talks about the August strikes does not signal the end of the proposed charter.

Both sides have indicated that they will continue to discuss drafts on curbing violence, combating poverty, conflict intervention and political transition. Such a contract for "class peace" would no doubt include voluntary agreements on the part of the unions to avoid strikes in

the interests of the economy.

The "curbing of violence" will no doubt be a way of tying the hands of the masses whilst leaving the security forces and the bosses armed to the teeth.

"Combating poverty" will not mean the expropriation of the bosses and their profits but deals to curb the wages of the masses.

The general strike in August must be used by black workers to launch a real offensive against the government and the bosses. The mass action cannot be left at the level of a protest against the government's slow pace of reform. It needs to tackle the fundamental questions of poverty, exploitation, oppression and democracy.

The general strike is a great opportunity. The workers need to organise councils of action in every locality. They need to seize the factories and mines from the bosses, and to defend the action and the communities through taking arms and building workers' and township defence squads.

Movement

They need to extend the strike into a movement to halt the collaboration of the ANC and workers' organisations in the CODESA talks.

But to do this black workers need to break with the treacherous leadership of the ANC. They need a revolutionary workers' party, not a cross class alliance with liberal bosses. And COSATU needs a union leadership that is prepared to fight independently of the ANC's plans for a "peaceful" reform process for South African capitalism. ■

The meaning of the Holocaust

The Sunday Times' serialisation of the Goebbels Diaries, edited by Nazi David Irving, has brought the ideas of the Holocaust revisionists back into the news. **Richard Brenner** looks at the attempts of fascists to re-write history, and assesses the importance and meaning of the Holocaust for socialists and oppressed minorities today.

IN TUNE with the forward march of anti-semitism, fascism and the far right in Europe, the malign theories of the Holocaust revisionist "historians" are back in the public eye.

The affair of the Goebbels' Diaries has highlighted the numerous and sustained attempts by fascist and far-right propagandists to deny that one of Nazism's greatest crimes—the systematic extermination of six million Jews—was ever known to the leader of the Third Reich, or indeed ever happened at all.

Only cynical fascist leaders or the most naïve and desperate of their followers can seriously doubt the historical fact of the Holocaust. Documentary and film records, the direct testimony of thousands of camp survivors and the absence of any serious challenge from non-Nazi historians all speak for themselves.

David Irving is the main representative of "respectable" Holocaust revisionism in Britain.

Relative

Even today every Jewish family of European origin can tell of at least one relative or friend who perished in the mass extermination programme of the Nazis. The scale of the slaughter was as immense as it was unconcealable. Nearly 6 million people, 67% of all European Jewry, were annihilated: among them 250,000 at the death camp of Sobibor, 800,000 at Treblinka, 1,380,000 at Majdanek, 2,000,000 at Auschwitz.

Suffering beyond belief was inflicted upon Jewish communities: herded into ghettos, starved and beaten, forced to work as slaves and not just to die in concentration camps but to operate the camps as well.

It is precisely the enormity of this inhumanity that makes it necessary to introduce the history of the Holocaust to new generations of workers: not just as an abstraction, a list of millions dead, but as reality within the living memory of many surviving victims and butchers alike.

Denial that the Holocaust ever occurred is the theme of numerous fascist tracts such as Richard Verrall's notorious "Did Six Million Really Die?". Such material would be laughable were it not so perverse and politically dangerous.

But the Nazi apologists have a fall back position: Irving's persistent claim that Hitler himself was unaware of the genocide.

In rejecting and exposing the lies of the Holocaust revisionists, revolutionary socialists must also expose the arguments of liberal bourgeois anti-fascism.

Those who reject the idea that genocidal racism is inherent in modern capitalism must advance some other explanation. They argue that the Holocaust was simply the result of the insanity of one man, or even the product of some genetic predisposition to savagery inherent in the German nation.

This is rubbish.

As we have pointed out before (see *The Holocaust* by Mike Evans WP 132, July 1990), Nazi genocide must be understood as the result of two related factors: the rise of fascism in Germany and the specific war aims of German imperialism.

The Nazis utilised anti-semitism, an ideology with deep roots in German and central European society, as a key means of winning the support of the backward lumpen-proletarian, lower middle class and peasant masses.

Anti-semitism, with its purported opposition to "Jewish capital" and its theory of a conspiracy stretching from financiers such as the Rothschilds through to the socialist ideas of the Jew Karl Marx, was justly described by the early Marxists as the "socialism of fools".

Through anti-semitism the Nazis directed the frustration and anger of petty officialdom, of small businessmen and traders facing capitalist competition, of small farmers ensnared in debt to the banks, against a single and conspicuous section of the bourgeoisie. Anti-semitism was used to provide an alternative explanation to socialism for the exploitation and misery of capitalism.

Vicious anti-Jewish discrimination, pogroms and expropriations of Jewish property followed. As German imperialism pressed eastwards in search of markets and resources, mass deportations and population transfers were inevitable. The invasion of Russia in 1941 brought with it plans no longer simply to drive the Jews east but to exterminate them behind the lines of the Wehrmacht as it advanced.

Nationalist

This was to be the sop fed to the nationalist leaders of the non-Jewish peoples Nazism wanted to dominate: at least they too would have someone to victimise.

Finally, as the state-run capitalism of wartime Germany approached the limits of its dynamism whole sectors of monopoly capital—such as the chemicals giant IG Farben—were forced to rely on the slave labour of Jewish prisoners and other deportees from the conquered countries.

Was the Holocaust unique? Certainly as an act of imperialist barbarism it remains unparalleled to this day both in the scale of the planned attempt at liquidation of an entire people, and as an act of policy carried out by a modern, "civilised" capitalist nation state.

But it is not the only example of attempted national extermination. The millions of African slaves who died as a result of the slave trade, the genocide of the Armenians at the hands of the Turks in 1913, the attempt by the Nazis to eliminate Romanians and gays, Stalin's mass murder and deportation of "unreliable nationalities" during the war: all indicate that genocide as a state policy has not been restricted



Irving is a Nazi

DAVID IRVING hit the headlines recently with his plan to edit newly uncovered diaries of the Nazi propagandist, Goebbels, for the *Sunday Times*. This is not the first time he has captured the limelight.

Irving first tasted media scandal back in 1959 when, aged 20, he briefly edited a London student rag magazine. He ran articles, liberally laced with anti-semitism, which praised Hitler and the Third Reich, quoted Oswald Mosley, the veteran British fascist, and defended the apartheid system in South Africa ("... seldom has there been a concept so confused, a cause so lost, as that of racial integration").

The *Daily Mail* quoted him then as saying:

"I belong to no political party. But you can call me a mild fascist if you like. I have just come back from Madrid. I had a fine time. I returned through Germany and visited Hitler's eyrie at Berchtesgarden. I regard it as a shrine."

A year earlier he had written: "Available education should be concentrated on providing a super education for the intelligentsia, with a purposeful, yet positive, near-illiteracy for the masses... the proletariat cannot be educated completely; therefore it should not be educated at all."

Over the next few years Irving published a series of books about the Second World War which attempted to paint up the actions of the Nazi war machine. *Hitler's War*, published in 1977, clearly set out

Who is David Irving: a cranky historian and academic with right wing views, or a fascist cultivating a respectable image? Sam Lowry throws some light onto Irving's murky past.

what became his distinctive theme—that Hitler was unaware of the Holocaust.

The book, which placed him in the limelight again, does not deny the Holocaust occurred. However, it does its best to rehabilitate both Hitler—"an ordinary, walking, talking human being weighing some 155 pounds"—and his regime.

Irving's next book, *Uprising!*, on the 1956 Hungarian revolution, focused particular attention on the Jewish background of much of the Communist Party leadership.

By the late 1970s Irving was cultivating his links with the fascist right through the Clarendon dining club, where he rubbed shoulders with members of the National Front, the League of St George, Column 88, the British Movement, ex-Mosleyites and other assorted low life. It closed after an exposé in 1982, although Irving relaunched it in June 1990, this time with significant support from the British National Party (BNP).

In January 1981 he launched the Focus Policy Group, organising letter-writing campaigns to local papers to publicise their policies, which included "benevolent" or "voluntary" repatriation for non-whites. Apparently those who wish to stay "may find that life in the New Britain as a

dwindling rearguard will be harsh and ungenerous".

At the same time Irving was consolidating his links with German neo-Nazis. He has links to the GFP (Society for Journalistic Freedom), founded by former SS members in 1960 and a disseminator of Holocaust revisionist writings.

He has often spoken at events organised by the far right Deutsche Volks Union, and at numerous other meetings and rallies in Germany and elsewhere on subjects such as "Adolf Hitler: a sore point in German historiography".

Irving has recently changed his mind about the Holocaust, teaming up with Fred Leuchter, an American anti-Semite who claims that the gas chambers at Auschwitz were a Jewish fraud. Apparently, Hitler didn't know about the Holocaust because it never happened!

In May this year Irving was fined DM 10,000 (£3,450) after an incident during a revisionist conference in Munich in April where he said that the gas chambers in Auschwitz were built by the Poles after the war. In court he claimed the Holocaust was "a blood lie which has been told against Germany for fifty years". Irving's Focal publishing company has recently republished *Hitler's War* with all references to the Holocaust removed—they were hardly necessary if it didn't happen!

The notion that Irving is in any way a serious historian should be laughed out of court. Have no doubt: this man is a Nazi.

to Jewish victims.

Jews today rightly maintain the memory of the Holocaust and fiercely resist attempts to write it out of history. This is essential to prevent its recurrence, particularly at a time when anti-semitic material and demagoguery is resurfacing with a vengeance across Eastern Europe and the former USSR.

But there is nothing to be gained from denying other victims of national or racial oppression the right to refer to the horrors of the Holocaust in the same breath as their own plight as some, such as some delegates to NUS conferences, have done from time to time.

Far from detracting from the specificity and horror of the Holo-

caust, still less fostering anti-semitism, attempts by black people, the nationally oppressed, or any other victims of violence and oppression to point to the lessons of the Holocaust are justified and welcome.

For despite the unparalleled scale of the Holocaust, the Jewish people are not the unique victims of oppression or genocidal violence. Anti-semitism, fascism, racism and state genocide will only be defeated by the unity of the exploited and the oppressed.

The development of Jewish nationalism (Zionism) and thus Israeli chauvinism contribute nothing to the fight against anti-semitism in Russia and Eastern Europe, except to coun-

sel Jews to flee to the supposed safety of Israel. But the maintenance of a Jewish nation state at the expense of the rights of another nation—the Palestinians—can only lead to more war, racism and mass murder.

The real lesson of the Holocaust is that all oppressed peoples and the entire socialist and working class movement must forge an unbreakable unity in the fight to liquidate fascism wherever it raises its head, and that humankind will be condemned to unending cycles of reaction, national strife, oppression, genocide and war until the rapacious imperialist system is destroyed once and for all. ■

CAMPAIGN AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Which way forward?

The case of Kiranjit Ahluwalia has highlighted once again the plight of battered women who end up in jail after fighting back against their abusers. Kiranjit and Sarah Thornton were both convicted of murdering their violent husbands, and received the mandatory life sentence.

A number of campaigns have taken up these and other cases. They are arguing for changes to the law, and interpretation of the law, to correct this injustice. Constant vocal pressure on the courts and parliament may eventually produce the necessary reforms, recognising the level of provocation suffered by battered women.

But such reform will not itself tackle the root causes of domestic violence or the reasons why women cannot escape from it.

Campaign

The Campaign Against Domestic Violence (CADV), which had its inaugural conference in March, is a big step forward in that it recognises the importance of these other questions.

The Campaign is committed not only to continuing work to support women like Sarah Thornton and Kiranjit Ahluwalia but also for better treatment for victims of domestic violence, access to safe refuges and housing and financial independence.

Workers Power supports CADV because of the campaign's recogni-

tion that fighting domestic violence is a question for the working class. This is not to say that only working class women suffer domestic violence. There is plenty of evidence that the problem affects all women, linked to the fact that all women are socially oppressed. But working class women are less likely to be able to escape from that violence, they are dogged by problems of poverty, lack of housing, lack of any place to take themselves and their children to safety etc.

It is the working class as a whole which needs to tackle the question of domestic violence. This means ensuring that all working class organisations campaign against abuse of women both inside and outside the home, and also that they fight for the necessary resources for women to lead independent lives.

Finally, domestic violence is a class issue because of its roots in women's oppression, an oppression which can be ended only through the destruction of the capitalist system and class society. Capitalism perpetuates and relies on that oppression.

Militant dominates the current political leadership of the CADV, and the campaign's strengths and weaknesses reflect this. The CADV has had an impressive record of both national and local activity during its short life, supporting Sarah Thornton, organising a lobby of parliament to draw attention to the case of Kiranjit Ahluwalia, tak-

ing the question of affiliation to a number of trade union conferences, and setting up numerous local branches and activities which have been directed to involving working class women.

But the campaign is also facing problems of direction and some danger signs have emerged. First, there is pressure to move into the business of staffing volunteer help-lines. Of course any campaign like CADV must be well equipped to offer advice, it must know its way round the law, must know how women can get help etc. And any working class campaign has important elements of mutual support.

Police

But if the Campaign started to concentrate on providing volunteer help line services itself it would run the danger of using all the energy and enthusiasm of its supporters in this role. Instead its energy should be focused primarily on a political fight: fighting to force councils and the government to fund proper services which include advice, refuges, housing, financial support.

We are not being unnecessarily alarmist in warning of this danger. With the fragmentation of the 1970s women's movement, self-help projects attracted many women and the campaigning edge was lost.

Much more serious is the collaboration with the police, being pursued particularly in the Manchester branch of the CADV. Not only were members of the police present at the last meeting on the Child Support Act, but the police have been actually invited to address a subsequent one!

Workers Power has protested against this. How could women speak openly in a meeting with a police presence? The police are responsible for enforcing the law that has landed Sarah Thornton and Kiranjit Ahluwalia in jail for life. They are the ones who presumably will be searching out the men whom women are forced to name under the notorious Child Support Act. They are the ones who for decades have "always come late" and failed to protect the victims of domestic violence.

New more "sympathetic" units are finally being set up now after many years of campaigning by women's groups. These are supposed to provide better protection and treatment of women victims of rape and violence. But the idea that we can trust a force which is known to be prejudiced, corrupt and anti-working class is one that results either from political naivety or from political error.

In this case it is the latter. Although the leadership of the CADV seems to disagree with a perspective of collaborating with the police, this policy has not been made

At a recent meeting of Manchester CADV women were confronted with the presence of the police, who had been invited by the campaign's Militant organisers. This incident highlights both problems of orientation for CADV and Militant's general attitude to the police and the capitalist state.

On this page Lesley Day outlines the need for a political campaign on domestic violence linked to the fight for a working class women's movement. Opposite, Colin Lloyd shows that Militant's recent line changes have not affected its opportunist stance on the police and the parliamentary road to socialism.



Protestors Picket Kiranjit's appeal

clear. And Militant's traditional position of viewing the police as "workers in uniform" (making a false comparison with the situation of conscript soldiers—see right) means that it is open to ideas of reforming or improving the police force.

Movement

What should be our attitude to the police in regard to domestic violence and other violence against women? In our current society, when the working class still accepts the "right" of police to operate (even if they are detested), when the vast majority of workers don't challenge the existence of the capitalist state, when there is no alternative source of power like a workers' defence force, then clearly sometimes individuals have to deal with the police. If a woman wants a rapist caught so that he cannot threaten her or other women, then there is no alternative but the police. Battered women are forced to

try to get police support and evidence. Campaigns that support women in these situations have to know how the police operate, and may have to have contact with them over particular cases. But this is not the same as encouraging collaboration or sowing illusions in the 'reformability' of the police.

CADV should make clear that it does not intend to engage in any collaboration with the police and that the police will not be allowed into CADV meetings.

The third problem facing the campaign is the question of long term aims. Domestic violence is just one, very acute, expression of the oppression of women. Inevitably in discussion and campaigning the many other aspects of that oppression are raised. While it is important to campaign on particular issues, in the long run, something more is needed.

Revolutionary socialists argue that only the destruction of capitalism can open the road to the full emancipation of women. We think



Free Kiranjit Ahluwalia now!

Militant, Marxism and the state

AT TOY shops they sell a motorised car that rides along until it hits an obstacle then flips over and starts travelling in the opposite direction. The same thing has happened to the politics of Militant in recent months.

The group which denounced any activity outside the Labour Party as "sectarianism on the fringes of the movement" now stands candidates openly against Labour in elections.

The organisation that denounced black members of the Labour Party for forming their own caucus now has its own black paper, *Panther*, which carries glowing articles about Malcolm X.

Those who rightly laughed at middle class radical fads in the 1980s now assure us that, under socialism, animals will no longer be "ordered around and killed" but they will have a "meaningful life just like us!" (*Militant* 10 July 1992)

Reformist

But one vital thing hasn't changed. From the example of collaboration with the police in CADV it is clear that Militant has retained its old, completely reformist, view of the police as "workers in uniform". And despite expelling the former "greatest living Marxist" Ted Grant, Militant has yet to renounce his main "contribution" to Marxism: the thoroughly reformist idea that socialism in Britain can be achieved peacefully through parliament.

The real Marxist position on the police, the courts, the army and the monarchy—the state machine which protects the rule of the employing class—is simple. It has to be smashed and replaced by a workers' militia, workers' councils and a workers' republic.

Of course this becomes possible only at moments of extreme revolutionary crisis. But revolutionary socialists have to prepare the working class for this struggle by refusing to hide the harsh truth that there will have to be a revolution to inaugurate socialist change. At the same time in the workers' struggles taking place today we have to try to prepare the kind of organisations that can overthrow capitalism and its state.

Faced with police harassment of youth, police attacks on picket lines, police protection for fascists we can and must argue in the here and now for workers' defence squads.

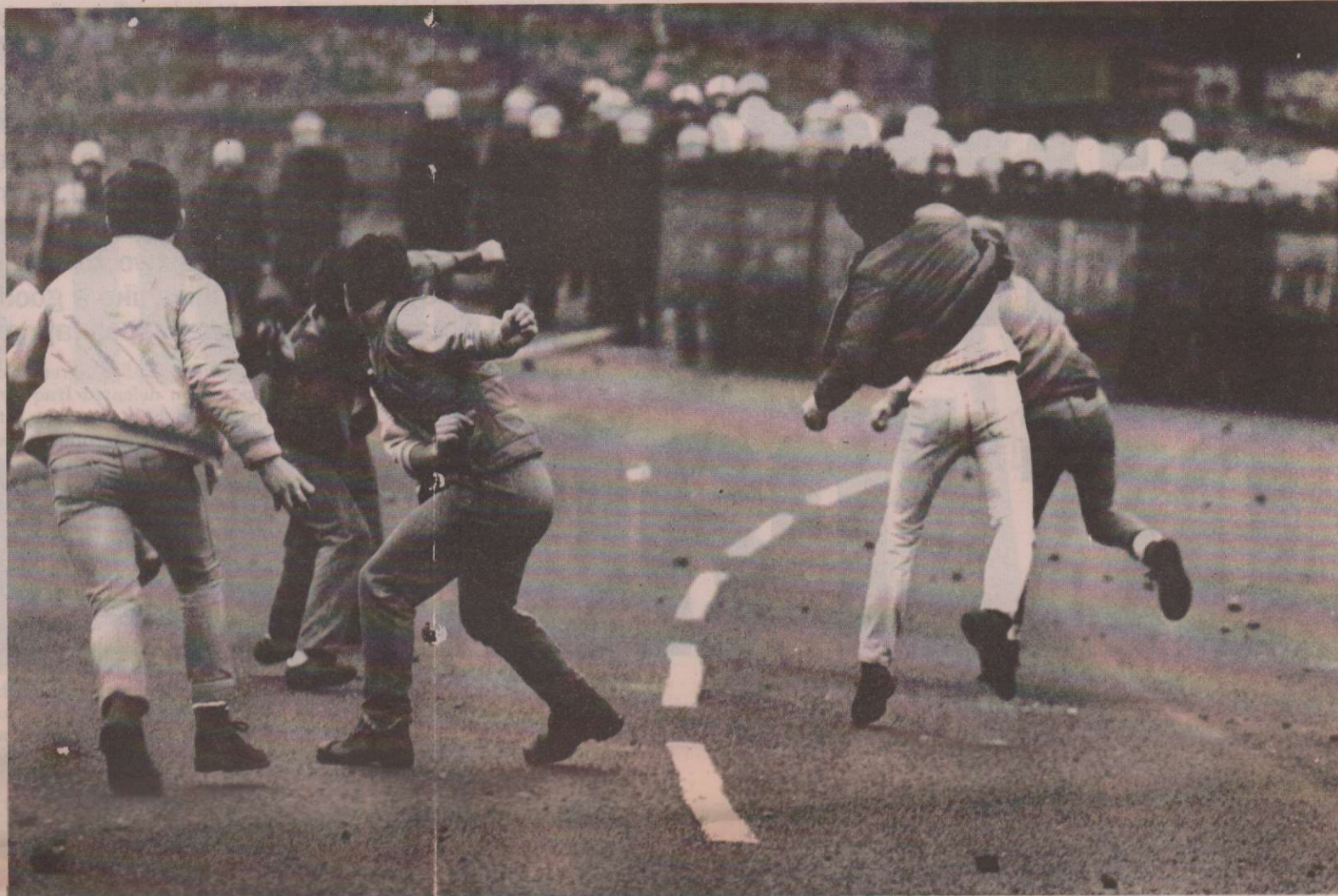
In every generalised working class struggle, like the miners' strike, we have to argue for delegate councils of action.

Against management offensives we need a consistent workers' answer: workers' control through workplace committees.

As Trotskyists we raise these and other transitional demands wherever the ordinary economic and democratic demands of the workers' movements clash with the needs of the capitalist system. What does Militant do? It consistently refuses to raise these demands, either in practice or in propaganda.

that a revolutionary working class party must be built which can win the class to the need for revolution. A crucial part of this battle will be winning over women workers and to do this we should argue for the building of a working class women's movement. Campaigns like CADV, along with building women's organisations in the unions and workplaces, campaigning for equal pay, nurseries and so forth, are all vital components of the work needed to build such a movement.

These questions must be raised within both CADV and the dominant political current within it—Militant. We do not think that Militant can provide adequate answers to the questions of collaboration with the police or the long term aims of the CADV, precisely because Militant's own politics is wrong on the question of the state and unclear on how to fight women's oppression. Workers Power has clear, revolutionary answers to these questions. Read our material, discuss with us and join us.■



We need workers' defence squads, not utopias about democratic control

Faced with the low level, daily problem of the capitalist state - police violence and intimidation against workers' struggles and communities, Militant argues for:

"Democratic control of the police. Elected local authority bodies to control resources, discipline, training and day to day policing policy." (*Panther* Issue 2)

Control

This is a dangerous utopia. In the first place, except in London, there are already partially elected local police committees. Making them fully elected would hardly change the way they operate: they are stuffed full of elected corrupt Labour and Tory politicians already.

Giving them control over policing policy would work only as long as this didn't clash with the needs of the bosses. Take a picket line for example. Because it is illegal to picket effectively the police force can claim it is only enforcing the law when it smashes up a workers' picket line. The law protects the bosses and attacks the workers because it is capitalist law. And the police enforce that law because they are the paid agents of the capitalist state.

No amount of democratic control over resources, training and policy would end police attacks on picket lines, because it is capitalist law, not "policing policy" that enables this. Any police authority which told coppers to go and bust the heads of sweatshop employers instead of pickets would be quickly wound up and replaced by the national state.

It would be far more direct and effective if the workers on the picket line organised themselves, got themselves resources and training and gave the riot squads a good beating. The examples of workers beginning to organise such action in the miners' strike, at Wapping and in numerous other struggles demonstrate the real possibility of building workers' defence squads in the struggles of today.

Does this mean we refuse to fight

for democratic reforms advocated by reformist politicians, or for the scrapping of riot squads and the banning of plastic bullets etc. No. Even the minimal demand of replacing one police chief with another (as happened after the Toxteth uprising in 1981) can be the basis for a united front with reformist leaders and the workers and youth who follow them. But the aim here is to convince workers of the futility of reforming the capitalist state machine, not conning them that it can be done.

Lewisham Youth Rights Campaign recently wrote in *Uproar*:

"We need an accountable police force, one that we control. A police force that is there to protect our communities, not attack them."

Well, comrades, the only police force like this will be a workers' militia, and to get it we will have to smash up and replace the existing police force!

The same is true at the highest level of clashes between the workers' movement and the state. For years Militant peddled the idea that a "socialist Labour government" could legislate the abolition of capitalism in parliament, "backed up by the colossal power of the working class".

Perhaps this vague phrase really meant workers' revolutionary struggle and organisations? No. From Militant's Editor came the assurance:

"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."

Dangerous

Of course, in private, many Militant comrades never believed this. But the idea that British workers will only make a revolution if they think that it's going to be peaceful, and are then "shocked" into an armed uprising by the resistance of the capitalist state, is patronising and

dangerous.

Leon Trotsky had sharp words for those who tried to do this in the 1920s:

"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. This is the best method for facilitating the destruction of the proletariat by the powers of reaction. In order to be capable of offering serious resistance the masses must be prepared for such action mentally, materially and by organisation". (*Trotsky on Britain* p 103)

Army

Militant comrades should ask themselves, despite all the "improvements" in their paper, where it has ever addressed this task of preparing the workers for revolution. The answer is nowhere.

On the ground the police and the professional army, and all those workers who join them, are the enemies of the working class. The policeman or woman is not a "worker in uniform". As soon as they put on their uniforms the police become paid agents of capitalism against the working class.

Their "job" is not mainly to solve crimes. If that is so why is it that over 80% of all crimes go unsolved? Their real job is to protect capitalist property - from striking workers, rioting youth, "subversive" left-wingers, black people rebelling against racism. And their whole training and subsequent life is geared to doing this job.

Militant should remember that in the miners' strike, even before Orgreave, 10,000 of their "workers in uniform" were bussed in to stop real workers from picketing. This wasn't a deviation from the police's role. It was just a graphic example, on a massive scale, of what the police exist for.

The same is true in a professional

army. Even though it is the dole that drives many working class teenagers into the British Army, once there they are subjected to fierce ideological brainwashing against class solidarity. All this is to prepare them for their essential task: to repress working class struggle when the police can't cope and to protect British imperialism's interests abroad.

It is different with a conscript army, when the bosses are obliged to recruit the working class youth en masse. Then revolutionaries have to treat the conscripts as potentially vital forces in the struggle for socialism. Time and again mutinous conscript armies have proved the vital factor in revolutionary situations. That is why we have to reject "conscientious objection" and, like the Bolsheviks, work inside the army to break it up and prepare the overthrow of the rule of officers and professional sergeants.

Whether it is inviting the police to collaborate with CADV groups, or advocating democratic control to solve police harassment, or prattling on about a peaceful parliamentary road to socialism and a "socialist" Labour government Militant clearly still carries a lot of the political baggage originated by Ted Grant. A real break with the politics of this proven centrist misleader will require a lot more than committing Militant to the struggle to Save the Whale. It means jettisoning the revision of Marxism on the state that has been at the heart of Militant's politics for decades and turning to the genuine Trotskyism of Workers Power.■

For more on Militant and the state read
Militant's peaceful parliamentary road in Permanent Revolution No8
available from
Workers Power
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Hands off Iraq!

TWO THINGS make a UN backed military strike against Iraq more likely at present. First there is the game of hide-and-seek the Ba'ath regime is playing with the UN teams sent in to dismantle Iraq's nuclear and chemical weapons facilities. Second is the fact that George Bush is trailing two to one in the US Presidential election race. There is nothing like a good shoot-out with a third world dictator to boost flagging poll ratings.

As part of the ceasefire agreement imposed on defeated Iraq the UN has the right to search at random through the government offices and installations for hidden details of Iraq's weapons programme.

Making the best out of a bad situation, Saddam Hussein has been able to use repeated incidents with the inspectors to fire up the Iraqi population against imperialism and take the heat off his regime after his miserable failure to defeat imperialism in the 1991 Gulf War. But being aware of his military weakness after last year's imperialist assault, it is also possible that Saddam, having touted his anti-imperialist credentials once again, will plump for a negotiated settlement and deny Bush his election stunt.

Workers Power says: despite the dictatorial nature of Saddam's regime, imperialism has no right to keep troops or inspectors in Iraq. They are there to shore up an imperialist armed peace that is incapable of giving freedom to the Iraqi Kurds or Shias.

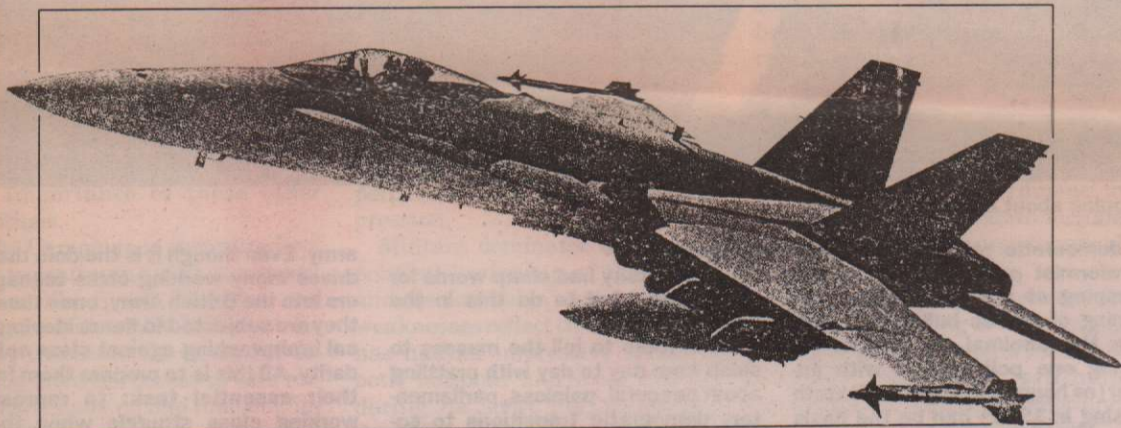
The imperialist peacemakers allow Iran and Turkey to build up

conventional arms, and Israel nuclear ones, at the same time as they excoriate Iraq for non-co-operation. "Free Kuwait" stands as a monument to hypocrisy: the majority of its citizens still without the vote, its Palestinian guest workers the subject of arbitrary torture and arrest.

For this reason, as with the Gulf War itself, workers should stand with Iraq against imperialist intervention and any military strike. Any military strike should be met with immediate protests on the evening of the action outside US embassies and installations.

The only people who have the right to disarm Saddam are the Iraqi and Kurdish workers and peasants, and they will have to use every military weapon at their disposal to fend off imperialist intervention the day a progressive overthrow of Saddam takes place.

- That's why we say:
- Hands off Iraq!
 - End sanctions, no to military intervention!
 - All imperialist/UN troops out of the Middle East!



MELLOR SCANDAL

DAVID MELLOR is a Tory. For that one reason every worker should hate his guts. But the current press exposures about his sex life, particularly in the Labour supporting *People* and *Mirror*, attack him not for his politics, rather for having had an affair.

The papers have played up the porno star mistress, grubby mattress, hard-done-by wife and poor little children aspects of the affair. Mellor has responded by demanding privacy.

The stench of hypocrisy from every side in this quarrel is overwhelming. Mellor's sex life is his own business. Consenting sex should be a private matter. We would still hate Mellor even if his sex life was as pure as John Gummer's.

But Mellor is a member of a party that regularly denounces extra marital sex, homosexuality and the break-up of the family. And he belongs to a government that has overseen the introduction of laws guaranteeing the right of the state to intrude into the sex lives of all of us. The Tories have made Britain one of the most sexually repressive countries in Europe.

We are not allowed to view certain films or read certain books. Open discussion in schools about homosexuality is banned under Section 28. Men are rotting in prison, put there by Tory laws, because they consensually engaged in sado-masochist sex sessions.

The state should be driven out of the bedrooms, or wherever else people want to have sex, altogether. And if Mellor wants the right to privacy in his sex life then he should make

Tory press hypocrisy

sure that the government he belongs to extends that right to everybody else.

He won't of course, because he is a sleazebag. And he is a sleazebag because he belongs to a party and a class that prop up their rule with moral codes designed not for their own observance but for millions of workers that have to be kept in line.

Mellor was the minister charged with drawing up new laws on press freedom. The tabloids are worried that their right to muckrake may be modestly restricted. But what sort of law have the Tories and their millionaire backers been mulling over?

Would it be a law to defend gays from vicious lying abuse and hate campaigns? To stop the gutter press whipping up sheer race hate against black youth in the inner cities? To stop the unemployed being painted as a bunch of work-shy layabouts who can't be bothered to get a job? To stop women being presented as mere receptacles for male heterosexual lust? To stop lies and smears against Arthur Scargill or left wing councillors going uncorrected when it is proved that there is not a word of truth in them?

No. The truth is that the Tories just want to keep the press from digging too deeply into

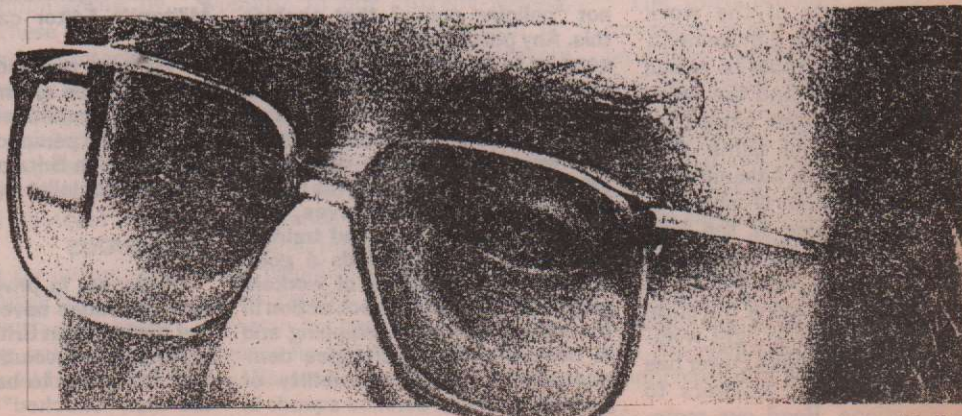
their own private moral, political and financial squalor. Carry on smearing political opponents at election times, foreign national characteristics at time of war, workers and the left at times of unrest, by all means. But avert your cameras, gentlemen, when you catch us with our trousers down or with someone else's pension in our bank accounts.

To stop the lies, we must first stop the liars. What use is a right to reply to front page slanders three months later at the foot of page 12? What use libel laws that cost

£500,000 in lawyers' fees before you've even got to court? What use an "independent watchdog" of hand-picked Tory hacks?

It ought to be obvious enough—you can't have a free press if it is owned by a handful of work-shy millionaires who spread lie upon lie to defend their privileges, their wealth, and their power from the rest of us.

We say: nationalise the entire press under workers' control. That's the only "freedom of the press" that means anything to ordinary working people. ■



Mellor