

workers power

INSIDE

Number 178 April 1994

**Fighting fascism on
the Isle of Dogs**

British section of the LRCI - League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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MILLIONS HATE THE TORIES

*Turn the
anger
into
action
and*



KICK THEM

OUT!



Divided they fall? Page 3

D-DAY

Who do you think you are kidding Mr Major?

IN THE run up to the 50th anniversary of the Normandy landings a row has broken out within the establishment about the commemoration ceremonies.

Faced with a developing political crisis, Major's publicity men saw the D-Day commemoration as an ideal opportunity to "unite the nation". What could be better than red-white-and-blue flags fluttering over street parties less than a month before the June Euro-elections? The National Heritage Department - whose head of PR, Tim Bell is also head of Tory Party publicity - set to work mobilising all the worthy institutions of Tory middle England for a weekend of "celebrations".

Scouts and Guides, Women's Institutes and Rotary Clubs set about organising the traditional activities which symbolise the war years for the suburban and rural middle class - Glenn Miller singalongs, spam frying competitions, jitterbug contests etc.

The fact that the event being celebrated was a battle which killed 36,000 on the first day, and over a quarter of a million in the month that followed, seemed to have been quietly forgotten in an orgy of Tory patriotism and sentimentality.

It is testimony to the power of war to change consciousness that Major's grotesque plan has been spoiled, not by a left wing protest, but by an alliance of Normandy veterans, the British Legion and Dame Vera Lynn. Those who fought, who saw fellow workers in uniform killed, maimed, in agony - and those who have had to live with the consequences for fifty years - took the view that remembrance of the dead was more important than sustenance of a dying government. Faced with demands for the cancellation of the various "fun days", and the threat of a boycott by Vera Lynn herself, Major has beaten a swift retreat.

The new plans will concentrate more on remembering the heroism of those who fought in the Second World War. If the anniversary and the commemoration are to mean anything they should look at the reasons why so many died. Commemoration means asking the questions: what were they fighting for and was the carnage worthwhile?

It is a widespread sentiment, reinforced by numerous films and by the oral tradition in the working class, that the First World War was a bloody slaughter and a waste. But World War Two, in popular consciousness, was an "anti-fascist war" and as such the sacrifice of millions of working class lives is thought to have been justified.

Trotskyists reject this idea. Our predecessors in the 1930s were among the most self-sacrificing fighters against fascism - on the streets of London and in the fields and cities of Spain. But those who fought Franco in Spain were repressed in Britain and, when war broke, out initially banned from the armed forces.

The point is that the British capitalists were never really interested in fighting fascism as a political force or in protecting its victims. Whilst they may have been worried about Hitler seizing their markets for German capitalism, plenty of British capital went into Mussolini's Italy throughout the



Thousands went to their deaths on the Normandy beaches

1930s. The relatives of the Jews who died in their millions in Nazi concentration camps were refused entry into "anti-fascist" Britain and the USA.

The capitalists in Britain, the United States, Italy, Japan, France and Germany were fighting the war to protect their markets and colonies. As the war progressed the imperialists of the Allied forces grew more afraid of the revolutionary ideas and organisations which were developing in the course of the war than they were of Hitler.

The millions who died in the Russian workers' heroic struggle against Nazi occupation, were pursuing a truly "anti-fascist" struggle. It was precisely to head off the potential revolutionary consequences of that struggle that the imperialist allies invaded Europe on D-Day.

D-Day ushered in a process of crushing and dissolving revolutionary struggles against fascism at the point of allied guns. The working class people of Paris were "liberated" by allied troops only when the French generals feared that a mass insurrection could lead to a new Paris Commune.

The victorious Greek partisans, led by Communists, were amongst the most heroic anti-fascist fighters. Yet in December 1944 the British 8th Army were unleashed on the population of Athens to protect the interests of imperialism. This anniversary, we suspect, will not be the occasion for a national commemoration in Britain.

The war between the big imperialists was not an anti-fascist war. It was, like the First World War, an imperialist war, in which workers should have taken no side, made no

class peace, and in which they should have - and in some cases did - place fighting their own bosses above fighting foreign workers.

Bosses need millions of young workers to fight their wars. To convince us to fight and die for British imperialism they try to create the impression that workers and their bosses are part of the same nation and have the same interests.

During the Second World War, the British capitalists really did to an extent "unite the nation". But they did it by purging overt reactionary Toryism out of public life and by promising, and in part delivering, major social concessions to the working class. The Labour and trade union leaders were put in positions of power. The NHS and social security systems were being drawn up, not prepared

for destruction. We see in wartime feature films and propaganda "documentaries", the sentiment hammered home repeatedly: "when this is over there"ll be no more class distinctions".

Major's pathetic attempt to reel out the bunting shows that fifty years on, there is no material substance to the "one nation Toryism" he supposedly represents. The task facing every modern capitalist government is to strip away every vestige of the concessions workers won during and after the war. That is a process that has been going on, under Labour and Tory, since the mid-1970s. It is far from finished.

The world of peace and social justice which the war veterans thought they were fighting for was always an illusion. Today even that illusion is collapsing, along with the imperialist world order ushered in after 1945.

Whatever form the commemorations take on D-Day we have to remember two important lessons of the Second World War: you can never trust the capitalists to fight fascism and they are never on our side. Even the solemnity, the two minutes' silence and the artillery salutes play a propaganda purpose for the bosses. The pomp and circumstance of traditional remembrance is used to convince successive generations that British imperialism is worth dying for.

What should socialist workers and youth do on D-Day? Remember the dead? Yes - because the millions of dead were innocent workers and peasants. Boycott Major's street party and fun-day plans? Yes - because they are an ill disguised election ploy.

The best monument to those killed in imperialist wars is to ensure they never happen again. We have to remove the cause of war: capitalism and imperialism. We have to oppose imperialist militarism of all kinds, the solemn and dignified parades of the military as well as the publicity stunts of the collapsing Major government. We have to commit ourselves to fighting for a new society in which millions of workers will never again be sacrificed for the profits of the few. ■

Next month Trotskyism and World War Two

No bans on videos!

B RITAIN ALREADY has the most draconian censorship laws in Europe. Many films are significantly cut before they even get an 18 certificate and some, like *The Exorcist* and *Reservoir Dogs*, were already banned from watching at home.

Yet these censorship rules are about to be tightened even further. Home Secretary Michael Howard will introduce an amendment this month to the Criminal Justice Bill which will give the censors—the British Board of Film Classification—more powers and make them more unaccountable.

So keen are the censors to get on with the job that they have already banned one film from home viewing: *Beyond Bedlam* by the award winning director of *Leon the Pig Farmer*. They say the effect of the Home Secretary's new restriction will be a ban on any film deemed to be violent.

The amendment will instruct the censors to take into account when considering issuing certificates for home viewing the "psychological effects on children" and the possibility that they will give children inappropriate role models.

There will also be an increase in the penalties imposed on video shop owners if they supply inappropriate films to under-age customers. They

will be liable to up to two years in prison and unlimited fines.

Michael Howard's amendment is a response to pressure coordinated by arch-reactionary Liberal Democrat MP David Alton. The Tories, faced with the prospect of a defeat in the first week back after their Easter break, "compromised" with Alton by giving him everything he wanted. Alton's rotten bloc of moralising MPs included familiar figures such as Rhodes Boyson but also a number of Labour MPs, including Kinnoch, Livingstone, Blair and anti-pornography campaigner Clare Short.

The pressure to increase censorship of home videos was initiated by a report, by Professor Elizabeth Newson, published two weeks before the planned vote. The report, *Video Violence and the Protection of Children*, claimed to show that watching violent videos affected children's behaviour. Supported by 25 so-called child experts, the report is totally unscientific, not based on any research and reflects the views of one particular right wing professor. It was commissioned by Alton from someone who clearly shared his views.

The Director of the Medical Research Council slammed the report for being "just a piece of opinion—a piece of polemic from a particular

point of view".

The report certainly doesn't read like a piece of research, more like a sermon: "By restricting such material from home viewing, society must take on a necessary responsibility in protecting children from this as from other forms of child abuse."

Just before the Home Secretary's announcement another report was published. Undertaken by the Policy Studies Institute it was based on research which had looked at the viewing habits of young offenders.

Comparing what they watched on television with children who had not committed any crimes, the researchers found that there was no difference at all. It showed that there was no link between watching video nasties and going out and committing a crime. Yet this piece of research was totally ignored by the moralisers. Why? The Tories have a very simple reason. Blaming the film industry for crime and child abuse is a way of diverting attention from their policies which ruin the lives and health of many children.

They want us to believe that watching *The Evil Dead* is the important factor in driving children into crime, not unemployment, poverty and bad housing. The reality is that it is the nasties of capitalism, not the video nasties, which are to blame.

On the very same day that Howard

made his pact with Alton, trading standards officers made a raid on a warehouse in Preston. They found children aged between 11 and 14 working there illegally, packing clothes. When asked what hours they worked the children simply replied "we're here until we finish". The Low Pay Unit believes that there are thousands of children in similar positions. The children in Preston were discovered by people who were being paid to protect the big jeans manufacturers from counterfeit products. They were there to protect the bosses' profits, not to protect children.

The hypocrisy of Howard and Alton, who lecture us about violence in a fantasy world whilst they promote the violence of exploitation in the real world, should come as no surprise. But their loyal supporters in the Labour Party should be called to account.

If Labour MPs like Clare Short really cared about the lives of children then they would be trying to do something to protect them from working long hours for very little money in appalling conditions. They would be addressing the reasons for the return of diseases such as tuberculosis and massive increases in asthma in children living in damp housing. They would be addressing the fact that a third of all children in Britain live in families that exist on half the average income.

These are the "nasties" we should be fighting and the "nasty" system which creates them. ■

EDITORIAL

Tories divided – but why?

"I HAVE no intention of being moved by synthetic efforts to pressure us from any source."

So spoke John Major, the hard man of Huntingdon, the scourge of the Europeans and the ruler of Britain. Of course he was moved. His fellow European heads of state said: accept the deal or get lost!

The issue was the extension of voting rights within the European Union. With four new countries joining it was logical that the number of votes needed to veto European legislation should be raised (from 23 to 27). It was hardly a matter of life or death. In return for accepting this Major was given the right to delay Euro-legislation for a couple of months.

But why tell Parliament that he would fight a new Battle of Britain to stop the extension of voting rights, and then within a matter of days get the cabinet to accept the very same extension? The somersault was humiliating for Major in the European Union and it enraged the Tory faithful. It put him in a no-win situation.

Major has raised political ineptitude to an art form. How else could he have come up with "back to basics" in a party congenitally prone to sex scandals? How else could he come up with a programme for D-Day celebrations that has managed to offend every war veteran still alive?

Yet the mess that is Major's regime cannot just be explained by the inadequacies of the man himself. He is just a symbol of the deep-seated crisis in the ranks of the Tory party.

Major's government is weak and divided. It is clinging on to a slim parliamentary majority. This has allowed the different factions in the Tory party to come into the open in a way that was inconceivable under the much stronger Thatcher governments. With the need to win votes in parliament, Major is obliged to appease the factions in his party. The factions know this and are prepared to use their bargaining strength to pressure the government into chopping and changing its policies.

This weakness is therefore only a reflection of a deeper crisis. At the heart of the factional line-ups is the real source of Tory divisions—Europe. The Eurosceptics and the Europhiles, with the Major centre faction oscillating between them, reflect a division within Britain's ruling class. The issue is how far to integrate British capitalism with the European regional capitalist bloc.

The farce over voting rights, like the fiasco over Maastricht ratification last year, are a direct result of this division. The Eurosceptics represent a powerful wing of British imperialism,

with worldwide investments and interests, who stand to lose from Britain throwing in its lot decisively with European capitalism.

Sections of British multinational capitalism fear the creation of such a strong European regional bloc. To protect their US and worldwide interests they want to keep Europe as a loose trading bloc and prevent it moving towards real economic and political union. They know that a strong European bloc would inevitably be drawn into fierce competition with the two other powerful blocs around the USA and Japan. Battles over Maastricht's ratification and even over the extension of voting rights for new members are not parliamentary games. They are serious attempts to obstruct greater European unity, to get Britain to act as a spoiler within Europe.

Ranged against this wing of the ruling class is a section of British capitalism, both manufacturing and financial, that positively benefits from European integration. With 53% of Britain's total exports and 43% of its overseas direct investment going to Europe, these capitalists recognise that Britain must support greater integration to both expand and protect such exports and investment.

The Tory party is the party of the British bosses. When those bosses are divided amongst themselves then the party expresses these divisions. Major's weakness is a direct product of this. He is desperately trying to hold the ring, to pacify both wings in the hope of maintaining a stable strategy. He cannot do it.

Despite their own divisions, indeed because of them, the capitalists need a strong political leadership to come up with a strategy that is best for British capitalism as a whole, even if some sections of the bosses go to the wall. That was the secret of Thatcher's strength. She united the bosses around her programme of slump economics and union bashing.

With the collapse of his economic strategy in the autumn of 1992 (when Britain was obliged to leave the Exchange Rate Mechanism), Major has been unable to offer a coherent strategy around which he could unite the ruling class and the Tory party. Clearly this cannot go on. The bosses are growing exasperated. The Economist recently complained:

"Mr Major deserves the avalanche of criticism now engulfing him... The Tory party is bitterly divided on everything to do with the European Union... The big question facing the Tories is not whether Major stays or goes, it is whether any Tory leader can now face down the intransigents in his own party to represent the country's, and Europe's, interests."

Of course getting rid of Major won't resolve the crisis, as *The*

Economist astutely points out. For the pro-Europeans, like Heseltine and Clarke, and the anti-Europeans, like Portillo and Lilley, still have to unite the party around their strategies. Both sides fiercely distrust each other. While Heseltine or Clarke may be a more dynamic leader than Major, and while Portillo would be more systematically right wing, the elevation of any of them to leadership will not resolve the Tories' crisis, it will deepen it. It is a crisis that will not go away unless and until one faction decisively triumphs.

Such a triumph is unlikely. Only a thumping election victory under a new leader, or a resolution of the conflicts during a period of opposition, can end their problems. And this is the key to Major's survival. He accurately embodies real contradictions. He is the leader the Tories deserve.

But while his survival as Tory leader owes much to the wariness of his rivals being handed a poisoned chalice, his survival as Prime Minister owes most to the startling failure of the labour movement to mount a challenge to his government. Labour, even allowing for its right wing drift over the past decade, has been the most ineffective parliamentary opposition in living memory. Its lack of a strategic policy alternative to the Tories has deprived it of the ability to challenge the government for power.

Similarly, faced with the chance to rouse millions into action against the government the leaders of the unions have decided to pass. The pit closures, the public sector pay freeze, the new round of anti-union laws, the tax hikes, VAT on fuel—each have prompted anger in the working class, each have offered the chance to strike a death blow at a terminally sick regime. And each have produced a solemn and binding agreement amongst the union leaders to do nothing to mobilise that anger.

If we are not to face three more years of Tory rule, three more years of vicious attacks, three more years of Major or his successor, this must change. The Tories are weak and divided. This makes them vulnerable. They are hated by millions of workers. We can take advantage of that vulnerability and drive them from office. The precondition is that we do more than fume. We must act. ■

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workers power

MEETINGS

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BIRMINGHAM
•South Africa after the elections
Tuesday 10 May 7.30pm
Monday 16 May 7.30 pm
•Fascism – what it is and how to fight it
Tuesday 24 May 7.30pm
•Youth and revolution
Tuesday 31 May 7.30pm
see sellers for details
-
CARDIFF
•The trade unions under the Tories
Thursday 12 May
•The class struggle in Bosnia
Wednesday 25 May
see sellers for details
-
COVENTRY
•Socialists and the Irish War
Tuesday 17 May
see sellers for more details
-
MANCHESTER
3rd Floor, Manchester Metro Student Union
•Zionism and the Middle East
Wednesday 27 April 5pm
•Reform or revolution?
Wednesday 11 May 5pm
-
LEICESTER
Castle Community Rooms, Tower St/Welford Road
•China – has capitalism been restored?
Tuesday 31 May 7.30,
•After the council elections – lessons for the left
Tuesday 17 May 7.30pm
•The council elections, the cuts and the fight for a Workers' Budget
Tuesday 3 May
•The Fight against racism
Wednesday 4 May
Bolshie Women
•South Africa after the elections
Tuesday 17 May
(women-only meeting)
see sellers for details

BOLSHIE WOMEN

OVER FIFTY women attended Bolshie Women, a weekend of discussion and debate for women held in Sheffield last month.

The topics covered ranged far and wide over questions such as the rise of fascism, political correctness, capitalist restoration in China and the relationship of socialism to feminism. The lively discussions were enriched by the participation of women from the LRCI's French and Irish sections. A quiz and social raised over £200 for the Workers Power fighting fund. Many women said it was the best political event they had ever attended.

Look out for local Bolshie Women discussion groups organised by your nearest Workers Power branch.

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FUND DRIVE!



Preparations are in full swing for the 3rd International Congress of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International, which will be taking place this summer. The LRCI is bringing together revolutionary militants from around the world to discuss the tremendous changes that are taking place internationally, and to take forward the struggle for a new world party of socialist revolution.

Bringing together delegates from as far afield as New Zealand, Peru and Bolivia, together with representatives from France, Germany, Austria, Britain and Ireland, is no mean feat. It will cost money. So far Workers Power has raised £2,616.56 towards our contribution to the costs of the Congress. Special thanks to comrades in Sheffield for their donation of £61.30, £35 from a reader in Germany, and a tremendous donation of £278 raised by supporters in London. But we still need more. Show your support for real internationalism. Rush your contributions to us now.

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COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Vote Labour but organise to fight!

THE EYES of every political commentator are fixed on this month's local elections and next month's European Parliament elections. This is not because the pundits have suddenly become concerned about street lighting in London's boroughs or edicts from Brussels on the shape of cucumbers. It is because they view the elections as John Major's final chance.

Whether or not Major survives as leader, despite bad results, is yet to be seen. But if he does, his government will be even weaker and more crisis prone than it is now—hard as that is to imagine. This, in itself, is a powerful argument for voting Labour in both elections.

The Liberal Democrats are another bosses' party, through and through, and their record of racism and anti-working class policies in Tower Hamlets, Richmond, Sutton and, in a previous period, Liverpool, stand as a warning to every worker. The Liberals have said they want to provide council funded nursery places for three and four year olds. But on the Isle of Wight they provide a meagre 7% of such children with nursery places.

Labour, of course is capable of the same sort of attacks on workers. But, unlike the Liberals, the Labour

Party is based in the working class. Unlike the Liberals, Labour is a party for the bosses **within** the working class. This is a fundamental difference. Labour acts in the interests of the bosses and their profits, as such it is a bosses' party. But through its links with the trade unions, it is also a workers' party. Because of this, Labour is subject to pressure from the organised working class.

In the absence of a revolutionary alternative, workers should vote for Labour and organise to fight—against

the betrayals of Labour and the bosses which it tries to protect. That is why our support for Labour is critical. We do not support its programme. We do not support its anti-working class actions. Nor do we share the belief of many workers who still look to it that it is any sort of vehicle for the socialist transformation of society. But we do share the desire of these workers to get rid of the Tories.

By uniting with the millions of workers who look to Labour at the polls, we will be in a far better position to

put Labour to the test of office so that those workers can see for themselves that a revolutionary alternative to Labour is desperately needed.

Today this means combining the fight to get Labour elected to the councils with a fight to support struggles against council cuts and for illegal budgets based on the needs of the working class not the bosses. We fight to tie Labour to such commitments through the only force capable of holding them to account, the organised working class. We seek to

organise workers through strikes and strike committees, through tenants and anti-cuts committees, through community campaigns and through trade unions to fight for the interests of the working class.

- Vote Labour, but organise to fight!
- No cuts in pay, jobs or services!
- For a steep and progressive local income tax to make the rich pay!
- Cancel all council debts to the banks and finance houses!
- For workers' budgets to meet workers' needs!

George Silcott: Standing for justice

VOTERS IN the North London borough of Haringey have the chance to protest against the imprisonment of Winston Silcott, a victim of British injustice. Winston's younger brother, George, is standing as a "Justice" candidate for West Green ward in the council elections on 5 May.

Workers Power urges voters in the ward to show their solidarity with Winston by casting their ballot for George. Everywhere, trade union and community activists should fight to win their organisations' support for the defence campaign which is still struggling to win Winston's release from Swaleside prison.

Winston Silcott became notorious throughout Britain and internationally as the object of a vicious, nakedly racist campaign in the *Sun* and other tabloid papers. Along with Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghip he was one of the Tottenham Three, framed by the Metropolitan Police for the killing of PC Keith Blakelock.

Blakelock was one of more than 200 police who descended in full riot gear onto the Broadwater Farm estate in October 1985 to crush an uprising by local youth. Years of racist police harassment against a background of more than 50% youth unemployment fuelled anger on the estate. That anger exploded after the death of a black woman, Cynthia Jarrett, during a police raid on her flat.

In the wake of Blakelock's death, police terrorised the estate, arresting and interrogating several boys under 15 years of age. Three of these youths, who were mistreated in police custody, initially faced murder charges alongside Silcott, Braithwaite and Raghip. Even an Old Bailey judge conceded that there had been police malpractice and ordered the release of the three teenagers. The judge and the bosses' gutter press did their level best to ensure that Winston and his co-defendants went down despite the flimsiest of cases.

For nearly six years relatives and supporters waged a campaign, faced with indifference from Labour Party politicians and trade union bureaucrats. A handful of journalists began to probe into the convictions of the Tottenham Three, bolstering the effort to win an appeal. In December

1991, after the state had reluctantly admitted the wrongful convictions of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six, the High Court quashed the murder convictions of the Tottenham Three. Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghip walked free.

Meanwhile, Winston remained behind bars at Her Majesty's pleasure. The official pretext for keeping Winston in prison was another conviction, arising from the death of Anthony Smith. Despite witness statements that supported Winston's version of events, backed by an investigation by *Sunday Times* journalists, the courts rejected his plea of self-defence. In reality Winston is a victim of state racism and a class war prisoner. His continued detention after more than eight

years is a blatant attempt to silence and break the spirit of a black man who had the courage to stand up to the police on Broadwater Farm and who defiantly protested his innocence at every turn.

In 1985 Bernie Grant was the leader of Labour-controlled Haringey Council. At the time of the Broadwater Farm uprising he spoke of "the police getting a bloody good hiding", a remark seized on by the media to launch a witch-hunt. Nonetheless, he was elected in 1987 and became one of four black Labour MPs. He now represents the Tottenham constituency which includes Broadwater Farm.

Though Grant still faces periodic vilification in the Tory press, he acted last year to defuse the simmering anger after Jamaican immigrant Joy

Gardner was killed by police and immigration officers. In the spring of 1994 Grant's office sought to discourage George Silcott from standing for Haringey Council for fear that it "might split the Labour vote".

But George's candidacy reflects the very failure of the Labour Party, including Grant, to pursue the issue of Winston's imprisonment.

While George is not standing on a programme that could provide a true socialist alternative to the betrayals and cuts executed by Haringey's ruling Labour group, he is seeking to use his candidacy to highlight other examples of the institutionalised racism and sexism of the British state. His campaign literature refers to the plight of asylum seekers in detention camps, the case of the Tower Hamlets Nine, the continuing impris-

onment of the M25 Three and Oliver Campbell and the jailing of Sara Thornton, a victim of domestic violence.

He has also identified himself clearly with all those imprisoned for their opposition to the Poll Tax. And, unlike any other candidate in West Green ward, he advances the call for "the right to a decent job, education, housing, social welfare and health", born of his own personal experience and that of many other residents of Broadwater Farm estate. ■

For further information about the Winston Silcott Defence Campaign, ring 081 365 0448
Write to: Winston Silcott (B74053)
HMP Swaleside, Brabalon Road,
Sheerness, Kent ME12 4DZ

Council workers fight the cuts

ONE HUNDRED and fifty Unison members in Birmingham are on indefinite strike. They have been out since 23 March because their jobs and conditions are being viciously attacked.

The workers are responsible for processing housing benefits for thousands of low paid and unemployed private tenants in the city. Despite an increased workload, staffing levels in their section have recently been slashed by 25%. The strike action very quickly created a massive backlog of over 150,000 outstanding benefit claims.

The benefit workers' claim for regrading has been refused, even though their jobs have undergone dramatic changes with the introduction of a new multi-benefit service. Staff will now be assessing and paying out Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit for private and local tenants, organising free school meals, as well as advising claimants of their entitlement to welfare benefits such as Income Support and Family Credit.

The benefit workers are making a stand against the treatment they have received from management and Birmingham City Council. Birmingham's new multi-benefit service was



Birmingham benefit workers out on indefinite strike

launched at the end of March with the promise of a more efficient service and the facilities to enable maximum uptake of benefits in the City. The system is already in total disarray. So what went wrong?

The Labour council cynically seized the opportunity of the new service to impose central government funding cuts on its own workers. The council tried to pass on the Tory cuts to those workers who are most vulnerable, in the hope that they wouldn't fight back. Many of the strikers are on low grades; they are low paid, mainly women work-

ers. Many qualify for the very benefits they are administering! Local government workers already lost out last year with a mere 1.5% pay rise, below the rate of inflation. This year, with the Tory tax rises and with inflation set to rise to between 3% and 4%, wages will fall again.

The problem is that currently the strike is limited to the Strategic Management Department. There is a real danger of isolation and demoralisation setting in if the action is not spread quickly. Four internal post delivery workers who refused to cross

the picket lines were first suspended then reinstated. Their action shows the way forward.

With the May local elections imminent, now is the time to escalate the action. That means a clear plan of action in which Unison activists and strikers use the resources of the union to launch a massive campaign for strike action with meetings in every workplace.

We must fight for solidarity action across the council workforce. We must show the council leaders that they cannot make the workers pay for their cowardice in imposing the Tory cuts. Instead of overseeing the cuts, they should be setting a Workers' Budget based on the needs of local working class communities.

We should demand the withdrawal of cuts in the benefits section and the regrading of the benefits workers. Local service users and the council workers, not the Tories, should decide what kind of service is needed, and that service must be funded out of a massive tax on the rich, from the profits of the bosses. We are for the best possible service for benefit claimants, but such a service must be paid for by the bosses, not delivered on the backs of the benefit workers. ■

NUT CONFERENCE

A DELEGATE WRITES

BEING A delegate at the NUT conference you get a rather different impression of the union than the one given in the press. Far from being on the verge of organising the revolution, this year's conference showed the continuing problem of how to fight a union bureaucracy determined to squash any signs of militancy.

Whilst the conference took some left wing positions, and frequently voted against the right-wing Executive, General Secretary Doug McAvoy did not seem unduly concerned. The decisions of the conference are increasingly irrelevant for the union bureaucrats who allow the membership to "sound off" once a year and then ignore them.

Conference voted for industrial action to fight for smaller class sizes. But we all know who will control such action—the (In)Action Committee of the Executive.

The conference also voted to not to be bound by the anti-union laws. Fine words, but no one seriously believes that Doug McAvoy is going to comply with this decision.

The clearest example of the impotence of conference was over the question of appraisal. Last year the conference voted for a ballot to boycott appraisal. The Executive ignored conference and did not organise the ballot. There was little discussion of their sell out, partially because left Executive members did not believe they could win the vote! Such, apparently, is the confidence that left leaders have in the membership.

The main left forces, the Socialist Teachers' Alliance (STA) and the Campaign for a Democratic Fighting Union (CDFU), assured delegates that in two years time the left would be "running this union". For the first time ever the STA and CDFU did not stand candidates against each other in the elections.

But the whole strategy of the STA and CDFU of winning positions at a national level while failing to build, or indeed sometimes obstructing, militant rank and file action and organisation across the union, will not turn the NUT into a real fighting union.

Unless the rank and file is organised to fight, the bureaucrats will be able to get away with their treachery. The success of last year was the anti-SATs action. This action was based on rank and file unofficial action which forced the bureaucrats to issue a national ballot.

Teachers in Waltham Forest are showing the way to build such action again around appraisal. Despite being fined £100 each by their employers, and despite threats by Doug McAvoy to suspend their local leadership, these teachers are maintaining their unofficial boycott. This is because the action is strongly supported and controlled by a well organised and determined rank and file. A membership organised in this way can hold the bureaucracy to account, and help build a real rank and file organisation that can replace them. ■



End of an era—Tower's last protest

TOWER

A battle lost

TOWER COLLIERY closed on 19 April. The pit is in an area where 30% of the men are unemployed. The 325 job losses at Tower would raise that figure to 40%. While Heseltine had not included Tower in the 32 pits for closure back in October 1992, and despite the fact that the pit had grossed £25 million profit for British Coal over the last three years, the NUM lodge was constantly aware they could be axed at any moment.

When British Coal (BC) first announced that Tower was to close on 15 April, the strength of the miners' response stunned management. The miners demanded that the pit be put into the Modified Colliery Review Procedure to establish its viability. This could take as long as a year to complete. They also voted to reject the £9,000 additional redundancy pay, offered as an incentive for immediate closure. Tower became the first pit to hold out against such pay-offs. At this point management said miners would have to take a pay cut of £100 per week if the pit was to remain open until the end of the year.

The miners knew the odds were stacked against them and moved quickly. While the lodge was approaching the Wales TUC for sup-

port, Ann Clwyd, the local MP and Labour's spokesperson on employment, carried out a sit-in with the support of the miners. Overnight management made what appeared to be a complete turn around. On the Friday the pit was due to close a BC spokesman declared:

"The corporation has now reconsidered its proposal to close Tower in the light of the strength of the NUM's feeling and the union's optimism for the future of the colliery. It will be the corporation's intention to continue all coal-mining and development operations for the remainder of this year."

"Victory!" cried the local press. But the miners were more cautious—rightly so. By the following Monday it became apparent that BC had more dirty tricks to play. They revealed that production would have to increase from 300,000 tonnes to 500,000 tonnes per year. Each miner would have their pay halved and lose up £23,000 in future redundancy payments. The pressure that this put the miners under, at the end of a stressful week, was incredible. On Tuesday 19 April they voted to accept the original redundancy deal. Production stopped.

Tower miners have always fought not just for their own jobs and condi-

tions, but as part of the wider class struggle. In 1831, the Red Flag was first raised in the Merthyr Rising on Hirwaun Common, the site of the pit. In the 1940s, the lodge supported the Trotskyist candidate, standing on an anti-war revolutionary platform, in the famous Neath by-election. It debated the need for workers' control in the period of nationalisation.

Workers Power supporters have worked with the Tower miners for ten years. In 1985, the lodge refused to march back to work like the rest of South Wales NUM because they knew it was not a victory and not a cause for celebration. Over the years, the lodge supported every section of workers that came under attack and were always mindful of international solidarity, supporting the Bolivian miners' strike of 1985 and the young South African NUM.

The failure of the men and women of Tower to stop the closure was not cowardice. It was a political failure not to build a rank and file movement that could fight for the tactics—occupation and spreading the action—that could win. As Phil White, lodge chair put it, "The people who have shut Tower are the Tories and the TUC—and sometimes I'm not sure if that's the right order."

TUC Black Workers Conference

BY LAURA WATKINS

AN UPBEAT John Monks, TUC General Secretary, opened this year's TUC black workers' conference, still basking in the glory of leading the 50,000 strong "No to Racism" demonstration in East London in March.

The threat of the BNP and the rise in racist attacks were high on the agenda. A number of motions were passed calling for the labour and trade union movement to actively stop the BNP gaining further victories in the May elections. Another called on the TUC to drive active racists and

fascists out of the unions and to support workers' action against fascist and racist activities.

But, despite warnings that state bans against the fascists will be used primarily to curb anti-fascist black and working class mobilisations, conference also voted for such bans.

This conference remains the only national forum for black workers from all trade unions to discuss issues that affect them. This year almost 300 delegates and observers from 51 unions, trades councils and regional TUCs attended—among them

a small number of white delegates.

A dispute over whether white members should attend future conferences, and indeed the nature and purpose of the conference, emerged as a result. Most delegates agreed that the conference is a caucus of, and for, black workers and should therefore operate in the same way as most union black workers' groups. A Unison demand for future conferences to be black-only won the day. However, a sizable minority of delegates,

including Bill Morris, General Secretary of the TGWU, disagreed.

There is not a tremendous amount of enthusiasm amongst trade union leaders for a black-only conference. In a 1992 survey only twelve unions favoured a black-only restriction, while eighteen did not. The TUC confirmed this position in 1994, despite last year's black workers' conference rejecting it.

At the heart of the union leadership's resistance is the belief that this type of self-organisation undermines unity. Nothing could be further

COLLEGE LECTURERS

Contracts Dispute

BY A NATFHE MEMBER

RESISTANCE CONTINUES to the employers' attempt to impose new contracts on college staff. The employers scored an important victory on 1 March when the lecturers' union NATFHE backed down in the face of a high court ruling that a successful ballot for strike action was unlawful. Only three colleges defied the court order and went ahead with the strike. In the wake of this retreat employers' attitudes have hardened.

The union's Further Education Sector Conference then abandoned a national strike strategy and went for local bargaining. Activists won a commitment, however, for branch by branch strike action. Branches and regions have been working flat out to deliver a "legal" ballot with action co-ordinated across groups of branches and colleges. This policy has been further weakened by the decision to instruct branches to seek local negotiations even where it is clear college managements are determined to impose the new contracts.

The vital task now is to deliver effective strike action. But even going through the tortuous balloting procedure may not stop the Colleges Employers Forum. Militants must continue to argue that while official action is what we want, unofficial - and therefore "unlawful" - action may be necessary.

Co-ordinated strikes are planned for the week beginning 13 June. Pressure has forced the National Action Committee to agree that this should be part of an escalating programme of strike action. But the leadership is now happy to "leave it all to the branches". Activists must continue to campaign for national strikes, including the fight for a pay increase, since employers are refusing pay increases to staff who do not sign new contracts.

Discontent with the national leadership was demonstrated in this year's union elections. The Socialist Lecturers' Alliance (SLA) put up a number of candidates. Stuart King, a Workers Power supporter, standing on a platform that included a clear call for defiance of the anti-union laws, polled over four thousand votes and came second in the poll for national treasurer.

SLA candidate for Vice-President, Andrew Price, also made a good showing. Five SLA members were elected to the Further Education section of the National Executive and one on the Higher Education section. Unfortunately the left's candidate for the General Secretary, SWP member Jan Neilson, was ruled out on the grounds that she did not have five years of continuous membership, a fact disputed by the candidate. This means there is no candidate for General Secretary worthy of support. ■

from the truth. In every example where black workers' groups exist, they have encouraged members' fuller participation in all concerns of the union.

The real problem is that these caucuses pose a threat to the passivity of the bureaucracy on fighting racism. What's more, they provide a means of fighting against the systematic under-representation of black workers so prevalent in the movement. This is why all militant activists, black and white, should fight for the setting up of black caucuses in their union branches and workplaces. ■

We have to drive them off the streets!

“It is tragic that, so far, the BNP has been allowed to campaign unhindered on the Isle of Dogs and in other parts of East London. We have had a mass demonstration of 60,000 organised by the TUC, we have the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) with a claimed membership of 60,000, but so far nobody has set in hand the task of physically stopping the BNP spreading its filth.

Leaflets have their place, and so does face to face campaigning on doorsteps with local people. But against fascism they are not enough.

Fascism attracts the most poverty stricken sections of the middle class, unemployed and even the most backward sections of white workers by showing them it can dominate the streets. In Hitler's words, it attempts to form the “little worms” of society into a “mighty dragon”.

In the run up to April we had a whole spate of organised racist attacks on the Isle of Dogs and in adjoining areas targeted by the BNP.

But then the racist attacks cooled down. Tony Lecomber—the BNP's convicted bomber and street fighter—went on TV to announce “an end to punch ups”. Nobody should be fooled. If the BNP consolidates its election base the violence will begin again—on election night itself they will go on the rampage whatever the result. There will be a campaign of harassment to force black families off the Island.

The workers' movement has to deny the fascists the right to campaign publicly. That means getting unions to boycott any work connected with fascist propaganda like printing their letters to the newspapers or delivering their mailshots. And it means organising defence squads against the BNP thugs, taking the fight to them, stopping them selling papers, leafleting, canvassing and holding public meetings. The TUC has no intention of doing this and neither has the ANL.

The argument that “street violence will drive locals into the arms of the BNP” is a red herring. If the BNP wins control of the Island council, and its £25 million budget, and becomes the direct bosses of hundreds of black workers and trade unionists all hell will be let loose anyway. For the hardened minority who can't see beyond the boundaries of their own little world, any anti-racist campaigning is seen as the work of “outsiders”. That goes for the work of the pacifist ANL and even the Labour canvassers.

It is vital to mobilise working class people, trade unionists and youth, to show the people of the Isle of Dogs that it is people just like them who are against the Nazis and who are willing to stand up to them.

So far there have been only isolated attempts to stop the BNP canvassing. On Thursday 14 April a group of their canvassers were hospitalised after local anti-fascists decided they'd had enough race hate leaflets posted through their front doors. That upped the stakes.

Now we need to prepare for the first attempt to hold a BNP election rally and make sure it is smashed. Anti-fascist groups in East London have got together to call for a Day of Action to stop the BNP canvassing on Saturday 30 April. So far the ANL and the Labour Party have gone out of their way to avoid clashing with the BNP whilst campaigning. The action on 30 April has to be the start of a week in which the fascists will be driven off the streets and then voted out of office.” CHRIS CORNWELL



It's no good saying “don't be angry...”

“I went out canvassing in a safe Labour ward in Bethnal Green. Most people will be voting Labour, but there was quite a lot of support for the BNP as well. Liberals and Tories didn't get a look in.

The most common argument on the doorsteps from BNP supporters was straightforward racism. Some white voters have been taken in by the lies—which have never been challenged by the main parties—about Asian families getting preferential treatment in housing. In fact, we were ready with the figures to prove that the opposite is the case—black people have been discriminated against. But some people were so bigoted that they just didn't want to know.

The typical “moderate” answers to this racism are completely ineffective. It is no good telling people not to

be angry when everyone is aware of bad housing, limited facilities and unemployment. That anger needs to be directed against the real enemy, not against other working class people. We managed to talk one woman round after she began blaming black people for the housing crisis. The facts and figures helped, but they weren't enough on their own. We pointed out how the rich were to blame for the cuts, and how we needed working class unity—black and white—to fight the Tories and get a budget that meets working class needs in the area.

If we are divided, the rich will be laughing all the way to the bank. “Well if you put it like that . . .”, she replied, “I definitely won't be voting for the BNP”. Class politics are the key.”

DAVE GREEN

TOWER HAMLETS

“Class politics are the key”

The campaign to stop the BNP's election bid is in full swing. Early indications point to a strong Labour vote in all the areas where the BNP is standing, but also to a large minority of vocal, racist BNP supporters in areas of London's Tower Hamlets and Newham.

There is still a possibility that the BNP could retain its Millwall seat and even win another two council seats. But even if the BNP fails in its election bid, it is clear that it has used the election to consolidate its base in East London.

That is why Workers Power has argued, from the very beginning, for:

★ physically denying the fascists a public platform, through mass demonstrations, organised defence squads and union action to

stop them spreading their propaganda

★ an active campaign for a vote for Labour, the only working class party standing in the elections

★ a political fight to focus the anger of working class people against the real enemy—the Tories, the Docklands Development Corporation and the Nazis—and to put forward a fighting socialist alternative to Labour's sell-outs.

Workers Power members and supporters have been actively campaigning to implement all of these goals.

Gary Pike talked to some of them about the current state of play on the Isle of Dogs, the political problems socialists face in combating the rise of racism, and the pros and cons of various anti-racist initiatives in the area.

Organising in workplaces

“Even before the BNP won in Millwall last September, teachers were getting persistent reports of rising racist violence from students. We decided to form East London Schools Against Racism and Fascism (ELSARF). We have tried to organise a fightback from teachers, students and school workers.

We leafleted schools in the wake of Beackon's victory and called for support for the Tower Hamlets Nine—Asian youth who were victimised after police attacked the vigil for racist attack victim Qudus Ali. We tried to build support for the school strike in East London organised by the YRE. We have helped organise escorts for a group of Asian school students who faced harassment on their way to school.

In all of this we have faced opposi-

tion, not just from the top union bureaucracy but from the leaders of our local NUT Association. They are quite prepared to give support to the ANL or ARA on paper, but when it comes to backing direct action it's another question.

If there is any attempt to use schools for BNP election rallies we will try to get a strike and occupation to stop it. If Beackon or other Nazis get elected, the unions—both in local government and education—have to launch an immediate policy of non co-operation. When Beackon was first elected UNISON members on the Island walked out. But the union officials soon moved in and got them back to work. The initial policy of non co-operation with Beackon was toned down.

This time there should be strike action on the day after any Nazi is

elected and a rigorous, union backed policy of non co-operation. That will be a political strike and against the law.

We have heard that local UNISON officials are already warning against any attempt to discuss political strike action against the BNP. But amongst the rank and file—black and white—there is a strong feeling that they cannot work for a Nazi controlled local neighbourhood council. In the worst-case scenario, of an outright BNP victory on the Isle of Dogs, many black council workers are saying they will apply for transfers.

Without strike action and occupations Beackon will get his way: the fascists will “ethnically cleanse” the council workforce on the Island as a prelude to doing it to the whole population. We must be ready to stop them.”

DAVE GARTON

Mass protest drove the BNP out of Bethnal Green last September. Now we have to drive them off the streets in the Isle of Dogs

On the doorstep

“Large numbers have been mobilised for successive Labour campaign days on Sundays in the Isle of Dogs. Workers Power took part in the canvassing and leafleting but with the aim—as far as possible—of doing the kind of work that Labour has all but banned in recent years: arguing on the doorstep for socialist answers and demanding that Labour actually acts in the interests of the working class.

When we turned up the local Labour Party bureaucrats were keen to emphasise that there should be “no arguments” with BNP supporters. This was to be a normal Labour Party canvass, to find out the strength of the vote and to organise lifts for the elderly on voting day. One or two local Labour members even suggested that “you can't put the anti-racist arguments here—if you say you're anti-racist they just think you are discriminating in favour of Bengalis”.

We set out to prove that this approach is wrong. The BNP are on the doorsteps every day—and they certainly do argue with people. They have shoved a copy of their hate-sheet *British Nationalist* through every letter box, and Beackon is out and about glad-handing local white people.

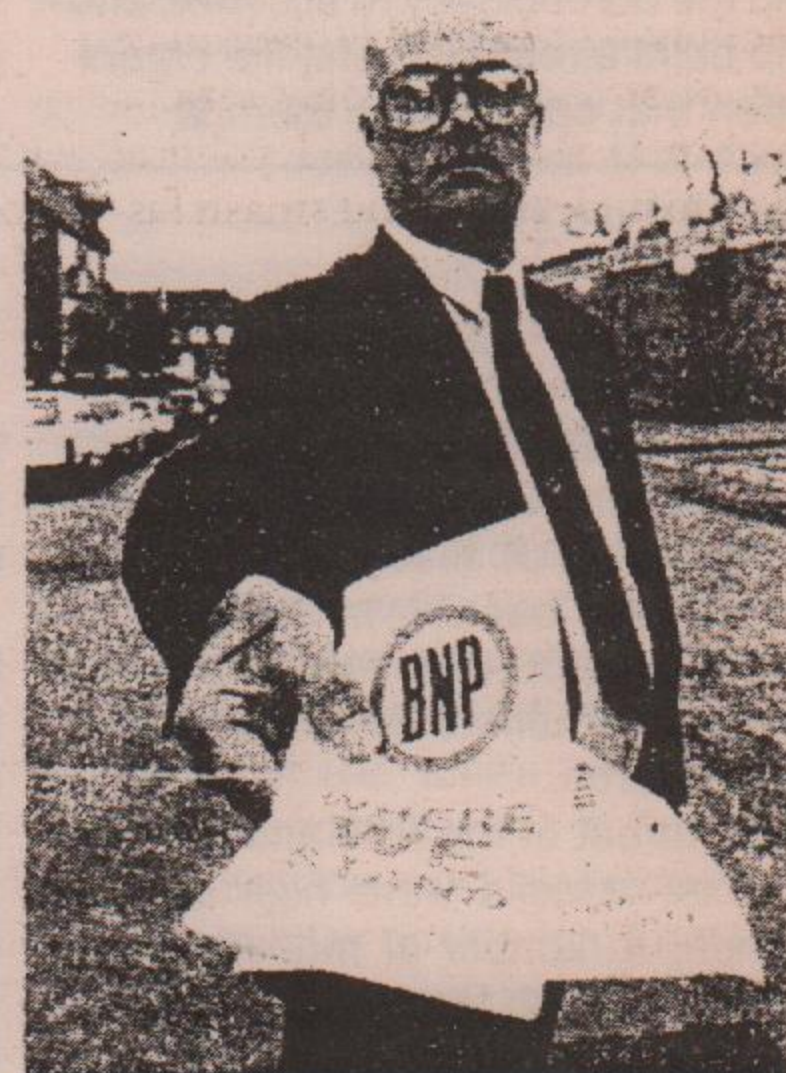
What we found, at least in the well established, low-rise council housing, was between 10% to 20% vocal support for the BNP. Activists returning to the canvass HQ expressed surprise at the willingness of BNP supporters to be open about their allegiance.

The racism of the BNP supporters was no different from the usual racism you get from a hardened minority anywhere. The difference was that the BNP are there to express it and channel it. These voters are not BNP members, nor even the kind of person the BNP could mobilise on the streets—yet. But they are not just fringe elements. We found council workers, self-employed builders and middle-aged working class men and women amongst their supporters. Encouragingly, there were hardly any young people prepared to express support for the BNP, and many of the youths we met on the streets while canvassing—black and white—expressed support for us.

What is needed is an active campaign to organise the local community to defend itself against the real enemies, and a campaign to isolate the hardened BNP supporters.

We have to make it unacceptable to be a BNP member in a working class area.”

PAUL MORRIS



Derek Beackon—the workers' movement must organise to stop him peddling his fascist filth

STEVEN SPIELBERG'S latest film shows the horror of fascism in power. It will reach greater numbers of viewers than documentaries like Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, including a new generation confronted with the growth of fascism. *Schindler's List* drags the Holocaust out of the realm of anonymous statistics, helping to make the scale of the terror concrete and, at least partially, imaginable. As such the film is a useful weapon in today's anti-fascist struggle.

Nevertheless *Schindler's List* is a product of the capitalist film industry. It is an expression of the spirit of the times. It reflects today's economic and social crisis, and a change in the cultural atmosphere which has swept away uncritical celebrations of capitalist society and its values.

Despite this the "anti-fascist" establishment has nothing to fear from this film. It presses on few of society's raw nerves—so that neither the public nor the liberal bourgeoisie will take offence.

The film shows that, alongside small employers like Oskar Schindler, German industrial giants like IG Farben also used Jewish slave labour. German capitalism was the main beneficiary of the rule of the fascist murder gangs.

Capitalists

But what is never shown is the role of the German capitalists in the Nazis' rise to power. The capitalists relied on Hitler to smash the organised working class, to boost profits at the expense of the working class—in particular through the super-exploitation of Jewish and East European slave labour.

Because the film cannot explain the origins of fascism, it presents a picture of something akin to a natural catastrophe, something which just suddenly happened. This is typical of bourgeois historical accounts.

It presents an idealist image of history; the Nazis and their backers are portrayed as men who, for unknown reasons, suddenly become fanatical, inhuman and "evil".

Fascism appears not as the capitalists' ultimate regime of crisis management, but as a ready-made reign of terror which simply fell from the skies. Thus the message of the film is that under such a regime it is only possible to save some of the victims through personal courage, and then wait until the "natural catastrophe" is over, until liberation from above by the Allies.

Foolish

In Austrian debates about Spielberg's film a foolish idea has been doing the rounds: "What would have happened if there had been many Schindlers?"

This absurd arithmetic—"with 6,000 Schindlers there would have been no extermination of the Jews"—just does not add up. Schindler's plan worked simply because he found a gap in the system that he could use without attracting attention. Had he taken on a greater volume of Jewish workers, they could no longer have been concealed. The liberal answer to fascism—generalised individual courage and a sense of civic duty—is a laughably inadequate means of struggle. The only serious alternative is the organised political struggle to undermine and smash fascist rule.

It is no accident that Spielberg has chosen the story of an employer, a man from the Nazi establishment, who "sees the light"—a popular theme in religious America. Why not one of the thousands of resistance fighters from the working class movement, who at the risk of their lives fought the fascists in the towns, industry and the army, or who hid Jews in their homes?

The ruling class do not want to hear tales of working class self-organisation, of class struggle, of industrial sabotage, of subversion in the army. That is why German histories of the period parade the military chiefs around Stauffenberg—who decided to overthrow Hitler when it became clear that

SCHINDLER'S LIST

Ideology and the Holocaust

The transformation of a rapacious Nazi businessman into the saviour of 1200 Jews—that is the theme of Schindler's List. It has provoked huge public debate in Germany and Austria, with millions attending the film in the first few weeks of release. This article is a translated excerpt of a longer review, by Eric Wegner, originally appearing in ArbeiterInnen Standpunkt, paper of the Austrian section of the LRCI.



"Work makes you free"—The slogan over the gates of every camp

the Nazis faced defeat—as the real "heroes of anti-fascism".

Schindler's later history is covered in a documentary epilogue. This is highly selective, which is also no accident. We are told that he had no further business success and received eventual recognition of his deeds. What is not mentioned is that Schindler was arrested and fined by a Frankfurt court at the end of the 1950s. His crime was to punch a Nazi who, like countless others before him, harassed Schindler in the street, and called him a Jew-lover for his role in saving people from the Holocaust.

Spielberg obviously did not want to start a debate about the role of former Nazis in the post-war Federal Republic of Germany. In particular he did not want to draw attention to the fact that

working class movement.

In *Schindler's List* the anti-fascist hero is a German. Spielberg thus seems to break with the banal schema of most American anti-fascist films that present "the Germans" as being all little more than fanatical Nazis. But once we leave Schindler himself out of account, Spielberg's film stands four-square in this tradition. All the German characters come across at best as cowardly fellow travellers of vicious camp bosses. This is exacerbated by images of children filled with anti-semitic hatred, cheering on the incarceration and annihilation of the Jews. There is no doubt that these examples are entirely authentic. The point is that they are not representative of the majority of Germans under the Nazis.

For Spielberg, Schindler is the ex-

low citizens were also over-represented in the repressive state apparatus and in the running of the concentration camps. Above all, it cannot be said that the Germans as a whole became fascist, or even that a majority of them did. Nor were the exceptions few and far between.

At the last free democratic elections, the Nazis got fewer than the combined votes of the two working class parties—the Social Democrats and the Communists. After their seizure of power, the tendency for the Nazi Party to be integrated into the system stood in contradiction to growing disillusionment at the Nazis' broken promises.

The certain outbreak of civil war in Germany was forestalled by the allied invasion. The reactionary ideological consequences of the fact that the lib-

It is no accident that Spielberg has chosen the story of an employer, a man from the Nazi establishment, who "sees the light"—a popular theme in religious America.

its justice system showed a definite continuity with the institutions of the Nazi state, using many of the same people as judges and officials.

This would have upset the West German ruling class and lessened the glory attached to the Allied armies for their role in the "liberation".

These armies disarmed the Antifascist Committees that had taken over many towns and workplaces in the immediate aftermath of liberation, and re-established the old state apparatus under the protection of the Allied military administration, making only a few cosmetic changes. In their project of ensuring capitalist stability and building an anti-Soviet bloc, the Western "democrats" regarded the old Nazis as far more reliable than the resistance fighters, most of whom came from the

ception that proves the rule. The notion that the supposed "national character" of the Germans is particularly authoritarian, disciplined and thus prone to fascism is not only widespread in the West, but also among Austrian anti-fascists.

In Austria this myth is bound up with the central lie of the Second Republic, the notion that Austria was the "first victim" of Nazism. Thus Austrian nationalists are able to blame "the Germans" for fascism and to exonerate the Austrians. In reality Austria, like most capitalist countries, had its own home-grown fascist movement, the *Heimwehr*, which came to power.

After the German annexation, Austria not only had a higher percentage of Nazi Party members than the "Old Reich" (Germany), but our kindly fel-

eration of Germany came not from within but from without have profoundly influenced post-war politics.

As well as reinforcing stereotypes of the Germans, Spielberg reinforces stereotypes of the Jews. Spielberg's film reproduces an image of the Jews as passive victims, who accepted their fate resignedly, who ran their businesses even under Nazi repression, who relied on "instinctive cleverness" to overcome the worst, but were incapable of collective resistance and relied on well-meaning saviours.

1943 saw the heroic uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto, which brought with it a class and political polarisation among the Jews (see Ben Carling's account in WP 173 and Marek Edelman's *The Ghetto Fights*).

In view of the uprising's revolution-

ary character it is no accident that the US film industry hasn't latched on to that particular "story". In Spielberg's film there is not a single reference to this, the most significant instance of Jewish resistance to the fascist murderers.

The weakest part of the film is definitely the end. Incredibly, Hollywood has succeeded in giving even a film about the Holocaust a happy ending. The epilogue, which reminds us that today only 4,000 Jews are still living in Poland gives the impression of having been tacked on as an after-thought. The real ending is a lengthy and emotional parting scene between Schindler and "his" Jewish workers, followed by the march of the Schindler-Jews, amidst optimistic music, over the hills and into the distance.

A Red Army soldier who comes into the camp to announce the liberation is depicted as a laughable and overbearing figure. The symbolism is cynical to say the least.

The Soviet people and Soviet troops defended themselves against the fascist assault, sustaining a monstrous level of victims and casualties—20 million dead, the scorching and wasting of endless stretches of land, and racist genocide against the so-called "Slav sub-humans".

Struggle

Through their struggle they made the decisive contribution to the liberation of Europe. The fact that the USSR was ruled by vicious Stalinists in no way robs the struggle of the Soviet people of its meaning. The Brunnitz concentration camp in East Sudetenland, depicted in the film, was liberated because its SS guards fled before the advancing Soviet troops.

What a sickening reminder of Hollywood's ingrained anti-communism: confronted with the Holocaust, the whole of liberal society is consumed with pious hypocrisy, but the film can still end with a tasteless joke at the expense of Nazism's Soviet victims.

Finally, Spielberg hints at the Zionist conclusions that the establishment wants us to draw from the Holocaust. After the Red Army soldier makes it clear that the Jews are not welcome in the East and that things scarcely look better in the West, he leaves the freed captives to march off into the sun. Together with the positive image of Israel in the documentary epilogue, the message is clear: a Jewish state in Palestine is the salvation and the future for the Jewish people.

Reactionary

This message is reactionary not only because it has meant the oppression of the Palestinians, but also because it reinforces the reactionary myth of the "unity of the Jewish people", of their supposedly common interest—transcending class distinctions—against a universally and eternally hostile environment.

It is reactionary because it leads the Jewish people towards another catastrophe: Israel is not their salvation, but a prison house, forcing them into permanent confrontation with the Arab masses in the Middle East. It is not nationalist self-isolation in an armed reactionary state but the international struggle of the working class that can free all Jewish people from centuries of persecution.

Barbaric

Despite these weaknesses, *Schindler's List* has its strengths. It is a tremendous indictment of fascism's reign of terror. By showing us the barbaric reality that gripped Europe fifty years ago, the film can be a powerful spur for the struggles of the future. Liberal "anti-fascism" will use this film's undoubted emotional charge to divert and smother any effective class action against the fascists. We have to focus that emotional charge into support for a fighting alternative. ■

WOSA

The Mass Workers Party and the unions

WP: A number of socialist organisations in South Africa, like the International Socialists of South Africa (ISSA) or the Marxist Workers Tendency (MWT), have called for a vote for the ANC. WOSA has decided that this is wrong. Can you explain why?

Joseph Mtete: WOSA decided to enter the elections against the ANC because we realised that there is a need to build an alternative set of politics, alternative to that of the nationalists. We decided to go into the elections to make propaganda around the issue of building an alternative socialist politics, that is to build a mass workers' party.

A lot of people argue that the vote will be polarised between the National Party and the ANC, therefore we have to go into the ANC and give it a critical vote. But the time for a Mass Workers' Party has finally arrived in the country. It is to the advantage of the Mass Workers' Party initiative to use the elections and the euphoria around them to set up a movement to establish alternative politics in the country.

The Marxist Workers Tendency has always talked about people going into the ANC to try to change it into a socialist movement, but this has been going on for a long time. There have never been fruits in the relation to the ANC. Instead of moving more to the left, it has moved consistently towards the right and in that process compromised the working class.

What do you expect the ANC government will do in its first year? Will it deliver anything to the workers or do you think it will try to keep workers' demands down?

I think the latter. If you can remember the 1990 strike of the hospital workers the ANC actually intervened at the level of stopping the strike. And the COSATU strike of 1993—early last year—the ANC moved to stop that strike. I don't think they would be able to deliver, but it is possible they would try to ease the problem of unemployment. How far they would go to solve that problem is another issue, but for them the solution to the unemployment problem is trying to get public works schemes going without saying where the money will come from. The ANC, in the first years, might try to build houses; not so as to solve the problem of housing, but really to persuade people to give them a chance.

Where does the Workers List Party (WLP) say the money should come from for

mass programmes of public works and house building?

Firstly we should look at the debt that apartheid owes to outside donors. The WLP says that the debt shouldn't be repaid because that money was loaned to the apartheid government of South Africa. That money was used to keep us in the position that we are in now. So one of the issues would be to argue against them repaying the debt to the IMF and the World Bank.

We say only the people fighting for the right to work against those who control the wealth of the country can ensure the problems of unemployment can be solved. Primarily the money has to be taken from those who have the wealth. Less than 1% of the population here owns over 80% of the wealth. You have to tamper in some way with the amount of money people have in their hands, that is the big companies like Anglo-American and Sanlam. The ANC will not do this.

In terms of promoting the idea of the Workers Party, last July at the NUMSA Conference there was an argument and discussion about the support for the workers party. But what has happened with the trade unions since then? Have any of the trade unions supported the idea of a Workers Party?

I think a lot of unions have sympathy with the idea. Socialists, especially within the unions, have come out in support of the idea of a Mass Workers Party. However there have been numerous attempts by the Communist Party leadership to discredit the idea of a Mass Workers Party.

In fact some time last year one of the main ideologues in the Communist Party, Jeremy Cronin, called the idea of a mass Workers Party a ploy by the national intelligence services. By this he suggested that people who actually are propagating the idea of a mass Workers Party are falling into the trap of the national intelligence services, which is to weaken the ability or capacity of the ANC.

But that is not the intention. It is clear that the ANC is going on a totally different road from what the masses are expecting, and our duty as WOSA and as other organisations on the left, like the Independent Socialist Movement (ISM), is to argue the only alternative for the working class is a Mass Workers Party. We have come out and stated it on numerous occasions.

Support for the idea of the Mass Workers Party is not limited to the trade un-

ions, WOSA and ISM but receives support in other organisations, the civic movement, the youth movement etc.

In the Workers List Party are you in favour of trying to get the unions to affiliate to a mass Workers Party either nationally or locally? In Britain the majority of trade unions are affiliated to the Labour Party.

I think the attitude so far has been that unions as unions shouldn't affiliate to the Mass Workers Party. The unions should be independent from political parties, but the membership of the mass Workers Party would be drawn from the unions, as individual members, instead of the union joining as a union. Our position is to get people, activists in the union movement, to join the Mass Workers Party. Of course it doesn't exist as yet, but the intention is to get union members not as representatives of the union into the Mass Workers Party, the union should stay clear of the Mass Workers Party. We aim at getting individuals, not only from the union movement but from the civic movement, student movement and the youth movement etc.

Isn't that making concessions to the workerist tradition, the old FOSATU tradition, that says the unions should not be involved in politics? Isn't that a dangerous idea, that somehow trade unions shouldn't be involved with political parties? Shouldn't socialists actually be saying unions should be political, they should be supporting a Workers Party?

I don't think so. In SA the union movement draws membership from a lot of different organisations so I think, on the basis of not alienating those members who are not really interested in the Mass Workers Party, it would be a very disadvantageous thing to do. We are not saying that unions should not be involved in politics because in South Africa at various stages in our country unions have been at the forefront of politics. The organisation however should not decide which political party they want to join. I think it should be up to the members, as individuals, to decide which political organisations to join.

People inside COSATU who are not members of the SACP become marginalised from decision making, they to some extent get harassed. A lot of our comrades from SACA/WU got harassed because of them being members of WOSA instead of being members of the Communist Party.

Isn't it a good thing to have a debate as a union as to whose programme is of more advantage to the workers trade union, the SACP's programme or Mass Workers Party programme. One could actually debate out before the workers, within say NUMSA, whose programme actually stood for the interests of the workers, the ANC, the SACP or the Mass Workers Party?

In a lot of instances debates around the particular issues come up, like whose programme really advances the interests of the working class as in shop stewards' councils where the WOSA representative goes to put forward the programme of WOSA at that stage. Even at this stage, WOSA's programme is in competition with somebody from the Communist Party.

In fact I think our position on the independence of the working class has been influenced because of our particular position now. We are small, our comrades face the brunt of harassment within these unions committed to the ANC alliance.

The Workers List Party has been formed very recently for the elections. What sort of support are you getting? Has it got many members yet, branches, and where do you think it is strongest?

The Workers List Party has got numerous branches. In Johannesburg the WLP includes the ISM, WOSA and individuals in neither of the two organisations coming from the trade union movement, the student movement and the civic movement and even unemployed people from the townships.

In other regions also the WLP is made up of branches of WOSA and other members who didn't want to join WOSA but felt a need for an organisation that represents the interests of the working class in the country, and they find the WLP is the only one that intends to do that.

We have many branches in the country. For example there are branches in Capetown, in the Northern Cape, in Natal etc.

Do you hope to have members in the Constituent Assembly?

I think it is very controversial debate, but we intend to get as many votes to establish our support, because we went into the elections to propagate the idea of a Mass Workers Party. Taking seats is still under debate. It hasn't been decided yet. Some socialists are against raising the question of a Mass Workers Party because they say it will inevitably become just another reformist party, like for example the Labour Party in Britain which has a capitalist programme. Terry Bell of the ISSA argues this in the latest *Work In Progress*.

How do you think, as a socialist from WOSA, you can stop a Mass Workers Party from becoming just a reformist party like the British Labour Party?

I think it depends whether the Mass Workers Party becomes a reformist or a revolutionary party. It is going to be determined by the kinds of members that the Mass Workers Party intends drawing into the party.

I think if the Mass Workers Party draws members from the trade unions, the civic movement, the unemployed and students, especially people based where the working class is based, in the townships, then the prospect is very slim of the Mass Workers Party becoming another reformist party. In fact I don't know what led to the British Labour Party becoming a reformist party. But I think if we draw people from the mass movement and the mass movement is strong, and in our programme of action we place the emphasis on strengthening the mass movement, then I think the possibilities of becoming a reformist party is very slim.

If we had a civics movement controlled by the people it represents, then I think to have a reformist Mass Workers Party would not be possible—unless we concentrate on building the Mass Workers Party on the basis of so-called socialist intellectuals rather than drawing in actual workers. A Mass Workers Party controlled by the membership, I don't see becoming a mass reformist party. ■

THE QUESTION of supporting elections has divided those revolutionary Marxists. Members of the left and attended the formation of the Workers List Party in Capetown.

We present here two interviews and the fight for a Mass Workers Party.

The first interview is with Joseph Mtete, Secretary of the Workers List Party and a member of the ANC in the elections.

The second interview is with John McKee, Secretary of the West Central region of Comrades for a Workers Party, for critical support for the ANC in favour of building a Mass Workers Party.

Right John McKee explains why we should give critical support to the ANC in the April elections.

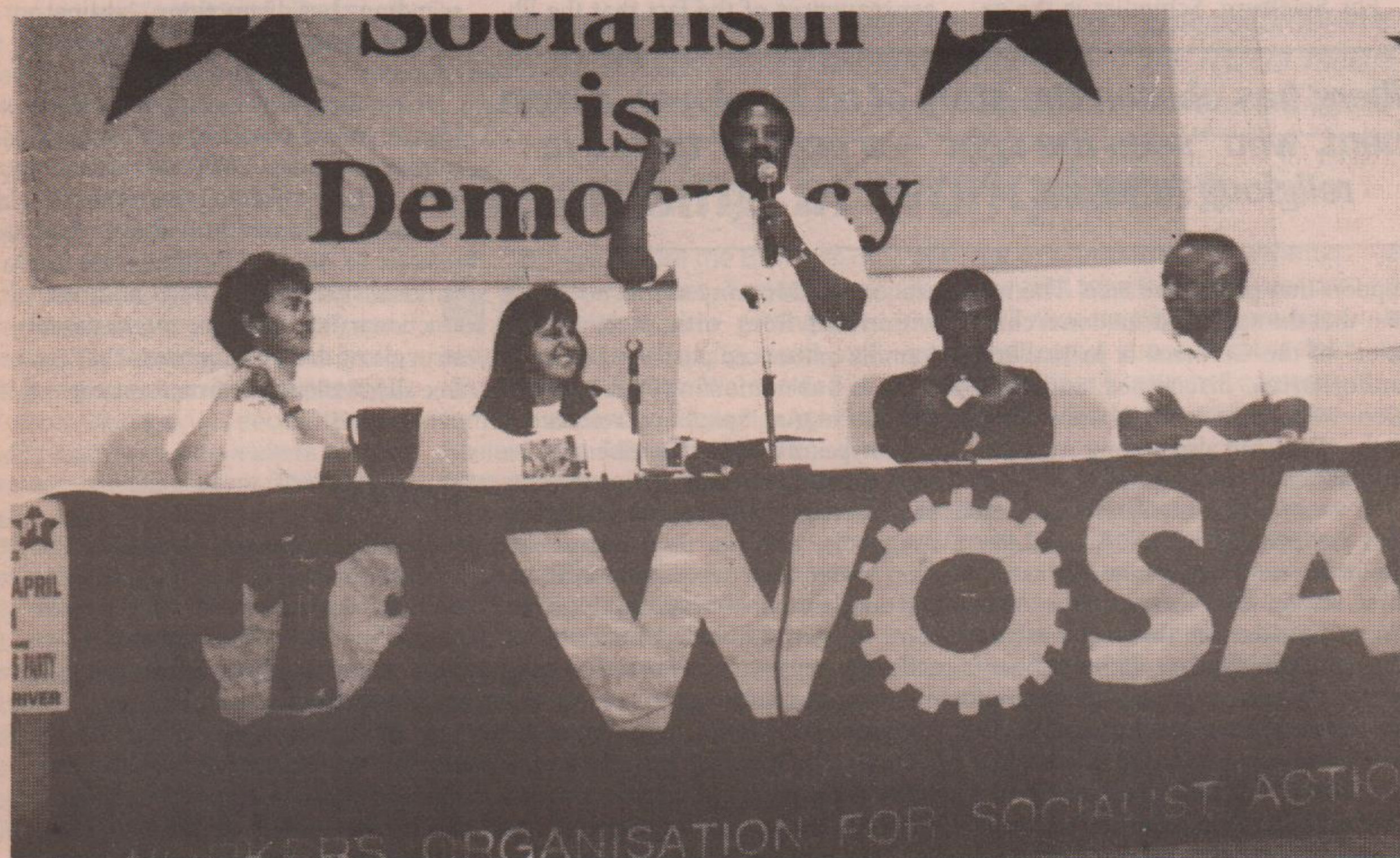
SOUTH AFRICA What to t

WP: At the last NUMSA Congress there was an important resolution which came from your region, calling for the workers to have their own party. The final version of the resolution as passed was clearly watered down, but nevertheless it has sparked off a great deal of debate. Can you tell us about how that resolution originated and what has happened since. Tony Kgobi: In preparation for the Congress, six months before, our region had a discussion on the question of building a political alternative to the ANC. This was influenced by the number of compromises that the ANC was making at that time, and also because workers were becoming more politically aware as well—embracing worker politics in terms of the class struggle and socialism. We had three sessions dealing with that question. The position arrived at in our region, was to say "look, we can't talk of having an alternative now".

There are a number of tendencies within this union: it's one of the politically healthiest unions we have in this

GLOSSARY

ANC: African National Congress
NUMSA: National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
WOSA: Workers Organisation for Socialist Action
SACP: South African Communist Party
ISSA: International Socialists of South Africa
ISM: Independent Socialist Movement, a Workers Party
CWG: Comrades for a Workers Government, an organisation of the Workers International League
MWT: Marxist Workers Tendency, sister organisation of the ANC



WOSA is the main force behind the Workers List Party

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Late last year a number of left wing groups in South Africa, including the CWG, came together to discuss putting forward a working class alternative to the ANC. In the context of significant support for the idea of a workers' party within the trade union movement and the enormity of the sell-out being perpetrated by the ANC/SACP alliance, this was a vitally important initiative.

The agreements made by the ANC/SACP with the National Party, restricting the rights of the future parliament, enshrining capitalist private property in a Bill of Rights, guaranteeing the positions of the army and police high command and top civil servants, illustrate the nature of the sell out.

The ANC was about to take its place as the bourgeois government of South Africa, agreeing in advance to enter into a coalition with the hated National Party until the year 2000.

The crucial task for revolutionaries was to rally as many workers as possible against this sell out. It was not utopian. Many working class militants were already looking for alternatives to the bourgeois politics of the ANC. The demand for a workers' party is a revolutionary tactic, providing a rallying point for all those workers op-

WHAT WE THINK

Vote Workers List!

posed to the deal with the nationalists and who recognise the need for a party that represent their interests.

However the pressure of the ANC/SACP alliance, especially within the trade unions, made the winning of such a position more and more difficult. The approaching elections and the murder campaign of the right wing Freedom Alliance and Inkatha generated enormous pressure for unity behind the banner of the ANC.

The CWG declared it would no longer support the attempt to stand independent workers' candidates in the election and decided to call for a critical vote for the ANC. The Workers International group, initially involved with the workers' party tactic in the Cape, decided to withdraw and stand on its own in two regions. This left WOSA as the biggest force still adher-

ing to the fight for a workers' party in the elections. Supporters of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI), sympathetic to Socialist Action and Socialist Outlook in Britain, withdrew from WOSA, condemning the decision to stand against the ANC.

Workers Power believes that the forces left in the initiative to stand independent working class candidates against the ANC and against the sell out were absolutely right to continue the campaign for a Mass Workers' Party. A vote for the Workers List Party (WLP) will be a vote against the sell out and for an independent workers' party.

Obviously the WLP represents small forces. Small because the majority of the South African "revolutionary" left has decided to swim with the stream and call for a vote for the ANC. Nevertheless the fact that in less than a fortnight the WLP managed to collect 13,000 signatures, names and identity card numbers, in order to get state election funding, indicated the support for a working class alternative to the ANC.

To call on workers to vote for the WLP does not mean that we hide our criticisms of it. We have already pointed out (WP 177) that the WLP's programme leaves out the question of how the workers can take power in South Africa. The WLP presented a manifesto that was a mixture of revolutionary and reformist ideas.

Tony Kgobi from the CWG points out another major weakness: its failure to argue for the affiliation of trade unions to the party. We believe, like the CWG, that a mass workers' party in South Africa can only be built via the trade unions, fighting the reformist and nationalist programmes of the SACP and the ANC. At the same time revolutionaries cannot neglect to fight the still significant syndicalist current inside

COSATU which wants to keep the unions out of politics altogether.

The alternative to the WLP is not to vote for the ANC, an organisation that the CWG themselves characterise as a bourgeois party. It is to fight within the Workers List Party for a revolutionary position. The WLP is a very new political formation, only formed shortly before the elections in April with a predominantly young membership recruited in the struggles against apartheid. But its leadership, largely drawn from the Cape Action League tradition, bears all the hall marks of USFI-influenced centrism.

At its April Conference opposition to its current rejection of trade union affiliation was smothered. The conference, at the insistence of the leadership, put off deciding on whether to take seats in parliament if they receive sufficient votes.

This prevarication leaves the party unable to tell workers whether a vote for the party will mean workers' representatives in parliament or not!

A new "Manifesto" was delivered just as delegates were leaving. This "populised" version, not discussed by the conference, removed many of the transitional and class struggle elements of the original, turning it into a completely reformist programme. This signals the need for a struggle inside the WLP, to win it to the revolutionary programme of Trotskyism.

Despite this the forces in the WLP have taken one step that places them head and shoulders above the rest of the left in South Africa. They have said clearly at a vital moment in South African politics that workers should not give their vote to an enemy class—the bourgeoisie in the form of an ANC government. They have publicly stood up against the sell out and provided workers with the only alternative worth voting for in the April elections. ■

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CWG

Voting for the ANC?

country. The SACP-ANC tendency want to say, "look, we can't talk of building a workers' party" but when this came up at the Congress (which was raised by Western Cape Region, by the way, not ours) there was not a single region that came out against that resolution.

That included our region, even though our region's position was that we can't build a workers' party now.

It says something that there is this groundswell saying "yes, we need some kind of an alternative". There was no opposition to that except of course from the then General Secretary who wanted to open a debate because he was a mem-

ber of the Central Committee of the SACP. But the entire Congress did not want to entertain a different view. That was very interesting.

But if you look at the resolution passed it is very eclectic. It says we will support the ANC in the forthcoming elections. It says we will break the alliance immediately the ANC is in parliament and look at new forms of organisation which may mean the formation of a working class party.

Did you think it was important to try and form a workers' party before the elections?

I was of the opinion, I think a year ago, when we developed this position in the CWG that we needed to put all efforts into forming the workers' party which would contest the elections. Because at that stage there was still a possibility of drawing quite a huge number of people onto this road. But the way we wanted to go about it was to establish Committees for a Workers' Party which would be at the trade union level, to be spearheaded by the comrades in the trade unions because they provide a better base in terms of organisation.

As events unfolded, and also in terms of not really getting enough groundwork done for that, it was going to be problematic. The danger is to discredit the project,

because then you would go to the elections with a party which would not show well.

Hence we decided on tactical support for the ANC. Tactical support actually means that you raise problems that the ANC is posing. It is not going to deliver because it has tied its hands, more so with this internal constitution. When the ANC comes into power it will be unmasked for what it is, not an organisation that represents the working class. We are not hoping to transform the ANC into a workers' organisation, but expose the contradictions within the ANC. We continue making a call for a workers' party, but it is not a call related to the elections.

Many socialists would say that on principle it is not possible to encourage workers to vote for a bourgeois party, a party that represents the capitalists. And especially one that is about to form a bourgeois government with the Nationalists. How do you reply to that?

Well it's not really an encouragement. We do not ourselves go and campaign for the ANC. We say we vote for the ANC critically and openly say that the ANC is a bourgeois party. But in this case no one should be indifferent to an ANC victory over the National Party, or Inkatha if it comes in, and so forth. Because you find

the majority of progressive militants in the ANC, it is this majority of the militants that you have to get onto your side.

Looking ahead, if the ANC/National Party government ends up attacking the workers or imposing a social contract, what do you think will happen to the COSATU members of parliament and the SACP? Do you think they will be under pressure from their rank and file? Do you have any method of relating to that?

They will not represent the workers' interests because they are bound by the ANC structures and these are not COSATU structures. They don't go there representing workers, they go there representing positions that come from those

structures.

That's why we should be calling for COSATU to break with the ANC, going back to what it should be, a class struggle trade union and move away from this reformism. The call for the workers' party will find better ground within COSATU. We still think that you can't build a Mass Workers' Party from a combination or collection of individuals. There must be a serious effort in COSATU, in the labour movement. We are not saying that COSATU should be the workers' party, we are saying it should be used as the platform the vehicle to build the workers' party. That is where we have differences with the comrades from WOSA. ■



NUMSA conference voted for workers' party resolution

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AFTER THE ITALIAN ELECTIONS

Stop the MSI!

THE RESULTS of the Italian general election represent a serious blow to the Italian working class. They are also a bitter blow to the opportunist leaders of the Italian labour movement who, until a month or two ago, thought they would be the beneficiaries of the deep political crisis which has gripped Italy for over two years. Now the right is in control. It is they who, if they do not destroy one another with internal feuding, will design a new constitution for the so-called Second Republic that is in the making.

The leaders of the labour movement rode the wave of corruption scandals, forming alliances with bourgeois figures who promised to clean up the Tangentopoli ("Bribesville") system. They knew that this would fatally discredit the Christian Democrats (DC).

Achille Occhetto, leader of the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS), smugly expected to be rewarded with power. To make sure of this Occhetto and the PDS promised to support mass privatisation, and offered to put the former chairman of the Bank of Italy, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, in office as premier. At the same time Occhetto made it clear that he would dump the Stalinist Communist Refoundation Party from the ruling coalition immediately after victory. He even made a pilgrimage to the City of London!

It was all to no avail. A man from outside the political system, Silvio

BY DAVE STOCKTON AND RICHARD BRENNER

Berlusconi, knocked together a party in two months and snatched power from under Occhetto's nose with a coalition of parties to the right of even the most right wing post-war government.

Whilst the PDS gained 20.4% of the popular vote, and the Communist Refoundation 6%, their "allies" got a pathetic handful of votes. The Greens got 2.7% and the anti-Mafia network La Rete got 1.9%. But in the run up to the election no expense was spared to accommodate these parties in a "broad progressive" coalition.

The "left" as a whole will have 122 seats in the lower chamber of the Italian parliament. The hard right Freedom Alliance gained 366 of the 630 seats.

Its components were Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia ("Come on Italy") with 21% of the popular vote, giving it 101 deputies, Umberto Bossi's Lega Nord (Northern League), which gained 118 deputies from only 8.4% of the popular vote, and Gianfranco Fini's Alleanza Nazionale (AN—National Alliance), the renamed Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), with 105 deputies from 13.5% of the vote.

In less than fourteen months Fini has brought the AN-MSI from the fascist fringes of Italian politics to the threshold of power. In doing so he has changed the name and public



image of the party. The limits of this distancing can be seen in his post-election praise of Mussolini as "the greatest statesman of the twentieth century" and the AN followers' singing of the fascist anthem and giving the straight arm salute to delirious shouts of "Duce! Duce!" in the streets of Rome on the night of the results. Clearly for all Fini's well groomed image and his claims that "fascism is a historical question" the AN-MSI is far from having broken with its fascist past.

The Lega Nord, the party with the smallest popular vote but the largest number of seats, has claimed the key posts including the premiership. It

has insisted on the new government carrying out the League's federalist programme. Bossi, its loudmouthed leader, has denounced Berlusconi as unfit to be prime minister, calling him "Berluskaiser".

He has denounced the AN-MSI as "reactionary fascists" and claimed Berlusconi's alliance with them does not bind him to participate in a government which includes them.

Bossi is no anti-fascist however. His party's representatives are ferociously racist in their verbal attacks on immigrants, and capable of the occasional anti-semitic comment. The League is a hard-right populist party. Its raison d'être is to lower taxes for

the yuppie classes of the north, to integrate the north into the European single market and abandon the south of Italy.

Thus the League's spokesmen present southerners as professional beggars always trying to get their hands on the wallets of the thrifty hard working northerners. For obvious reasons there is little love lost between the southern based AN-MSI and the League.

At bottom it is not the personal frictions between the three leaders that has led to the post-election brawling. It is the contradictions within the Alliance over who will control the new government.

FASCISM IS a party of civil war against the proletariat, seeking a dictatorship to crush workers' democratic rights and political and trade union organisations. The AN-MSI was not elected on such a programme, nor do its organised street gangs possess the numbers or the experience to start large scale confrontations with the labour movement. But the MSI is not simply a reactionary populist party.

The MSI was founded in 1946 as a direct successor of the Fascist Party. It was not banned by the post-fascist Italian Republic. Its connection to the fascist past was thus not denied. Its name was drawn directly from the official title of Mussolini's Northern Italian state established after he was deposed by the King in 1943. Many of the MSI's leaders had been officials of the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (RSI).

Programme

The MSI's programme was one of undiluted Italian fascism, stressing nationalism, the corporate state, opposition to the democratic constitution and to the peace treaty promoted by the allies and accepted by the Christian Democracy. The party had a demagogic anti-establishment orientation and could rely on little support within the new state apparatus.

The development of the political situation in post-war Italy rapidly demonstrated to the MSI leaders that if they were to preserve and extend the organisational integrity and influence of the party, an accommodation to stable bourgeois democracy would be unavoidable. It was this that allowed the MSI to build up its strength, consolidate, and remain part of mainstream po-

What is the MSI?

litical life over the coming decades in a manner that no other fascist party in Europe was able to do. It has consistently polled between five and eight per cent of the vote in national elections and boasts a membership of over 100,000 in over 1,000 branches. It controls established youth, women's and trade union front organisations.

Yet at the same time, the MSI has been constantly beset with problems and shifts arising from the contradiction between its necessary accommodation to bourgeois democracy and its unbroken fascist heritage.

The MSI has passed through a number of phases. The faction around the party's first leader, Giorgio Almirante, adopted a classically fascist approach, emphasising opposition to the democratic regime and engaging in social demagoguery to build a petit-bourgeois and peasant movement against the political establishment and post-war domestic order.

By 1950 he had been forced to resign and was replaced by Alfredo de Marsanich, a former fascist government official and leader of the "moderate" faction in the MSI. The party now emphasised its anti-Communist credentials, allied itself with the Monarchists, and expressed support for NATO. The result of this was a massive increase in the party's vote to 11.8% in the local elections of 1952.

This accommodationist *insertimento* strategy saw the MSI's parliamentary fraction supporting suc-

cessive DC governments and even becoming the key force backing the government of Giuseppe Tambroni in 1960.

But the success of the *insertimento* strategy in bringing the MSI close to participation in government did not lead the MSI to abandon physical confrontation. Indeed there was a stepping up of street battles with the left during strikes and demonstrations. The MSI's approach to government with Tambroni provoked a massive response from the left, leading to street battles across Italy and scores of deaths. Demonstrators prevented the MSI congress from taking place. The government fell and was replaced by a centre-left coalition.

Defeat

This defeat led, during the 1960's, to ideological disunity within the MSI, culminating in Almirante's return to the party leadership at the end of the decade. His new policy involved fusing with or incorporating other rightist parties, such as the Monarchists, renewed emphasis on street confrontation and alliances with sections of the state apparatus. These sections of the repressive apparatus were becoming increasingly alarmed by student rebellion, the continuing strength of the PCI and rising trade union militancy.

This was the period of the "strategy of tension" in which direct collaboration between smaller, more openly fascist groups and sections

of the police and military led to a series of urban bombings designed to foment social instability and thus the conditions for a military coup.

The fascist terror group Ordine Nuovo, which had been readmitted to the MSI, now exerted a controlling influence on party organisations and policy. At the same time the MSI launched an attempt to construct a new broader party of the far right, the Destra Nazionale, and continued ideologically to declare its support for democracy and the system. Thus we can see that the fascists and the far right have repeatedly pursued a policy of "Russian dolls": constructing alliances and populist programmes that can assure success in elections.

Further shifts were to follow. The "moderates" split from the MSI in 1977, and anti-system demagoguery resurfaced alongside an attempt to construct a new "third way" ideology. The party's growing youth organisations managed to combine support for this radicalism with a strong mood for discontinuing the street fighting and individual terror of the 1970s. Throughout the 1980s, the party continued to debate its relationship to the political system and the fascist past, usually combining elements of demagogic radicalism and anti-capitalist rhetoric with attempts at opportunistic alliances with other major parties, including, after the "Historic Compromise", declarations of preparedness to bloc with the Socialists against the Christian Democrats and the Communist

Party.

These swings have been continued, with recent changes in the party leadership. The current leader, Fini, was first replaced by the open radical-fascist Pino Rauti in 1990, but subsequently recaptured the leadership.

On the one hand Fini can downplay the party's fascist past (with the statement that the MSI is a "post-fascist" organisation) whilst at the same time the prominence of Alessandra Mussolini serves to re-emphasise the MSI's historic links to fascism.

The MSI today can therefore be defined as a party with a definitely fascist cadre, but forced to adopt the political expedient of offering support to the democratic system. Thus its mass following at the moment neither seeks nor expects a seizure of power, a march on Rome.

Expedient

The MSI's downgrading of the strategy of street violence against the left has been a short-lived and reversible expedient rather than a qualitative break. What course its further development will take depends on the developing social and economic situation.

If the structural crisis of Italian capitalism unfolds and deepens, if Berlusconi's Thatcherite project fails, if the working class fights back but stops short of imposing its own solution to the crisis, then the AN-MSI will rapidly reassert the open features of fully fledged fascism, converting its masses of members and connections with the state apparatus into a force capable of mounting a physical challenge to workers' organisations and democratic institutions. ■



The two faces of the MSI: Fini and Mussolini (left) can't disguise the existence of a hard-core fascist cadre (above)

Having squeezed an extremely advantageous deal out of Berlusconi when it came to the allocation of seats, Bossi is clearly manoeuvring to get the largest share of ministerial portfolios. He fears that unless he achieves a significant step towards federal rights for the north, slashing taxes destined for the development of the south, Forza Italia could overtake the League even in the north.

Berlusconi is the owner of a \$7 billion media conglomerate that controls all three private TV channels. His only experience of politics until three months ago were his links with the Masonic lodge P2 and his friendship with the disgraced leader of the Socialist Party, Bettino Craxi.

If he becomes prime minister this will give him control of the three state TV channels as well as his own. Berlusconi's ability to come from nowhere owes a great deal to media manipulation. His media empire was in severe trouble and a number of his closest associates were under investigation for corruption before the election. From his position of political power he will now be able to "solve" these problems.

Berlusconi won power with a welter of promises. He promised to create a "new Italian miracle". He promised to create a million jobs in two years, to privatise state industry, the railways telecommunications and health care, to cap the national debt by slashing government spending, to cut taxes and to slash the state bureaucracy.

In fact what Berlusconi is seeking to do is to turn Italy into a deregulated low wage economy, where not only will the big bosses of the *Confindustria* be happy, but where a new wave of smaller employers can prosper on the basis of an unprotected and de-unionised workforce.

In short Berlusconi is offering himself as the Italian Thatcher. But he is likely to be a temporary figure in Italian politics.

His "party" has a tiny membership beyond the ranks of his blue-blazer employees, though doubtless thousands will scramble aboard to share the rich pickings of office. Forza Italia, if it meets the slightest real obstruction, could find itself collapsing nearly as quickly as it grew.

Who then would be the chief beneficiary? Probably the much more solidly based AN-MSI. Indeed the entry of the MSI into government must be a cause of alarm to the whole labour movement. It is not analogous to the coming to power of Hitler or Mussolini: Italy is not in such a massive economic and social crisis that

the bosses have to turn to fascist dictatorship. But a party which has not broken its historic links with fascism, and whose leaders are pressing for the strongest possible presidential powers, cannot be regarded in the same light as its two partners.

This can be seen in the reports of the party leaders and rank and file in its strongholds like Lecce in Puglia. Here Giandomenico Caselino, its regional head, could tell the *Guardian*: "Be clear about one thing. Between us and Berlusconi is only a strategic alliance. We are the MSI. We are not libertarian or liberals of any kind, for us the market is organic and organised".

He went on to reveal his totally fascist outlook:

"In 1945 the allies imposed a system of blackmail on the Italian people; an accord and conspiracy between the big finance capital in the north and the communist unions".

At the end of the rally at which he spoke, the *Guardian* reports, young men struck up the chorus of "Cammicia Nera" ("The Black Shirt").

For all that the National Alliance put forward an electoral policy of right-wing populism, for all that it has abandoned the policy of street confrontations with the Left and is in alliance with Berlusconi and Bossi, the Italian workers should do everything they can to prevent it getting its hands on any part of the state machine.

Fini has been tipped for either the Foreign or the Interior Ministry. The effects of giving him control of the police, the judiciary and so on can well be imagined. The Italian workers should imitate the actions of their forbears in 1960. Mass demonstrations should be called to protest at the entry of MSI ministers into government and mass actions should be organised to prevent it. This, just as in 1960, can break up the alliance of the right.

It can not only prevent crypto-fascists being able to use state power against the workers' movement, it can also save the Italian workers from a Thatcherite government. Workers should demand that the leaders of the CGIL, the Communist Re-foundation and even the wretched leaders of the PDS call an indefinite political general strike to stop the AN-MSI entering government.

The Italian labour movement has a powerful tradition of militant rank and file organisation. All such organs and tendencies should start to organise now for such a general strike. They must not let their leaders supinely allow Berlusconi, Bossi and Fini to take power and launch ferocious attacks on the trade union rights, democratic and social gains of the last forty to fifty years. ■

RWANDAN POGROMS

Legacy of colonialism

BY JEREMY DEWAR

ACCORDING to Human Rights observers, 100,000 people were slaughtered in Rwanda in the two weeks following the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana by a mortar attack that brought down the plane he was travelling in on 6 April.

The vast majority of those murdered were, or were believed to be, members of the minority Tutsi tribe. The army, the police and the elite Presidential Guard, all dominated by members of the majority Hutu tribe, have led the pogrom.

The UN's response is pure hypocrisy. Now that they have lost control, after decades of military and economic intervention in the region they have pulled out most of the 2,500 troops who had been overseeing the "peace accords" designed to put an end to the three year civil war. Thousands of Rwandan UN employees are being targeted by Hutu extremists. The UN has flatly refused to airlift a single Rwandan to safety—only whites are deemed worthy of protection.

The western media has portrayed the conflict in Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi, whose President was also killed in the plane crash, as the continuation of a centuries-old tribal rivalry. The region was originally inhabited by Hutu farmers. In the fifteenth century, Tutsi migrants conquered the land and subjected the Hutus to feudal servitude.

When the Germans colonised the region in 1899, followed by the Belgians in 1917, the European imperialists continued to treat Tutsis as a relatively privileged minority. The armed forces were exclusively Tutsi. Tutsis also received better education, land and administrative jobs. In particular, the Belgians based their discrimination on the racist notion, imported from Europe, that the Tutsis were genetically more intelligent.

As we went to press Workers Power received the following report from our Bolivian sister organisation, Poder Obrero.

BOLIVIA HAS been shaken by a mounting wave of strike action. Every day different sectors have taken to the streets in demonstrations and blockades. Protesters are demanding wage rises and an increased education budget. They are opposing the privatisation of the schools, the imposition of VAT on impoverished street traders, and a £25 a month minimum wage.

At the end of March students began hunger strikes, whilst demos shook the universities in Santa Cruz and Cochabamba. On 30 March the Bolivian trade union federation COB called a partial 24-hour general strike. The next week saw even greater protests.

More than 1,500 students, workers and teachers at Cochabamba University joined the hunger strike. In Potosi students, along with workers from the Sanchez company, took control of the streets.

La Paz and Oruro saw the biggest student and worker demonstrations for nearly a decade. Five thousand took part in a militant march in Oruro which ripped the flags of the nationalist MNR party from the Town Hall and

This is one side of the legacy of colonialism. The other, which has continued and even accelerated since Rwanda and Burundi gained independence in 1963, is the economic impoverishment of the region. Both countries are among the poorest and most densely populated in the world.

Over 90% of the population work on the land, which is dominated by coffee production for export. Debts to the imperialist banks mean that "cash crops" have to come before food production, which is set to fall by 22% this year, in a land where one in five children are already suffering from malnutrition.

Both Rwanda and Burundi are 85% Hutu and 15% Tutsi. In Rwanda, a Hutu chauvinist dictatorship has ruled for 25 years. Until last year Burundi was controlled by a Tutsi-dominated regime. Both regimes have, with the collusion of French and Belgian imperialism, periodically channelled anger over land-hunger into vicious pogroms. Some analysts estimate a million people have been massacred in riots and civil wars over the past 25 years. Many more have been displaced in neighbouring states.

In the present situation, it is vital that workers and peasants defend all communities from the pogromists. The army elite are apparently leading these pogroms (all Rwandans by law have to carry identity cards stating their "tribal" status).

They have also targeted all politicians, religious and aid workers who are known to favour power-sharing with the Tutsi-based Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) for summary execution.

The elitist thugs of the army, not fellow workers and peasants, are the main enemy. They must be re-

sisted by all means necessary.

This may involve fighting defensively alongside the RPF, who are nominally in favour of equal rights for Hutus and Tutsis and have called on all Rwandans to rise up "against the clique of Hutu military". However it would be wrong to see the RPF as the solution to the crisis or to back its attempted seizure of power. Not only have the RPF received funding from the Tutsi-chauvinist Burundi government, but they were instrumental in organising the Ugandan coup which placed the Muhima-chauvinist Yoweri Museveni in power in 1986.

Above all, the RPF are committed to a capitalist solution for Rwanda. But capitalism cannot deliver consistent democratic rights for the workers and peasants of central Africa. The whole history of the twentieth century proves that. In fact, imperialism's belated turn to supporting "democracies" in Africa over the last few years has been motivated by economic self-interest, not humanitarian concern. As one analyst recently put it:

"Africa is in danger of falling off the map of world capitalism".

If the struggle for democratic rights in central Africa begins to question the ownership of the land and the control of the IMF and the banks—which it must if that struggle is to mean anything for the masses—then we can expect the UN to patch up its differences with the dictators and declare Africans are "not ready for democracy".

Beginning with the armed struggle to defend all communities from the pogromists—Hutu and Tutsi alike—the workers and peasants of Rwanda and Burundi must chart a course towards the only lasting solution to ethnic strife in the region: a socialist federation of central African states. ■

BOLIVIA

From the heat of the struggle

burnt them.

In La Paz, teachers, lecturers, health and social security workers, municipal workers and others paralysed their workplaces and held huge demos. On 18 April 15,000 street traders descended on La Paz and joined up with a large workers' demonstration.

The next day saw the plenum of the COB. Poder Obrero was the only political group to leaflet the meeting. We argued for:

- strike action in the most strategic sectors of the economy
 - peasants to bring forward their planned road blockades
 - a miners' march on the cities
 - strikers to occupy factories and workplaces not on strike.
- Even the bureaucracy accepted the last two proposals.

The POR, the largest left-wing party, claim that Bolivia is in a revolutionary situation and is ripe for a Trotskyist insurrection. This sounds very "radical", but in reality it is just a way of avoiding putting forward a clear programme of action. The POR's main slogan is for thousands more to join the hunger strikes.

Poder Obrero has pointed out that, in reality, this is a mainly defensive mass action in the midst of a reactionary offensive—far more limited than in the strike wave of 1982-6.

We are the only tendency that has openly criticised the tactic of the hunger strike. The hunger strike isolates thousands of the best activists who could be leading the street demonstrations.

A government that has condemned millions to hunger will not be influenced by it. The hunger strike cannot last indefinitely and in the end the workers will accept negotiations to save their lives.

Another big problem is that the productive workers (oil, most railways, factory and rural workers, electricity, phones and mail) are not on strike. The teachers have not linked up with school students and parents. We need to mobilise these sectors and paralyse public transport.

That is why Poder Obrero has taken the lead in the fight for democratic mass strike committees in every area and every workplace, and a national strike committee to co-ordinate the action. ■

THE BOSNIAN Muslims have been engaged in a just struggle against genocide and for their very existence since Autumn 1992. That struggle is in acute danger of defeat—not just at the hands of the Serb and Croat militias and the arms embargo imposed by the Western imperialist powers, but at the hands of the Bosnian government itself.

The dominant political force in the Bosnian camp is the SDA (Party of Democratic Action). Founded in 1990 by Izetbegovic, it is a bourgeois Muslim party committed to the restoration of capitalism.

Izetbegovic understood from the outset that to restore capitalism he would need to ally himself with imperialism, particularly the European Union (EU). The SDA wanted to rebuild a Muslim dominated state without destroying the multi-ethnic communities. Their leaders knew that anything other than a multi-ethnic Bosnia would mean mass persecution and genocide for the Muslims.

But the very idea of Muslim dominance in a multi-ethnic capitalist Bosnia is completely utopian. Why? Because the masses' justified hatred of inequality, poverty and privilege will be diverted into national hatred unless an internationalist party puts working class power on the agenda.

Izetbegovic initially provoked mistrust in the non-Muslim communities by purging other ethnic groups from top administrative positions and promoting 'his' people. At the same time the SDA's naive belief that they would receive imperialist backing made them completely unprepared for war.

Gamble

This gamble paralysed the Izetbegovic government. There are serious indications that the SDA leadership refused to try to break the siege of Sarajevo because they hoped to provoke a NATO intervention. The politics of the SDA weakened the fight in other ways as well. Many Serbs and Croats fought and still fight with the Muslims against Serbian and Croatian progromists. They do so because they want to maintain a multi-ethnic community, and to defend their friends and families of all religions and ethnic groups. There remains strong support in the urban Muslim population for a multi-ethnic society.

But the SDA leadership are incapable of gaining the trust of the mass of Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, the only guarantee of a multi-ethnic state. On the contrary, Izetbegovic's policy of subordination to imperialism has led to his acceptance of partition.

On 15 September 1993 he signed a secret agreement with the Serb nationalists, in which he accepted that the Bosnian Serbs and Croats should unite with their "motherlands" and supported the Owen-Stoltenberg partition plan.

Izetbegovic's policy is deeply contradictory. On the one hand he wants to fit in with the imperialists' terms. But at the same time he has always hoped for a renewed alliance with the Croats.

But in the medium term a smaller version of a multi-national Bosnia is impossible. The destruction and partition of Bosnia has an inherent dynamic: persecution and the displacement of hundred of thousands. This inevitably feeds chauvinism. What is more, the dominant factions within imperialism are still not prepared to back Bosnia against Serbia and Croatia.

Islamic

These contradictions have led to increased pressures on the Izetbegovic group. The right-wing faction in the SDA is becoming stronger. This Islamic fundamentalist group dominates the influential Muslim Assembly, and has its regional stronghold in the central Bosnian region around Zenica. The military forces under their influence, like the el-Jihad Brigade, are relatively small, but have been responsible for a reactionary "ethnic cleansing" campaign.

Their goal is to reconquer all Muslim areas and create an Islamic state. They

A monstrous crime is being perpetrated against the Bosnian people. Jan Roth analyses the situation, and argues that only working class internationalism can save Bosnia from ethnic partition.

The class struggle in Bosnia

rely less on Western imperialism than on material support from Islamic states in the Middle and Far East. They are benefiting from the growing disillusionment among Muslim refugees and peasants in central Bosnia. But their weakness lies in the strong secular and multi-ethnic traditions of the urban Muslim population.

In the army the officer corps is secular and multi-national. Together with mixed working class communities, especially around Tuzla and Sarajevo, they are still fighting against pogroms and partition.

In Tuzla, for example, there are still workers' detachments, like the miners' brigade, fighting the Serb militias. But they are led by secular restorationist forces like the Reformist Party (led by former Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic) and the Social Democratic Party (the former Stalinist party). They control the local council in Tuzla and have significant influence in the II Army Corps. But they are drawing ever closer to the SDA regime in their preparedness to accept imperialist terms for a peace deal, clinging to the utopia of a rump Bosnia as a UN protectorate.

These two oppositions—the right and the left—proved strong enough to stop Izetbegovic's capitulation to the Owen-Stoltenberg plan. But the political weakness of the multi-ethnic wing, and the weak roots of the fundamentalists in the army, enabled the Izetbegovic group to organise a political counter-offensive.

Sacked

Izetbegovic appointed Silajdzic as the new prime minister, sacked army chief Halilovic and purged the army, replacing critical officers with SDA loyalists. Silajdzic gave his support to a Franco-German proposal for partition—more land for the Bosnians in exchange for lifting the sanctions on Serbia—at the beginning of December. The newly appointed army chief, Delic, came out in favour of continuing the war in the short term to get a better position in the negotiations. Now Izetbegovic and his placemen are preparing terms for a final carve up of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But a reactionary peace deal is not inevitable. Several factors will decide the outcome, the first being the reaction of the Bosnian working class. It would be no surprise if the first reaction of many Bosnians is sheer relief at any cease-fire, irrespective of the terms.

But class organisations still exist. The trade unions and workers' brigades in Tuzla are still fighting for a multi-national Bosnia. The Serbian soldier uprisings in Banja Luka and Priedor showed the possibility of building a class opposition to the bosses on all sides.

A second factor is the political situation in Croatia. It is possible that Croat leader Franjo Tudjman will be overthrown. Adoption of the Bosnia-Croatia confederation plan means a fundamental change in the strategy the Croatian leader has been pursuing over the last two years. He could be replaced by a bloc comprising sections of the army's General Staff and the opposi-

tion, which has always opposed the carve up of Bosnia.

In the last two weeks Tudjman's ruling HDZ party has split, leaving him with a parliamentary minority. His opponents claimed he was still too soft on those who have pursued a war against the Bosnian Muslims. The opposition forces have a genuine interest in an alliance with the Muslims. For them, the Serbs are the main enemy.

The third factor is the Serbs. Their leader Milosevic will have to overcome the resistance of some Bosnian Serb forces to the signing of any peace deal. And even if he succeeds, he has still got to deal with the disastrous state of Serbia's economy. This was the reason for Serbia's aggressive expansionist policy in the first place.

Whatever peace deal Milosevic is pre-

pared to sign, a renewal of the war in Bosnia by the Bosnian Serbs—or even a war against Croatia—is entirely possible. If Milosevic opts to turn Serbia's guns to the south, towards Macedonia and Kosovo, in a desperate bid to divert the anger of the masses away from their domestic problems, then he risks sparking a regional conflagration. Everything depends on the development of working class struggle in Serbia against the Milosevic government.

But the decisive factor is the role of Western imperialism. The imperialists face two alternatives. The more they intervene in Bosnia—whether politically or militarily—the greater will be the risk of getting dragged in to a new explosion of the war, and even of increasing tensions between the USA and Russia.

But the less they intervene, the greater

the threat that the settlement negotiations will break down. The Serbian offensive on Gorazde was a case in point. While a short term truce is possible, the explosive mixture of national oppression, large amounts of weaponry and the acute crisis in Serbia points to an eventual breakdown of any peace deal.

The Washington agreement between the Bosnian and the Croatian governments is an obstacle to the rebuilding of a multi-ethnic Bosnia. It is designed to prepare for a new, reactionary, war against the Serbs.

Thus the plans for a UN administration in Sarajevo and the UN/Russian conditions for the opening of Tuzla airport are totally reactionary. They increase the power of the imperialists and their allies in the Russian government to enforce a reactionary settlement and deprive the Bosnian working class of any say in the running of their country.

While Croatian military support for the Muslims would not alter our defence of Bosnia, a full scale war of a Croat/Muslim federation against Serbia would be just as reactionary as the initial fratricidal conflict between Serbia and Croatia in 1991.

Rally

However in the unlikely event that imperialism launches a full scale war against Serbia, then the international workers' movement would have to rally to Serbia's defence, as the best way of preventing the imperialists from imposing their plans on the region. Obviously this would not stop socialists from standing for the defence of all communities against pogroms.

The danger of a sell out by Izetbegovic means that working class resistance in Bosnia must focus on the overthrow of the regime. It must be replaced by a workers' government based on militias and councils of the multi-national working class.

The Serb soldiers' uprisings in September and the growing unrest in Bosnian cities shows the possibility of mobilising workers against war profiteers and corruption. Socialists should fight for the building of price-control committees, workers' control of production and services, and public control of all municipal and state institutions.

A workers' government would fight any form of imperialist intervention. It would fight against Serbian and Croatian nationalists—not with a Muslim "national" programme but an internationalist and socialist one. It would seek to undermine Serbian and Croatian support for pogromists and reactionaries.

The truth is that revolutionary socialists are the only consistent defenders of the multi-ethnic tradition. To keep that tradition alive means rallying the working class of the whole region to the defence of the Muslims against genocide, opposition to national chauvinism and the restoration of capitalism on all sides, and the fight for a Socialist Federation of the Balkans. That is the only basis on which the principles of national self-determination and economic integration can co-exist. ■



Sarajevo demonstration in solidarity with Gorazde—but victory is not possible under Muslim, capitalist, restorationist leadership.

JAPAN

Crisis deepens

THE RESIGNATION of the Japanese Prime Minister, Morihiro Hosokawa, on 8 April has thrown the Japanese political establishment into confusion and paralysis.

It is a sign of the explosive contradictions, both economic and political, that are facing Japanese capitalism.

With growth rates of 1.3% in 1992, zero in 1993 and a projected 0.5% in 1994, Japan is in its worst crisis since the war.

Only 65% of its manufacturing capacity is being used. The rate of profit has been declining for four years and last year there were high levels of company bankruptcies every month. Japanese capital is heavily indebted. ¥359 trillion in new debts brought overall corporate debt to 145% of Gross Domestic Product in 1992. Japanese capitalism is living on borrowed money and borrowed time.

Japan's main economic rival, the USA, has used the recession to improve its own trade and productivity performance. The USA has now managed to draw level with Japanese productivity in most hi-tech industries.

Eclipse

These problems have shaken the Japanese bosses. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Japan's biggest newspaper, is typical when it declares:

"Japan faces the worst crisis in its history", and that the country "could face a downfall comparable to the eclipse of the ancient city of Carthage."

The ruling class recognise that they now need to transform the country's whole economic and political framework. While the present political and economic regime was useful in the post-war period, it has become anachronistic in the face of new and changed conditions (See below).

On the economic level the programme of the bourgeoisie is clear: deregulation, cutting corporate taxes to support investment and, of course, low wages. State intervention is now seen as an expensive and overbearing barrier to business flexibility.

The state regulates, directly or indirectly, as much as 40% of GNP. Ministries have imposed more than 11,400

BY MICHAEL GATTER

rules and regulations. One Japanese economist claims that this is why prices in Japan are 33% higher than in the USA, Britain, France and Germany. With declining profits and a narrowing market this is intolerable for the capitalists. A commission was set up to draft a proposal to reduce regulations by 10%. It is unlikely that they will succeed.

Meanwhile, this year Japanese workers got their lowest wage rise since the mid-1950s, a mere 3%. Bonuses, which form an important part of income (accounting for several months' pay) were not covered. Even with an inflation rate of 0.5% to 1%, real wages will not be rising at all.

In a desperate attempt to stimulate the economy, the government has introduced four reflationary packages of over \$400 billion in the last 18 months. These are mainly public works projects, but also include business loans and the writing off of bank debts. The last package in February also included an annual income-tax cut of \$55 billion. This is aimed at raising purchasing power, particularly for the middle class, to stimulate the economy.

While the majority of the bosses are still not prepared for the scale of attacks on the working class that are necessary to boost profits, a growing number recognise the need to smash

up the system of jobs for life that protects a large minority of workers in the big companies.

But many bosses also fear a breakdown of the "co-operative" tradition which has created a strong sense of loyalty among the workforce. As the *Nikkei Weekly* put it:

"Japan's lifetime-employment system may be facing its most crucial test since the Second World War, but a majority of personnel managers at Japanese corporations still want to maintain this traditional system."

That is why the bosses did not attack this system in the last *shunto*, the annual spring wage negotiations. But more and more big companies like Honda are being forced to sack workers and to hire new blue and white collar workers on limited contracts. To win a greater share of the world market, the Japanese bosses need to tear up their entire job protection system.

Power

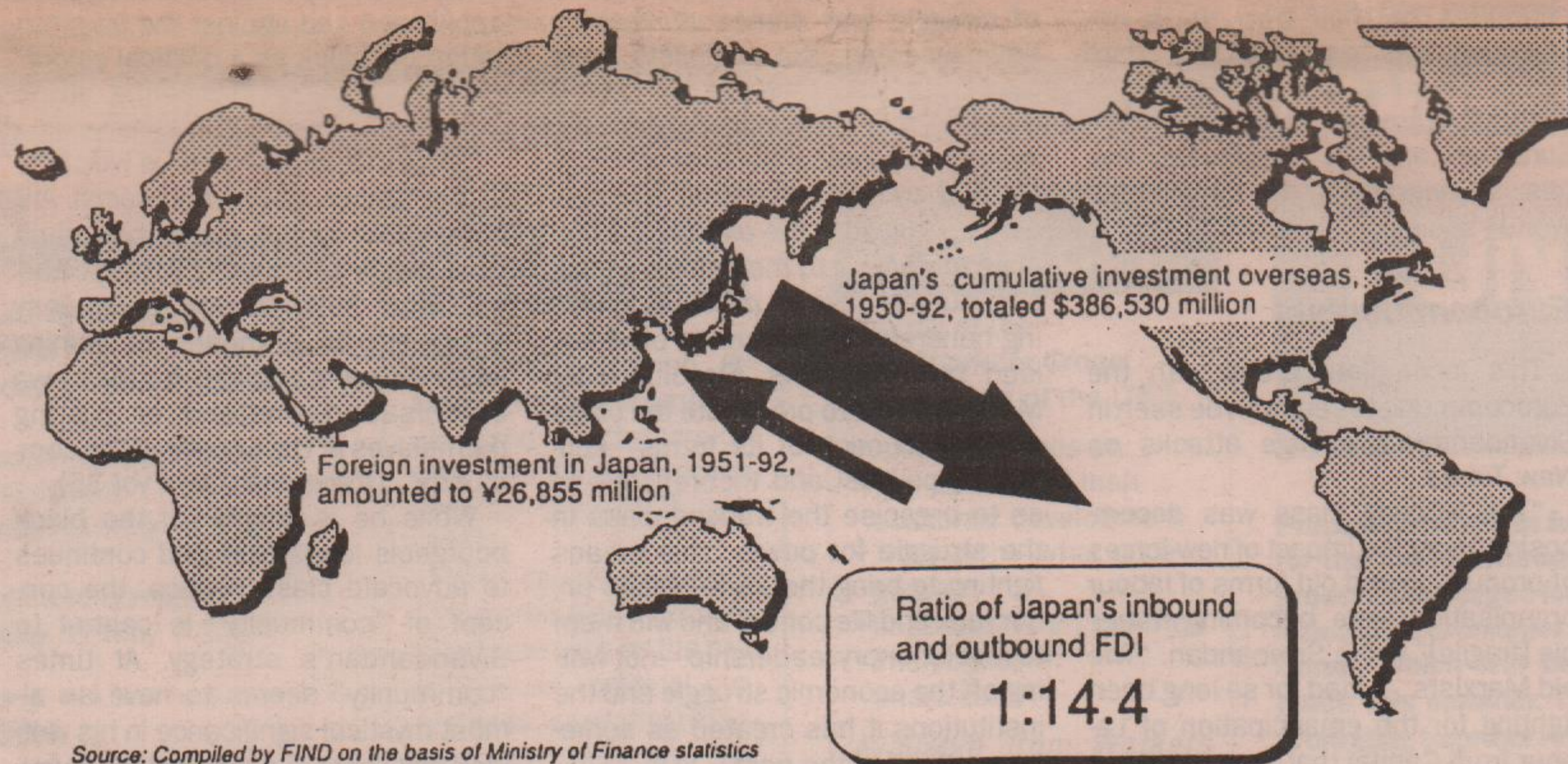
The political project of many ruling class strategists goes well beyond a neo-liberal economic programme. Their slogan is, "Japan must become a normal country", by which they mean a normal imperialist power, with all the political and military clout that involves.

In their famous book *The Japan that can say No*, the bourgeois writer

LOWER HOUSE PARTY MEMBERSHIP	
Coalition Parties	
Social Democratic Party	74
Shinseito	60
Komeito	52
Japan New Party*	40
Democratic Socialist Party*	19
Sakigake	15
Kaikaku no kai	5
Coalition total	265
Opposition Parties	
Liberal Democratic Party	219
Japan Communist Party	15
*JNP&DSP include some independents	

Ishihara and Sony boss Morita argue for Japan to build up its armed forces, become a nuclear power in the longer term and get a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Their goal is to make Japan the dominant power in Asia.

In 1991 Japan's exports to Asia outstripped exports to the USA for the first time. Huge investments are flowing in the same direction, particularly to China and Hong Kong over the last six months, where cheap labour is readily available. The present tug of war with US imperialism over access to the Japanese home market reflects both the growing strength of the US economy and the increasingly confrontational attitude of the Japanese bourgeoisie to its rivals. Nevertheless the majority of the bourgeois



Economics of the crisis

THE ENTIRE model on which Japanese capitalism developed after the Second World War has been revealed as a cul-de-sac. Japan is probably the most developed form of state monopoly capitalism, a very close network linking the large monopolies and the state bureaucracy.

This system enabled the Japanese capitalists to co-ordinate the rebuilding of their industrial infrastructure after the war.

As *Nikkei Weekly*, the mouthpiece of the Japanese bosses, put it last month:

"To help Japan to rebuild itself after the war, institutional frameworks were set in such a way to mobilise all financial resources. People were encouraged to save, and these funds were channelled into industry. Taxation, fiscal programs, monetary policy and all other means were directed at the strengthening of the corporate sector."

At the core of the system lies the intensive exploitation of the working class. Japanese workers' wages are historically low compared to those of Western workers.

Profits

Today capital expenditure stands at 23% as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compared to only 11% in the USA. Whereas between 1979 and 1990 labour productivity grew by 0.5% in the USA and 2.2% in Europe, it rose by 3.0% in Japan over the same period. This is why profit rates—the levels of return on investments—were much higher in Japan than in any other major imperialist country after the war. But now the system has gone into crisis.

The rapid introduction of new technology and the widespread application of the most modern plant, equipment and machinery, means that

each Japanese product embodies less and less human labour-time.

Japanese companies have been able to produce consumer goods quicker and more cheaply than their competitors. But this also lies at the heart of Japan's mounting economic crisis.

Profits are derived from the labour of living human beings alone. The more living labour is replaced by machinery, the greater is the tendency for the rate of return on investments—the rate of profit—to fall.

This is what has happened in Japan. It has added to the existing problems of the Japanese capitalists, and is the main impetus behind their drive for a greater share of the world market.

The Japanese domestic market is very limited compared to most advanced countries. Low wages and a poor state welfare system result in low levels of private consump-

tion.

What is more, individuals and families have been encouraged by the state to save a high proportion of their earnings, which depresses consumer spending.

Rivalry

With their home market so weak, the Japanese bosses have to defend it against foreign competitors. The upshot has been a strong tendency to rely on protectionism on the one hand, and on the other hand the limited domestic market provided the impetus for a tremendous export offensive, first of goods and later of capital.

But falling profit rates are not just a Japanese problem. It is a world phenomenon. United States and European Union capital also have an interest in protecting their markets from Japanese imports. Thus trade rivalry is mounting. ■

sie is not yet prepared for a full scale trade war with the USA and they are likely to compromise.

Meanwhile the way to political and military domination of the Asian market is littered with serious obstacles.

The constitution restricts defence spending to only 1% of the whole budget. There is a mass pacifist opposition to militarism. That is why conservative forces have until now been unable to put a militarist policy into practice. In the latest budget defence expenditure has in fact been cut. Cautious steps to strengthen Japanese involvement in UN foreign operations like Cambodia met with sharp public criticism, particularly after two armed Japanese policemen were killed.

The prelude to the transformation of the Japanese economic, political and military system has been the breakup of the traditional ruling party, the Liberal Democrats (LDP).

The LDP ruled Japan for nearly 40 years. It became utterly entwined with all the worst features of the old system: the huge ministerial bureaucracy, the massive corruption and the relatively restricted autonomy of the government as an executive body of the whole bourgeoisie.

This resulted in several splits from the LDP last year and the formation of new bourgeois parties—particularly Ozawa's *Shinseito* (Japan Renewal Party), Hosokawa's Japan New Party (JNP) and Takemura's *Sakigake* (New Harbinger Party). Together with other bourgeois opposition parties and the reformist Social Democratic Party, they formed a coalition government.

While they agreed on the reform of the election system, it soon became clear that these parties are divided on the key questions of Japan's future.

Ozawa formed a block with *Komeito*, another conservative party linked with a very rich big Buddhist sect, and brought in Hosokawa's JNP. This block represents the most far-sighted faction of the ruling elite who are determined to strengthen Japan's role as an international political and military power, to push through the deregulation offensive at the expense of the working class, and to build a new, united conservative party.

Stalemate

The Social Democratic Party (SDP), which has close links to the trade union federation *Rengo*, *Sakigake* and the Democratic Socialist Party, represents a more moderate sector of the bourgeoisie. They are unwilling to break with Japan's pacifism (opposing an aggressive policy towards North Korea), and they blocked Hosokawa's attempt to impose a new income tax in February. With the conservatives divided in several parties, the SDP constitutes the biggest party in the coalition.

Hosokawa's corruption scandal was just the trigger for his resignation. The real cause was stalemate inside the government. If Foreign Minister Hata is appointed Prime Minister it would represent a clear victory for Ozawa's strategy. But it would not put an end to conflict within the government. The "new conservatives" and possibly also the moderate bourgeois forces will continue to form new alliances. Sooner or later the government will split and a new election could resolve divisions in the bourgeois camp.

The Japanese working class needs to take advantage of the divisions within ruling class politics to launch a fightback now. However the bosses try to resolve their problems in the short term, the impending challenge to the post-war consensus will involve massive attacks on workers' conditions, job security and living standards. This in turn will create conditions both for a resurgence of class struggle in Japan, and for the creation of a revolutionary party of the vast Japanese working class. ■

MARXISM AND BLACK LIBERATION

Sivanandan's Socialism

THE NAME of Ambalavaner Sivanandan is not familiar to many on the British left. It should be. He has become the most influential black political thinker in Britain. His writings have shaped the outlook of a whole layer of black activists.

A revolutionary socialist critique of Sivanandan's ideas, and the strategy which flows from them, is therefore long overdue.

Sivanandan is a long time scourge of the British left on the question of black struggles against oppression. When Sivanandan derides the "white left" for its tendency "to view working class racism as an aberration" (*Race and Class* Vol 35, 1994) he hits the mark as far as the two largest far left organisations, Militant and the Socialist Workers Party, are concerned. They share the notion, typical of economism, that racism is simply a question of workers competing with each other over jobs and resources. Once "black and white unite and fight" around economic questions, they believe racism will spontaneously disappear.

Criticism

Another target of Sivanandan's criticism has been the declining and crisis-ridden Eurocommunist tradition, and its key black intellectual, Stuart Hall. Sivanandan's "The Hukom of New Times" is a scathing polemic, in which he ridicules the ideological underpinnings of the Communist Party's collapse into liberalism:

"New Times is a mirror image of Thatcherism passing for socialism. New Times is Thatcherism in drag."

A third distinctive feature of Sivanandan's politics is his opposition to the liberal "race relations" industry and its left wing offshoots, the "ethnic minorities" units set up by many Labour councils in the 1980s. According to Sivanandan this was simply:

"Government moneys for pluralist ploys—the development of a parallel power structure for black people, separate development, bantustans—a strategy to keep race issues from contaminating class issues."

When we look at these targets of Sivanandan's criticism it is easy to understand his appeal. But, viewed critically, Sivanandan's work does not present a coherent strategy for black liberation or socialism.

Imperialism

Like revolutionary socialists, Sivanandan sees an understanding of imperialism as crucial to understanding racism in Britain. But his understanding of imperialism is wrong, leading him to locate the "Third World" as the centre of the struggle for socialism:

"I do not think it is our business to be sectarian; to take sides between liberation movements to tell them how to conduct their struggles. We try in *Race and Class* to guard against left cultural imperialism: the tendency to extrapolate from the western experience onto Third World societies." (*Communities of Resistance*)

In practice this translates into an accommodation to a range of Stalinist-influenced and petit-bourgeois nationalist leaders. Sivanandan berates one left wing writer's "inability to distinguish between reactionary (bourgeois) nationalism and the revolutionary nationalisms of Ho, Fidel and Cabral and Mao". It is to Vietnam and Cuba that Sivanandan refers when he



What strategy for militant Asian youth?

talks about "the workers and peasants having a bash at socialism".

The Stalinist-led national liberation movements were fighting a just struggle against imperialism. But by reserving a place for the "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie in the struggle and limiting the revolution to a democratic stage, they systematically held back workers' struggles. Even in Vietnam and Cuba it was not socialism they introduced, but stagnant regimes modelled on the bureaucratic planning and dictatorship of the Stalinist USSR, often practising racism against minorities of their own. It is not "Eurocentrism" to point out that "Third World" Stalinism was essentially no different from the Stalinism of the European and US Communist Parties. Sivanandan's model of Third World "socialism" has failed.

Eurocommunists

This incomplete break with the Eurocommunists can even be seen in Sivanandan's savage attacks on *New Times*:

"The working class was decomposing under the impact of new forces of production and old forms of labour organisation were becoming fragile [fragile]" wrote Sivanandan. "The old Marxists . . . had for so long been fighting for the emancipation of Labour from Capital that they could not bear to think that it was Capital that was now being emancipated from Labour."

Sivanandan thus accepts the basic premise of Eurocommunism, that old forms of working class struggle have been rendered obsolete. But instead of accepting the neo-liberal, pacifist and cross-class conclusions of the Eurocommunists, Sivanandan called for a refocusing of both socialism and anti-racism towards "that third of the nation which Thatcherism has dispossessed".

According to Sivanandan the end of the traditional working class did not mean an end to class struggle, only that the terrain of battle has moved "from the economic to the political, from the base to the superstructure".

"The battle is the same as before", Sivanandan writes, "only it needs to be taken on at the political/ideological level and not at the economic/political level". (*Communities of Resistance*)

Before we examine the effect of this view on Sivanandan's anti-racist strategy, it is necessary to say that Sivanandan, along with the Eurocommunists, massively overes-

BY YASMIN KHAN AND
G. R. McCOLL

timated the effects of economic changes on the workers' movement. It is not British capitalism's "emancipation from Labour" that is the problem, it is workers' consciousness, bureaucratic misleadership and the legacy of a decade of defeat.

Struggle

That is not to deny that new forms of struggle and arenas of struggle have emerged. But socialists must reject the idea that the "economic struggle" has simply been replaced by a combination of political, ideological and cultural struggles. The economic struggle is the practical resistance of workers to their employers. It continues to involve millions, including hundreds of thousands of unionised black workers. Revolutionary Marxism aims to prosecute the class struggle in each of its forms—economic, political and theoretical—so as to organise the working class in the struggle for power. This means fighting to bring the trade unions under rank and file control and win them to revolutionary leadership—not writing off the economic struggle and the institutions it has created as somehow a thing of the past.

Sivanandan spells out clearly what the rise of Thatcherism meant for the struggle against racism:

"The nature and function of racism was beginning to change. The recession and the movement of capital to the labour reserves of the Third World, I pointed out before, had stopped the importation of labour. The point now was to get rid of it. Hence the rationale of racism was no longer exploitation but repression—forged at the ideological level through the media (directly) and the schools (indirectly) and in the long term) and effected on the political level through the forces of law and order."

The black struggle, Sivanandan wrote, was no longer one between "employers and workers but the state and the workless".

Of course there is a large measure of truth in the tendencies Sivanandan outlines, but his analysis is schematic and wooden. It was not the 1979 recession which introduced the politics of repatriation to the political mainstream but the end of a specific period of cheap labour expansion in the early 1960s. Even now the bourgeois consensus remains at the level

of formal "equal opportunities" in return for strict racist immigration laws, not overt repatriation.

Certainly the street level resistance of "second generation" unemployed and youth has become a vital arena of black politics and resistance. But the idea that the struggle between bosses and workers is no longer a concern of anti-racists is nonsense and leads directly to Sivanandan's confused political strategy.

Sivanandan stood firm throughout the 1980s and 1990s against the rise of "identity politics" amongst the oppressed and against the fragmentation of "black as a political colour" into a variety of competing ethnic hues.

Since offering a cautious welcome to the launch of the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA), he has given short shrift to its largely self-appointed black leaders, who "tend to use [community struggles] as a means of gaining legitimacy and publicity for their own organisation—instead of putting themselves at the service of the community". (*Race and Class* Vol 35)

While he is a critic of the black bourgeois leadership and continues to advocate class politics, the concept of "community" is central to Sivanandan's strategy. At times "community" seems to have an almost mystical significance in his writings, yet there is never a clear definition of the concept. Sivanandan repeatedly documents the class stratification that has taken place within Britain's black population.

But by avoiding aligning himself with any political tendency, and by downplaying the role of the organised working class, black and white, Sivanandan avoids the responsibility of charting a path that can transform "dynamic, organic" local struggles.

Grunwick

In his analysis of the Grunwick strike of the mid-1970s, despite documenting the way in which the trade union bureaucracy used and then discarded the Asian women strikers, Sivanandan draws the wrong conclusions.

He contrasts Grunwick negatively to earlier black strikes, such as Mansfield Hosiery and Imperial Type-writers:

"The lessons of earlier strikes—that black workers needed to rally the community behind them and from that base force the unions to their side—had been temporarily unlearned by workers who had not had the benefit of that tradition".

But this was not the lesson of Grunwick. Tens of thousands of white workers and youth rallied to the Grunwick pickets. It was the inability of rank and file workers to overcome the legalism and pacifism of their leaders and turn sympathy into solidarity strike action which led to defeat.

Certainly the vanguard layer of rank and file trade union militants that developed in the 1960s and 1970s was defeated and largely dispersed in the 1980s, creating new problems for linking community struggles against racism with the organised power of the working class. Nevertheless this remains the key to victory, a key which Sivanandan consistently discards.

Community

Sivanandan has always been open in his support for organised self-defence by black communities under attack. So are we. The difference lies in the fact that revolutionary socialists aim to transform the isolated acts of resistance into a political movement which can challenge capitalism, whether on the street or in the factory.

Sivanandan is clearly opposed to black nationalism and to the passivity that pure cultural politics prescribes. He writes:

"... whilst the struggle against racism could not be subsumed to the class struggle it could not in the name of that autonomy, become separatist, inward looking or nationalist." (*Race and Class* Vol 35)

But Sivanandan's politics of community resistance do imply a form of separatism—not the small world of separatist sectarian grouplets but a kind of separatist stageism: organise the black community first and then worry about the working class organisations.

This is self defeating. Revolutionary socialists fight for black workers' self-organisation, but within and as part of the whole workers' movement. We seek to place black struggles on the agenda of the whole working class and focus the workers' most powerful weapons in support of these struggles. Even within the community itself a class line has to be drawn, between the working class, the middle class and the bosses. Class politics within the black community can draw in sections of the middle class, around both the fight against racism and to a limited extent economic questions like strikes. But this must never be done at the expense of dropping working class independence and the right to carry out militant, illegal direct action.

Politics

Like Sivanandan, revolutionary socialists reject reformist multiculturalism, middle class careerism and overt separatism. But we remain revolutionary integrationists. Our aim is to integrate the struggles of black working class communities into the struggles of the organised working class, revolutionising both in the process.

To do that we need the weapon of a political party—something which Sivanandan's whole existence as an independent "tribune of the people" rebels against. Paradoxically, for all Sivanandan's praise for politics, ideology and "subjectivity", he fails to see that only an organised force can change the politics and subjective ideas of the working class.

Those who want a coherent practical alternative to Euro-Stalinism, middle class careerism and centrist economism will not find it in the writings of Sivanandan. They will find it in the politics and practice of revolutionary Trotskyism.■

A Sivanandan: *A Different Hunger*, Pluto Press 1991, *Communities of Resistance*, Verso 1990.

Fighting racism in Oxford

Dear Workers Power,

Your story about the concentration camp at Campsfield did not deal with the overall parlous state of anti-racist and anti-fascist work in Oxford. For some strange reason your informant has told you nothing of this.

There is, of course, support for the Campsfield campaign, but this is against the background of no serious work ever having been done by the left in

Oxford to understand the oppression of black people. Two years ago an organisation called Oxford against Racism and Fascism (OARF) was set up which could have changed this. It did initially make an effort to contact black organisations but stopped when black people did not immediately flock to its meetings.

It held no educational meetings, but was mainly a place for middle-class lefties to save

their consciences. The groups Socialist Outlook and Socialist Worker were the political force behind it, though the SWP also split off into its ludicrous re-run of the Anti-Nazi League.

When the government opened Campsfield, OARF then (miraculously?) closed down so that the left groups could concentrate on recruiting for the Campsfield campaign. It has not met for many months.

With this kind of "solidarity"

is it any wonder that black people look on the left with contempt? I do not see how this can change until the British left (white and black) starts to educate itself about racism. I believe that Trotskyism must lead this.

Amy Mxenge

● We encourage our readers in Oxford to keep sending in reports and letters about the situation in the anti-racist movement.

Dear Workers Power,

Ouch, you know how sensitive I am, I am seriously distraught! Seriously though, that was never a review of the book ["Pit Sense or Nonsense?", WP 177, April 1994] was it? Rather it was a bad tempered response to the paragraph and a few lines where your group gets a mention.

The paragraph in question, which was entirely true by the way, characterises much that was wrong with the Marxist Leninist parties' intervention into that strike and others.

It was not, however, meant to be a comprehensive analysis of Workers Power's entire role in the strike.

You were irritating but didn't obstruct our efforts in the way some groups did, you were entirely helpful, non-sectarian

and constructive in your role toward and within the Women Against Pit Closures movement in particular. This is a fact and not one I have ever denied.

You demand "prove it": how do you ever ignore what the miners say themselves and just carry on to peddle your self-designated role as vanguard and leader?

Well, in the last edition of your paper for a start. Your criticism of "people power", your demand that we strike from the first announcement of the renewed closure plan. When did you listen to us when we told you, we simply could

not win a strike vote of any kind at that moment?

Sure, you engage in dialogue—we talk then you talk—taking not the slightest bit of notice of what everyone in the pits was telling you. The men did not want to take on unlimited strike or even one day strikes at that time. Not because we, bureaucrats (!), didn't want strikes.

Branch officials, as we keep telling you, are workers: our jobs were going down with everyone else. We wanted strike action but the rank and file did not.

It was and is the dialogue of the deaf. You believe strike

action is desirable therefore if we don't get it, its because the "bureaucrats" stop it happening. It is a total lie, or at best a kind of blind faith that obscures reality even when it confronts you.

Revolutionary Greetings,
David Douglass
(£6 per day bureaucrat—that's what I get paid off the union)
Hatfield Main NUM

● This letter has been shortened

We reply:

It is not true that we ignored the difficulties of winning the NUM membership to strike action during the pit closure crisis in 1992.

In Workers Power, November 1992, we actually quoted Dave's words that "where pits are threatened with closure, the miners feel that if they went on strike the pits would close. There is a lack of confidence in winning."

As we commented at the time, "These words, from an NUM militant, should serve as warning to anybody carried away by the 'mood of anger' that is sweeping Britain". We did listen, and we took into account what we heard. Our arguments were focused on proving to miners who were reluctant to strike that if they did not take up the fight for such action they would lose their jobs anyway.

But we steadfastly refused to draw the same conclusions as Dave, namely that the "People Power" strategy was the way to win. Dave argued at the time that the community campaign was "more important than a strike because we are politicising people". We thought then, and Dave has not succeeded in dissuading us, that this was little more than cover for the bankrupt strategy being pursued by Arthur Scargill (£50,000 a year bureaucrat).

That strategy did not save a single pit. That is why our review of Dave's book was right to accuse him of being, not a bureaucrat, but "a consistent apologist for the left bureaucracy of the union".

We have received the following letter about events surrounding an immigrant rights meeting organised by a campaign in San Rafael, California on 6 April

Dear Comrades,

Nine racists turned up demanding to be allowed into our meeting on the grounds that it was a "Public meeting". They came with picket signs, so they planned to disrupt. We refused to allow them in. There were several fist fights. Then the police arrived who decided to close our meeting down! (This is the first time I've heard of the police closing down a meeting they didn't like.)

A total of 30 police proceeded to sweep the streets where the [immigrant] workers live. One Salvadorean worker told me the police acted the same way as they do in Central America.

The important fact was we had the support of 200-300 workers and community people versus 10 racists and 30 cops. No one ran and for most of the workers the cops were just ridiculous.

"Illegal" immigrants are being blamed by both parties for unemployment, crime, drugs, and almost anything else that's wrong. The "Free Trade Agreement" with Mexico gives rights to merchandise to cross the

Cops ban immigrant meeting

border but not workers. We believe the border—which has become like a Berlin Wall between Mexico and the US—is a piece of shit. President Clinton is hiring more immigration police to deal with the "problem". We believe instead undocumented workers need unionisation. The AFL-CIO and Chavez's Farm Workers Union are not interested in organising undocumented workers.

We believe we are facing a kind of incipient fascism, which has a "Liberal" face. The racists say they are not against all immigrants, just "illegal" immigrants. They exist in a paranoid world where they think

everybody wants to come to the US and take away "our" jobs and "our" culture. Actually, most undocumented workers spend a few years in the US to save up some money and go back to Mexico and Central America. And of course, most of the jobs the illegals do—yard work, dishwashing, maids—is work most white Americans don't want to do.

The "liberal" racists are now trying to get propositions passed in California which would deny education to "illegals" as well as free health care.

Fraternally,
Earl Gilman, San Francisco

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WHERE WE STAND

WORKERS POWER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

★ We oppose the restoration of capitalism and recognise that only workers' revolution can defend the post-capitalist property relations. In times of war we unconditionally defend workers' states against imperialism.

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

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

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

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

★ Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. The last revolutionary International (the 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

INSIDE
Number 178 May 1994

- ★ Class struggle in Bosnia
- ★ The South African left
- ★ Bolivian general strike

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BOSNIA: LIFT THE ARMS EMBARGO!

UN TROOPS OUT NOW!



“SIXTY THOUSAND defenceless citizens are being attacked by a modern army . . . between 8am and 7pm 97 people were killed and 263 injured . . . they are singling out refugee hostels and hospitals for shelling . . .”

This was Gorazde, Bosnia, in April 1994. Not so much living proof as dying proof that the West's "New World Order" cannot guarantee peace, stability or justice in the Balkans.

Gorazde was designated a safe haven by the United Nations (UN) in 1992 after Serbian militias overran eastern Bosnia. They sent tens of thousands of peasants fleeing for their lives into the Muslim towns of Gorazde, Zepa and Srebrenica.

Siege

The Serbs laid siege to Srebrenica, forcing the UN to give a new meaning to the word "safe haven". UN soldiers disarmed the defenders and became not the saviours but the jailers of the Srebrenica workers. Srebrenica's economy sank into ruins: no

work, no power, no crops or raw materials and no guns to fight back.

Gorazde's torment was triggered off, paradoxically, by the latest peace deal. The deal is backed by the Western imperialist powers, and will carve up Bosnia on ethnic lines, securing the results of ethnic cleansing.

Onslaught

Whilst it may give the Bosnian Muslim survivors some respite, they will be condemned to live in a rump state—economically unviable, disarmed, and surrounded by pogromist enemies. It also betrays the Serbs and Croats who have stood by their Muslim brothers and sisters, fighting in multi-ethnic brigades against Croatia and Serbia's racist onslaught.

Imperialism is desperate for such a deal because it wants order in the Balkans, not justice.

The Balkans are teetering on the brink of chaos. Albanian border guards are killed by mysterious Greek "liberation fighters". Greece imposes eco-

nomical sanctions against Macedonia in defiance of the European Union. The Albanians of Kosovo simmer under the guns of a Serbian occupation force. Russia interposes its troops between the imperialist armies and the Serbs in Sarajevo. Turkey and Iran compete with each other in anti-Serbian rhetoric and offers to "sort things out".

For all their triumphant claims to have "kicked the Vietnam syndrome" after beating Iraq in 1992, the US has not kicked it at all. It is the very fear of another Vietnam which prevents them sending in the hundreds of thousands of troops that would be needed to "pacify" the region.

The only force capable of imposing an order suitable for the reintroduction of capitalism in the region is Milosovic's Serbia. This explains the imperialists' inept, confused and bungling relationship to Serbian militarism. By imposing an arms embargo which has the effect of disarming only the Bosnians, the UN has pressured the Bosnian government to the point of signing away multi-ethnic Bosnia forever. Now, to force the Serbs to ac-

cept what they have been given, the imperialists have declared their willingness to sanction "limited" air strikes.

The UN tried this threat in Sarajevo, but the appearance of Russian troops defused the situation. With pro-Serbian Russian paratroops on the ground in Sarajevo, the Serbian commanders knew there was no chance of NATO launching all out action. So they attacked Gorazde.

The imperialists' response had all the credibility of a TV wrestler. American strike fighters dropped flares to warn Serb artillerymen before bombing their positions. British soldiers and airmen were ordered to risk their lives to ensure pinpoint accuracy—not with the goal of maximum devastation, but to ensure minimum loss of life to the racist militiamen coordinating the assault on Gorazde.

Power

The Bosnian Muslims are learning, the hard way, what the Kurds found out after the Gulf War of 1992. Imperialism used devastating military

power to defeat Saddam Hussein and to weaken, but not destroy, his army. Then it stood by as he redeployed the remnants of his forces to crush a Kurdish uprising.

When it comes to defending the super-profits of the oil magnates, the imperialist planes don't fire blanks. When the rights of millions of people come into conflict with the profit system's need for order, it is their rights that are sidelined.

But the answer is not to urge Britain, France and the USA to attack Serbia.

The job of overthrowing the racist, militarist government of Slobodan Milosevic and relieving the besieged Muslim communities of Bosnia cannot be progressively way by imperialism. That task falls to the Serbian workers themselves.

The only useful thing the imperialist armies can do is get out of Bosnia and the Balkans altogether. They should lift all economic sanctions and end the arms embargo so the Bosnians can defend themselves. Workers all over the world should oppose any intensified air strike campaign against Serbia, no matter how

much temporary relief it may give to besieged communities.

Is that the same as the workers of the world washing their hands of the Balkan conflict? No! Working class people, who have already donated millions of pounds worth of aid to the victims of the Bosnian conflict through charities and working class campaigns should launch a mass movement of solidarity with multi-ethnic Bosnia, and with the victims of war, rape and ethnic cleansing on all sides.

Hypocrites

Our rulers look like fools, criminals and hypocrites. That's just what they are. Gorazde, Srebrenica, Sarajevo, Mostar and all the other working class towns under the guns of Serb and Croat chauvinists are testimony to the fact that we need an international struggle to sweep our rulers away. A new, revolutionary, workers' international—not the corrupt, bureaucratic, imperialist talking shop called the United Nations—is the only way to put an end to genocide, barbarism and war. ■