



# STOP THE TORY VANDALS!

## *Strike while the iron's hot*

THE TORIES' decision to temporarily reprieve 21 out of the 31 pits condemned to close should not fool anyone. Although this partial retreat was forced by a storm of protest and the threat of defeat at the hands of backbench Tory MPs, it solves nothing for the miners and for the tens of thousands of other workers in supply industries, transport and retailing who depend on the continued existence of the coal industry.

The announcement by the millionaire Trade and Industry Secretary, Michael Heseltine, of an even more 'generous' package of retraining programmes, a Coalfields Area Fund and 'consultation' over further closures is a transparent fraud designed to split the miners and defuse the situation. NUM president Arthur Scargill correctly rejected the package as a 'delayed execution'.

Unless it is fought now, the Tories will pick off pit after pit until there is nothing left, leaving themselves free to take on other sections of workers one by one. Powerful historical examples bear this out. In 1925, the Tories under Stanley Baldwin backed off from a confrontation with the miners over wage cuts, only to provoke the General Strike a year later. A similar tactic was used over pit closures in the run-up to the miners' strike of 1984-85.

The attack on miners' jobs has become the focal point for the anger of everyone at the sharp end of the recession and lobbed a hand-grenade into the Tories' middle class electoral base. The plan to axe what remains of the British coal industry comes hard on the heels of massive job cuts in the car industry, British Aerospace, Lucas, VSEL, the NHS, local government, education, public transport and the BBC, pushing unemployment to an official level of 2.84 million – in reality, over 4 million.

The fight to defend miners' jobs must become the signal for all sections of workers to seize the moment to mobilise against a discredited and divided government. The retreat in the public and private sector which began with the defeat of the miners in 1985 must be stopped. The broadest campaign must be built up in the trade union and Labour movement which links those fighting the threat of redundancy with all those under attack



**Fight back . . .**

from the Tories, including the unemployed and the homeless. For such a campaign to win, it must aim for nothing less than bringing down the Tories.

It is a measure of the strength of feeling on the ground that the TUC was forced to meet in emergency session on October 17 and to call a day of action for October 25. After all, only a month before, the centrepiece of the TUC's annual conference was an address by the CBI president! The TUC's response is completely inadequate. It is aimed at diverting the groundswell into peaceful parliamentary and legal channels, in alliance with Tory backbenchers, bishops and sections of the union-hating press.

Arthur Scargill has adapted to the pressure from the TUC-Labour leadership and 'public opinion'. Within days of advocating an all-out strike he changed his tune and argued that nobody wanted a strike. His arguments for defending the coal industry are based on economic nationalism – hence his constant harping on about the com-



**. . . or return to the Thirties**

petitiveness of British deep-mined coal. The logic of this position is to set miners and other workers in Britain against their brothers and sisters in other countries. Only workers' control of industry and socialism can ultimately defend miners' jobs from the anarchy of the capitalist market.

In the present situation, the biggest danger would be to place any confidence in a cross-class coalition with Tory backbenchers like Winston Churchill, whose grandfather was responsible for shooting striking miners in Tonypany in 1910. Whether, like Churchill, these MPs want to save the Nottinghamshire miners who scabbed in 1984-85, or they want kinder, more humane closures, they are no friends of the working class.

Miners should immediately occupy the pits to prevent their closure and bring all coalfields out in an indefinite strike. The TUC must co-ordinate supporting action by dockers, rail and transport workers to prevent the movement of coal, as well as action in the gas and oil industries and power sta-

tions. It must call an immediate 24-hour general strike. This must not be counterposed to an indefinite general strike aimed at bringing down the Tories, but instead be seen as a means of mobilising and testing the strength of the working class. Every opportunity must be taken to generalise such action.

In no way however can the treacherous TUC leadership be relied upon. Its first objection will be that it cannot break the Tory anti-union laws. Militant workers should reject this cowardice. No better opportunity exists to break them than when the Tories and the ruling class are split. Without delay, rank-and-file inter-union strike committees and pickets must be established and take control of the action.

While the spotlight has fallen on miners because of the speed and scale of the closures, attacks on workers are proceeding on all fronts and there is no end in sight to the recession. Millions are out of work, tens of thousands are homeless, and benefits and services

are being cut to the bone.

Those in work are constantly threatened with the sack unless they concede hard-won gains. Throughout the public sector, individual contracts, temporary contracts, performance reviews, market testing and new management techniques are the order of the day. Wages Councils, which set minimum rates for 2.5 million low-paid and mainly women workers, are again under threat. Sunday working is being widely introduced. On the railways, the eight-hour day has been replaced by 12-hour shifts. Flexible working and 'continental' shift systems have been introduced in the car industry. Everywhere, disciplinary codes and sickness allowances are being tightened. Along with the massacre of jobs in industry, this winter will see the health service, education and local government in the front line. Tory plans to impose a two per cent limit on the public sector in the current round of wage bargaining, while considering tax increases, will add more fuel to the fire.

**In this situation, a determined stand by the miners would inspire wide sections of the working class. With the Tories in disarray, the conditions exist to take on the government and defeat it.**

Against the pathetic demands of the Labour and TUC leaders for emergency debates in parliament and talks with Major, and their attempts to sound out Tory dissidents, we must clearly demand that they force the Tories to resign. Smith and the Labour front bench made it absolutely clear during the sterling crisis in September that they have no intention of doing any such thing – it would, they claimed, be bad for the economy! They're even less keen on occupying Downing Street at the moment than they are of occupying pits and factories. Smith's grand strategy consists of sitting out the recession in opposition.

Trade union militancy alone will not solve the crisis. It requires a political answer, and this in turn means a struggle against the right-wing Labour leadership. Labour must replace the hated Tories, not on the bankrupt reformist pipedreams of John Smith, but on a fighting programme to defend workers' interests and make the ruling class pay for the crisis.

## EDITORIAL

## The crisis over European unity

THE SEEMINGLY inexorable drive towards the integration of capitalist Europe has spectacularly come to grief. First, the Danish referendum narrowly rejected the Maastricht treaty, thereby throwing the whole process, which was supposed to be agreed unanimously, into confusion. Then in September heavy pressure on the weakest EC currencies brought about Britain and Italy's withdrawal from the Exchange Rate Mechanism. Four days later, the wafer-thin majority voting 'yes' in the French referendum only served to deepen the uncertainty.

The aim of the European capitalists was to create the largest single market on the planet as a counterweight to the US and Japan. At the same time the intention was to establish a framework within which rivalries between different European imperialist states could be held in check. To be effective, such a bloc would have to have a strong measure of centralised economic and political power.

The Maastricht treaty, agreed between the heads of state of the 12 EC countries in December 1991, already demonstrated the tensions present. Britain negotiated the right to opt out of both the social chapter and Economic and Monetary Union, and successfully expunged all references to federalism in the treaty. From this fudge arose the concept of 'subsidiarity' – essentially an attempt to introduce a demarcation between 'European' and 'national' decision-making.

But the actions of the British Tory government are not the cause of the generalised crisis over a united Europe – they are a symptom of it. The big push for economic and political unity came in the late 1980s, based on relative prosperity and the strength of the German economy. The development, however, of recession throughout Europe from 1990 and the huge overheads involved in German unification have glaringly highlighted the unevenness of European capitalism. The strongest economy, Germany, was forced to retrench, unable to make any cut in its interest rates, and the weakest were driven to the wall.

The twin tendency of European capital to grow together and to fracture along national lines reflects one of the basic contradictions of the system. Capitalism long ago outgrew the nation state, and the relentless pursuit of profit means that each national group of capitalists must, of necessity, look beyond its own borders. But this expansion is invariably carried out under a national flag, with the state acting as organiser of the different groups of capitalists, and assisting their efforts with diplomacy or, at times, force. Each state is thus little more than an employers' organisation representing the interests of its own capitalists. So while the tendency of imperialism is to iron out national differences, the better to exploit the masses, this can often lead to a conflict between two or more nations.

While the currency speculators may delight in rapid fluctuations in the market, capitalists involved in trading goods or services prefer stable conditions. They don't want to gear production to a particular country only to find that a shift in exchange rates has made their product unsaleable there. The drive towards the total economic union of Europe is a response to this basic requirement of capitalism. The ultimate aim is not merely to create a large tariff-free zone, but to ensure price stability through a single monetary policy and a single currency.

Though most capitalist politicians across Europe see the advantages of working together to achieve this goal, they are attempting to balance between one faction of the bourgeoisie which sees the failure to integrate Europe sufficiently fast as the source of its problems, and another which sees Europe as the mother of all evils. The lines of this split are not fixed, nor are they determined exactly by the nature of the business activity in which the participants are involved. While bankers, multinational corporations and exporters whose main market is outside Europe may have less immediate reason to support European unity, they are by no means all opposed to it. In the upper circles of the ruling class, the main dispute would appear to be over whether or not the strategy can work. Those who push for unity are effectively saying that it can, those who stress economic nationalism that it can't. Meanwhile, there is a growing army of 'don't knows' or 'can't decides' who perhaps more accurately reflect the contradiction at the heart of the system.

In this situation, the impact of the recession – especially on the weaker economies – has become the crucial factor in undermining the project for European unity. Each national bourgeoisie rests socially and politically on a petty-bourgeoisie and a professional middle class, many of whom are feeling the sharp wind of the recession and see nothing for them in a single Europe. This is boosting the fortunes of the anti-Europeans and obliging the pro-Europeans to step up their claims to be fighting in defence of the 'national interest'. Nothing could illustrate this latter point more clearly than John Major's speech to the Tory party conference, in which he sought to heal divisions over Europe. He began by playing the patriotic card for all it was worth and then outlined plans for a series of vicious attacks on the working class.

Workers should seize the opportunity presented by the split in the ruling class to step up opposition to an integrated capitalist Europe. Capitalist unification will not solve any of the problems facing the working class; on the contrary, the aim is to exploit workers in an enlarged 'domestic' market more thoroughly than before. Neither can any support be given to those who claim to place the 'national interest' first – the interests of workers have no place in their scheme. The fight must be not for the strengthening of national borders and a retreat into chauvinism, but for a socialist united states of Europe.



Members of the civil servants' union CPSA, together with unemployed groups, lobbying Mortimer Street Job Centre in central London in September. They were protesting against a pilot scheme to open the office at weekends using casual labour, which is widely seen as an attempt to break existing union agreements and undermine conditions of employment.

## Lies, damned lies and Tory statistics

By David Lewis  
and Jon Bearman

THE TORIES won the April general election on the basis of lies. They lied about the health service, they lied about education, but most of all they lied about an economic recovery. While no worker can ignore the serious consequences of the recession, it must surely be a matter of satisfaction that the Major government is currently in a state of deep crisis.

No sooner does one problem appear to be contained than another raises its head. Karl Marx's remark that 'Mankind always sets itself only such problems as it can solve' clearly does not apply to the Tories! The currency crisis, which has seen the pound fall through the floor since September, accurately reflects Britain's slide down the league table of 'advanced' countries.

Under Thatcher, the Tories embarked on a project to revitalise British capitalism on a narrower, less labour-intensive basis. Their reliance on 'the market' to solve all problems meant abolition of exchange controls, removal of subsidies, privatisation and deregulation of public services and industries. Today, the 'customers' of British Rail, the water companies and anything else you can think of are reaping the benefits or, rather, suffering the consequences.

Tory economic policy lies in tatters. Desperate measures to tie Britain's economy to the rest of Europe – some of them very expensive like the attempt to prop up the pound – are visibly failing. Dogmatic adherence to a policy of low inflation has worsened the impact of world recession. Job losses have been piled upon job losses. The decline of manufacturing industry is accelerating. The government spending deficit is matched only by the national trade deficit. Recession threatens to turn into full-blown slump.

In this situation, it is hardly surprising that even in capitalist terms the Tories do not have a coherent economic policy. Their response to recent developments has been characterised by vacillation, panic and the number one sin in the Thatcher book – the U-turn. The day before Britain left the Exchange Rate Mechanism, a U-turn in itself, interest rates went up first to 12 per cent, then to 15 per cent. The next morning they went down again to ten per cent. Very shortly after that they were down to nine per cent. In

the middle of October, after a week of denying that interest rates could possibly go any lower, they went down a further percentage point to eight per cent. To the Tory ranks, Major more and more appears as the driver of a runaway train. Some want a return to 'orthodox Thatcherism'; others want a greater degree of state intervention.

Given the relative weakness of the British economy, the attempt to peg an overvalued pound to the German mark in the ERM was doomed to failure. The subsequent collapse has strengthened the anti-European wing of the Tory party. They are not yet strong enough to take over the party, but they have sufficient clout to continue undermining the Major government, ensuring that deep divisions will remain over economic policy.

The effective devaluation of the pound was a forced recognition of economic reality, but it will not solve any of the deep-seated problems. The economic fall-out of leaving the ERM will be far-reaching. The price of some imports has already risen and, with the pound continuing to spiral downwards, this will become an increasingly important factor in driving up inflation. In addition, most British goods use components and materials from overseas – they have to be paid for too. The argument that the lower pound will make British exports cheaper is undercut by the collapse in manufacturing capacity and output – there simply aren't the goods to export. The prospect is for an ever-widening trade gap.

These pressures will no doubt spur the Tories to even greater efforts to control inflation. However, low inflation is no panacea. Property prices have fallen significantly over the last two years – what *The Economist* calls 'disinflation'. This means that the capitalists have less money to invest and are less willing to invest it. The chase after low inflation will continue to mean business failures, factory closures, job losses and, sooner or later, pay cuts.

Unemployment has now been rising continuously for two and a half years, with male unemployment now standing at 13.4 per cent. Some

commentators believe that the real jobless total is now greater than it was in the 1930s. The real unemployment rate among women is considerably higher than the official figure of 5.5 per cent because of the inequitable way women are treated by regulations on claiming benefit.

Job losses in manufacturing reached their highest level on record in August. Since the Tories came to power in 1979, the number of workers in manufacturing has collapsed from seven million to four million. The much-vaunted expansion in service industries, with which Thatcher set out to replace manufacturing, has collapsed. Unemployment in the hitherto privileged area of the south-east is now at 9.5 per cent; in London it stands at 11 per cent, almost as high as the north where it is 11.5 per cent. The number of job vacancies has plummeted to its lowest level since May 1981, and there are now 30 people chasing every registered job.

The scale of the problems faced by British capitalism makes all palliatives and reformist approaches wholly inadequate. The claims of the Labour leaders that they could manage capitalism better than the Tories are hollow. Both wings of the Tory party have attempted to shore up British capitalism and have manifestly failed. In reality, what John Smith and the Labour leadership are offering is a marginally higher degree of state intervention and a closer alignment to the European Community. This cannot possibly meet the needs of workers. Only a workers' government which destroys the economic and political power of the ruling class, and sets out on the road to a planned economy based on human need and not on profit, can provide job, homes and services for all.

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THOUGH the campaign against Maastricht was not victorious in the French referendum, it is nevertheless clear that the 'yes' campaign supported by virtually the whole of the bourgeois political establishment suffered an effective political defeat. When abstentions are taken into account, barely more than one in three of the electorate voted for the ratification of the treaty, and the pro-Maastricht 'majority' amounted to only a few hundred thousand out of the 38 million votes cast. On the evening of September 20, it was the opponents of Maastricht who were rejoicing (not its supporters who 'excused' and 'understood' the electors who had voted no). And this for one very good reason: the opposition to Maastricht split the popular base of all the parties which advocated a 'yes' vote, from the Green parties to the Gaullist RPR, winning from them their worker and farmer base in particular.

The industrial and agricultural regions that were traditionally of the 'left', such as the north and the 'red' belt around Paris, the centre and the south-west, voted massively to reject Maastricht (between 55 and 65 per cent for 'no'). And above all, it was the working class and the farmers, hard hit both by government policy and by the directives of the European Commission, who overwhelmingly voted against ratification.

Because of the necessarily plebiscitary character of the referendum under the Fifth Republic, it is clear

## French workers say no to Maastricht

The referendum in France on September 20 narrowly endorsed the Maastricht treaty – scarcely the vote of confidence that the ruling class was looking for. **L. Leroy** reports from France on the class basis of the 'no' vote and critically examines the response of the French left to the referendum

to everyone that right across the 'no' vote, aside from Maastricht itself, it was the Bérégovoy-Mitterrand government, together with all its policies, that was being punished, and in large part by the traditional base of the Socialist Party itself. A town such as Liévin in the Pas-de-Calais, which is the bastion of the Socialist Party (it received 75 per cent of the vote in the municipal elections), voted nearly 60 per cent 'no'. But the right-wing opposition of the RPR and Giscard's UDF suffered almost as badly, especially in the agricultural regions where the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy is a question of life and death (the CAP stipulates that one-third of agricultural land should lie fallow, which in the medium term will push almost two farmers in three into bankruptcy). The 49.3 per cent

'no' vote represented a new stage in the erosion both of Mitterrand's popular front and of the Fifth Republic itself and its parties, already evident since the regional elections in May (18 per cent of the vote for the Socialist Party, 32 per cent for the right-wing opposition!).

It is the opposition of the workers and farmers, and the masses as a whole, to the regime, to the European Community and to their policies which was expressed in the 'no' vote. It is true, however, that this opposition has not found a political 'voice' worthy of it: neither Le Pen's semi-fascist National Front, nor the reactionaries Pasqua, Séguin and De Villiers, nor the chauvinistic reformists of Chevenement's 'Citizens' Movement' and the Communist Party. It is clear that Chevenement no longer has any-

thing to do with the workers' movement. He is very largely a chauvinistic bourgeois politician comparable to the RPR's Philippe Séguin (whose interminable speeches against Maastricht in the Assembly Chevenement applauded). As for the Communist Party, if proof were needed, it showed once again the depth of its red-white-and-blue chauvinism with demands such as 'France, keep your identity!', echoing its old campaign to 'Produce French'. Behind all the hot air about the defence of existing gains lay the search for an anti-working class and chauvinistic bloc with a wing of the French bourgeoisie.

But beyond the Communist Party, the 'Trotskyist' organisations were usually distinguished by the extent of their opportunism. Lutte Ouvrière, in particular, actively contributed to the victory of the 'yes' vote in the referendum with a massive poster campaign calling for *abstention*. LO 'justified' this line by putting forward a whole series of arguments which amounted to the position that a capitalist Europe would be progressive, or at least 'neutral', from the standpoint of the

workers. And in practice, by arguing against voting 'no' with Pasqua and Le Pen, LO ended up refusing to endanger the Bérégovoy-Mitterrand government. LO's responsibility in the matter is even more important given that only a few hundred thousand votes made the difference – less than the section of the population that LO influences (it receives two per cent of the vote, year in year out). LO's campaign was a serious mistake.

The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, for its part, called for a 'no' vote, but on the basis of arguments which cannot be characterised as anything other than social democratic. In the shadow of Chevenement since the Gulf war, the French section of the United Secretariat reproached Maastricht for not being 'social' or 'democratic' enough – as if a capitalist Europe could be either of these things! Behind the 'obligatory' reference to a 'socialist' Europe, Maastricht marked a new milestone on the road to final liquidation into social democracy for the declining and demoralised organisation which the LCR has become. This is as true for the Krivine wing as it is for Matti's – the LCR's two major 'tendencies'. (Matti has, moreover, recently co-authored a book with the pro-Maastricht Socialist Party deputy J. Drayon... Europe!)

Only one conclusion is possible. In France, a new workers' party must be built, as the section of a reconstructed Fourth International.

## BRAZIL

# Masses drive Collor out

IN THE midst of the deepest economic crisis in the history of the country, the Brazilian people took to the streets in August and September to demand the end of President Collor's government.

By applying the theories of 'neoliberal' capitalism, the government has pushed the country into recession, creating mass unemployment. Inflation, which had been on the rise, stabilised at 20-25 per cent per month. Wages, however, have not risen at anything like the same rate. Under pressure from the IMF, Brazil uses all its annual surplus (about \$10 billion) to pay the interest on its foreign debt. This haemorrhage of resources is made worse by the foreign multinational companies which repatriate their profits, and by the illegal remittance of cash to European banks. Before Collor took office, Brazil was the eighth largest economy in the world; as a result of the world recession and Collor's disastrous policies it has fallen to thirteenth place.

Collor's government was elected on a pledge of putting an end to corruption. However, as in all previous governments, corruption continued to be a way of life. Fraudulent contracts involving work to be carried out for the federal government by private companies came to light. Several of these were linked to Paulo Cesar Farias, the treasurer of Collor's presidential campaign, and involved high-ranking officials and Collor himself, all of whom received huge deposits in their bank accounts made by 'ghosts'.

The government could not prevent congress from setting up a Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry to investigate the frauds, details of which had in some cases been leaked by former allies of Collor. But at the

From Portilho Simões  
in Sao Paulo

time, the government wasn't worried. Like the other 439 commissions of enquiry set up since 1946, this one would surely come to nothing.

The level of dissatisfaction with the government grew. There were daily demonstrations demanding 'Ethics in politics', which in reality meant 'Collor out!'. These were the largest demonstrations seen in Brazil since the campaign for popular elections for the presidency in 1984. Some were really gigantic, with about half a million people demanding the bringing down of the government.

With municipal elections due to take place throughout the country on October 3, many saw their chance to voice their opposition to the government. Members of congress who supported the government grew anxious that candidates from their parties would be defeated and, as the demonstrations grew larger, so the bloc in parliament which favoured the impeachment of the president took shape.

The demonstrations were organised by various different organisations, and by political parties. The powerful Federation of Sao Paulo Industrialists and the right-wing trade union confederation Forca Sindical supported the slogan 'Collor out!', but carry on with the modernisation of the economy'. They were for Collor's government without Collor! The role of the Workers Party (PT) was indistinguishable from other parties. Along with the Stalinists, it refused to adopt a struggle for either general or presidential elections, calling instead for the vice-president, Itamar Franco, to take over.



Sao Paulo, September 18: 'University of Sao Paulo students shout in all languages: Collor out!'

When the Commission of Enquiry finally ruled that Collor had been involved in corruption, it was up to congress to decide whether or not he should be impeached. On September 29, the deputies voted overwhelmingly to start impeachment proceedings and Collor was suspended. He will be tried by the senate on charges that he received millions of dollars in return for granting favours to his former aides.

Meanwhile, the PT was already negotiating with the bourgeois parties over the line-up of ministers in the new government. It didn't put forward any of its own candidates for these posts. The PT wanted the new administration to be composed of 'notable men with public credibility'. The press reported that PT president Lula agreed with Itamar Franco that the Economy Ministry should be headed by the social-liberal economist Jose Serra, who is a deputy belonging to the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy – which tends more towards free-market 'liberalism' than social democracy. Suffice to say that Serra did not oppose Collor's economic plan of 1990, and was even then being considered as a candidate for Economy Minister. In the event, Serra was vetoed and the post went to the ex-mayor of Recife and former friend of the military regime, Gusta-

vo Krause. As should have been expected, the new government ended up being composed of the same people who have always ruled Brazil.

In supporting Itamar Franco for president, the PT is accepting that Collor's election was legitimate. But Franco was Collor's running-mate in a 'dirty tricks' presidential election which saw attempts to frame the PT as 'kidnappers of businessmen' and in which the buses were withdrawn in areas where the PT was likely to win. The PT will be seen as joint sponsor of a government which will follow the same policies as its predecessor, policies which will have the same

harsh consequences for the masses.

The first round of the municipal elections on October 3 revealed a preference for the parties which opposed Collor. The PT won in several important cities, including Rio de Janeiro, formerly a bastion of the Democratic Labour Party whose president supported Collor.

In throwing Collor out, the masses were doing more than protesting against corruption; they were rejecting unemployment and the recession (the slogans which most often appeared on the demonstrations) and the IMF's 'modernising' policy adopted by the Collor regime.



## Join the Workers International League

For the rebuilding of the Fourth International!

I would like to join/have more information about the WIL (Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency/Britain).

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IN NOVEMBER last year, the Appeal Court overturned the conviction against Winston Silcott for the murder of PC Keith Blakelock on October 6, 1985. Blakelock was killed during the battle which took place after hundreds of riot police invaded the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham. In the weeks that followed, police raided 271 homes on the estate – one-third of the total – and arrested 369 people.

The only 'evidence' against Winston Silcott was an unsigned statement made to the police in an interview at which he had been denied the right to have a solicitor present. Although this did not contain anything remotely resembling a confession, the judge at the Old Bailey trial in March 1987 accepted the prosecution's contention that some comments by Winston Silcott 'tended to indicate his guilt'. He was sentenced to life imprisonment with a recommendation that he serve a minimum of 30 years. Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite were also found guilty of killing Blakelock, again on the sole basis of uncorroborated 'confessions'.

When the notes of the police interview with Winston Silcott were later subjected to electrostatic deposition analysis, which compares what is written on a page with the indentations on the page underneath, they were found to have been altered. Sections which had helped the Crown gain a conviction had been added later, and one important page was missing altogether. Like the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, the Maguire Seven and Judith Ward – wrongfully convicted during the 1970s as 'IRA terrorists' – the Tottenham Three were the subjects of a police and state frame-up. While the earlier cases had been the result of the British ruling class's determination to weaken the IRA by intimidating Irish people in Britain, the Tottenham Three were victims of the onslaught against working class, especially black, youth who fought back against Tory economic and social policies in the 1980s.

At the Appeal Court hearing on November 25, 1991, the Crown conceded that it could no longer rely on the police interview with Winston Silcott, and the conviction was quashed. Two days later, Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite were set free after prosecution lawyers admitted that their case was destroyed because the doctoring of Winston Silcott's interview notes pointed to the 'apparent dishonesty' of the senior investigating police officer, Detective Chief Superintendent Graham Melvin. Winston Silcott remains in jail, however, having been convicted in February 1986 on another, unrelated, murder charge.

Central to the success in clearing the Tottenham Three was the role played by their families and friends. For six years, Winston's brother, George Silcott, worked for the convictions against the three for PC Blakelock's murder to be overturned. Now he continues to campaign for Winston's case to be referred to the Appeal Court.

# When the whole seems to be against you

## An interview with George Silcott

Winston Silcott is still in jail serving a life sentence. Lizzy Ali and George Silcott spoke to his brother George about the state frame-up of the Tottenham Three and the campaign to free Winston

### How did you begin the campaign?

Shortly after Winston's conviction we felt we had to do something. We didn't know how to campaign. We started to meet in the local youth club every two weeks, my family and one friend of Winston's.

### What effect has Winston's sentence had on the family?

It was terrible for the family seeing my brother's name dragged through the mud. It seems the whole world's against you. People who should know better were giving us bad looks. My dad was put off work a couple of times because some of his colleagues brought in a picture from *The Sun*, holding it up saying he had guts to come into work. The whole place sent him to Coventry. Mum got a lot of it as well.

### How has this changed the family's attitude towards life?

My parents came to this country in the early Fifties, thinking the place was paved with gold. But even before Winston was framed for the killing of PC Blakelock, he did suffer a lot of harassment

and victimisation by the police. So my parents did start to wake up! Every time Winston or I left the house they were worried and would breathe a sigh of relief when we came back. They know that the British police are total racists and that the whole system is unjust.

### What response have you had from the Labour Party, in particular its Black Sections, and other left groups?

Unfortunately it took the Labour Party and its Black Sections a long time before they got involved in the Tottenham Three case. We were writing to them for years on end urging them to help us in our fight for justice. It was only later on that the Labour Party gave support. But the most disturbing thing was when Roy Hattersley was on TV commenting on how he was always with the campaign from the start. I remember three weeks before his going on TV, when

we tried to get an audience with him with our solicitors, he didn't want anything to do with us.

The left in this country have been very helpful because they are totally aware of how this system is corrupt, racist and unjust. Most of the groups on the left have continued to help in our fight for justice.

### Do you think that the Labour Party wants to be associated with Winston's case now?

I believe so. In the early stages, it wasn't a very popular thing to be involved with – you know, a police officer dies and they frame three men and victimise a whole estate. They wouldn't support us straight away; they were waiting to see what happened. I was glad to see our local MP, Bernie Grant, taking on the case and starting to say a few controversial things on TV. That did help us a lot.

In a letter from prison last

# Beating the fascists?

ONE YEAR has passed since the Anti-Racist Alliance was launched and ten months since the rebirth of the Anti-Nazi League. Both ARA and the ANL were established in response to the growth of racist attacks in Britain, the efforts of neo-Nazi groups such as the British National Party to organise on the streets, and against the background of the rise of ultra-right and fascist movements in Europe. Both have claimed support running into thousands and have attracted sponsorship from prominent figures in parliament, the trade unions, sports and entertainments. One year on, despite the inflated claims of both organisations, none of the essential tasks of building a united anti-racist/anti-fascist movement have been accomplished. The combination of opportunist political leadership and mutual sectarianism have continued to bedevil any serious advances.

ARA's distinctive claim has been that it promotes black leadership within the anti-racist struggle as an antidote to the 'white left' leadership of the ANL, both in the 1970s and today. Prominent among its founding organisations were the Black Liaison Group and Labour Party Black Sections. Support for ARA has also been pushed by the competing fragments of British Stalinism. Playing their by now accustomed role of behind-the-scenes fixers and Ken Livingstone link-persons have been supporters of *Socialist Action*. ARA has received widespread but passive support from the trade union bureaucracy, whilst also pitching for cross-party and

church sponsorship.

While ARA aspires to be an all-embracing cross-class front, in practice the axis of its politics is a weak, not-very-left reformism. From its correct if one-sided position that racism is a more pervasive force than organised fascism, ARA draws thoroughly reformist conclusions. Thus at ARA's Labour Party conference fringe meeting, speaker after speaker denounced racist attacks and police indifference, only to conclude that the answer lay in a reformed judiciary and better legislation.

ARA's overblown claims to be the anti-racist movement rest in large part on its emphasis on black leadership. But artificially building quotas into ARA structures has not attracted significant black working class support. Instead it has enshrined the position of a narrow layer of black middle class professionals claiming to represent the black community at large. Much of its leadership is at best equivocal and at worst hostile to militant anti-fascist mobilisation. By playing off anti-racism against anti-fascism, a disservice is done to both.

In contrast to the heterogeneous nature of ARA, the ANL in most areas is very much an SWP front. If ARA's internal democracy leaves a lot to be desired, then the ANL's is virtually non-existent, with a non-elected leadership and no democratically accountable structures. Members are signed up in workplaces and colleges on the minimal commitment of a £1 subscription, only to find that the ANL is merely an appendage of the local SWP branch. And if this

## Richard Price and Andy Mills look at the problems of the anti-racist/anti-fascist movement

doesn't build an anti-fascist movement, at least from the SWP's point of view it builds up their contact list!

The SWP initially sponsored ARA. But to build the ANL it has been forced to present itself as more activist and more radical in order to compete. In practice, however, this has meant limited regional or local mobilisations of SWP members and their immediate sympathisers. The political basis of the ANL is provided by the SWP's version of the united front. Speaking at the SWP's *Marxism 92* in July, veteran SWP leader Tony Cliff restated the line developed in the late 1970s: the ANL should be an all-inclusive front of all those opposed to fascism. Such a definition is thoroughly opportunist. It draws no distinction between the united front policy fought for by Trotskyists and the disastrous cross-class popular front position of Stalinism. Even if ANL Mark 2 is largely based upon left activists, students and members of the labour movement, the door remains wide open to understanding the fight against racism and fascism as being one of defending capitalist democracy – rather than the 'revolutionaries' explaining within the united front the link between racism, fascism and capitalism. Indeed, it is the reliance of the ANL on purely 'democratic' and propaganda methods which leads it consistently to underestimate the im-

portance of physically confronting fascists.

Much smaller than either ARA or the ANL, the only other force with any claim to be a national organisation is Anti-Fascist Action (AFA). Although it is firmly committed to the policy of 'no platform for fascists' – several of its activists are currently in prison – it is dominated by the sectarian and 'squadist' politics of Red Action and the Direct Action Movement. Red Action, in particular, has virtually reduced anti-fascism to a question of physical force pure and simple. Instead of fighting to build a mass movement firmly based in the labour movement and the minority communities – which would have to develop workers' defence groups – Red Action inverts the relationship. It sees the first step in building an anti-fascist movement as the creation of an elite hit squad. From this nucleus – somehow – a movement will grow.

Compounding this false position are other serious mistakes. Red Action's one-sided emphasis on orienting to white workers leads to a corresponding lack of emphasis on building links with black and Asian communities, lesbians and gays, and other minorities under attack.

Red Action's avowedly 'libertarian' politics do not extend to its conduct within united fronts. In AFA

it practices an increasingly intolerant role and has been the prime mover behind the expulsion of members of the Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL). Despite important political differences with the RIL – particularly over its sectarian conception of the united front – we are ever more opposed to resolving political differences by bureaucratic means.

AFA's leadership has also boycotted a number of anti-racist/anti-fascist mobilisations. Taken together, these negative features place a serious question mark against the possibilities of building AFA under its present leadership.

The different problems of ARA, the ANL and AFA have something in common. They are all symptomatic of a generalised political confusion over how to advance the anti-racist/anti-fascist struggle. With a low level of class struggle, ever-growing unemployment and the absence of a large fascist opponent to concentrate minds and activities, a lot of time and energy has been consumed in wide-of-the-mark polemics. Thus the Black Liaison Group has made a laboured attempt to prove that the SWP is 'racist'. 'Only the victims of racist attacks,' BLG argues, 'can define accurately how to fight back.' If this is the case, what price socialist political organisation? The argument that campaigns must be 'victim centred' begs the question of how class unity will be achieved. The insistence on 'black leadership' begs the question of what programme this (largely self-appointed) leadership stands on.

But it must be stressed that the

# The world against you

## Silcott

and Alistair Wrightson spoke  
am Three and the continuing

year, Winston says we are  
living in a police state. How do  
you feel about this?

I would totally agree with Winston. Any time a police officer stops somebody, black or white, for something they didn't do, whose words are the magistrates going to believe? It doesn't matter how many witnesses you have, they always go on the side of the police. I can only come to one conclusion - it's a police state.

As we saw in Los Angeles, you can have the whole thing on tape and still not get any justice. I have been arrested on several occasions - fortunately I had people who were willing to say where I was. I am still suffering from victimisation from Tottenham police. I walk down the road and the police start curbcrawling and calling me by my first name and making jokes - it's outrageous really.

How do you see the fight

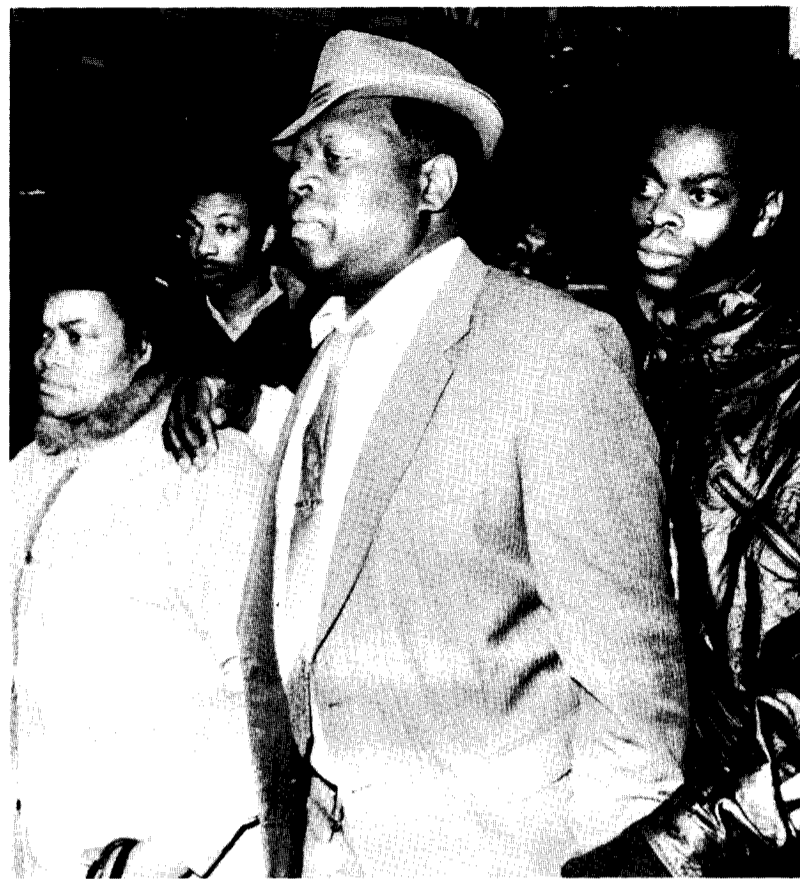
against institutionalised state  
and police racism developing?

Working class people and people who suffer the oppression of the state should get together in one mass. At the moment there are too many people bickering within the various organisations - there are a lot of things not being done. The real enemy is the capitalist system.

Do you think that bringing  
together all the different  
campaign groups related to  
police frame-ups and racist  
attacks would be more  
effective than lots of individual  
campaigns?

It would be great for people to get together under one banner; it would be more powerful. But I believe individuals who suffer should hold their own identity because when you go into one big mass you may lose a bit of your fight. Like our campaign now - I am Winston's brother, but there are people who will come and go and use the campaign for their own goals, like trying to get me to join their party. But for me the priority is to see Winston released.

How do you think Winston's  
experience relates to those of  
the framed Irish prisoners like  
the Guildford Four and the  
Birmingham Six?



George Silcott (right) and his parents leaving the Appeal Court in London on November 25, 1991, after the conviction against Winston for the murder of PC Keith Blakelock had been overturned

The only difference is that they are Irish and white, and Winston is black. It was the same media, the same state. They clubbed together, worked out what they were going to do, and then they framed these people.

Do you believe that Winston's  
case was prejudiced by the  
press?

Most certainly so! In the original trial, on the second day, *The Sun* got hold of a police mug

shot and told people: 'This man is guilty of killing PC Blakelock.' How could anybody get a fair trial after that? It was a trial by the media. Winston is doing life for murder, but I can't see it as murder. Anthony Smith and two of his gang members attacked Winston. This all happened before he was framed for PC Blakelock's murder. If Winston hadn't been framed for the killing of PC Blakelock, he wouldn't be serving life now.

Can you explain something  
about how the campaign  
developed and what it is doing  
now?

In the beginning, the campaign wasn't based around Winston and the other two. It was launched because of people getting harassed by the police. It didn't matter if you were five or 50, if you lived on the Broadwater Farm estate you were seen as some sort of criminal. There had to be a place where people could go and tell of their victimisation by the police, and that's how the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign evolved.

The campaign has never stopped; it has only changed names. We are still telling people: please do not forget about Winston. We need your help - we can't do it on our own. What groups, individuals and other organisations who are interested in justice can do is write to your local MPs. We need donations as we are not funded by any organisation. And please support our pickets and protests.

Donations and messages of  
support should be sent to:  
**Winston Silcott Defence  
Campaign**

Selby Centre, Selby Road  
Tottenham, London N17 8JN



SWP represents no principled alternative. If it believes that it can overcome the vertical divisions within the working class by inanely chanting 'black and white unite and fight' until it is hoarse, it has learned nothing and forgotten nothing from the old ANL. To communities whose youth are stabbed and whose houses are fire-bombed, racism is a life and death question; not the occasion for a cheap recruiting stunt.

Much the same can be said of Militant's front organisation, Youth Against Racism in Europe, which has suddenly become a focus for the tendency's activity after years of it ignoring anti-fascist mobilisations and anti-racist events. Predictably enough, Militant is up to its old game

of creating its own 'united front' which it can dominate, while only dipping its toe in the wider movement.

What conclusions should we draw? The leaders of all the main organisations have no intention of uniting their forces on a principled basis. Therefore serious activists must lose no opportunity to raise this demand in ARA, the ANL, AFA, in the labour movement and in the oppressed minority communities.

Black and white working class unity will not be built in committee; it will be forged in struggle. The injustices, paternalism and mutual suspicions of the past must be overcome. Socialists, while not giving an inch to the reformism of the ARA leadership, must defend the right to black self-

organisation, while arguing for a united, militant and integrated movement. Black self-defence must be wholeheartedly supported, with the perspective of developing workers' defence groups in each area under threat from racists and fascists. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary to direct agitation and propaganda towards white workers to prevent fascist groups winning a base among the unemployed, the demoralised and the desperate.

Last but not least, there must be a struggle within the labour movement, not just for paper affiliations, but to commit the Labour Party and the trade unions, from local up to national level, to action to prevent any platform for fascists, and against state and institutionalised racism.

## Defend Steve Masterson!

THE OCTOBER edition of the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight* carried a scurrilous and disgraceful attack on Steve Masterson of the Campaign Against Fascism in Europe. It comes in the form of a letter from *Searchlight* editor Gerry Gable to the *Jewish Chronicle*, which the latter chose not to publish, and an article under the heading 'Defending the anti-fascist and anti-racist movement'.

The article is in three sections, the first attacking Masterson, the second and third detailing the activities of two BNP supporters. This in itself is a crude amalgam reminiscent of Stalinism. It accuses Masterson of 'improperly soliciting funds' and of using the pseudonym Myers 'to pretend he has a Jewish connection when he has none'. A meeting between *Searchlight* representatives and Masterson led to the former threatening that he would be 'publicly exposed' if he did not 'comply' with demands to cease fund-raising and using his pseudonym.

We see nothing improper in raising funds for anti-fascist defendants, providing they are handed over to those for whom they are intended. And since *Searchlight* has produced no evidence that this is not the case, the allegation falls flat. On the question of pseudonyms, anyone with a grain of sense can appreciate why anti-fascists might use them. By 'exposing' Masterson's identity, *Searchlight* may think it has done anti-fascism a service; others might regard it less charitably as fingering an anti-fascist militant.

In his letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* (traditionally a platform for the conservative establishment within the Jewish community), Gable adopts a scarcely-concealed tone of red-baiting, citing Masterson's past associations with the WRP and *Labour Herald* (seven years ago!). Gable describes him as 'the self-appointed leader of a group [CAFE] that is universally disapproved of by the anti-fascist movement, both in Britain and in Europe', and as someone with 'absolutely no track-record' in fighting anti-Semitism and racism.

Despite Gable's belief that *Searchlight* has some franchise which entitles it to demand groups and individuals 'comply' with its ultimatums, and despite all this universal disapproval, the fact is that several hundred anti-fascists, including members of ARA, the ANL and AFA, and Jewish activists, supported CAFE's two mobilisations against pro-Nazi historian David Irving. It is also a matter of record that CAFE played an important role in the large demonstrations which greeted French National Front leader Le Pen when he visited Britain last December.

The same issue of *Searchlight* carries an editorial (entitled 'Will Major act to defend democracy?') which begins with an appeal to the Tories and concludes with a call to boycott German goods. If we were to use Gable's own method of amalgam - but with far more justice - we could accuse *Searchlight* of siding with anti-European Tories, who by their policies of the last 13 years have stoked up racism: 'Gable in sinister bloc with Tory chauvinists.' But we won't. Instead, we suggest that *Searchlight* either puts forward some hard evidence or withdraws its nasty, 'commie-bashing' innuendoes.

Workers News has political differences with CAFE. We do not accept its slogan of 'putting demands on the state without illusions', nor are we convinced of the need for yet another organisation when the pressing need is for a single anti-racist/anti-fascist united front. However, we are opposed to witch-hunts which objectively aid the fascists from whatever quarter.

# Race and class in Liverpool

## Readers reply to the Workers News articles on Militant

Dear comrades,  
Your two-part article on the split in Militant was on the whole a very good attempt to open up a debate on the history and politics of Militant. The smug and sectarian 'I told you so' approach of many on the left is only going to alienate the many good youth and working class members of Militant and Socialist Appeal who can be won to a real Trotskyist position from the centrist brand of socialism both groups expound. If I may, I would like to add to your report, but also criticise one or two of your positions.

The 1984-85 battle of the Liverpool City Council with the Tories was crucial to the growth of Militant, but also showed their political weakness. As you say, reforms were carried out - slums were cleared, thousands of houses with gardens built, sports centres and nurseries built and jobs created. All this was at a time when other councils were cutting jobs and services. It is something that the local labour movement has a right to be proud of. However, it was the councillors themselves that were promoted by Militant as being the centre of the struggle, and they balanced between the two main centres of workers' resistance to the Tories: the District Labour Party (DLP) and the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee (JSSC).

The DLP was the favoured arena of Militant, and it drew its strength from both a large and active Labour Party and from union delegates. However, the DLP was fatally flawed in its ability to lead the workers' resistance to the Tories for two reasons. Firstly, the second largest council union, NALGO, had no representation upon it, as NALGO is not affiliated to the Labour Party. This was a serious absence in light of the fact that council workers themselves were crucial to any chance of victory. The second reason was that the DLP was a party organisation, made up only of those who were in the Labour Party. This left no room for those workers, especially those radicalised in the struggle, who did not hold a party card; it was a dangerous split when maximum unity was needed. In comparison, the basic strength of workers' councils is that they unite workers in struggle, regardless of political affiliation.

In this situation it should have been the JSSC at the centre of the fight, having delegates from all the council unions and also leading Mili-

At the conclusion of our two-part series 'Behind the Crisis in Militant' (Workers News Nos. 39 and 40), we invited comment from our readers on the issues raised in the articles. Here we publish two letters, both of which defend Militant's traditional approach to the politics of race and class. In particular, they reject our criticisms of Militant's role in the 1984 'Sampson Bond affair', when a Militant supporter was appointed Principal Race Relations Advisor to Liverpool council in the face of bitter opposition from the leaders of the city's Black Caucus

tant member Ian Lowes as its Chair. However, the JSSC was clearly given a back seat in decision-making, deciding on the proposals of the councillors or the DLP. It is not surprising that in this situation Militant councillors were able to make the appalling blunder of issuing redundancy notices to the workforce in order to act 'legally' to defend an illegal budget. It was left to the JSSC to propose all-out strike action. The vote was close; in total, 47 per cent of workers voted for strike action, 53 per cent against. However, the leaderships of NUPE and NATFHE refused to allow their members to vote, and whilst the manual workers had been strongly in favour, it was the vote against by NALGO workers which decided the issue.

There is no doubt that had the manual workers gone on strike and picketed out those workers who had not been allowed a vote, then a significant confrontation with the Tories would have been possible, with strikers' committees running the city. Instead, Militant ignored the potential of the most radicalised workers to win others to the struggle, and argued against strike action on the grounds of formal democracy. So again it was the councillors who were put in control in order to lead a retreat. It is this fetish for councillors (and MPs) that clearly shows the centrism of Militant's politics.

However, I believe Workers News was wrong in its assessment of the Sam Bond affair and the role of positive discrimination. Where did

you get the idea that Bond's appointment as head of the race relations unit was 'in the teeth of hostility from the black community'? (It could also be asked what exactly is the 'black community'? Is there also a 'white community'? This erroneous attitude completely ignores class divisions.)

Liverpool has one of the oldest black populations in the country, and Liverpool 8 is the most integrated area I have ever come across, and yet Liverpool is a racist city; when the Liberals were in control they reinforced that racism by discrimination in jobs and housing policies. Historically, Militant always had its strongest base in the north of the city, rather than in the south which includes Toxteth. This had its origins in Militant's concentration on the organised workers in unions - the docks and factories being mainly in the north end - often to the exclusion of other groups (the workerism that Workers News referred to). This had positive effects in the sense that Militant was always a solidly proletarian group, unlike much of the left which is made up of students and intellectuals. However, it also led

Militant to be a predominantly white organisation (which would lead to the untrue allegations of racism).

During the period of the Militant-dominated council, real efforts were made to overcome decades of institutionalised racism in many areas, and one in five of all new council workers was black. (This effort was hampered by NALGO's refusal to allow jobs to be advertised externally before they had been offered to existing employees. The effect of this was that the only way to enter the workforce was at the bottom, adding to the discrimination.) Indeed, far more was done by the council to combat the material inequality of black workers than most of the trendy left councils in London put together, who spoke a lot of 'positive discrimination' at the same time as making cuts. So the impression given in Workers News that the council did nothing to counter the effects of racism is simply not true. Militant had every right to make a political appointment of a Marxist, Sam Bond, to the post of Principal Race Relations Officer.

Who opposed Bond? Certainly not the majority of black workers,

but rather a loose coalition of self-appointed 'community leaders' and careerists known as the Black Caucus (now non-existent). The Black Caucus believed that they were the only people fit for the job, but their actions showed they cared little for the people they claimed to represent. They mounted physical attacks on Bond and other Militant members, and one of their leading lights crossed picket lines against Harry Rimmer's redundancies on the grounds that NALGO was 'a white man's union' (the fact that a number of black workers had been sacked made no apparent difference). The Caucus gave evidence to Kinnoch's witch-hunting kangaroo courts and also called for a vote for the Liberals because they would have sacked Bond. The Caucus were supported by the right-wing NALGO leadership who were desperate for a stick with which to beat Militant. NALGO were joined by the Tories, the Liberals and most of the soft left for the same reason. In this way, support for Bond became an issue of class as much as race. For this reason I very much hope that Workers News will reconsider their own position on this matter.

Lastly, the Liverpool Labour Broad Left have proposed to sponsor a national conference of the left where the fight for socialism can be debated. When details are announced I hope Workers News will give it their support.

Yours fraternally,

**Jim Dye**  
Liverpool Labour Broad Left,  
personal capacity)

Dear comrades,  
I bought your latest paper in London last weekend and was shocked to find that you peddle the Sam Bond myth, and that along with it you share the political position of the bloc of petty-bourgeois and reactionaries who inject middle class politics (US imports, mainly) into the labour movement: black sections, positive discrimination, etc. I thought that this was a product of the most degenerate - especially London-based - pseudo-Trotskyists, Stalinists, liberals, priests, Kinnochites, assorted careerists, etc, not to speak of the range of parasites waiting to get their hands on the funding that accompanies such policies.

I have opposed the injection of such middle class policies into the labour movement for the last decade precisely on the grounds that Liverpool council and Militant did: namely, the splitting of the working class. This summer, in Islington, the NALGO strike against the council was scabbed on by such black nationalists (trained and encouraged in their time by would-be Trotskyists), arguing that 'last in, first out' would hit more blacks than whites (true) and thus one could scab as it was a 'white man's strike' - exactly what those of us who opposed the trendies said would occur: the class would be split on lines of race.

Sam Bond was interviewed by a

council committee and given the job. It wasn't Militant who employed him. He actually had some different ideas to Militant, but wasn't allowed to put them into effect owing to NALGO sabotage. The Black Caucus were a dubious, self-appointed entity, including a pimp who knocked Eric Heffer off a platform. Another of their luminaries, Michael Showers, just got 20 years for importing two million pounds' worth of heroin. He lived in a mansion in Childwall, a posh area.

To combat racism existing for hundreds of years isn't done overnight, and certainly not by discriminating in favour of blacks, against whites. Instead of uniting the class, this is a recipe to split it. In Liverpool today, the Irish sectarianism so strong in Belfast and Glasgow is a shadow of what it was. Class politics have replaced it. That was the way forward for the oppressed racial minorities.

Your critique of Militant on this point is not only wrong but shameful, and you peddle the myths and

politics of a poisonous bloc of witch-hunters, gangsters and pseudo-Trotskyist trendies. A peculiar popular-frontist alliance for a group striving to be the earthly representatives in Britain of Trotsky! I suggest that whoever cobbled up your article is instructed to cease socialising with middle class trendies as it is affecting his/her political judgement.

Your critique of Derek Hatton on this is petty-bourgeois moralising. He was correct in the quote you condemn him for, and we are now seeing the result of positive discrimination in places like Islington. You take up a liberal, moralistic view of sympathy with 'poor blacks' rather than a class view. The enemies of class politics are always trying to inject their views into the labour movement - Lib-Lab pacts, rainbow politics, etc - and in this case you are assisting them.

Comradely,  
**Mike Jones**  
Chester

We shall publish a reply to this correspondence in the next issue of Workers News. But we would sharply dissociate ourselves from the opinions expressed in Mike Jones's letter. If this is representative of the views held by Militant supporters in the 1980s, no wonder Liverpool council came into conflict with a section of the black community. Since then, of course, the tendency's line on the relationship between race and class has shifted dramatically. Militant was recently involved in arranging a speaking tour by former Black Panther leader Bobby Seale (another 'US import?'), resulting in the recruitment of hundreds of black youth to the organisation around the Panther newspaper. We are sure that many Militant supporters today would reject Mike Jones's crude, class-reductionist approach to the question of racial oppression.

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The series 'The Rise and Fall of Gerry Healy'  
will resume in the next issue of Workers News

### The Fall of Yugoslavia

By Misha Glenny, Penguin £5.99

Review by Daniel Evans

THIS IS a very useful and well-drawn picture of the events, personalities and the constituent republics and autonomous regions involved in the break-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Misha Glenny is the BBC World Service correspondent for Central Europe, a talented journalist and a fluent Serbo-Croat speaker – all of which helped him enormously as he travelled the length and breadth of Yugoslavia witnessing events, talking to politicians and academics and seeking out the views of ordinary people.

The book deals mainly with the period from October 1990 to May 1992, when Glenny and his colleagues were ordered by the BBC to evacuate the besieged city of Sarajevo, but includes a fair smattering of more historical background to the crisis. Glenny's descriptive powers and flowing style, and the fact that his courage carried him into some of the most dangerous situations, make the book highly readable.

Glenny describes how the president of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, whipped up chauvinist sentiment over the autonomous region of Kosovo, the population of which is 90 per cent Albanian. He shows how Milosevic defeated the opposition at home in March 1991 by stealing its thunder over the question of the 'unity of the Serbs' – and by mobilising the army on the streets of the capital, Belgrade – and how he then undermined the Federal authorities and eventually won the allegiance of the Yugoslav People's Army to the cause of a 'Greater Serbia'. According to Glenny, Milosevic arranged for agitators and thousands of tons of arms and ammunition to be sent to Serbs living in Croatia and Bosnia long before the declarations of inde-

pendence and the beginning of the war.

Whilst Milosevic is portrayed as a cunning, corrupt politician, Franjo Tudjman, the Croatian president, emerges in this account as an arrogant buffoon whose heavy-handedness in dealing with the Serbian minority within Croatia was almost suicidal.

One of the least-analysed aspects of the war is the extent to which the conflict is driven by a fundamental split between town and country. Though Glenny doesn't point this out himself, it becomes clear in the course of his narrative. Most of the anger and aggression comes from the large peasant populations, a distorted reflection of their economic situation. Peasants make up the bulk of both the Serbian and Croatian militias.

Milosevic's skilful manipulation of the peasantry is graphically illustrated by one particular incident. Serbia's sole remaining ally within the borders of the former Yugoslav federation is Montenegro. The casualties sustained by units from this republic in the early stages of the war with Croatia gave rise to a peace movement along the lines of 'this is not our war'. Glenny recounts how this was headed off by assigning Montenegrin troops to a less dangerous part of the front, where they were encouraged to run amok, raping and looting unhindered. The result was a steady flow of TVs, videos, washing machines, fridges, etc. back to the villages of Montenegro, silencing the critics.

The siege of the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, was initiated by the Serbian peasants living in the surrounding area. In the city itself, however, Muslim, Serbian, Croatian and Jewish inhabitants united against the heavily-armed irregulars,

# Reports from the war zone



Burying the dead in Sarajevo

courageously launching huge demonstrations to tear down barricades intended to keep the different communities apart.

Elsewhere, Glenny is able to reveal some of the shortcomings of the Bosnian leadership. As the Yugoslav army advanced on Sarajevo with the obvious intention of assisting the irregulars in taking the city, Presi-

dent Alija Izetbegovic failed to warn the population and organise a proper defence in a bout of political paralysis which continues to this day.

One thing you won't find in Glenny's book, however, is an in-depth analysis of the reasons for the 'fall of Yugoslavia'. Like most journalists working for the capitalist media, he cannot penetrate events any deeper

than his liberal consciousness will allow. His anti-communism leads him naturally to equate Stalinism with socialism, and therefore compels him to welcome the return of capitalism to Yugoslavia – even though he is horrified by many of the consequences. His previous book on the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe was triumphantly entitled 'The Rebirth of History'!

## New theoretical journal of the LTT

October sees the publication of the first issue of *In defence of Marxism*, the theoretical journal of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT). The LTT was formed in March 1991 by merging the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency of Belgium and Germany and the Workers International League of Britain. A group of South African Trotskyists also participated. The fusion document, entitled *Rebuild the Fourth International!* was published in *Workers News* No. 30. The political collaboration which predated formal fusion by some time is reflected in the contents of the journal which takes as its starting point the LTT's strategic aim of rebuilding the Fourth International and the consequent need for a clear Marxist understanding of events both current and historical. It is intended to provide a forum for debate on the impor-

tant questions facing Trotskyists, a vehicle for theoretical work carried out by the LTT and its supporters and, also, a means of ensuring that important material from the archives of Marxism is not forgotten.

This issue concentrates on the first of these three functions and thus reflects the major upheavals in world politics in the recent past. Those upheavals include what is undoubtedly the most significant political development of the late 20th century: the collapse of Stalinism. The process of capitalist restoration has induced the most profound crisis of political understanding in many organisations which claim adherence to Trotskyism and led to their disorientation in the face of Stalinism's collapse. This mirrors to some extent the confused character of the post-war debate on Eastern Europe in the Trotskyist

movement. The inadequacy of this debate was in many ways a watershed in the collapse of the Fourth International into centrism. It left unresolved some of the questions which are raised today by the reverse process. These include: what is the dividing line between a bourgeois state and a workers' state? What was the role of Stalinism in the overturns of capitalism in Eastern Europe? It is intended to return to these questions in future editions of *In defence of Marxism*.

Dealing with these and other questions, especially those relating to the national problems long suppressed by Stalinism, provides Trotskyists today with an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the Fourth International after the Second World War and make genuine strides towards a rebuilt revolutionary international. A major section in this issue of *In defence of Marxism* relates to capitalist restoration in Germany, in the form of a debate between the LTT and the Partido de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (PTS) of Argentina on the nature of the process which led to the reunification of Germany. A document entitled *Theses on Yugoslavia* deals with the national question in the ex-Yugoslav federation, where the suppression of national minorities by the Stalinists has had the most serious consequences.

The question of strategy and tactics in the struggle to throw off the yoke of imperialism is posed exceptionally sharply in South Africa, where the black masses face betrayal at the hands of the African National

Congress and its associates in the South African Communist Party. The second most substantial section appropriately deals with issues facing revolutionaries in Southern Africa. It includes a significant document produced by a group of South African Trotskyists in response to their abrupt exclusion from the Preparatory Committee by its WRP/Workers Press-dominated majority in September 1989. This document and a recent shorter article take up the spurious notion of Fourth International continuity held by the Preparatory Committee and its successor, the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International.

The stark challenge to revolutionaries presented by the imperialist attack on Iraq in 1991 is reflected in the third section of the journal which contains joint statements on the Gulf War between the LTT and the Internationalist Faction

of the Liga Internacional de los Trabajadores of Argentina, Chile and Mexico and the LTT and the Liaison Committee, which included groups from Austria, Germany, Italy and Sri Lanka. The struggle against pacifism and chauvinism in the labour movement during the Gulf War evoked the historic struggles of Lenin and the Zimmerwald Left and others for a principled line during the First World War.

*In defence of Marxism* has made a start in publishing material from the archives by choosing a short but very timely article on The United States of Europe from 1939 by the Revolutionary Workers League of Britain.

*In defence of Marxism* is available from the WIL for £2 including postage and packing.

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## ANGOLAN ELECTIONS

# MASSES REJECT STOOGES SAVIMBI

In the UN-supervised elections held in Angola on September 29-30, the imperialist-backed UNITA of Jonas Savimbi was defeated.

**Jabu Masilela** examines the latest in a series of 'regional peace settlements'

THE VICTORY of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in the recent Angolan elections is an important blow against the counter-revolutionary National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and its US and South African backers.

The MPLA fought the elections without financial and material support from its former Soviet and East European allies, whereas UNITA was still enjoying South African rands and US dollars. The imperialists were confident that their Angolan puppets were set to become the new, pro-Western, government in Luanda, and that their own influence in the region would be increased.

However, the toiling masses of Angola put paid to these reactionary plans, and throughout southern Africa a hardening of the US-South African line can now be expected. More economic and political pressure will be applied to the governments in a region already being bled to death by the IMF and World Bank's so-called Structural Adjustment Programme. UNITA is already attempting to hold the MPLA to ransom by threatening to re-start the civil war. It can also exploit the Cabinda national/regional question.

In the past year, South African and Portuguese speculators have grabbed thousands of hectares of Angolan land, while openly stating that they were waiting for a UNITA government to grant them even more. With a 'peaceful' takeover of land now denied them, they will naturally band together with UNITA and pursue their plans by vio-

lent methods. Angola will remain politically, economically and militarily unstable for some time.

As soon as it became clear that the MPLA and UNITA were on the verge of a cease-fire and 'multi-party' elections, the masses began voicing their grievances against the MPLA. Protests were mounted against the effects of the austerity programme and the lack of democracy. The bureaucratic structure of the MPLA itself was challenged by oppositionists within the movement. The critical attitude of the masses towards the MPLA and their open hatred for UNITA could be seen in a slogan like 'MPLA robs, UNITA kills', which was sprayed on walls in the working class areas of Luanda. The Angolan Civic Association was formed, with a worker/youth base. Its intention to openly challenge both the MPLA and UNITA could be seen from its popular slogan 'Neither MPLA nor UNITA'.

But all this was still at an embryonic stage when the elections came. Without a viable working class alternative to the two major parties, and with the trade unions and other grassroots organisations tied to the MPLA, the masses naturally adopted the line of critically voting for the MPLA in order to defeat UNITA. Had the UNITA bandits won, they would have entered government with openly pro-US and South African policies. All the mass organisations would have faced immediate repression. The way Savimbi has dealt with opponents in his own organisation – recently even embarrassing his US masters – would have seemed soft by comparison. People randomly



Supporters of the ruling MPLA attend a rally during the election campaign

interviewed in various provinces, including those mainly populated by the Ovimbundus, allegedly UNITA's ethnic base, were fearful that a reign of terror would accompany Savimbi's assumption of power. These fears were proved well-founded by, among other things, the kidnapping and killing of MPLA supporters by UNITA during and after the election campaign.

It is important, though, to note that the crisis in Angola after independence in 1975 was not solely due to imperialist intervention. Like other national liberation movements, the MPLA initially pursued pragmatic policies, attempting to get Western support for its cause. Ironically, after Agostinho Neto's visit to the United States in 1962, the CIA dispelled the myth of a Communist MPLA and argued for US support for both the MPLA and the Front for the Liberation of Angola. Later it pointed out that there were no essential differences between the MPLA and other Angolan nationalist forces, and that all of them should be supported. However, anti-communist US policy prevailed, and ensured that the MPLA was isolated and driven towards Stalinism.

When the MPLA took power, there was no attempt to overthrow capitalism. As in Mozambique, only the property of those Portuguese settlers who sabotaged the economy as they fled the country was expropriated. This was supplemented by certain measures of nationalisation carried out as a result of the war with UNITA. At its 1977 congress, the MPLA transformed itself into a 'Marxist-Leninist vanguard party' – the MPLA-PT. From then on, party and state structures were modelled on those of the degenerated and deformed workers' states. But the MPLA-PT embarked on its 'objec-

tives of socialist revolution' (nationalisation, collectivisation and centralisation) by prescriptive means, and unnecessarily alienated the masses with its anti-religion campaigns. Relations with the workers' states – chiefly the USSR, Cuba and the GDR – were strengthened, and Angola itself was declared a 'workers' state'. This did not, however, alter the capitalist nature of the Angolan economy.

By the mid-1980s, Angola was experiencing serious economic problems, with virtually all oil revenues going to finance the war with UNITA. Then came the military stalemate after the defeat of counter-revolution at Cuito Cuanavale. The Kremlin bureaucracy was already retreating from its 'international' obligations and capitulating to imperialism. Angola thus became one of those 'trouble spots' designated for peaceful settlements on the basis of US-Soviet detente. In fact, the Kremlin left Angola at the mercy of its enemies by withdrawing aid, while the US and South Africa continued to support UNITA right up to the recent elections. It was in this context that the linking of the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola (and the closing down of Umkhonto we Sizwe bases in Angola) with Namibian independence was achieved by Pretoria and Washington. In addition, the workers and peasants of Angola were tired of a war that the MPLA was not prosecuting with the necessary revolutionary efficiency. 'Peace' moods emerged strongly within the MPLA ranks and the country in general, making it possible to reach the agreement that led to the elections.

Of course, overall, imperialism and its puppets have been victorious in Angola. The economy is in tatters, thousands have been maimed

in the war, UNITA has been accommodated by the MPLA, the IMF measures are being implemented, and the MPLA has thrown its 'socialist objectives' overboard. However, the electoral defeat for UNITA is an important victory on which workers, peasants, youth, students and revolutionary intellectuals can build.

The immediate task is to reject any attempt to bring UNITA into a coalition government with the MPLA. The austerity programme must be fought tooth and nail, and the land-hungry peasants should struggle vigorously against the speculators. Youth and student demands for decent jobs and proper schooling should be integrated with the demands of workers and peasants. In short, a comprehensive programme of action should be devised which politically arms the masses against the MPLA.

This should include the national/regional question of Cabinda – the MPLA's criminal attitude to this problem has turned the Cabindan masses against the Angolans. When the arrangements for transition from colonial rule were made with the Portuguese, the subject of Cabindan independence was not raised by the MPLA. Subsequently the MPLA has ignored widespread calls for a referendum on independence for Cabinda, and only recently started talking to some factions of the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave.

Revolutionary militants should take a lead in building and strengthening trade unions and other mass organisations. An immediate start must be made on building a revolutionary workers' party to fight for this programme. The battle-cry of the toiling masses of Angola should be 'Forward to a workers' and peasants' government!'

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