

# Workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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# Support black self defence!

**J**OHN MAJOR is a racist. At the recent EC summit he blamed immigrants for drugs, crime and racial tension. He called for a strong "perimeter fence" around Europe; continent-wide security to seal Europe off from immigrants from North Africa, the Indian sub-continent and the Far East.

Trailing in the opinion polls, the Tories are preparing to play the racist card to win votes in the coming election.

They are being aided and abetted by tabloids like the *Star* and the *Mail*. With lying stories they whip up hatred against black people in general and immigrants in particular, and give sustenance to every backward prejudice.

On the streets and in the housing estates this translates into more racist abuse, more fascist campaigns for "rights for whites", and a growing tally of deaths and injuries from racist violence. Racist attacks, like the ones that resulted in the murders of Rolan Adams and Orville Blair in Thamesmead, are on the increase everywhere.

Black people are not responsible for the ills of British society. They are its main victims.

The police systematically criminalise blacks. One in five of all black men between 15 and 24 have been stopped by the police. Afro-Caribbean men

in cars are four times more likely to be stopped than whites. The media scare campaign against drugs has been used to step up racial harassment by the police. A recent survey in the London borough of Lewisham showed that whilst over half the crack users are white, 95% of those arrested for possession were black.

It is institutional discrimination like this that has caused black people—who make up 5% of the population—to make up one third of those appearing before the courts. Once in court black people are twice as likely to be refused bail and twice as likely to be sent down than whites.

Over the last few months the media hate campaign has returned to one of its oldest themes: the idea that immigrant families are being given privileged accommodation, (the famous "five-star hotels"), at the expense of tax-paying whites.

In reality the present crisis in housing hits blacks extra hard. The notorious Liberal council in the London borough of Tower Hamlets pursues a blatantly discriminatory policy of evicting Bangladeshi families from accommodation designed for the homeless. Councils across the country favour white residents in allocating new housing, with black

people being offered the worst housing in the most run down areas.

Not content with blaming black people for bad housing, unemployment and crime the press and the politicians blame them for racism itself.

The most sickening aspect of Major's EC outburst was his hypocritical assertion that increased restrictions will be for the black communities' own good. Warning of the possible growth of far right-wing forces he said: "excess immigration can give rise to tensions."

Labour answered his moves to further restrict the number of refugees gaining entry to Britain by warning him to make sure the laws were applied "fairly".

Racist, far right and fascist parties are on the rise across Europe because of recession, increased unemployment, attacks on services and on the living standards of the working class.

In Britain job losses, increased homelessness and repossessions, the underfunding of education and inner city decay all demand an answer to the crisis. But the unions and the Labour Party only offer more of the same.

The bosses will always use the tried and tested tactics of divide and rule. Racism is one of their biggest weapons.

In reply workers and youth have to combat racism in all its forms, mobilising against every instance of discrimination. We must support and initiate the organised defence of the black community against physical attacks by

the police, the racists and fascists. We must campaign not only against every exclusion of economic or political refugees, every deportation

of so-called "illegal" immigrants, but against every capitalist restriction on immigration.

Unity between black and white workers is our goal. But that will never be achieved by glossing over racism, downplaying the justified demands of black people or refusing to support their right to defend themselves against every attack.

It will be built by winning all workers to the defence of those oppressed and victimised by the bosses and their system.

This means:

- Support black self defence! For organised workers defence against racist attacks!
- Abolish all immigration controls!
- Fight for a massive programme of house building—no discrimination in allocation against black people!
- Fight for workers' control of recruitment in every workplace to end racism in employment practices!
- No platform for fascists! Drive them off our streets and out of our estates!

## FREE THE TOTTENHAM 3!

**NEW EVIDENCE** proves that Winston Silcott, convicted for the murder of PC Trevor Blakelock in 1985, is innocent. Tests show that after interrogation by police, his "confession" was altered to include the very words used to incriminate him at his trial.

Winston was framed after the Broadwater Farm uprising in October 1985. Local youth protesting at the killing by police of Cynthia Jarrett in her home were attacked by hundreds of police who laid siege to the estate. The youth put up a heroic

resistance, which left Blakelock dead and the police desperate for a conviction—any conviction.

Like the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six, Winston Silcott is a victim of trial by media and fabricated evidence. Like them he is being kept inside while the Tories delay a fresh appeal. Instead of supporting the racist police and judges, the labour movement must demand Winston Silcott's immediate release along with Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite who were fitted up with him.

**SCRAP ALL IMMIGRATION  
CONTROLS!**

**T**HE MEDIA is describing Lesley Mahmood's 7% vote in the Walton by-election as a "crushing defeat" for the Liverpool Broad Left. The Labour leadership has seized the opportunity of Kilfoyle's victory, and Terry Fields' jailing, to unleash a savage purge against the left.

What is the balance sheet of the Mahmood campaign?

It shows there is a fighting minority in the working class prepared to withstand a barrage of media lies and Labour Party intimidation and vote for somebody who says they stand for "genuine socialism". Mahmood represented real forces in struggle: council workers, rebel councillors, Poll Tax non-payers, people fighting local hospital closures. Those forces were, and are, in a struggle against a Labour administration. Labour stands openly for their defeat.

That is why it was right to vote and campaign for Mahmood against the Labour Party. It was necessary for revolutionaries to go through the experience of a practical break with Labour alongside an advanced and organised section of workers in struggle. The aim should have been to lead as many of the 2,633 workers voting for Mahmood as possible into making a *political* break with reformism and taking a step towards building a revolutionary party.

Mahmood's campaign squandered the opportunity to do this. To claim that the result represented "2,633 votes for socialism"—if you mean real revolutionary socialism—is sheer self delusion. The whole campaign was based on presenting Mahmood as part of the genuine Labour tradition and Kilfoyle as an aberration from Labour's politics.

The Broad Left told workers that it was the *real* Labour Party. It recruited people to Walton Real Labour Party. It claimed Labour's traditions were socialist and that Mahmood stood for these traditions. What a crass piece of deception! Labour always governs for the bosses. It is not, and never can be, a real socialist party. Its traditions, from MacDonald to Kinnock, are anti-working class.

Most workers know there is a fundamental difference between Marxist and reformist "socialism", whether they agree with Marxism

# Militant after Walton

or not. To pitch the whole campaign along the lines that Mahmood represented the real Labour tradition played into the hands of the media and the right. They can portray the left as liars, pretending to be "real" Labour in order to win votes. With minimum research the right wing can prove that no real Marxist seriously believes that they represent Labour's real traditions.

To counter the charges of the right

rallies of council workers she didn't use the opportunity to agitate for the vital strike action needed. The Walton Real Labour leaflet to the city's refuse workers even warned, "They are trying to provoke us into an all out strike" when it should have been calling for a strike as soon as possible! Only now, with the election safely behind it—but also with much precious time lost—has *Militant* come out in favour of

have supported Mahmood. Workers Power supporters in the Labour Party were banned by the Broad Left executive in Liverpool from canvassing for Mahmood, not on the grounds that we were "outsiders", not on the grounds that there was no work to do, but because we were "sectarian".

But Trotsky wrote that a sectarian is somebody who puts the narrow interests of the party before

**The Broad Left ran a traditional Labour left constituency canvassing campaign. This may have been good enough to wipe the floor with the scab candidates in the May council elections, but it was totally inadequate faced with the combined onslaught of the media and Walworth Road.**

wing the Mahmood campaign did the exact opposite of what *real* Marxists would have done. Not only did the campaign claim it was the "real" Labour Party—it acted like the real Labour Party. The Broad Left ran a traditional Labour left constituency canvassing campaign. This may have been good enough to wipe the floor with the scab candidates in the May council elections, but it was totally inadequate faced with the combined onslaught of the media and Walworth Road.

Whilst Mahmood spoke to mass

all out action (19.7.91).

Mahmood was denounced from the pulpits of the Catholic Church because she supported abortion. Instead of taking the fight to the clergy, instead of organising working class women to make a public protest about this, Mahmood kept quiet. The Walton Real Labour leaflet for women contains many good demands about cervical screening, sexual harassment, nurseries and women's pay. But it contains not one word about abortion! Instead of making free abortion on demand a major issue, Mahmood ducked it.

The campaign should have used the election, and the spotlight that was on Walton, to transform politics in the city and make the by-election a focus for the national issues facing the working class. A real Marxist election campaign would have organised daily, high profile activities, demonstrations and rallies for the whole city. It would have organised a delegate conference of as many workplaces, APTUs and community organisations as possible in the fight to solidify the working class base that undoubtedly existed for the campaign.

And any Marxist organisation worth the name would have made sure that the national spotlight turned on its supporters in one city was used to mount a national propaganda campaign around the issues raised: unemployment, abortion, Poll Tax, housing.

But outside Liverpool *Militant* went into virtual hibernation. Sales were suspended, public meetings cancelled and worst of all we had the spectacle of Terry Fields and Dave Nellist refusing publicly to support Mahmood. Fields' refusal to answer straight questions about who he supported did nothing but damage to the image of Marxism. And it didn't even save him from the wrath of Kinnock.

No attempt was made to organise those who in every town would

the policies the 47 fought for".

Of course the stand the 47 took was way ahead of most of the Labour left at the time and the gains, especially in housing, must be defended against the new round of cuts. But the tactics of the *Militant*-led council were fatally flawed. They signed a deal with Jenkin during the miners' strike, which *Militant* claimed as a victory. It was a hollow victory because it closed down a potential second front in the decisive struggle of the decade and merely bought time for the council—it didn't resolve any of Liverpool's fundamental problems.

Then, when the showdown came, the weakness of carrying out the class struggle primarily in the council chamber and the DLP was revealed. The strike action in the workplaces that was desperately needed to win the struggle could not be organised because it hadn't been fought for by the Hatton leadership, or by *Militant*, in the preceding months. The Hatton leadership resorted to the stupid and disastrous "tactic" of sending out redundancy notices to the workforce. Then Hatton made his bid for stardom in the bosses' press and media. Personally he confirmed what many cautious workers suspected: this was no Marxist but a fly-boy with a flash car and a neat line in cheap watches.

Many supporters of *Militant* will admit that these were errors. *Militant* itself admitted them in the small print of a special supplement after the defeat of the 47. Likewise it dissociated *Militant* from Hatton—in one corner of a paper article. But that is not enough when you are faced with the ruthless bosses' agents of the Labour right. They shouted about Hatton from the rooftops. They gambled everything on convincing workers that the left was the problem, not the solution, in Liverpool. And it is now clear that with the vast majority they succeeded.

Even among the fighting minority of workers Mahmood's support was eroded. Of course this was partly a result of the intimidation, the media pressure, the enormous resources that Walworth Road put into supporting Kilfoyle. Nevertheless, many of the opportunities presented by the campaign were squandered as a result of the weaknesses outlined above.

## Free Terry Fields! Free all poll tax prisoners!

TERRY FIELDS, the Labour MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, is in jail for not paying his Poll Tax. He was sentenced to 60 days because he was willing to defy the Tories' unjust tax. He was immediately denounced and disowned by Kinnock.

Terry's stand against the Poll Tax was absolutely right. His willingness to risk jail was courageous. Unlike the great bulk of the Parliamentary Labour Party he made a decision to stand with the working class against the bosses, no matter what the legal consequences would be.

Every worker needs to remember that he is just one of the many people now serving sentences either because they refused to pay their tax, or because they refused to bow down to police violence at the Trafalgar Square anti-Poll Tax demo last year.

The labour movement should not be allowed to rest while these people remain banged away. The work

of those defending these prisoners in the Anti-Poll Tax Federation and the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign must be given maximum support.

But legal battles and solidarity gestures will not deter the government from imprisoning class fighters. The labour movement needs to organise strike action to free the prisoners. A start can be made by winning commitments to such action by the unions and workplaces that many of the prisoners belong to. For unemployed prisoners the local labour movement as a whole must campaign for strikes and protests to secure their release.

The wave of jailings shows that the Poll Tax is still alive and kicking and the Tories remain determined to make us pay. We must show our own determination by fighting for mass protests and strike action to secure the release of those prisoners. ■



Kinnock: determined to crush the left

On 14 June Dave Cotterill wrote in *Militant*: "Now a genuine workers' party is in the making. It may be that the bulk of the activists will be expelled. The six Broad Left candidates and their supporters are being expelled. The six ward parties have been formally suspended. But the official party is withering on the vine. It will have no activists and declining support. The real Labour Party will rest with the rank and file." The Walton result must leave many *Militant* supporters asking:

# where next?

The danger of the self delusion contained in Cotterill's article was always that it would provoke a retreat. And in *Militant* on 12 July the same Dave Cotterill writes "It is not a question of setting up a separate party". He outlines the perspective of a re-emerging "left movement" in both the unions and the Labour Party.

What perspective does this offer to the 300 workers who have, according to *Militant*, joined Walton Real Labour Party? What does it offer to those who are being expelled in increasing numbers from the Labour Party?

Workers Power believes that wherever possible Marxists should devote some of their forces to work inside the Labour Party. It is not a question of "in or out" as the Socialist Workers Party has tried to make it, but of politics. The problem is that anyone who fights consistently for revolutionary politics is liable to end up expelled.

And in all its years of running the Labour Party the right wing has always been willing to crush the left—sometimes even the left reformists as well as the revolutionaries—rather than allow them to upset Labour's chances of running the country on behalf of the bosses. This is why it has always been wrong to pose the transformation of the Labour Party as the strategic goal of Marxists.

Our task is to seize every opportunity to advance the construction of a revolutionary party rooted in the working class. This means that where sections of workers in struggle begin to break with reformism we have to convince them of the need for a complete break—politically and organisationally. There is no need for workers to go through the stage of firstly being won to the left reformist illusion of a socialist Labour government, or a "real" Labour Party going back to Labour's "socialist roots".

Walton shows it is possible to win a fighting minority of the working class to a revolutionary politics that, in Marx's words, "disdains to conceal its aims". Until now *Militant* has rejected this in favour of fighting strategically for Labour's transformation.

For years *Militant* has based its activity on the perspective of an inevitable mass influx of workers into the party and the destruction of the Labour right by conditions of capitalist crisis. As the 1981 *Militant International Review* (MIR) special put it:

"The effect of decades of reformism in a period when reforms could actually be gained on the basis of the upswing of capitalism are being swept away on the basis of the downswing of capitalism which is now developing. All the muck and encrustations on the trade unions and the Labour Party which have brought the neanderthal men to the fore will be dissolved and washed away as a result of the crisis of British and world capitalism."

This prediction misunderstands the very nature of reformism. It exists not only to deliver reforms but to deliver the workers up to the bosses.

The end of the boom did not mean the withering away of the right wing. The "neanderthal men" were replaced by the slick thirtysomethings of the Kinnock clique. They have succeeded in bringing the party policy into line with the needs of the bosses in the 1990s, abandoning support for nationalisation, accepting the Tory anti-union laws and guaranteeing that many of Thatcher's gains over the working class will remain intact.

The autumn 1985 edition of MIR stated boldly:

"The movement of workers into the Labour Party will be a reflection of the struggles in society as a whole. It is an inevitable process, that when the working class is thwarted politically, as in 1983, it turns onto the plane of industrial action, but equally when a period of struggle on an industrial level fails to lead to a fundamental transformation of the situation, workers will draw political conclusions again, first of all seeking a return of a Labour government but at a later stage in more actively participating in the party itself. From this point of view the right wing are already living on borrowed time."

This wooden schema was already being falsified at the time it was published. The defeat of the industrial struggle, epitomised by the miners' strike of 1984-85, has not yet shown signs of pushing ever more workers into the Labour Party. Quite the opposite. It greatly encouraged and strengthened the right wing who have set out to prevent constituency activists playing any significant role in the party's internal life. Many wards are shrunken and moribund. The direct link between the trade unions and Labour Party conference via affiliated membership and the block

vote is being consciously weakened by both sides.

On the basis of its false perspectives *Militant* opted for a strategy of remaining within the Labour Party at all costs. At the 1982 Labour Against the Witch-hunts conference *Militant* argued against defying the party's register of proscribed organisations on the grounds that it was party policy decided by conference.

In 1986 *Militant* went to the bourgeois courts to get injunctions against the Labour Party bureaucrats to prevent expulsions. The tendency supposedly committed to transforming the Labour Party into a weapon to overthrow the bosses went pleading to the bosses' courts to help them do it.

Where democratically selected candidates were deposed by Walworth Road *Militant* refused to support the tactic of standing against the stooge candidate. They allowed LPYS to be closed down without a fight, when an independent, rebel conference could have rallied thousands of youth to an independent organisation.

In 1985, when conditions were much better in Liverpool, *Militant* refused to consider a DLP based split. It could have attracted 10,000 according to Taafe and Mulhearn, but it was rejected because *Militant's* leaders expected tens and hundreds to flood into the Labour Party for every one of those 10,000 who split.

None of this has saved *Militant* from the purge Walworth Road is now unleashing. *Militant* comrades now have to ask: was it worth compromising these principles, bringing the courts into the workers' movement, giving up the LPYS, all for a schema that has been proved utterly false?

Now *Militant's* whole perspective is in ruins. This has happened because the perspective was always based on one-sided catastrophism and a schema for transforming the Labour Party. Marxism is the science of perspectives, as Ted Grant has often repeated. The scientific character of real Marxist perspectives has never been better demonstrated than by today's utter falsification of *Militant's* predictions.

*Militant* comrades are now learning the hard way that there is no substitute real Marxism, that Labour cannot be transformed, that events push in the direction of an open revolutionary organisation even for those stubbornly opposed to it. They have two options.

The first is to listen to the worthless crowing of organisations like *Socialist Organiser* and *Labour Briefing*, who are claiming that the result shows Marxists should never stand against Labour, and who have written off the prospect of building a revolutionary party.

There are no doubt those within *Militant's* leadership who are echoing the content of this analysis, albeit without the sickening self satisfaction of the pro-Kilfoyle "Trotskyists". And their advice will now be—keep your heads down, survive the purge, live to fight another day, accept the need to organise outside the party only as a necessary and temporary evil.

The second option is to build on the experience of Walton and start the fight for an open revolutionary organisation. Those who take up this fight will have to realise that it cannot be done in isolation from a thoroughgoing critique of *Militant's* history, programme and strategy. They will have to fight for a perspective based on materialist dialectics not catastrophism, for an honest accounting of the lessons of Walton, for the clear goal of a revolutionary party and for a programme which doesn't hide the need for capitalism's revolutionary overthrow. They will find this only in the politics and practice of Workers Power.■

# Fight the witch-hunt!

"We will never have a better opportunity of warmly shaking this group by the throat than we now have, and we should seize it with relish."

This was how Frank Field, the right-wing Labour MP for Birkenhead, greeted the result of the Walton by-election. His sentiments are shared by virtually every section of the Labour Party. Labour fought the by-election as a referendum against *Militant*. Having got the result they wanted they are now moving fast to smash *Militant* and every left-winger who refuses to toe the Kinnock line.

For nine years Kinnock has been remodelling the Labour Party politically. Every left wing policy has been overthrown. In a symbolic but significant gesture, Kinnock, the "unilateralist for life", has left CND. This does more than simply remove any lingering doubts as to his determination to render Labour absolutely safe for Britain's bosses. It will also get him the security clearance he needs before he is allowed to pass through the portals of 10 Downing Street.

Kinnock's retreat from Labour's old policies has been accompanied by a ruthless organisational transformation of the party. He has conducted a civil war against the left and destroyed party democracy in the process.

## Crime

No sooner was Walton out of the way than the aforementioned Frank Field, democratically deselected by his constituency, was reimposed on Birkenhead. No matter that Frank has a record of urging people to vote against Labour in elections - the crime now being used to justify the purge of *Militant* supporters. No matter that his deselection was quashed and his reselection ensured by undemocratic means. Frank was Kinnock's man, and the great leader was not about to allow the ordinary party members of Birkenhead any say in the matter.

To silence them Kinnock employed his favoured tactic straight after Walton. He closed the entire party down. This is becoming a habit with Kinnock. By last March 80 constituency parties had suffered this fate.

The Labour leadership have followed through these bureaucratic closures with expulsions. Over 100 people have been targeted in Liverpool, and 62 are already suspended. Photographs were taken of people supporting Mahmood, special sheets were circulated for all members to fill in with details of who they'd seen canvassing for Mahmood. Computers have been crammed with the names and addresses of those suspected of lack of loyalty to the leader.

Most of those on this blacklist are supporters of *Militant*. Investigations of members are underway in Scotland, in Manchester, in London and on Merseyside. To satisfy the Tories and their press the MPs identified with *Militant*, Terry Fields and Dave Nellist, are to be investigated and probably purged.

But *Militant* is not the only target. In Lambeth 13 councillors have been suspended and are likely to be expelled because they refused to vote for cuts. The whole council is now being policed by a regional official to ensure it stays in line. In Sheffield *Socialist Organiser* supporters are being investigated with a view to expulsion. Everywhere members who are in any way associated with the Anti-Poll Tax Federation, whether they are support-

ers of *Militant* or not, are facing charges.

Kinnock has ensured that Labour cannot be mistaken for a socialist party. He is equally determined to make sure it is not a democratic party. That is why it is sickening to hear him prattle about the virtues of democratic socialism over revolutionary socialism.

In this war within the Labour Party it is obligatory for revolutionaries to take sides, to fight every inch of the way against the purge.

If members are expelled local parties should refuse to recognise their expulsions.

If Kinnock imposes a candidate against a democratically selected one, CLPs should stand their candidates against the official stooge.

If Kinnock closes down a ward or CLP it should carry on operating in defiance of Walworth Road.

It is no surprise to Workers Power to see that the darlings of the various "Trotskyist" newspapers with supporters in the Labour Party have sided with the right. *Tribune*, which has travelled a long way since the heady days of its fulsome support for the "Benn for Deputy" Campaign, has welcomed the purge. Its editorials have called for *Militant* supporters to be given their "come-uppance" and said of the investigation into Fields:

"If indeed there is such evidence, he can expect no sympathy from the democratic, libertarian [sic!] Left, if he is given the boot. The same would go for Dave Nellist..." (20/7/91).

That fiery leftist Tony Banks, has insisted that *Militant* supporters are guilty "of an offence against which there is no appeal". Clare Short, another left traitor, seconded Kinnock's resolution to suspend the 62.

To their credit, Benn and Skinner voted against the suspensions. But these men are, in truth, clapped out. They have not offered a single word of advice to party members on how to fight back. They no longer got the stomach for such a fight and are left pouring their hearts out to the press about how bad things have become.

## Solid

In this situation it is vital that every socialist in the party takes up the fight. Against the oncoming attacks by Kinnock we must unite our forces into a solid wall of resistance. We propose the following basis for a united struggle against the witch-hunt:

- refusal to recognise every expulsion or suspension of socialists;
- defiance of attempts to close down local parties;
- determination to stand candidates selected by local parties against any imposed ones.

If we can build a fighting united front of all the forces opposed to the witch-hunt then we can lay the basis for going onto the offensive against Kinnock. His right to rule unchallenged has gone on too long. The left has cowered before him for fear of "upsetting" Labour's chances of victory at a general election. If we do not fight him now, then in government he will be able to rule for the bosses against the workers all the more easily.

The fight against the witch-hunt today can marshal the forces for a fight against a Kinnock government tomorrow. This is why no barriers to fighting unity must be allowed to stand in the way of our resistance to the purge.■

**T**HE INTERVENTION by Yugoslav army troops in the republic of Slovenia, following hard on its declaration independence, must be condemned by all socialists and working class fighters worldwide.

The forcible retention of any people within the borders of another state is not only a violation of democratic principles but, far more importantly, poisons the relations between the working classes of different peoples and in this case splits the unity of the Yugoslavian working class.

Yugoslavia is a workers' state but not a workers' state where the working class has ever held direct political power by means of workers' councils. It was from birth a degenerate workers' state. Therefore, it has always lacked key features inseparable from workers' democracy, including a real, rather than a formal, right for any republic or oppressed nationality to secede from that state.

Marxists are no admirers of small states for their own sake. Nor do we advocate the creation of tiny statelets for every nationality, linguistic or ethnic group world wide. On the contrary, we see in the existing national borders so many restraints on the forces of production and above all on the most important one—the working class itself. But if the unity of the working class is injured by the network of frontiers even more so is it injured by the national oppression of any people within an existing multinational state.

Our answer to this is to fight for an elementary demand of bourgeois right: for self-determination up to and including separation, for the unhindered right to secede. In the imperialist epoch, despite including this principle in all their charters, declarations and constitutions, the bourgeoisie (whether imperialist or semi-colonial) denies this right in practice.

Thus in the Middle East the thirty million strong Kurdish peoples' right to an independent state is denied by all the great powers and not only by the regimes which partition it. Those vicious hypocrites the British imperialists have for the last seventy years imprisoned a large minority of the Irish people within the "United Kingdom".

Therefore, the EC imperialists, who refuse to recognise the declarations of independence of Slovenia and Croatia, have rushed to offer their "good offices" to prevent civil war and solve Yugoslavia's problems. The working people of all nationalities in Yugoslavia should beware the imperialists bearing gifts.

They have only two purposes. Firstly, they desire political stability and, secondly, the completion of the process of the restoration of capitalist exploitation in Yugoslavia. They will only support Slovene

# Yugoslavia explodes

**As the conflict in Yugoslavia continues, Richard Brenner examines the current balance of forces. We also print here the resolution of the International Secretariat of the LRCI on the crisis in Yugoslavia.**

**ON THE night of Thursday 17 July, the joint presidency of Yugoslavia decided to withdraw the federal armed forces from Slovenia within 3 months. The republic's war, in which 70 people have been killed since the declaration of independence on 25 June, appears to be at an end.**

**If the Yugoslav army does indeed withdraw, the most serious obstacle to independence will have been removed. Slovenian workers must now lose no further time in organising independently of their nationalist and pro-Western leaders if the disaster of capitalist restoration is to be avoided.**

**But the attainment of full national self-determination remains a demand that they should champion until independence is an accomplished fact. This and this alone will deny the**

Slovenian bureaucracy and restorationists the ability to declare to the Slovenian workers, "it is neither we, nor the much vaunted free market that crushes and oppresses you, but the communists and the workers of Serbia." The way will be cleared for the Slovenian workers to settle accounts with their own class enemies.

Only one of the seven members of the Yugoslav joint presidency voted against the withdrawal from Slovenia. This was Stipe Mesic, a Croat. The irony of the situation is easily explained. The Croats are now deeply afraid that the withdrawal of the Federal troops from Slovenia will

free the army to act against their own republic.

Since the declaration of independence there have been more killings in Croatia than in Slovenia where the attention of Western public opinion has until now been focused. There are between 50,000 and 70,000 Federal troops in Croatia at present. Skirmishes continue in those areas in which the 600,000 Serbian inhabitants of Croatia form a majority. There have been around 2-3 deaths per day so far, including around 30 police killed by Serbian rebels against Franjo Tudjman's Croatian government.

Tudjman's comment that the with-

drawal of troops from Slovenia creates a "politically favourable" environment in which the independence of Croatia becomes more possible is belied by his recent establishment of a War Cabinet to face the growing threat of open military conflict. Tudjman himself has been guilty of crude and vicious anti-Serbian chauvinism, which has not only mobilised support among Croats by inflaming deep-seated historic prejudices, but has added to the fears of the Serb minority, who recall all too well the war-time atrocities of the Croat pro-Nazi militia, the Ustase.

Croatia has a right to self-determination. If this is to mean anything at

and Croat rights to the extent that they advance this process. That is why we oppose their intervention. Imperialist economic or military intervention will enormously strengthen and speed up the process of capitalist restoration.

The election of openly bourgeois restorationist governments in Ljubljana and Zagreb delighted the imperialists. Some of the adjacent capitalist countries (Italy and Austria) may have flirted with the prospect of gaining client statelets out of any break-up of Yugoslavia.

The bourgeois restorationist government in Hungary has secretly sent arms to Croatia. It may harbour designs of re-uniting the half-million strong Hungarian minority in the Vojvodina with the fatherland, as well as restoring some sort of economic linkage to Croatia. As these two republics are the most developed parts of the Federation they would be a valuable acquisition for their neighbours.

Backward Serbia, with its large and militant working class as well as its Stalinist regime, is clearly much harder to handle. The EC powers do not want another poverty stricken claimant to EC membership and EC funds. A controllable flow of Yugoslav cheap labour to the factories of Germany and Italy in the boom years was one thing. A mass exodus of economic refugees in the present recession is quite another.

The EC and the CSEC have therefore rushed to mediate. Their objectives are to prevent a complete break up of the federation, to promote the weakening and eventual downfall of the Serbian republic's Stalinist regime and to



strengthen the restorationist federal government of Ante Markovic.

We do not take as our starting point the preservation of the Yugoslav Federation as such. This federation is itself too narrow to resolve the national problems of the Balkan peoples. Its borders divide one and three-quarter million Albanians from their co-nationals in Albania. They divide one and one-third million Macedonians from their co-nationals in Greece and Bulgaria. They divide nearly half a million Hungarians from their fellow nationals.

Revolutionary communists from the early years of this century have seen the answer to the extreme national complexity and intermingling of the peoples of south-east Europe in the creation of a Federation of the Balkan Peoples.

National borders and customs posts crippled the already underdeveloped economies of the peninsula between the two wars. Stalinism was unable to overcome this legacy of economic backwardness. It was also unable to overcome the legacy of national oppression.

At various times, and most recently in the period of the crisis of the regimes in Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia, the Stalinist dictators deliberately inflamed the old national antagonisms. Zhivkov per-

secuted the Turkish minority, Ceausescu the Hungarians, Gypsies and Germans. In Yugoslavia, since 1987, Slobodan Milosevic has held on to power by inflaming first anti-Albanian chauvinism amongst the Serbs over the autonomous region of Kosovo, and then the historic antagonisms dating from the bloody "civil war" between Croats and Serbs which was a component of the 1939-45 war.

Yugoslav Stalinism is in its death agony. The Yugoslav League of Communists (YLC) has disintegrated and its rump, now named the Serbian Socialist Party, still maintains a semi-dictatorial hold on power in Belgrade. To preserve this power, its leader, Slobodan Milosevic, has for three years mounted a campaign to "restore" Serbian dominance in the Federation, lost, in his view, in 1974 when a new constitution created autonomous regions in the Vojvodina and in Kosovo.

In addition the Yugoslav army, dominated by a largely Serbian high command and officer corps, will only survive if the Yugoslav Federation holds together. That is why it is willing to use bloody means to ensure this. Any Yugoslav military dictatorship, any restoration of the Stalinist one party tyranny would not constitute a defence of the planned property relations which still exist in Serbia, albeit in a dis-

integrating condition.

To be sure, Milosevic has sought to preserve his hold on the working class by opposing rapid moves to denationalisation and the abolition of the "workers' self-management". This in turn has fuelled illusions in him by workers fearful of the economic disintegration that would be intensified by the secession of the Slovenes and the Croats.

But Milosevic is also committed to restoration. His only proviso is that a Serb dominated Yugoslavia must continue and that the Stalinist bureaucratic caste should hold onto a dominant share of power whilst it transforms itself into a part of the new capitalist class or into the political servants of this class.

Serbian workers are being dragged into a reactionary civil war, not in defence of the planned property relations but in defence of the parasitic bureaucracy. Only a political revolution against the SSP bureaucrats and the defeat of the bourgeois opposition (e.g. the Serbian Renewal Movement of Vuk Draskovic *et al*), only the support by the Serbian workers for the right of the oppressed nationalities to independence if they wish it, can be a basis for solving the enormous problems facing the proletariat.

Serbian chauvinism has in its turn fuelled Slovene and Croat

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# odes

bian villagers. This, in turn, has given another twist to the upward spiral of Serbian chauvinism.

The obstruction and then the military prevention of Croatia's and Slovenia's bid for independence has wounded, perhaps fatally, the hopes for a solution to the national question within the framework of the Yugoslav state. Only a rapid break of the working class from their Stalinist and bourgeois misleaders can save the fraternal union of the toilers and avoid either a bloody and reactionary civil war or an imperialist-restorationist imposed settlement.

What should be the key demands which constitute such a break?

- Imperialists, hands off Yugoslavia. No to an EC intervention. No sanctions or withholding loans to the Federation.
- Yugoslav Armed Forces out of Slovenia and out of all but the majority Serb enclaves of Croatia. For the withdrawal of all Croat militia from the Serbian regions of the Croat republic and the right of these regions (like the Krajna) to secede if they wish to. Fraternise with the Yugoslav armed forces; for workers' and soldiers' committees and the election of officers.
- For the right to self-determination of all nations, including the right to autonomy or participation in a free and equal federation with no privileges to one nationality.
- For the immediate recognition of the Slovene and Croat declarations of independence and the recognition of the independence of the Serbian majority areas within Croatia.
- For the maintenance of the planned property in Croatia and Slovenia, against the restoration plans and mass unemployment, for the defence of workers' ownership and control of the factories, for a new democratic workers' plan.
- Break with the bourgeois and Stalinist restorationists. For independent workers' militias to safeguard all minorities and full democratic rights to the workers and peasants. Down with the pogromists.
- For workers' council states in Slovenia, Croatia and all the republics.
- For a new voluntary federation between the republics as the first step to a socialist federation of the Balkans.

Adopted by the International Secretariat of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International  
29 June 1991

separatism. The Slovenian and Croatian Stalinists have been swept from power by openly restorationist bourgeois nationalist governments that, as the elections showed, unfortunately have the support of the great majority of their populations including their working classes.

The programmes of the governments of Milan Kucan and Franjo Tujman will bring unemployment, poverty and social insecurity to the workers of Slovenia and Croatia. But they can hide this now, not only by the usual deceitful propaganda envisaging a rapid transition to the prosperity of an Italy or an Austria, but also by appearing as the only defenders of their peoples against a brutal Serbian dictatorship, whether Stalinist or bourgeois nationalist.

This latter claim is false in essence. They themselves have inflamed chauvinism by their blaming of all Yugoslavia's ills on the Serbs, whom they claim exploit them by taking "their" taxes to develop the backward parts of Yugoslavia. The Croatian nationalists have glorified reactionary "national heroes" like Ban Jelacic (leader of the pro-Habsburg counter-revolution in 1848) and the leaders of the Nazi puppet state of "independent Croatia".

In addition, the Croat militias have attacked and murdered Ser-



**S AND MINORITIES!  
ATIA AND ALL REPUBLICS!  
IALIST FEDERATION OF THE BALKANS!**

## IN DEFENCE OF MARXISM



### The National Question in a workers' state

**MARXISTS STAND** for the right of nations to self determination. The current spiral of national struggles in Yugoslavia and the USSR obliges revolutionaries to examine the meaning and application of this slogan closely.

One example of undiluted confusion is instructive. In their bulletin *the next step* (5 July 1991) the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) oppose the separation of Slovenia and Croatia and advocate the maintenance of the Serbian dominated Yugoslav Federation:

"If Slovenia and Croatia secede from the federation they will unleash a process of fragmentation which can only have divisive and dangerous consequences. It will act as a spur to national conflict elsewhere in the country where the mix of ethnic groups is complex... It would also serve to confuse and obscure the class struggle by pitting one national group against another."

Marxists certainly do not strategically advocate the breakup of federal or multi-national states into their constituent parts. We stand for the highest possible development of the forces of production, which are held back and divided by the proliferation of national borders, as is the working class itself. In the Croat and Slovene referenda, before the masses had taken the road of struggle for national independence, we would have voted against secession.

However what the RCP fails to recognise is that 40 years of Stalinist domination and the failure to integrate the regionalised economy of Yugoslavia have already acted as a spur to national conflict. At the first available opportunity the masses of both Slovenia and Croatia voted for secession from the federation. They harbour the illusion that it is the Serbs who are the cause of their troubles rather than their "own" bureaucrats and would-be bosses. Reality has already "confused and obscured the class struggle".

For those nations which have chosen separation, against the advice of revolutionaries, only the attainment of that goal will enable nationalist illusions to be dispelled. Whether or not the republics concerned are more economically developed than other constituent republics, if their intention to secede is obstructed this constitutes nothing less than national oppression. Therefore revolutionaries must champion the right of these nations to independence and try to give working class forms and a socialist aim to their national struggle.

The only condition we place on this is that the exercise of that self-determination should not intrinsically lead to the denial of the same rights to minorities within the same territory.

A further argument against our attitude has been raised by those who, unlike the RCP, see themselves as Trotskyist and correctly think the working class should defend the proletarian property relations of Yugoslavia and the USSR. They point to the reactionary and pro-capitalist politics of the secessionist leaders and oppose independence on the grounds of defending planned economy against capitalist restoration.

The Spartacists are the most brazen proponents of this position. On Lithuania they say:

"As Leninists and internationalists we stand for the democratic reorganisation of the Soviet Union and for the right of any nationality with a leadership that opposes counter-revolution to withdraw to any extent it sees fit. But in Lithuania

and the other Baltic republics the fig leaf of 'national independence' is being used as a cover for capitalist restoration. And this must be fought." (*Workers Hammer* February 1991—Our emphasis).

The conclusion they drew was to support Stalinism's murderous crackdown in Vilnius. Others balk at these conclusions but share the Spartacists' conditional support for independence. The International Trotskyist Committee (in Britain the RIL) support:

"the right of the oppressed nationalities to establish independent socialist republics" (*Revolutionary Internationalist* May 1991—Our emphasis)

The position of genuine Trotskyism on the national question in a workers state was, fortunately, completely different to this conditional support for the right of self determination.

In the late 1930s a growing national movement in the Ukraine demanded independence from the USSR and was increasingly influenced by clerical and even fascist reactionaries. For Trotsky the first task was to assess the situation as it was:

"We must proceed from facts and not ideal norms. The Thermidorean reaction in the USSR, the defeat of a number of revolutions, the victories of fascism... must be paid for in genuine currency in all spheres, including that of the Ukrainian question." (*Trotsky Writings 1939-40* p48)

Stalinism had pushed the Ukrainian masses towards separatism. Trotsky advised Ukrainian revolutionaries to participate in the struggle for independence whilst fighting within the national movement for the retention of the state property relations under the slogan of an independent soviet Ukraine.

This caused a furore amongst some of Trotsky's supporters who argued that instead of secession from the USSR the Fourth International should counterpose the call for a political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy. As Trotsky pointed out this was the thinking of "sectarian muddleheads". To those who counterposed the class struggle to the national struggle, Trotsky replied that the national struggle was a form of the class struggle; one of the most "labyrinthine and complex" forms, but nevertheless an extremely important one. (*ibid* p50).

To those who counterposed political revolution to a national uprising Trotsky replied that the national uprising "represents nothing else but a single segment of the political revolution".

To that assessment the objection was raised, as it has been again by present day sectarians, that the movements were under the leadership of reactionaries and therefore embodied a counter-revolutionary rather than political revolutionary dynamic.

As always centrists can think only in fixed categories.

The restorationist danger exists and grows insofar as the reactionaries are able to dominate the national movement, to utilise the just desire of the masses to end national oppression in order to put forward a socially counter-revolutionary programme.

Opposition to independence only consigns the revolutionaries to isolation from the masses, consigning the masses to the unchallenged leadership of the nationalist demagogues. To restrict support for independence to those nations whose secessionist movements are already led by opponents of resto-

ration, in effect denies support to any independence movement save one that falls from the skies equipped with a ready made Trotskyist leadership.

It was something Trotsky did not expect and therefore placed no such conditions on the right to self determination.

There is one major difference between conditions which pertained in the Ukraine and those we have to deal with today. Trotsky thought it was virtually impossible for the slogan of a "democratic Ukraine", raised by the liberal restorationists, to be realised. Ukraine, like Slovenia or Lithuania today, was destined to become a semi-colony of imperialism if a restorationist separatist movement triumphed. In conditions where Europe had been plunged into fascism and dictatorship he pointed out that a stable democratic capitalist Ukraine was impossible.

Today it is the relative prosperity and bourgeois democracy which beckons the oppressed nationalities of the Stalinist states, not crisis torn fascist Europe. Does this mean that Trotsky's tactics and slogans become invalid?

No, they become much more important, because the lure of imperialist restorationism is infinitely stronger today than in the 1930s. Trotsky's tactics are the only ones which can effectively combat pro-imperialist restorationism.

That, paradoxically, is why it is also even more utopian now to trust the Stalinist chauvinists with the defence of planned property and to grant them in return a free hand to crush the national movements. Neither Slobodan Milosevic nor Mikhail Gorbachev are defenders of the post-capitalist property forms. They too are mesmerised by the promises of the western capitalists.

The crushing of the nationalist movements and the establishment of Serbian or Great Russian military dictatorships would involve setting back conditions for the construction of independent workers' organisations.

This in turn would be the greatest possible blow against not only national and democratic rights, but also against the possibility of defending the remaining gains of the workers' states and resisting the ravages of the market. Because only the working class can do that, through their own organisations and their own revolution. ■

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# UCATT in crisis

Dear Comrades,

There is a very definite political dimension to what is happening in the construction industry and unions, and with UCATT in particular. That is something which all left political commentators and papers miss at the moment. It has its roots in the upsurge of working class militancy of the early 1970s.

The ruling class planned their political revenge on the miners after the victories of the NUM in 1972 and 1974. They achieved their revenge with the political and industrial defeat of the miners and the NUM in the 1984/5 strike.

## Guise

This same ruling class, mainly in the guise of the Building Employers Federation, were also planning their revenge for the most successful (i.e. national) strike in the history of the construction unions and industry in 1972. This was led by the rank and file Building Workers Charter organisation and movement. In turn this was politically led by the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). Via the medium of the newly formed UCATT most of the disparate trade unions in the industry were united. The importance of this achievement was that divisions between the unions had previously made it almost impossible to get united national action over wages and conditions.

The ruling class' revenge has culminated in the horrendous circumstances which prevail in the construction industry today. On average three building workers are killed every week in so called site accidents. Many other workers are seriously

**T**HE UNION of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT) is in turmoil. The election of 3 "left" candidates to the Executive Council this spring led to revelations about the corruption and ballot rigging practices of the old leadership, in particular Albert Williams, the General Secretary. Since then the union has been beset by court cases and subjected to poaching raids by the scab EETPU.

UCATT has been having problems for some years, and it is an open secret—now being denied—that it has been having merger talks with a number of unions over the past period. When the elections brought in new leaders a layer of the corrupt leaders defected. After the GMB was rapped over the knuckles for offering to take in some UCATT officials, 13 defectors turned to the EETPU. In Yorkshire they are claiming to have taken 200 members with them.

A good example of EETPU's methods was revealed in South Wales, where the regional secretary pledged his allegiance to UCATT on 12 June, resigned 14 June, and enabled the EETPU to write to all the local shop stewards on 17 June urging them to join the scab outfit and claiming that UCATT was now controlled by the "loony left". On that same day EETPU announced that the regional secretary and his wife were both now

employed by EETPU!

The letter from Brian Higgins, which we print below, puts this crisis into context. We don't agree with the idea that the pre-1972 CPGB pursued a healthy industrial strategy or that UCATT was ever really controlled by the rank and file. One of its problems was that it retained a number of craft union features and its recent merger talks have never addressed the problem of organising a real building workers' industrial union.

However, we do agree with comrade Higgins that the central question is organising the rank and file. Unless a campaign is developed on the sites to preserve the union from the poaching raids of the scabs, and build it up as a fighting union to combat the terrible health and safety conditions, the lousy pay and the anti-union policies of many bosses (buttressed by the growth of lump labour), then the crisis will get worse.

The strategy of the current leaders—going to court, and in South Wales case calling in the police because the defector to EETPU had used privileged information to circulate letter to members—will not end corruption and chicanery in the union. Nor will a merger with one of the general unions. A rank and file struggle, on every site, organising the unorganised, involving the members and fighting the bosses is urgently needed.

injured and maimed.

The bosses have obviously also had a strategy of destroying UCATT as a democratic, independent union for construction workers and for undermining the unity between the different trades and labourers established in 1972.

Their major tactic towards achieving this was and is by corrupting the official UCATT machinery, particularly at national and regional level.

So successful have they been in this that UCATT, if it is not halted by the actions of rank and file members and building workers, is in the process of disintegrating as a meaningful, democratic independent union for construction workers. The evidence for the bosses' success includes:

- the suspension of the UCATT General Secretary pending an inquiry into corruption;

evidence and allegations of ballot rigging, on a massive scale, against the executive council, which sat until May, and many regional and local executives;

- UCATT regional officials, D Hehir and P Lenihan (now on the Executive Council!) taking their own union to the High Court and making sure, in effect, that the union is being run by the High Court and bankrupted in the process;
- 15 full-time UCATT officials defecting to the EETPU and poaching their former members in UCATT into the EETPU!

How can a union which was so prominent in the successful 1972 building workers' strike, have come to such a sorry and distressing state?

Because since 1972 the CBGB have religiously implemented their real industrial strategy

whereby the rank and file political dimension in the Building Workers Charter organisation and movement was rapidly superseded and replaced by Broad Left popular frontism.

Among other things this led to the election of Albert Williams (with the total support and endorsement of the Broad Left) as General Secretary of UCATT, and to the election of J Henry, a CPGB member when elected, and G Brumwell and C Kelly, darlings of the Broad Left and members of the UCATT Executive Council which is now under investigation for ballot rigging and corruption. The corruption in UCATT can be paralleled exactly with the political degeneration and disintegration of the CPGB and their various Broad Left apologists.

The Broad Left industrial strategy has been proved a total and utter failure in UCATT and

in any other sphere where I know of its existence and practice.

What is needed in UCATT is strong united front, militant and independent Rank and File organisation, on site and in the union.

Rank and file organisation must be based on the total democratic reform of UCATT, lock, stock, rule book and barrel, from the bottom up. It must also be based on similar democratic reform programmes for all construction unions. Because not one is even remotely democratic in practice!

Also needed is an organisation which will promote and fight for a programme of democratic reforms and demands on building sites and workplaces, where truly representative elections and democracy will prevail. Because it is on the sites that the employers and corrupt union officials murder and maim building workers and seriously injure and maim many others.

I finish this by stating that I am a building worker who has been and is very severely black-listed for fighting for these things on the sites and in the unions, but one who refuses to and will not give up the struggle.

## Thousands

And I remind you that 5 building workers in the "Laing's Lock Out Committee" of 1986, with the support of the rank and file Building Worker organisation and many thousands of trades unionists and other workers, successfully and openly defied a High Court Injunction and the anti-union laws it was meant to enforce. Yes, it can be done. Before ending I must say that the building industry will never be properly organised without the use of flying pickets. Hence the need to tackle the anti-union laws immediately and head on!

Yours sincerely,  
Brian Higgins,  
Secretary,  
Building Worker Group

## Fighting fascism in Southwark

**T**HE FASCIST British National Party (BNP) are pursuing their "rights for whites" campaign in South London. Following their march in Thamesmead they stood a candidate, Stephen Tyler, in a Southwark council by-election.

The BNP kicked off their campaign, which centres on one estate in Southwark, with a vitriolic attack on a Lambeth councillor, Rachael Webb. She was a target because she works for the housing department in Southwark.

The BNP leaflet labelled her a "repellant [sic] loony leftie", attacked her for being a transsexual and denounced her for being "more interested in trying to evict white residents for being 'racist' than evicting the drugged up and drunken squatters that infest our estate."

Southwark is one of London's poorest boroughs and is run by a viciously anti-working class Labour council, which has done little to relieve housing and service problems in the borough. The council is a clear cut example of Kinnock's Labour Party in action. It is doing the Tories' dirty work for them with a vengeance.

On the estates of the borough the lousy conditions do provide fertile ground for the BNP amongst discontented white residents. This is why they have moved in.

Anti-Fascist Action (AFA), to which Workers Power is affiliated, was quick off the mark in countering this

new BNP venture. Teams have leafleted the estate every week during the election campaign clearly explaining who the BNP are and why black people are not to blame for the problems on the estate.

AFA speakers addressed NALGO shop meetings and won the affiliation of both Lambeth and Southwark Trades Councils. A labour movement rally against fascism was organised on the estate with over 100 people attending it. It was deliberately held on the night the BNP squads do their leafletting. But the 'hard men' decided not to show up until two in the morning to spread their filth.

The response from the left was typically complacent. To their credit both Rachael Webb and a Southwark councillor, Ian Driver (who received a death threat for supporting the rally) addressed the meeting. Supporters of *Socialist Organiser* also helped build the rally. But the borough's other Labour councillors declined to give their support, while the Socialist Workers Party turned up on the night to give out a leaflet telling us all "not to get sidetracked by the BNP".

For the many black families on the estate who have been intimidated or attacked by the BNP's thugs, who have welcomed AFA supporters and offered to help physically confront the fascists, this sort of head-in-the-sand approach, by a party claiming 6,000 members, is an insult.

Because of the support for AFA on

the estate and in the local labour movement we believe that it will be possible to isolate the fascists and smash them before they can get any influence in the area. By organising on the estates and in the trade unions we will be able to ensure that we can make Southwark a no-go area for the BNP scum.■



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## Support AFA carnival

**A**nti-Fascist Action is organising a Unity Carnival in the London borough of Hackney on Sunday 8 September (it will be held in a local park—contact address below for details). The Carnival is seen as an important part of our campaign against the rising level of racist attacks and fascist activity in East London.

The increase of racist violence has been widely reported. Nationwide it is estimated that there is an attack every 26 minutes, and East London has the highest level of attacks in the country. The fascist British National Party have made their work in East London a national priority. In the St. Peter's Ward election (Bethnal Green, August 1990) the BNP's 1 in 8 vote represented, in a ward evenly divided along racial lines, some 25% of the disillusioned white working class vote.

We believe the Unity Carnival will get the anti-fascist message across to a wide audience, especially young people. We are working with Cable Street Beat, the anti-fascist music organisation, to approach sympathetic bands/performers and have had an encouraging response. The Unity Carnival, apart from giving anti-fascism a popular and positive profile, will be used educationally through exhibitions, stalls etc. Stalls are available

to organisations on the day for £30.

Inevitably the Carnival is costing a lot of money. To get popular bands is an expensive business, even at benefit rates, and on top of that we have to pay for staging, PA, toilet facilities, generators, publicity etc.

We desperately need money to ensure the success of the Carnival and urge you to support it. We are asking organisations to sponsor the Unity Carnival for a minimum of £40. This means your organisation's name will appear on publicity if you require it. All other donations are extremely welcome. Cheques should be made out to Anti-Fascist Action (Carnival) and sent to the address below.

Thanking you for your support,  
Yours faithfully,  
J. Hunter  
AFA,  
Box BM 1734,  
London WC1N 3XX

Unity Carnival is already supported by: Jeremy Corbyn MP, Hackney Trades Council, Hackney Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, Hackney TGWU/ACTSS 1/477 branch, London Fields Primary School NUT, Diane Abbott MP, Mildred Gordon MP, Brian Sedgemoor MP, Gerry Ross (Labour Mayor of Hackney).

# GREEK COMMUNIST PARTY

## Another one bites the dust!

**The KKE, Greece's mass communist party, is the latest of the Stalinist parties to explode. Colin Lloyd explains why.**

THE GREEK Communist Party (KKE) is effectively split. Its hardline Stalinist majority has voted to withdraw from Synapsismos (SYN), the electoral bloc it formed with ex-Stalinist and liberal intellectuals in 1989. But the pro-perestroika "renovators" faction of the KKE not only stayed in SYN, they pressed forward with moves to make SYN into a new bourgeois party.

Leading KKE renovator Maria Damaniaki was re-elected as president of SYN at the alliance's June conference. The conference also pressed ahead with plans to transform SYN from an alliance of parties into a distinct organisation with a unified membership. It is virtually inevitable that the KKE, one of the strongest and most Stalinist of the western CPs, will split at its forthcoming Thirteenth Congress.

But the KKE, like the Italian PCI, is undergoing a transformation in form, not in content.

### Orthodoxy

Ever since the 1930s it has acted like a bourgeois party whilst clothing itself in Stalinist orthodoxy. It performed its greatest service to the imperialists in 1945 when it signed a truce with the Allies which voluntarily disarmed the workers and peasants who had defeated German fascism.

For its services it was crushed by the triumphant right wing in a bitter civil war (1946-49). But this did not stop Greek Stalinism from pursuing the disastrous strategy of a popular front with "democratic" sections of the ruling class.

In 1989 this reached a farcical conclusion. After the fall of the left-bourgeois PASOK government of Andreas Papandreu, the KKE instigated the SYN alliance and promptly took it into a coalition government with the Thatcherite New Democracy party (ND). In a country where both the workers' movement and the bosses' parties have long memories, the masses were treated to the spectacle of the KKE sitting in government with the former right wing torturers and butchers of the civil war.

### Corruption

The immediate excuse was a corruption scandal which saw former top ministers of the PASOK administration, including the former premier, dragged through the courts. The KKE told its mass working class base that the alliance with the right was aimed only at "cleansing the Augean stables" of PASOK corruption.

But during its coalition with the right the KKE managed to oversee massive price increases. It colluded with ND in the continued jailing of a prominent Palestinian wanted by the USA for extradition, and in the deportation of Dev Yol (Maoist left) activists to Turkey. There was worse to come.

The coalition collapsed and was followed by a six-month coalition government of all the major parties: New Democracy, PASOK and



Building workers battle with riot police in Athens

the KKE. Workers joked, "you vote for one party and get another two free!"

This new government emphasised national consensus but its main aim was the attack on workers' living standards demanded by the IMF as the price for bailing out Greece's debt ridden economy.

The elections of November 1989 marked a sharp rise in abstentionism and a total lack of clear slogans coming from any of the main parties—what did they have to say when they knew they were going to rule together?

But this government, with its constant price rises, could not last indefinitely—although that was the intention of the parliamentarians. As soon as a strike or an occupation developed the government would be put to the test and forced to try and attack all those who defied its rule.

### Hardliner

In the meantime the KKE in its twelfth Congress replaced the hardline leader, Florakis. It began the process of building alternative structures to those long feared by the ruling class. Alongside *Rizospastis* (the KKE's equivalent of the *Morning Star* or *L'Humanité*) it published a new paper, *Proti*, staffed by bourgeois journalists and under the control of the renovators.

It expelled those central committee members who opposed the formation of SYN. This led to a large left wing split in the KNE, the party youth movement, and the formation of NAR—a left coalition of the ex-KKE left, the KNE and various centrist organisations.

The crunch came when students occupied Athens Polytechnic in protest at the reprieve of a policeman who killed a student during a former occupation.

The KKE, through its bureaucrats who control the Greek TUC, called a national demonstration on the slogan, "All groups must withdraw from the Polytechnic". In all just 500 Stalinist bureaucrats turned up. They didn't even attempt to break the occupation. After nearly 70 years' existence Greek Stalinism was reduced to a pathetic and degenerate rump defending a Thatcherite coalition.

New Democracy was re-elected in April 1990, due to the mass disenchantment of workers and youth with the voting process. Its programme was Thatcherite economics combined with an ideological and political battle to return Greece to the 1950s.

In September 1990 Mitsotakis, the ND prime minister, announced massive, across the board cuts in pensions and social welfare policy. In response a wave of staggered 3-4 day strikes in power, banking, local government and Olympic Airways crippled the country for three weeks. These strikes were never co-ordinated or linked through joint action committees and at no point did the union leaders demand the ousting of the government. Nevertheless the strikes did lead to a rank-and-file explosion, especially in Patras, where workers blockaded the whole city.

The action escalated when school students launched a wave of occupations in response to a law designed to bring back the right wing education practices of the 1950s (rigid discipline, anti-communist lessons etc).

This provoked a mass upsurge of opposition, the like of which Greece hadn't experienced since the fall of the Junta in 1974. The militancy of the demonstrations, the role of the "opposition" parties, as well as the slogans that emerged, all point to a change in the mass consciousness of a sizeable proportion of the youth.

All of this left the KKE reeling in disorientation.

Having proved themselves traitors by opposing the youth upsurge, the KKE leaders then had the chance to prove their reliability to the bosses as imperialism began to rain bombs on the people of Iraq.

The complicity of the KKE with the imperialist coalition was trumpeted at its 13th Congress. Not only was Mitsotakis invited and given a platform from which to speak, but so was the US ambassador to Greece. This was broadcast live, so that the whole of the Greek bourgeoisie and the right wing could see how tame the KKE had become for imperialism.

### Proof

But, as in Italy, the needs of bourgeois politics demanded not just proof of the Stalinists' abject capitulation to capitalism at home and abroad. It demanded the abandonment of all the old party forms, the Stalinist rhetoric and any residual commitment to the legacy of armed struggle against the right wing.

That is where the project of turning SYN into a new bourgeois party comes in.

Whilst the "hardliners" have walked out of SYN, the political differences between them are not great. The Greek TUC's recent 2 year wage-cutting deal with

Mitsotakis was signed by Kostopoulos, a so-called hardliner.

The real divisions are essentially over party assets and parliamentary seats. The KKE owns one of the largest printing empires in Greece, publishing many capitalist dailies. Its conference centre "The House of the People" is a lucrative national business facility.

After the KKE made its historic deal with ND the circulation of the party daily dropped from 50,000 to 21,000 in two months. Now it sells 16,000 daily. Membership has been almost halved, according to official party figures, from 65,000 to 35,000.

As the KKE looks more and more to a stable future in bourgeois coalition governments it is content to see its working class base being eroded. This has exacerbated the crisis of leadership demonstrated during the upsurge of the last 12 months.

When NAR was formed in early 1990 there were mass rallies of 20,000, generating much excitement amongst the centrist left, who flocked to join it. Now its support is dwindling and the politics of many of its ex-KKE leaders stand exposed as the unreconstructed Brezhnevite Stalinism they always were.

### Warning

The fate of NAR, which was unable to give the mass upsurge any kind of political lead and now holds rallies of only a few hundred, is a warning to all those who see fusion with the hardline Stalinist rumps emerging from the collapse of Stalinism as the way forward.

As for the KKE, the split will only intensify the pace of its dissolution. No matter whether it is in the form of a traditional CP or a new liberal style party, the Stalinist tradition will continue to undermine its working class support by constantly backing the bosses.

What is happening to the KKE is not an accident or a new turn but the logical conclusion of the popular front strategy.

These degenerate bureaucrats have betrayed the true values of communism, betrayed their loyal working class supporters, for too long.

Workers shouldn't mourn the demise of the KKE. The best way to keep alive the fighting traditions of the Greek workers, past and present, is to build a new revolutionary party in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky.

That party will "clean the Augean stables" of Greek society in the only progressive way possible: by smashing capitalism!

## 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 and the LPYS, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

The misnamed Communist Parties are really Stalinist parties—reformist, like the Labour Party, but tied to the bureaucracy that rules in the USSR. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) inflicts terrible defeats on the working class world-wide.

In the USSR and the other degenerate workers' states, Stalinist bureaucracies rule over the working class. Capitalism has ceased to exist but the workers do not hold political power. To open the road to socialism, a political revolution to smash bureaucratic tyranny is needed. Nevertheless we unconditionally defend these states against the attacks of imperialism and against internal capitalist restoration in order to defend the post-capitalist property relations.

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 and councils of action.

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 are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

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

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

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

The LRCI is pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International and to refound a Leninist, Trotskyist International and build a new world party of socialist revolution. We combine the struggle for a re-elaborated transitional programme with active involvement in the struggles of the working class—fighting for revolutionary leadership.

If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism; if you are an internationalist—join us!



# Workers power

## INSIDE

- Crisis in Yugoslavia
- Militant after Walton
- UCATT in turmoil

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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## SOUTH AFRICAN NEGOTIATIONS

# A noose for the masses

**THE TRUTH** is out about the slaughter in South Africa's townships. The reactionary Inkatha Freedom Party has been carrying out armed raids and massacres against pro-ANC townships and individual militants ever since the ANC declared its "ceasefire" in August 1990.

Now the apartheid state has admitted that its security police has funded Inkatha to the tune of at least £70,000. And former special forces soldier, Felix Ndimene, has revealed that South African troops were directly involved in the massacre of 26 black workers on a train from Soweto.

That is just the tip of the iceberg. For months the security forces of apartheid have stood by claiming they are "powerless" to stop Inkatha's killing spree, "powerless" to disarm the Inkatha mobs who march through workers' living quarters waving knives and short spears.

The security forces which crushed the revolt of the South African masses with utter brutality in 1985-86 now stand back and let the reactionary black

movement carry on the job for them.

In response to the latest revelations, Nelson Mandela has declared further negotiations with the apartheid regime "out of the question". This is purely a negotiating ploy, not a real change of direction. Once the current conflicts have died down and de Klerk has sacked a policeman or a minister the ANC will go back to the negotiating table.

### Secret

Its whole strategy leaves it no other option but to negotiate with those who are sponsoring a secret war against the ANC. Mandela and the ANC leadership have banked everything on de Klerk's reform process, demobilising the

township struggle and urging non-violence to ANC youth defending themselves against Inkatha.

Mandela has long suggested that there was a "third force" operating independent of the ANC and the pro-reform National Party government, trying to sabotage negotiations and defend apartheid.

The latest revelations show he is wrong. There is no third force. The force doing the killing and sponsoring the murder gangs is the government itself. Weakening the ANC, terrorising its activist base and building a tame black alternative through promoting the national growth of the Natal-based Inkatha are integral parts of de Klerk's reform strategy. They are a crucial adjunct to his smiles and handshakes with the ANC



Inkatha murder—made in Pretoria

and the dismantling of the main apartheid laws.

### Determined

On the one hand de Klerk is determined to keep the ANC corralled in the negotiation process. He knows that only the ANC can deliver up the mass movement in a settlement which leaves the existing ruling class intact.

On the other hand he wants to undermine the primacy of the ANC amongst the masses so that its bargaining position in the negotiation process is weakened even further.

Inkatha's bloody campaign has already gone some way to achieving this. Over the year the ANC has backed down on its right to retain an armed presence. It has several times postponed its "final date" for the release of political prisoners and has modified its position on the proposed Constituent Assembly. Instead of this being a sovereign body it would merely be called on to rubber stamp agreements made by the leaders of the different parties.

At the ANC's recent National Conference, criticism of the leadership's actions was voiced.

The Conference passed a resolution ruling out "secret talks". But the opposition was not strong enough to mount any serious challenge to the main points of the existing strategy. The leadership is free to pursue the All Party

Conference (APC) which would provide the ANC with an arena to cement alliances with various existing bourgeois parties and potentially decide the shape of the Constitution.

It can also go ahead with seeking a presence in an Interim Government: in effect this means that the ANC leadership has the go-ahead for a coalition with the National Party. The ANC have a free hand to shape the future South Africa over the heads of the masses.

### Sanctions

The Durban Conference agreed to a "phased approach" to lifting sanctions. But as soon as it was over, Bush signalled that the USA would call the shots on sanctions. He lifted significant parts of the economic sanctions—something the ANC had ruled out until further concessions could be won from de Klerk.

The lessons for the South African working class are clear. You negotiate with apartheid and you get a stab in the back from its security forces and black stooge Inkatha movement.

You adopt a "phased approach" to lifting sanctions and US imperialism lifts them all at once.

You put your head in the noose of a peaceful transformation of South African capitalism and the bosses pull the rope tight and choke you!

## Spread bus strike to win!

"WE CAN'T afford to let the governors win. If you go to war you do so to defend a reasonable standard of living and half-decent conditions. So you've got to fight to win."

These words of Roy, an Ash Grove bus driver, express the determination of striking London bus workers to defeat a savage management attack on them. London Forest workers from the company's four garages, at Ash Grove, Clapton, Leyton and Walthamstow, began an all-out strike on 11 July. It is the first indefinite action by a section of London bus workers since 1958.

The strike is against management attempts to cut pay and impose new contracts on the 1,300 strong workforce. With the break up of London Buses into 11 satellite companies, and with competitive tendering being introduced, London Forest bid for 11 new routes on the basis of "fundamental cost savings". The bosses want to impose a slaves' charter.

As we go to press the strike is in its second week. The mood of the strikers is angry, militant and solid. But there remains a lack of effective leadership from the TGWU officials. The divisional officer, Ken Fuller, has preached legality at the mass meetings and rallies and he argues that the strike "will be won or lost on the basis of fundraising". For strikers who are only getting £5 a day from the union fundraising is essential. But on its own it won't win the dispute.

The conductors, drivers and engineers must estab-

lish their direct control over the running of the strike through a strike committee, directly elected by a mass meeting, and accountable to regular mass meetings throughout the dispute. Everybody should be kept informed and involved.

The strike committee needs to stop any scabbing. The bosses have enlisted help from Kentish Bus and Eastern National to try and maintain some routes. They are using TGWU drivers for this. Determined pickets, demands that the TGWU discipline scabs and effective resistance to any police attempts to limit pickets must all be organised by the strike committee.

Crucially the strike must be spread. The threat of deregulation and privatisation across the whole London fleet is on the horizon. All of London's bus workers are being offered a miserable 5% pay rise. There is anger at this, and it is reflected by the support that London Forest workers have been getting from other garages. The strike committee should send out pickets to all the other depots, putting the case for solidarity and for joint action against the bosses' onslaught. An all out strike across the whole of London will ensure that the threatened contracts are defeated and are not tried on in other sections.

For details of the dispute, speakers, messages of support and where to send donations, please contact the strike headquarters on:

071-249 6930 or 071-241 3799