

The LENINIST

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Militant Supplement

Only revolution will bring peace Iraq/Britain: The main enemy is at home

Support the Ad Hoc Hands off the Middle East
Committee's national demonstration, September 8, 12
noon, Temple Tube, London

WITH THE prospect of a bloody war in the Gulf it is worth while recalling that it was only a matter of months ago that we could read in the *Morning Star* and papers of that ilk, that with the advent of Gorbachev and his deals with the United States, the danger of war had gone and somehow we had entered a new epoch, an epoch of universal peace.

The *Leninist* not only poured cold water on such silly talk, it poured scorn. The Cold War might have ended peacefully, but it ended in a victory for capitalism and imperialism, not communism. Hence we insisted that far from lessening the danger of war, the danger of war was increasing.

We took this view because the danger of war never simply arose from the rivalry between capitalism and socialism. The drive to war, what makes war inevitable in the world as it is today, are the contradictions within capitalism itself.

The US might have won the Cold War; nevertheless because imperialism greatly exaggerates the law of uneven development under capitalism it means that this latest redivision of the world can only but be the prelude for yet another redivision. The US now has powerful rivals breathing down its neck, Japan, but above all a German imperialism which looks set to dominate Europe, east and west. So in the midst of victory over the 'evil empire' the US dominated world order increasingly stands as an anachronism compared to the emerging balance of power between the rival imperialist proto-blocs.

It is in an effort to reassert its world position against this tide of history that the US is orchestrating the other imperialist powers to impose both a blockade and a war against Saddam Hussain and Iraq.

Britain and the US are not in the Gulf in order to defend the democratic rights of the Kuwaiti population or sort out Adolf Hitler II. They are there for one reason and one reason alone: to secure oil supplies and restore the old regime in Kuwait that ensured them.

Kuwait under the Al-Sabahs was hardly a haven of even bourgeois democracy. There were no legal political parties, the electorate to a talking shop parliament was a tiny elite, and even this sham was closed since 1986, when the emir announced that he would rule by decree.

Does that mean we should defend Iraq and call for its workers to "subordinate" their struggle against Saddam Hussein to the "task of defeating imperialist onslaught"? In a word, no. As well as predicting that inter-imperialist contradictions would come to the fore we also predicted that another danger of war in the post Cold War world would be the imperialist aspirations of the medium developed capitalist countries, countries

which would not only crush and invade small countries, but in so doing come into direct conflict with the established imperialist powers.

What we see today with the crisis in the Gulf, Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait and the US threat of war is a world Falklands. And we take the same position over it as we took over Argentina's annexation of the Falklands and Britain's war to regain it. We are for the revolutionary defeat of both sides.

We do not begin by asking who was the aggressor, nor which side is the most powerful, but what class interests are involved. Hussein is not fighting for the liberation of the 'Arab nation', rather the interests of Iraqi finance capitalism. Iraq might operate as a subordinate country in the international pecking order of imperialism, but it is no semi-colony. The regime of Saddam Hussein is the regime of Iraqi finance capital, which, as its people know, is irredeemably reactionary. Its foreign policy is the continuation of its domestic policy. Iraq's annexation of Kuwait and its war with Iran were undoubtedly motivated by the same spirit that led Cecil Rhodes to advise the ruling class in late nineteenth century Britain, 'either we become imperialist or face civil war'.

That means that the main enemy of the Iraqi people and working class is not, as organisations such as Workers Power, WRP and RCP say, *abroad*. No, as in Britain, the main enemy is at home. Likewise for Hussein, in spite of his 'anti-imperialist' bluster. Today you cannot be anti-imperialist and anti-working class. Saddam Hussein wants to come to an accommodation with imperialism; he certainly would if faced by the united forces of his main enemy, the masses of Iraq - above all the working class and the Kurdish people. This is the force he fears, as he's proved by ordering mass executions, torture and chemical war.

To avoid civil war with them Iraqi finance capital must become imperialist. That is the harsh choice facing the ruling class in Iraq, and in other medium developed countries, not least those such as Turkey and Iran; which incidentally is why over the last decade or so the Middle East has become a cockpit of wars and revolutionary crises.

It is inevitable, given the existing division of the world, that such countries should clash with, or at least rub up the wrong way imperialist powers such as the US and Britain. Nevertheless, as we have said, because of their own character and stage of development there is nothing progressive about the wars fought by such countries.

That is why we call for the revolutionary defeat of both sides. Defeat by turning reactionary war into a civil war for socialism.

As war breeds revolution - the only sure guarantee of peace and progress - partisans of the working class should have no truck with social pacifistic pleas from Tony Benn, the Liberal Democrats and the 'official communists' in Britain, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia etc for the UN to intervene and return the region to the status quo. Dreams of returning to such a past are both by definition utopian and reactionary. It not only fosters illusions in the UN as a vehicle of peace; it also does, after all, call for the restoration of the Al-Sabah medieval feudal/bureaucratic regime. That no genuine communist will do.

During the Falklands war some pseudo-revolutionaries attacked us for taking a position of revolutionary defeatism for both sides. Foolishly in order to excuse their bankruptcy they said a *victory* for Argentina would breed revolution. The idea that in the midst of the euphoria of military victory the masses would turn against the military government defies imagination, let alone common sense. Life tells us that it is the other way round.

That is why in 1905 Lenin called for the defeat of Russia in its war with Japan. And what happened when that defeat came, when Japan sent not one, but two Russian fleets to the bottom of the ocean? It was not the working class in Japan that set up soviets and took up arms against Emperor Meiji. It was the Tsar who wobbled... and it was the Russian masses who took their opportunity to make revolution. The same could have happened in Argentina.

The objective conditions were ripe. Not the subjective conditions, however. The working class of that country had no Bolshevik organisation, no genuine Communist Party. Instead of risking initial isolation and unpopularity at the beginning of hostilities, the revolutionary forces of Argentina insisted that their main enemy was not Galtieri, but Britain. Some even demanded to be allowed to join the army! No wonder when the Galtieri fascist regime disintegrated after its defeat by Britain there was no revolutionary answer.

The same must not be allowed to happen this time in Iraq. We in Britain must do our proletarian internationalist duty. We must fight for the defeat of British and US imperialism. But we must also urge that the communists and workers of Iraq do their revolutionary duty too.

It brings no joy to our hearts to see large numbers of people, not least in the occupied territories, shouting pro-Hussein slogans. Naturally we understand why they do this. But then we understand why in World War II some elements in Ireland looked to Hitler for salvation from the yoke of British imperialism. The whole of the Middle East has been the subject of ruthless exploitation and domination by the forces of western imperialism for many, many decades. So naturally there is a deep hatred, in particular, of British and US imperialism.

Yet given that the whole of the Middle East could so easily be sucked into revolutionary crisis by current events it cannot be emphasised too strongly that the proletarian vanguard must stand independently of all alien class forces everywhere - crucially, independent of reactionary forces in order to pursue their own imperialist aims. The masses can and must be won to the understanding that there is an alternative to Hussein, an alternative to pan-Arabism, an alternative to pan-Islamism. That alternative is proletarian internationalism, which finds its highest expression in proletarian revolution.

Let's now turn to Britain itself. Britain is acting as a loyal lapdog of US imperialism. The reason has nothing to do with the personality of Margaret Thatcher. It is in its self interests, ie, in the interests of British imperialism, to join with the US attempt to restore the status quo. Kuwait has £15 billion invested in Britain and was the source of all sorts of lucrative orders. Hussein has now gobbled up the goose that laid such vital golden eggs. As a result the British economy hardly looks in a good position to deliver a fourth term for Thatcher. Already in a mess, the Gulf crisis can only but expose further the lies about a Thatcherite economic renaissance of Britain.

So far pollsters say that there is no detectable 'Falklands factor'. Nonetheless with constant media coverage and a pathetic parliamentary 'opposition' we can be sure it will come. When it does, Thatcher will be more than tempted to 'cut and run'. After all, what else can she do other than hope to ride to a fourth term on the backs of 'our gallant boys in the Gulf'.

In that sense the general election campaigning has already begun. Of course it is far from impossible that 'our boys' could come away with their tails between their legs. Iraq is no Argentina having to supply its troops over 800 miles away via sea and air. A land war

with Iraq could prove to be very costly, and could be indecisive. If that proves to be the case, good. Thatcher's difficulty will be our opportunity.

What is crucial now, therefore, is to prepare our forces. For no matter how small they are today, it is essential that they march along the correct road so as to do effective battle tomorrow. And not only in theory, but also practice. Only in that way can today's anti-imperialist minority become an anti-imperialist majority.

As a matter of urgency the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*) wrote to all working class and progressive organisations operating in Britain proposing a joint national demonstration around the two slogans: Imperialism out of the Gulf! Iraq out of Kuwait!

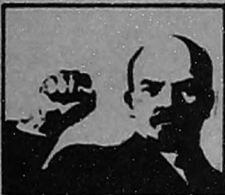
Since then we have heard of three other demonstrations or proposed demonstrations. In order to facilitate the maximum degree of unity the CPGB (*TL*) has suspended its plans for a national demonstration and is prepared to support all of these demonstrations, provided we are given full freedom to raise our own specific slogans - Iraq Britain, the main enemy is a home! Only revolution will bring peace! - and that no platform is given to forces of overt reaction.

The demonstration of the Labour left Campaign Against War in the Gulf still remains to be finalised. The first demonstration on September 1 is a rather dubious affair. It seems to have been called by the SWP as an *excuse* not to support the demonstration the week after, on September 8, called initially by the RCP, and now by an ad hoc committee which consists of the RCP, Workers Power, Dev Sol - Turkey and the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*), etc.

The SWP knew all about this demonstration when it unilaterally and speedily called its own - so speedily, indeed, that it did not have time to give it any publicity in its own weekly paper. That the SWP's demonstration has been organised under the banner of *Socialist Worker* can only add fuel to accusations of sectarianism. We say to the SWP that the crisis in the Gulf is far too serious for such an irresponsible act of pettiness. Wherever possible anti-imperialist forces should act in unity. They certainly should not try and steal a march on others.

As a matter of principle, because the RCP and Workers Power have a one sided anti-imperialism, only calling for Imperialist forces out of the Gulf! (Workers Power actually calls for a Victory for Iraq!) we will organise our own distinct contingent around the slogans - Iraq/Britain: the main enemy is at home! Only revolution will bring peace! We urge all genuine anti-imperialists to join us.

David Sherriff



ON AUGUST 20 1940 Leon Trotsky was brutally killed, almost certainly on the orders of Stalin. Ironically therefore, it was Stalin who perhaps summed up Trotsky's abilities most concisely: his strengths are revealed as the revolution gains momentum; his weaknesses are most manifest when the revolution must retreat. The man who had been both Danton and Carnot of the October Revolution – tribune and military organiser – found himself towards the end of his political life isolated and reviled.

Throughout most of the pre-October period Trotsky stood aside from both wings of the RSDLP, having seceded from the Mensheviks in 1904. He remained a resolute opponent of the Bolsheviks. Hostile to the Leninist party, he was unable to translate the insights of such works as his *Results and Prospects* into practice, instead playing the role of a conciliator between Bolshevik and Menshevik – reform and revolution – thus rightly earning the harsh polemical lash of Lenin.

Nevertheless, Trotsky was from first to last a revolutionary. This led him into the ranks of the Bolsheviks in June 1917, where he was to play such an outstanding role. Yet he had no experience of the fight to forge the weapon of the revolution – the Party – which had moulded the outlook and practice of other Bolsheviks. His position was very much that of “a man of State, not of the Party”, which led to such policies as the ‘militarisation of labour’ in the early 20s, and Lenin’s criticism in his ‘Last Testament’ that he relied overmuch on administrative solutions to political problems.

Trotsky had not grasped the Leninist concept of the Party. This was to prove fatal when the cancer of opportunism began to grow in the ‘20s. As in his pre-Bolshevik works, he collapsed the struggle within the Party into its social base, neglecting the centrality of the Party organisation, thus completely miscalculating the strength and dynamic of the centrist trend around Stalin. Despite Trotsky’s many penetrating criticisms, he was outmanoeuvred and defeated with commensurate ease.

The victory of Stalin brought with it the consolidation of the bureaucracy, the purges, and a general shift to the right in the world communist movement. This, and the increasing difficulty of operating within the national parties of the Comintern, was to convince Trotsky that the latter was “dead for revolution”; that it had definitively crossed class lines. He and his supporters followed through the logic of this, turning their backs on the vanguard of the world’s proletariat organised by the Comintern.

The resulting ‘Fourth International’ was a mechanical caricature of the Leninist Party that Trotsky had rejected prior to 1917. Having written off the communist parties, the ‘Fourth International’ could only find relevance through accommodation to the truly counterrevolutionary parties of the Socialist International. Trotsky’s followers transformed themselves from a communist to a social democratic opposition.

The ‘counterrevolutionaries’ of the communist parties carried out revolutions in China, Eastern Europe, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea; events which provided the catalyst for schisms in the tiny organisation that Trotsky predicted would lead millions.

Its myriad derivatives have all, without exception, proven theoretically, politically and organisationally incapable of contributing to the goal to which they claim allegiance – working class liberation. Indeed, to paraphrase their founder, all have been unable to defend the past gains of the working class, in the shape of the socialist countries, and are therefore incapable of conquering new ones.

The point is neither to bury nor to deify Trotsky’s contribution. He was an outstanding revolutionary, by any standards. His method, however, was fundamentally flawed. We should honour the man, but to reforge the party of Lenin it is necessary to reject the approach and bankrupt conclusions of Trotskyism.

Deputy Editor

LETTERS

Tooting Poll Tax

Following upon your review of Lorna Reid’s pamphlet and criticism of the Tooting APTU, it must be pointed out in all fairness that the Tooting group is not exceptional; the overwhelming majority of Anti-Poll Tax Unions are basically tied to the same narrow, parochial standpoint; a reformist position as advanced by the leadership of Militant and the SWP, to which RCG members abide.

When one considers that there are approximately 10 million non-payers of the tax and that the Federation has a membership of a tiny fraction of that number and can muster on local demos and meetings a few hundred when locally there are thousands of non-payers, a question mark is raised over the whole strategy of the organisation; a strategy which consists of obstructing court action against those who answer their summons through court attendance, and so delay the full implementation of the poll tax.

When one considers that attendance at court involves a loss of a days pay, court costs, and however long the delay in judgement, in finality a liability order made against the defendant involving bailiffs or deduction of tax at source, is it any wonder that a mere handful out of hundreds summoned, ever attend the court hearing. Is it surprising that the APTUs, adopting such a strategy, cannot win the passive, let alone active support of more than a mere fraction of the anti-poll tax public?

Tom Cowan
Tooting, South London

National Question

In reply to [the supplement on the national question], my first comment, briefly, is that it reminds me of discussion in the 1920 period, it is so dated.

Secondly, the dogmatic assertion that “Scotland was never a nation in any scientific sense of the term” and that nations, anyway, “belong to the epoch of rising capitalism” is so wrong and shows ignorance of history and what the national question is all about. Scotland (and Wales, and England, and Ireland) were nations, ie, national communities of self-identifying peoples, centuries before the rise of capitalism. For example, Scotland’s thirty-year war in defence of national independence against England’s aggression in the 14th century. And *Britain is a state, never a nation*.

Many other points could be raised. However, my main criticism of your piece is its pervasive dogmatic attitude and extremely narrow interpretation of the function of nations – for example, few in this time of ecological concern would now agree that ‘production’ is the central consideration; some of us would say that *democracy and popular participation* in all aspects and levels of a given society is what matters. This was barely mentioned in your piece! Likewise no mention of Brussels imperialism!

Finally, even fewer would accept your ‘principle’ of “violent revolution, proletarian internationalism and soviet democracy”. Soviet ‘democracy’ – surely a joke?

Bob Mulholland
Inverness

NCP Debate

Regarding comrade Spring’s letter (*The Leninist* No93), I was at the seminar attended by three members of the Central Committee of the New Communist Party. Contrary to what Spring says, the idea was certainly expressed by these comrades that the NCP’s one day ideological conference in June would be the start of open debate within their party and this would be the start of winning the NCP away from centrism to genuine revolutionary politics.

In reply Leninist comrades urged them to honestly and openly develop their ideas, which it was pointed out would inevitably lead them to being expelled. Against vigorous objections we said any idea of changing the NCP was hopelessness; surely proved by the subsequent resignation of these members and their supporters, including comrade Spring. Neither before nor after has there been a principled ideological struggle waged by these elements. No articles, leaflets or pamphlets appeared setting out a clear ideological alternative. These former NCP members – Spring included – did not even bother to turn out for the NCP’s much vaunted ideological conference.

In defence, Spring sarcastically asks how “the remarkable” comrade Chamberlain “ever found himself in the NCP”. Comrade, you are clutching at straws in a feeble effort to divert attention from our correct criticisms and our demand for honest debate.

Unlike you, those in the NCP who went on to establish *The Leninist* conducted a sustained campaign inside and outside the organisation, using leaflets, its youth paper and meetings through which to openly criticise the centrism of the NCP leadership. As a result the comrades were expelled.

You also have before you *The Leninist* – surely, for those of us who were in the NCP, self criticism enough. Not only that, but our paper has carried one polemical salvo against the NCP after another, none of which the NCP has dared to openly reply to, including No4 way back in April 1983 in which you will find a letter by comrade Chamberlain – former NCP National Organiser – in which he criticises himself. The comrade says his joining the NCP was a “mistake”, its only advantage was that it gave him “first hand experience of the NCP’s opportunism”.

Comrade Spring, the danger in politics is not in making mistakes, but in failing, or refusing, to learn from them.

Nick Clarke
West London

USSR again

Comrade P Conlon continues to argue, in the letters page of the last issue, the absurd position that the Soviet bureaucracy was, throughout the bulk of its existence, both progressive and reactionary; that it “has been compelled to adopt a progressive role, despite its reactionary working class attitude, which is reflected in the duality of its actions”.

This I think merely highlights the duality of comrade Conlon’s position, which makes about as much sense as arguing that one can move forwards and backwards at the same time.

Firstly, the progressive nature of socialised property forms in no way implies that the stratum which has

survived since its inception by parasiting off those forms is progressive. Quite the reverse, I should say. Comrade Conlon, in stating that “the bureaucracy was developing a profoundly progressive society in the course of its five year plans”, comes dangerously close to giving the bureaucracy credit for the society created by the working class under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The bureaucracy, as a self interested and dominant caste, arose out of the crippled and backward nature of socialised property in the Soviet Union.

The five year plans that the comrade quotes in support of his position are excellent examples of this. The degree of waste produced by these bureaucratic leviathans was immense, to the point where it has now reached a situation of total crisis. Is this due to the plan itself? I am sure that comrade Conlon does not think so. Then it is due to the bureaucratic form of the plan.

The point is not how far the economy developed within the plan as it has existed, but what would have been possible without those bureaucratic constraints. The plan, remember, is, as Marx defined it, a free and conscious association of producers. That hardly fits the system of forced labour, internal passports and the monstrous con-job of Stakhanovism that existed when Soviet growth rates were at their peak.

The bureaucracy is an excrescence of an isolated and crippled revolution in a backward country. The gains that have been made – and they undoubtedly exist – have always been severely limited and distorted by the presence of the bureaucracy. It is, and always has been, a brake along the road which the October Revolution opened up. It is therefore reactionary.

But, asks our comrade, what about the extension of socialism into Eastern Europe, or of Soviet support for Cuba and other revolutions in the past? Is this not progressive? Well, the Soviet bureaucracy was working within conditions not of its choosing. It has developed under the banner of *communism*, from whence it got its legitimacy. It must, at times, be seen to be behaving accordingly. True, this has led it at times to play a role in the development of working class struggle. But the same, on a different level, could be said of social democracy.

The Soviet bureaucracy has, in the overwhelming majority of these instances, been presented with a *fait accompli*; in China, Vietnam, Cuba, etc. Circumstances overwhelmed its own deeply conservative – ie, reactionary – nature. Again, on this front, it has strongly limited what was possible and necessary: the degree of democracy in Eastern Europe, and the extension of revolution into Western Europe in, most noticeably, the post World War II situation.

Of course, there are and have been conflicting interests acting upon this stratum. But the resulting ‘force’ was and is reactionary.

Alan Merrick
London

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.

WRITE OR RING

If you would like to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist* please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Or phone us on 01-431 3135.

Fight yellow unionism everywhere!

The attitude genuine partisans of the working class in Britain should take to the so-called 'free trade unions' in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

PAUL WHETTON is an outstanding rank and file NUM activist. A member of the Labour Party, his politics – both in relation to the 1984-5 Great Strike and on key international issues such as the nature of Solidarnosc – are not dissimilar to ours.

It might be surprising therefore that Paul Whetton is responsible for a weekly column in *Socialist Organiser*. Reading it however, it is clear that it must have, on more than one occasion, been an embarrassment to its publishers. His column has often totally contradicted *Socialist Organiser's* cravenly anti-communist stance. So the prestige Whetton gives to *Socialist Organiser* has a sting in the tail: his principled politics.

ority. I think given the amount of pressure that is being put on miners, eventually it is understandable that some people are taken in.

And we have to remember that while first of all it is an attack on Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield as individuals, via them, it is an attack on the whole NUM and its militant traditions.

Since we've gone back to work the miners have been kicked from pillar to post by local management. To have seen men fighting back under the conditions that they have had to suffer has been tremendous.

We still have the luxury of a rank and file that believe in its leadership and a leadership that believe in its rank and file; there aren't many trade unions in Britain today that you can say that about.

union and we need your support'. Be very, very careful.

Let's go back to Solidarnosc. I have never, ever, believed that Solidarnosc was a free and independent trade union. I have never trusted Lech Walesa. Anything that the church has got its dirty little paws into, I am doubly suspicious of.

Many people can now look back and be, if not a little ashamed, perhaps a little bit disgusted with themselves at having been taken in so easily. So they should be. That applies not only to Solidarnosc, but many organisations cropping up in many Eastern Bloc states and inside the Soviet Union itself.

I for one do not believe for a moment that some miner in Siberia decided to pick the phone up and complain to Scotland Yard that Scargill had got two of his day's pay! Where the hell did all that start from?

I wonder if I could pick the phone up, get hold of the KGB and ask them to investigate some of these organisations in the USSR.

Who the hell is behind these organisations and individuals? Who's financing them? Who's pulling their strings? We mustn't be paranoid, but obviously organisations like the CIA are operating in the Eastern Bloc.

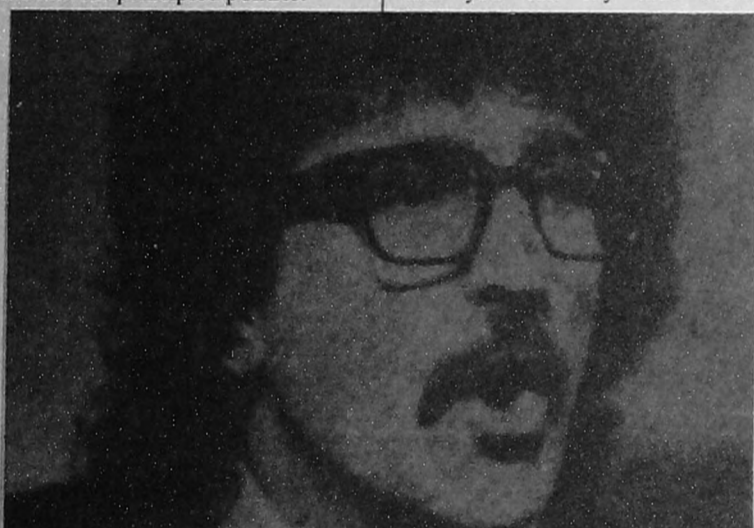
What about the argument that says that the accusations from the 'free trade unions' in the Soviet Union are all Scargill's fault because he backs the 'official' trade unions there, whose leaders are "members of a ruling class who have suppressed Soviet miners for decades"?

I fully understand Arthur Scargill's stance. All I need to do is to point to our own history in the NUM and indeed, Scargill's own personal history.

I'm a member of an organisation, the NUM, that not so many years ago was right wing, in particular the Yorkshire Area. There were some very shady characters. We had Joe Gormley as national president, and Len Clerk as area president! I had no time for either of them, or their politics. Scargill himself will tell you a story about being beaten up before or after branch meetings.

But to say 'I don't like the leaders and I don't like the organisation – sod it. I'll go and start my own union', is wrong. That is exactly what the authorities would like us to do. They'd like 50,000 miners in 50,000 trade unions, ie, every man looking after himself.

I understand the tremendous problems and hardships which the state controlled trade unions in the Eastern Bloc have had to endure. But the counter-argument is – get stuck in and bloody well change it! Exactly the same as Scargill had to do in the Yorkshire Area and we had to do in the NUM as a whole.



'Official' trade unions: don't split, fight, says Paul Whetton

Socialist Organiser has recently defended its sponsorship of the tour of a certain Yuri Budchenko of the Kuzbass Workers' Union, even though it was used by Roy Lynk's UDM and the fascist NTS organisation against Scargill, Heathfield and the NUM. With all this in mind we decided to interview Paul Whetton to see what his attitude was to the anti-Scargill witch hunt, as well as his views on both the official and unofficial trade unions in what the bourgeoisie used to call the Eastern Bloc.

What do you think of the anti-Scargill campaign? Should we dismiss it, or is it having an effect within the ranks of the NUM?

Right from the start it was blatantly obvious that it was a witch hunt, so everyone dismissed it as a nonsense. Now, however, there is a minority who have adopted the attitude that there's no smoke without fire.

The aims and objectives of Maxwell and the people behind him are clear: they don't want to have to face Arthur Scargill any more than Thatcher does. So it's get Scargill time.

The idea seems to be – if you throw enough shit, then some of it will stick. I would think that the vast majority of mineworkers are quite aware of what's going on and why. But there is still that min-

Despite the attacks on Scargill, that is still true today.

The aim of the Tory government in 1984-5 was to smash the NUM. Whether the strike was a success or failure, from the point of view of the Tories it was certainly a failure in that they failed to smash the NUM. So now we have an attack on Scargill and Heathfield, so as to attack the whole of the NUM. In that sense the witch hunt is a continuation of the 1984-5 strike.

What do you think of the so-called 'free trade unions' in the Soviet Union which have featured so prominently in the witchhunt against Scargill?

Many people seem to have been drawn into the delusion that if anyone over there stands up and says: 'We're a democratic organisation, we're fighting for freedom', then that's automatically good, that they've got to be cheered on and supported.

But I would caution comrades that there is some nasty stuff crawling out of the woodwork. There are semi-fascist organisations that have been allowed to fester inside the Soviet Union itself. And now they are raising their ugly heads.

I'm not prepared to bandy about the names of individuals or organisations. But comrades please, please examine any individual or organisation that pops up and says 'We're a free, democratic trade

In mid-July, three members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party – Sean Braniff, Desie McCleary and Damian McKeever – were arrested on the evidence of a 'witness' and charged with abducting a person, holding them against their will, and with membership of the Irish National Liberation Army. Subsequently, the 'witness' retracted his statement, stating that it had been given under police duress. Even though he refuses to testify in court against the three comrades, and that there is therefore no case against them, they are still being held. Aside from ignoring the retraction, the judiciary are using the fact that they maintained silence under police interrogation – now no longer a right in the Six Counties – as evidence of 'guilt'. Despite the collapse of the case against them, the comrades possibly face 18 months of incarceration ahead of them. In effect, this is no more than a form of internment on remand; an attack not only on the IRSP, but on democratic rights in general. The IRSP, however, expresses its determination not to be intimidated by such an assault. It has just embarked on its first Summer Offensive, to secure funds to relaunch its paper, the *Starry Plough*, on a monthly basis. Donations to this campaign should be sent to: IRSP, 392 Falls Road, Belfast. **AM**

The Trafalgar Square Defendants
Campaign was set up in May in the wake of the police attack on the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation demonstration on March 31. In order to mete out revenge on those who dared fight back, the Met mounted its biggest investigation ever. The following Six Counties style dawn raids and a 'name names, tell on your neighbour' press campaign has resulted in 409 arrests. In their defence the TSDC has organised pickets of gaols and courts in opposition to the show trials. To help defendants the TSDC needs statements from anyone who was present at the demo – no matter how little you saw, your evidence is still valuable. Recently the TSDC decided to organise a demonstration on October 20 – after the People's March Against the Poll Tax reaches London – as the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation is only organising an indoor rally and a "festival". Fortunately this forced the London Anti-Poll Tax Federation's hand, and a demonstration, probably in Trafalgar Square, will now be organised under its auspices. Contact the TSDC at: Room 205, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP. Tel: 071-833 8958. **BK**



■ Don't name names or blame anarchists and punks, but defend the heroes of Trafalgar Square

Last year, 82 people were arrested as a result of demonstrating against BNP fascists in Dewsbury. Tooled up police charged the peaceful demonstration on the day, and later arrested many more in raids. Twenty-five of the Dewsbury 82, who face serious charges, go on trial in Leeds on September 3. This is a state attempt to both criminalise the Asian community and stage a mass show trial of anti-racists. The campaign for their release is organising a demonstration on Saturday September 1 in Leeds. Physical defence is necessary against the police and 'freelance' racists. But it must not just rely on the black community. The slogan 'Self defence is no offence' is of course correct, but does not go far enough. There must be a political battle to win workers as a class to support and take part in anti-racist defence, especially where racism against the Asian community is being nurtured under the cover of a 'rational' British response to Islamic fundamentalism. That is something that can arise out of campaigns such as the Dewsbury 82. Support the demonstration. **SQ**

After the offensive



These are very dangerous, but exciting times. The crisis in the Gulf is threatening to spill over into war throughout the Middle East... and as we all know, war brings with it the possibility of revolution. So every effort must go to ensure that our paper is able to meet this challenge. Now that our Summer Offensive has finished, the £600 monthly fighting fund must take top priority. During August we fell short again, but only by £30. All things considered, that is a splendid effort, for which we would like in particular to thank comrades VP £25, AJ £100, AS £50 and SW £50.

South Africa: negotiation or revolution



For certain remnants of 'official communism' in Britain, South Africa and the successes of the SACP are held out as evidence that not all is lost. We have no time for such petty bourgeois pessimism nor such 'official optimism'

CAPITALISM in South Africa is beset by the most profound structural crisis. Times when growth and stability were ensured through strict apartheid have long since passed. Apartheid, with its irrationalities and naked inequalities, not only created intolerable inflexibilities in the labour market, it also created intolerable social strains, which from 1976 have taken the form of a drawn out revolutionary situation.

The problem for the ruling class, from at least since then, has been how to modify apartheid, without, on the one hand, risking the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism itself, or, on the other, having to resort to an exceptionally costly and dangerous Conservative, army or AWB fascist counterrevolution.

The regime's difficulties are, of course, opportunities for revolutionaries. Yet the dominant trend in the ANC is bent on a compromise with the regime, a compromise that will undoubtedly leave capitalism intact along with all the privileges of the white ruling class. In exchange for what? In exchange for getting a thin layer of middle class and bourgeois black faces into the top institutions of the state.

Nelson Mandela is now being lined up as a respectable national figure: a possible president? In the duty free shops of South Africa's airports you will find, alongside glossy coffee-

From the flames of

During the third week of August we were pleased to interview David Kitson – a founder of Umkhonto we Sizwe and for 20 years a prisoner in apartheid's jails. As comrade Kitson says, the South African revolution has reached new heights. With the unbanning of the ANC and SACP new possibilities were opened up. But along with these new possibilities have come new dangers: negotiations, legalism and sellout



David Kitson

WHAT IS the current state of the struggle in South Africa?

As you know there is an extremely high level of violence and struggle. At this moment the young comrades, the United Democratic Front and the organisations that support the ANC, are fighting it out with Inkatha, the Zulu organisation led by Buthelezi, who proudly announces his support for capitalism and opposition to socialism.

The state always intervenes on the side of Buthelezi, not least to get the ANC activists out of the way. But the driving force behind the crisis in South Africa is the determination of the black people of that country to end the system of apartheid. That means that everywhere there is struggle. For example, towards the end of March, all the children of Soweto were out on strike again. You must remember that half of the people in South Africa are under 25 and they're not as submissive as their parents. They have the experience and the example of the Soweto uprising of 1976 behind them.

What about Soviet policy concerning South Africa? What impact has Gorbachevism had?

Everything is getting very sharp at the grass roots level; conflict and confrontation is escalating daily. But it's escalating in a world that is feeling the impact of glasnost and perestroika. Soviet policy for Southern Africa is for a political settlement. We've attended meetings addressed by experts from the Soviet embassy in Zimbabwe who recommend the Angolan example for South Africa. They forget that any moves there towards a settlement have been based on the military victories of the Angolan regime.

support of negotiations.

It is difficult to establish exactly what is going on. But it seems that members of the

tion?

table books of the country's wildlife and tourist attractions, an equally glossy volume entitled *Nelson Mandela and the rise of the ANC*.

Not surprisingly, the regime's negotiating tactics and the elevation of Mandela to the position of partner to the equally 'statesmanlike' de Klerk, has caused all sorts of problems within the South African Communist Party. When Chris Hani, Umkhonto we Sizwe's chief of staff, stated in a recent speech that if the regime failed to agree to share power it would have to be overthrown by force, the South African establishment manufactured such an outcry that other ANC and SACP leaders felt obliged to distance themselves from these remarks; which actually represent a watering down of the ANC's own Freedom Charter.

In the week prior to the official relaunch of the SACP on July 29, the regime 'discovered' that the party was plotting to overthrow the government by force. It arrested several of its leaders, including 'Mac' Maharaj, and attempted to exclude Joe Slovo, the general secretary, from the ANC's negotiating team.

The reaction of Slovo was revealing. At the launch rally in Soweto he said that: "To suggest ... that these sons and daughters of our people harbour ideas of unilateral military action against the peace process is an insult

manufactured by the enemies of democracy". By 'the peace process', Slovo means the negotiations with the apartheid regime.

Contrast this with an extract from the party's programme, adopted less than 12 months earlier: "Street battles and barricades take shape where mass confrontation with the enemy becomes acute. At their initiative, the youth and other sectors set up Self Defence Units and combat groups. This creates the basis for the revolutionary movement to raise mass revolt to higher forms of insurrectionary activity."

To the naive this seems excellent stuff. However, in true centrist fashion the programme allows a get out; it says that: "There is no conflict between this insurrectionary perspective and the possibility of a negotiated transfer of power".

Slovo is therefore not renouncing his party's programme. He is merely exposing its right centrist limitations. In its spirit he went on to accuse "some of those surrounding de Klerk" (how diplomatic) of trying to "rubbish our party by accusing us of conspiracy and secrecy".

All we need to do in reply to this miserable legalism is to quote the SACP's paper *Umsebenzi*, "Of course insurrection involves conspiracy. The details of the actual timing and preparations for insurrection must at all times be closely guarded secrets" (fourth quarter, 1989, p13).

Such contradictory statements, as well as showing the eclectic nature of the SACP's programme, also points to deep divisions within the SACP's ranks. The SACP contains many healthy elements who have sacrificed everything for the revolution and have a high

level of ideology. These forces are engaged in some bitter internal battles at this very moment in time.

However, it appears that the pro-Gorbachevite elements have managed to publicly silence the left and shift the party to the right. An indication of this was the "new series" of articles towards the end of 1989 in *Umsebenzi*, entitled 'The Art of Insurrection'. It never got beyond the first article - a small indication that the regime's gamble in legalising the party appears to be paying off.

Now *Umsebenzi* plays a different tune. According to the issue of the second quarter of 1990, the party underground should be seen as a "reserve force", should negotiations fail (p18). Also in that issue is a dishonest piece entitled 'Dual Power', which purports to demonstrate that this already exists in South Africa at the moment, owing to the fact that anti-apartheid forces govern some Bantustans, there is mass support for the ANC, and many individuals within the regime's elected institutions - and even the armed forces - are now sympathetic to the democratic forces.

The implication is that the regime is faltering, the movement is in control - a "negotiated transfer of power" just a matter of patience. This is a typical opportunist example of using the revolutionary phrase as a cover for reformism.

The current shift to the right can only add to the danger of a sellout. The masses may not like it, but already the ANC is securing itself a firm base at the top of non-white society. It is busy recruiting among sections of the black, Indian and coloured bourgeoisie, elements who resent their inferior treatment as 'non-Europeans', but who will never support the

overthrow of capitalism.

For example at a recent ANC meeting in a largely Indian area of Durban, some of the audience turned up in BMW's and Mercedes and asked questions about the lifting of sanctions and the necessity of nationalisation. The replies from ANC leaders did much to reassure them.

But the situation is profoundly contradictory. The legalisation of the SACP and ANC has opened up the masses in an unprecedented way to revolutionary politics and revolutionary ideas. There exists a deep revolutionary culture - songs, plays, poetry and dance - which with the unbannings has reached new audiences and heights. The works of Marx, Engels and Lenin are circulating widely and everywhere one finds the hammer and sickle is proudly displayed, still a symbol of proletarian revolution in spite of recent SACP statements.

It will be no easy task to divert the thousands of revolutionary youth from revolution, a cause for which so many of their comrades have died. Reflecting this mood at the grass roots many local leaders are still emphasising in their speeches the necessity of the armed struggle.

The revolutionary youth are not interested in reformism. But what these young comrades most desperately lack is clear, Leninist theory and leadership. Now is no time for wait and see; genuine communists must fight for genuine communism. What is needed in South Africa is a genuine Communist Party of South Africa. The first step towards that must be a clear, principled and disciplined challenge to the right moving Slovo leadership.

Stephen Ovalson

evolution

The impact of these Soviet moves on the ANC and the South African Communist Party has been important: they are hoping for successful negotiations and have announced the suspension of the armed struggle, which in any event was being run down as far as the ANC was concerned. So, whether one likes it or not, on top of a seething volcano there is a negotiation process going on.

Why do you think de Klerk wants negotiations?

De Klerk is determined on negotiations in order to try and reduce discontent inside the country. Also, he is reacting to the impact of sanctions on South Africa which, despite the propaganda to the contrary, are having an impact. He is prepared to make some compromises, presumably under pressure from the multinationals, who want to protect their investments.

Of course, he has a problem. Even the smallest concessions makes the masses demand more. Prisoners have been released, but now there are rumours that all prisoners will be released. The authorities hope to get the black petty bourgeois and bourgeois elements pacified with a possible black president and possibly one man one vote, but with 'safeguards' for the white minority. Doubtless there are people in the ANC and the South African Communist Party who are hoping, for the ending of apartheid, but are prepared to sell out as well.

What has been the effect of unbanning on the SACP?

The SACP recently brought out a new programme, *The Path to Power*, and it has stated that its membership has increased substantially. We don't know how many supporters or members they have in South Africa, but the people know what role a Communist Party should play and this organisation is called the Communist Party. Hence they have great hopes for it.

Therefore when the Party becomes legal, sets up a local organisation and holds a rally where the identities of some of its leading members are revealed, there is tremendous support. Communist ideas, even if in an undeveloped form, have a great deal of popularity among the masses in South Africa.

As I said, nobody knows exactly how many members of the Party there are. As for the ANC, it is now estimated that there are between two to three million members inside South Africa. The SACP probably has something similar. But, it has problems. And its main problem is that not all its members are in

SACP in the leadership of Umkhonto we Sizwe are very dubious about the negotiation process. Before the unbanning, Chris Hani and Joe Modise (although I don't think Joe is a member of the CP) were interviewed in the media and condemned negotiations. Subsequently, Hani was dropped from the negotiating team.

There is a conflict going on in the ANC which appears to make it vacillate and this conflict must be a reflection of a conflict inside the SACP as well. Otherwise, the SACP programme is a thoroughly Kautskyite document: I don't think it represents much danger to the status quo.

What about recent rumours of a SACP coup?

The whole external and internal policy of the nationalists under PW Botha turned on this idea of a 'total onslaught' of communism led by the Soviet Union. Joe Slovo was painted as the anti-Christ! Now the South African media is pointing out what a charming, sophisticated and civilised man he really is!

But there are still a lot of people who don't like communists. They would rather not have openly declared communists as members of the deputation for discussions with de Klerk. The threats of this coup were made known and roughly 90 people were arrested, among them 'Mac' Maharaj, who was in my trial as a co-accused.

Quantities of weapons which purportedly were captured have been put on show. This sort of thing has happened before. I remember once there was an exhibition of captured Soviet weapons which still had the labels on them from where they were captured in Russia, they forgot to take the labels off! It might be the same again, who knows?

It seems to me most unlikely that the present leadership of the SACP would support such a coup at the present moment. Firstly, they realise it must have a much broader base if it is to overthrow a state as strong as the South African. Secondly, they have embarked on the negotiation process.

There might have been a number of Young Turks who have taken affairs into their own hands, but my feeling is that this was just a ploy organised by the security police to get rid of the communists from the negotiation process. As such, it failed because Mandela refused to distance himself from the communists.

How significant do you think is the growth of the right within the apartheid camp?

The main tensions are within the Nationalist Party. Botha has resigned from it because he couldn't stomach the presence of Slovo in the negotiation team. But there is no doubt that the ultra-right has grown over the recent period. The Conservative Party is now the official opposition. If there was an election tomorrow it would get a lot more seats; it

already controls towns in the Transvaal.

Further to the right still, there is the lunatic fringe like the AWB. It has stated that it is going to fight if there is any black participation in government. It has a fair amount of support among poorer whites, I would say. The AWB can be a destabilising factor. But it is more or less correct to call it the 'lunatic fringe' for the time being.

What do you think is the attitude of the masses to the ending of the armed struggle?

Good question. The fact that support for the Pan African Congress has grown from 5% to 30%, or even higher in Soweto, reflects the combative mood of the masses. They (the PAC), of course, are completely opposed to negotiations. The PAC is calling for the continuation of the military struggle via their military wing, APLA, which presumably will now be continuing its activities, although I haven't noticed any actions on their part for some time.

There are plenty of voices raised for the continuation of the armed struggle and against negotiations, particularly among young people. We sense controversy inside the SACP also, but it's hard to tell. Before the present situation arose, there were people like Mzala, who were much more militant and orthodox.

Joe Slovo has recently written a pamphlet, a discussion document he calls it, *Has Socialism Failed?*. He decided it hasn't quite. He points to some of the shortcomings of the SACP. But he has been denounced by Pallo Jordan who says that the criticism is not far reaching enough, that the CP has a horrendous record of inner-party democracy and the way people are stitched up. My experience lends support to that.

So whether there is controversy just on the armed struggle, or whether there is discussion on the whole line based upon the various discussion documents that Slovo has produced - he's also produced one on the national democratic struggle - is hard to say. When Joe makes a statement, a year later it's not just SACP policy, it's also ANC policy.

If you want an example, in 1987 he addressed a meeting here in Conway Hall in celebration of the 65th anniversary of the SACP. He said that the economy of South Africa should be a mixed economy, and described what he meant by that phrase. It certainly was not what Lenin would have described as a mixed economy, as partly socialist and partly capitalist. Now Joe's description is official ANC policy. So this will happen to his other discussion documents.

He quotes a Soviet analyst on the South of Africa, he doesn't mention his name but it's Gocherev, who says there won't be socialism in South Africa for a hundred years. He took exception to that when it came out. But no matter, so far as the SACP is concerned

socialism is definitely on the back burner.

In its programme, the SACP actually calls on the working class to 'hold its horses', don't frighten off the petty bourgeoisie and call for the immediate transition to socialism! The working class is the main force in the liberation struggle, but then the perspective is for a multi-party bourgeois democracy in which the Communist Party will have to win its place and then proceed to socialism, via 'discussion'.

The is theory of colonialism of a special type was developed long ago to give the theoretical underpinning to the struggle for national democratic liberation, rather than the struggle for socialism. That would place a limitation on the SACP - first national liberation, only later, socialism. There was a time when there was a certain ambiguity with the call for 'uninterrupted revolution' in the programme, but now they are saying, firmly, one at a time.

On the other hand, there is an intense struggle going on in South Africa and this fact lends the SACP a lot of credibility. But there are also a lot of people who say that the South African struggle is not being led by a real Marxist-Leninist Communist Party and that there is the opportunity for an immediate continuation of the struggle towards socialism; particularly as South Africa is so highly developed economically.

There will be irrevocable changes over the coming period in South Africa, but as I see it the conflict is going to continue for some time yet. The violence will continue. For basic changes to take place, it will be as a consequence of violent struggle in which the people must still win. I don't see that happening for quite a long time. The leadership isn't orientated that way and the people haven't really got arms yet.

The orientation of the people is not difficult to gauge, however. Mandela went to Natal and called on people who were fighting there to throw their weapons into the sea. They just ignored him. The young comrades in particular don't have reverence for anybody unless they come across with what they consider to be proper leadership.

What about your own personal situation?

Both Norma and I have been fully reinstated to the ANC. We're back in! At the British end, the bureaucrats in MSF have said 'Well, he went to Zimbabwe and that's the end of it'. And they are meeting with the rejoinder, 'Yes, but when we said we were going to support him, he was in South Africa which is even further away! It's what he did, not where he is, that's important!'

I'm sure that as far as Ken Gill and his associates like Barbara Switzer are concerned, they'd just like me to disappear. There are people around who are going to press it to a conclusion.



Our history

The formation of the CPGB and its early years: articles, documents and manifestos

It looks like the party's over for the Euros. In the run up to their special congress all district congresses have been cancelled; except, that is, for the Scottish district which, under the insipid stewardship of Doug Chalmers of the Yard, looks like it might do a nationalist UDI in order to prolong its own death throes. News and Views has been wound up, and 7 Days is being replaced by Changes, which threatens to inflict itself on a disinterested world every fortnight (though not, we trust, for long). But the final, August, issue of News and Views takes the biscuit. There, one Geoff Gay still blames the liquidation of the CPGB and the impending demise of his fragment on "the tankies", who it seems also "succeeded in destroying the YCL". So take heart: no matter how dire the situation, no matter how much you've cocked up, there's always someone else to blame if you look hard enough.

With the counterrevolutionary developments in the socialist world, particularly the Soviet Union, the Cuban revolution is put under threat even more from its US imperialist neighbour. But fear not, the staunch class warriors of the Communist Party of Britain have the answer. One afternoon in late August, part-time Gen-sec Mike Hicks - presumably sacrificing a lunch break - popped round to the US embassy with an official letter, no less, from the CPB complaining of this. Let world imperialism tremble. Still, it's easier than motivating a dwindling membership whose world view and perspectives have just collapsed around their ears, isn't it?

You can always rely on Workers Power to take the most up front expression of the British left's stupidities. From the organisation which gave us 'counterrevolutionary revolutions' we now have an equally bemusing line on the Gulf conflict. In a recent leaflet, their own particular 'Fourth International', the League for a Revolutionary Communist International, demanded "Down with Saddam Hussein" and "for victory to Iraq". Yes, WP, jolly good ... but isn't Hussein the feller who's leading Iraq at the moment, or have we got the wrong bloke? Anyway, didn't you call for the defeat of Iraq from when it invaded Iran in 1980 until 1982 ... or have we got the wrong Workers Power?

FOLLOWING successful negotiations between the British Socialist Party and the Communist Unity Group, a Joint Provisional Committee for the Communist Party was set up in June 1920. It consisted of Albert Inkpin (secretary), JF Hodgson, AA Watts and Fred Willis from the BSP and Tom Bell, Arthur MacManus (chair) and William Paul from the CUG.

Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers Socialist Federation had meanwhile become decidedly hostile to fusion, and from the beginning of June it stood aside from the process. On the positive side, the collapsed anti-unity South Wales Socialist Society was replaced by eight pro-unity communist groups in the form of the South Wales Communist Council.

In early July the Joint Provisional Committee issued *A Call for a Communist Party* and its official invitation to the Unity Convention, the 1st Congress of the CPGB. The principled communist politics of these documents stands in total contrast to the miserable opportunism of all forms of 'official communism' today. It is more than noteworthy that none of them would be eligible to attend; alone the CPGB (*The Leninist*) remains true to the founding principles of our Party.

hall on the Sunday. The proceedings will start at 2pm, and go on to 10pm if necessary in order to finish the agenda.

The following circular and invitation to the Convention is now being issued:

Dear Comrade, The negotiations for uniting the various revolutionary left wing organisations in Britain in one Communist Party have now taken definite shape. A great National Convention to establish the Communist Party and settle all questions of immediate tactics, will be held in the Cannon Street Hotel, London EC, on Saturday, July 31st, 1920, at 2pm.

An invitation to representation at this National Convention is cordially extended to all organisations, branches of organisations, and independent Socialist societies that accept the fundamental bases of communist unity: (a) the Dictatorship of the working class, (b) the Soviet system, (c) the Third International.

All bodies participating in summoning the National Convention are pledged to abide by its decisions on points of tactics, and to merge their organisations in the new Communist Party. Representation at the Convention will be held to imply that the branches, groups, and societies represented will also accept its decisions and

Delegates' application form and agenda for the Convention are attached hereto. Copies of a manifesto, "A Call for a Communist Party," are also enclosed.

A Call for a Communist Party

To the communists and socialists of Great Britain.

Comrades, In face of the strongly entrenched capitalist bureaucracy in this country the most urgent and pressing need in our working class movement today is a united and consolidated front.

Socialist revolution, formerly but an empty phrase, has become a real force, rending society at its very roots and challenging the power and authority of capitalism the world over.

In Russia, the working class has rallied nobly to its clarion call and socialism there is seen in action, no longer in the club room and coffee houses, but in actual struggle, braving torture and death itself in a glorious effort to preserve the results of the first definite and permanent breach in the wall of international imperialism.

True to its class instinct capitalism is marshalling its forces, and imperialist nations rush to succour each other in a desperate effort to drench in blood the defenders of proletarian revolution.

It is thus that the Russian Revolution becomes the touchstone of international socialism; a veritable beacon light indicating the paths to follow and the course to pursue.

We, in this country, have yet to realise the great fact of the Russian Revolution has turned the whole current of socialist thought into different channels, giving us new conceptions in place of the old. By such a standard we are revealed as lacking in outlook, policy and tactics. Faced with the vigour and solidarity of the imperialists internationally, and their organised determination to crush every vestige of working class freedom, and particularly to batter down the Workers' Republic in Russia, who now can defend the time worn ideas still held by some socialists of a gradual evolution or peaceful transition from capitalism into socialism? Allied to such an illusion is the notion that social revolutions can be quite constitutional affairs and carried through by the most correct parliamentary procedure.

The experience and intensity of the class struggle in recent years has shattered such beliefs.

The parliamentary democracy - that idol of the social reformist - has been stripped of its veneer once and for all, and now stands revealed for what it in reality is, an

instrument of class oppression to be engineered and wielded in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Against this sham parliamentary democracy of capitalism the Workers' Republic places the method of direct representation and recall as embodied in the soviet idea; only those performing useful social service being enfranchised. Thus the Marxist slogan that the proletarian revolution must march in the light of its own legality has been amply justified and demonstrated by experience.

The new institutions and order of things just arisen have become a constant challenge and menace to the whole system of international capitalism and indicates the task of the revolution. That task is to provide scope and freedom for their development and to assist in their realisation. Towards such an objective and to hasten the world revolution occurring, a Communist Party is wanted. A party of action. One that will wage the class war up to the point of revolution, rejecting with disdain all compromise and truckle with capitalist reform, but ever seeking to organise and rally the working class to the standard of international communism.

Such a party should be clear in its mission and courageous in its determination. Its fundamental principles must be:

(a) Communism as against capitalism, ie, the maintenance of society on a basis of social service rather than class exploitation.

(b) The soviet idea as against the parliamentary democracy, ie, a structure making provision for the participation in social administration only of those who render useful service to the community.

(c) Learning from history that dominant classes never yield to the revolutionary enslaved classes without struggle, the communists must be prepared to meet and crush all the efforts of capitalist reactionaries to regain their lost privileges pending a system of thoroughgoing communism. In other words the Communist Party must stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

While being aware of the several legitimate claims of the existing parties we think the need for a united political organisation based upon the foregoing principles and fusing all parties which accept the same cannot be gainsaid.

Unity of action must ever go hand in hand with unity of purpose. Against the predatory forces of capitalism we must hurl the united efforts of all who stand for a complete social change as the only way to end for all time the iniquity of class exploitation.

If you are in agreement with the principles of this manifesto, you are urged to prepare to attend a great rank and file convention, to be held in London on Sunday August 1 1920 and help to lay the foundations of a real revolutionary Communist Party.

Lenin himself, in reply to a question from a member of the Labour delegation as to his views on the need for the formation of a united Communist Party in Britain replied: "Genuine partisans of the liberation of the workers from the yoke of capital cannot possibly oppose the foundation of a Communist Party that alone is able to educate the working masses."

That reply indicates the fervent hopes of our Russian comrades. Let us not disappoint them but rather be worthy of our responsibilities.

The Provisional Committee of the Communist Party,
Thos Bell, JF Hodgson, Arthur MacManus, WM Paul, AA Watts, Fred Willis, Albert Inkpin (Secretary)



Albert Inkpin: Secretary of the Joint Provisional Committee of the CPGB. Our first leader

The Communist Unity Convention.

The Joint Provisional Committee for the Communist Party announces that the National Convention to form the Communist Party has now been definitely fixed to take place in London on Saturday, July 31st. The date has been changed to a Saturday because it was impossible to obtain a suitable

become branches of the Communist Party.

Your branch, group, or society is cordially invited to send delegates to the Convention to inaugurate the Communist Party and determine its tactics and policy. Representation will be at the rate of one delegate for every 25 members or part thereof, and voting at the Convention will be on the same basis. The representation fee will be 2s 6d for every 25 members or part of 25 members represented.

Gulf War

John Bulloch and Harvey Morris, *The Gulf War*, Methuen, 1989.

The following is an edited version of a review appearing in the July issue of *International Rahe Kargar*, the English language journal of the Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran. It therefore does not necessarily reflect our views.

LITTLE HAS been written in English about this disastrous war which cost over half a million lives and destroyed large sections of both countries.

As a book written so soon after the event, Bulloch and Morris have shown remarkable insight into not just the war, but the political events surrounding it. In particular, their knowledge of the intricate and almost Byzantine machinations of the ayatollahs in power in Iran is praiseworthy. In a field where ignorance and guesswork alternate with sweeping misjudgements, such accurate observations are indeed a rarity.

Moreover, the book documents the close involvement of Israel with the Iranian regime throughout the war (p17) - an involvement which puts in true perspective the anti-Israeli rhetoric of the Islamic regime.

Perhaps US-Iranian relations can best be considered by the inherent contradictions between the strategic and tactical policies of the US to Iran (pp123-36). While from the long term strategic point of view a fiercely anti-communist regime on the southern border of the USSR was extremely desirable, the immediate disruptions that the Islamic regime, with its policy of 'export of the revolution' had on the stability of this critical region had to be countered. From this dichotomy arose the contradictory of successive US governments towards Iran: it must be made more pliable without being overthrown.

Similarly, the contradictions between the anti-western and anti-communist nature of the Islamic regime dictated the cat and mouse policies of the Soviet Union. In retrospect, the leasing of three Soviet tankers to Kuwait can be seen as a huge blunder, giving pretext to the Nato powers to reassert their military presence in the Gulf.

The authors perhaps give too much emphasis to external factors when discussing the Iranian decision to abandon their war aims (p178). There was undoubtedly a very strong element of war weariness, to such an extent that here and there popular uprisings were taking place. It was again an ill-conceived attack by the Mujahedin which drew the regime's support base temporarily together.

Moreover, rather than the preparations for the final 'final offensive' (which never came) being diplomatic shadow-boxing, as the authors claim on p236, there was a definite and clear cut difference in the views on how the war should be conducted in the last year. The utter failure of the total mobilisation (p243) was the final straw that persuaded the regime to sue for peace.

But perhaps the most important point to be made relates to the introductory chapter. Here the authors, referring to the fateful decision to pursue the war into Iraq after the Iranian forces had recaptured the southern port of Khorramshahr in June 1982, state: "Khomeini, if he had not been obsessed by the hatred for the man who had been his reluctant host

during his years of exile [Saddam Hussein], or if he had about him advisors who were powerful or brave enough to tell him the truth, could at that moment gain peace for his people ... This was one of those classic blunders which change the course of events for mankind".

To reduce this decision to a 'blunder' is to miss the fundamental point about the Islamic regime, which had arisen from a revolution, and was incongruously perched on an unlikely coalition of the bazaar bourgeoisie and the mot deprived sections of society organised under the umbrella of the Hezbollah; and given its forlorn attempts at marrying the medieval laws of a long departed age with the structures and strictures of a medium advanced capitalist state, the 'export of the revolution' was not a romantic dream, but a necessity. Right until the end Khomeini considered the war as a "divine blessing". This signifies his understanding of the way the war put a lid on the divisions which arose from the intrinsically contradictory base of the regime of the ayatollahs.

For the more sober of the regime's leaders, the stark choice was clear: either succumb to the need to provide 'bread and melons' - ignoring ideological niceties if need be - or subjugate as much of the world as the blood and flesh of the "martyrdom-loving ummat" will take.

The two views were crystallised in two opposing policies towards the war after the failure of the human wave policies in 1985. One view looked at the war in the context of a global equation and searched for a political solution through increasing a rift among the broad enemy front by an alliance with the US. The other saw the 'Islamic revolution' as the first phase of "war till the end of sedition on the earth" in alliance with the "world Moslem community".

M Kia

30s Classic

Clifford Odets (author) Lisa Goldman (director), *Waiting for Lefty*, Workers Theatre Movement, Old Red Lion, St John Street, London, EC1, 1pm to 2pm Wednesdays to Sundays, tickets £3/£2 (concessions and cab drivers)

ANGRY, penetrating and committed, *Waiting for Lefty* was written by Clifford Odets, not as a mere peice of theatre entertainment or social comment, but to serve the cause of the working class and communism. It did, and does, brilliantly.

Based on the New York cab drivers who fought and won two strikes - the first in February 1934 over pay and the second in March 1934 demanding union recognition - *Waiting for Lefty* was there in every sense of the word. Yet, no doubt because it brought together the directness and political clarity of agit prop, and the intimacy possible in the traditional theatre, the play found the widest of audiences.

Odets was a member of the Communist Party of the USA, which had taken the lead in the hackies' strike. With its help, *Waiting for Lefty* was kept going against police attempts to close it (because of its supposed 'profanity'), and then taken to success on Broadway itself. By the end of 1935 its fame had spread across the world, being performed by workers' theatre groups throughout the Americas,

the USSR and Western Europe; it was the play which made Britain's Unity Theatre possible. So it holds a very special place in the history of workers' struggle - and the communist movement in particular.

For the Workers Theatre Movement, however, this is no matter of nostalgia. Its *Waiting for Lefty* does more than take the audience back to 1934. The costumes, immediate issues and naivety about the Soviet Union of Stalin, are firmly of its time and place, but the individual dilemmas it explores, the solutions it offers remain as relevant and challenging as ever.

At the heart of *Waiting for Lefty* is the power of collectivity. Of course, such power does not come from nowhere. To realise it takes more than issuing a slogan. Odets' workers are flesh and blood individuals. They have histories, they have personal hopes and aspirations, they have fears. As the play weaves from one hacky's life, back to the union meeting, to another hacky's life, we gain insight, an X-ray picture even, of the elements that make up the emerging collective will.

The mass unemployment following the 1929 crash more than doubled the number of cab drivers in New York, taking in unfortunates from many walks of life; in Odets' play, the young Jewish doctor turned cabbie and communist, and the out of work actor. Competing for ever decreasing fares, hackies old and new find their wages driven below subsistence level.

As each hacky tells his story the role of women is introduced. They are victims too, but consciously or unconsciously they are ahead of the men. It is they who act as the catalyst, transforming the obstacles to action into the necessity of fighting back. Edna (Mary Fabrice) demands that husband Joe (Russell Layton) stops making excuses, starts doing something ... strikes, even if it means dying at the hands of the union mafia. Anything's better than the misery of the pauper's wage.

Thankfully in such scenes, through tight directing, the danger of sentimentality in Odets' script is avoided. Instead human tenderness and fellow feeling is shown to be caged by the brutal rationale of capitalism in the midst of its Great Depression.

So underlying the tempo of the union meeting, the initially tentative and haltering but increasingly assertive challenge to the alternately persuasive, red baiting and then threatening union boss, Harry Fatts (Ed Bishop), we are fully aware of the individual dramas. It is these individual dramas which are eventually resolved through a collective stand against ABC cab bosses and union bureaucracy alike.

As any piece of socialist theatre should, *Waiting for Lefty* emphasises that leaders are made, not born. While the hackies wait for the man whom they all look to for leadership, 'Lefty' Costello, the dynamic of the situation itself produces answers, both in people and politics.

Let the cowards flinch and traitors sneer, these political answers are fresh and relevant today. To leave no room for doubt the caste end their performance in agit prop style with the WTM's own statement. In short: times change, but as long as capitalism and capitalist exploitation continue the working class will need to learn and learn again the lessons of solidarity contained in *Waiting for Lefty*. To conquer the future we must learn the past.

Ian Farrell

The Leninist

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A February or a Kronstadt?

A NUMBER of Trotskyites, most notably Workers Power and the Workers Revolutionary Party, have drawn an analogy between the counterrevolutions in 1989 Eastern Europe and the February 1917 Revolution in Russia. Frankly, the analogy limps on both legs.

The first parallel that they draw is between the absence of communist leadership in 1917 and 1989. Indeed, the first revolution of 1917 was a spontaneous affair on the face of it. The masses, exasperated by the privations and sufferings of the war, and the manifest inequalities in the distribution of those burdens, rose and swept away the Romanov monarchy. They did this without the leadership of the Bolsheviks, and without any other political organisation exercising hegemony.

This gives the petty bourgeois left what it needs: an excuse. An excuse to keep on supporting the counterrevolutions, the supposed 'political revolutions', in Eastern Europe. After all, the Bolsheviks and all revolutionaries supported the February Revolution in Russia, even though it 'stopped half way' and lacked *conscious* (ie communist) leadership. In fact, this argument only underlines the confusion of our opponents, not simply concerning the counterrevolutions in Eastern Europe, but the February revolution also.

Who can doubt that the February Revolution was a great revolution. It began with International Women's Day; instead of quiet secret meetings, the proletarian women boldly took to the streets. On February 24, the day after, half the proletariat of Petersburg — some 200,000 workers — were on strike, with the attendant street demonstrations becoming ever larger and bolder. February 25 saw a general strike and insurrection in the city (the Bolsheviks by now being the main organisers). The spread of mutinies in the Tsarist armed forces on February 27 sealed the autocracy's fate.

But these masses did not act in the abstract. The Petrograd workers and Russian workers in general, had passed through the revolution of 1905, through the Moscow insurrection of December 1905. This was a vital 'dress rehearsal' which shattered all the constitutional illusions fostered by the liberals. In that sense the February revolution was an act of workers tempered and educated for the most part by the party of Lenin.

Thus, a necessary precondition of the February revolution was the presence of advanced sections of proletariat, won to the ideas of communism. The contrast with the proletariats of Eastern Europe is obvious.

In these countries, decades of bureaucratic misrule have totally alienated the workers from their own state. In the absence of anything else, poisonous illusions existed in capitalism and its capacity to deliver the good life. Clearly, the spontaneous movement in these countries was inspired by pro-capitalist senti-

The petty bourgeois left have had their euphoric grins of joy first frozen, and then transformed into rather sick, embarrassed smirks by the events in Eastern Europe of the last year. Rather than re-examine their original mistakes, they are desperately scrabbling around to justify themselves

ments. They were mobilised on a counterrevolutionary platform.

However much they lacked direct revolutionary leadership, the revolutionary masses of February 1917 were fully aware of the dividing line between themselves and the bourgeoisie. It was emphatically drawn in their minds.

Although until October political power *did* reside in the hands of the cowardly Russian bourgeoisie, despite the fact that as a social group it took no part in the February Revolution, the masses remained loyal to their own soviets and their own goals — a fact which terrified the bourgeoisie and prevented them from consolidating their rule.

Workers Power tries to suggest that a similar situation has emerged in Eastern Europe: that the "revolutionary" masses have 'naively and generously' handed power to restorationist forces.

This really is rubbish. Tsarism and bureaucratic socialism are hardly the same things. Tsarism had for many, many decades meant that Russia was a bulwark of world reaction. Its overthrow, even without what was to come in October, represented a giant step forward.

Bureaucratic socialism, on the other hand, is a result of humanity's attempts to move forward. Its horrors, backwardness and failures were undeniable, but, in the last analysis, due almost entirely to the inability of communists in the advanced capitalist countries to make revolution. The collapse of bureaucratic socialism, no matter how ignominious, represents a step backwards for humanity, albeit, we are sure, a temporary one.

After February 1917 political power was transferred to the bourgeoisie as a result of what Lenin called the "insufficient consciousness and organisation of the proletariat." How did that 'insufficiency' manifest itself?

Certainly not in the form of support for capitalism, as with the masses of Eastern Europe! No, the key weakness lay in the fact that while the revolutionary masses of February 1917 overwhelmingly supported the Bolsheviks at the moment of the direct struggle with Tsarism, only a minority understood the differences between the left parties.

In the heat of revolutionary action, therefore, the sympathies of the masses gravitated towards the most irreconcilable, intransigent and energetic fighters — the Bolsheviks. But at first this did not find a full electoral expression in the soviets. Russian workers, who drew a sharp line between themselves and the bourgeoisie, at first mainly backed organisations such

as the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries.

The Russian bourgeoisie thus received power *behind the backs of the masses*, as a result of the treacherous role of the Mensheviks and SRs and the insufficient level of consciousness and organisation of the proletarian vanguard. The contrast with the chain of counterrevolutionary events in Eastern Europe could not be more stark.

There, the masses revolted either on explicitly or implicitly restorationist platforms, under the leadership of pro-imperialist, pro-capitalist *anti-communists*. There was no sharp line separating the masses from bourgeois forces, either psychologically or organisationally. The workers in these former socialist countries revolted *against* bureaucratic socialism, true, but however misguided, *for* capitalism.

After wholeheartedly greeting counterrevolution, Workers Power had to find some sort of defence when, once the dust settled after their 'political revolutions', capitalism stood restored. Grotesquely, it claims that its 'political revolution' "has been stalled at its opening, democratic phase." As it thinks that capitalist restoration somehow represents some sort of February, it now proposes the October *stage* in its 'political revolution'. What is needed, it says, is "a full, proletarian revolution" (*Stalinism in Crisis*, p36).

Blinded by dogma and fanatical 'anti-Stalinism' (actually, *anti-communism*), these dozy Labourites attempt to force the sad reality of the Eastern European counterrevolution into their preconceived abstract schema.

Yet how to explain the huge differences between the course of development of the February 1917 revolution and the counterrevolutions in the countries of bureaucratic socialism?

How can they explain the fact that where they have had the chance, the masses in these countries have for the most part given crushing majorities to parties explicitly standing for capitalism? Where is the masses' hostility to the liberal bourgeoisie, the armed workers, the rocketing support for the revolutionary parties, the soviets which characterised the aftermath of February 1917?

Just posing the question shows how ludicrously inappropriate is the analogy the Trotskyites attempt to impose on Eastern Europe. We are, of course, dealing with two totally different phenomena: revolution and counterrevolution.

Historical analogies have to be treated with caution. It is too easy to fall into the trap of attempting to

fit a living reality, as it unfolds with all its many sided contradictions, into a rigid pre-determined schema. However, if our Trotskyite friends are genuinely looking for an historical parallel, perhaps they would care to examine the one we have drawn with Kronstadt (see speech by comrade John Bridge in *The Leninist* No85, December 23 1989).

Against the backdrop of economic ruin caused by imperialist intervention, White sabotage and the appalling cultural backwardness of the masses in the Soviet Republic, 1921 saw a revolt by rank and file sailors, soldiers and workers at the naval base at Kronstadt. It was a counterrevolutionary upsurge, despite the subjective intentions of the insurgents.

At a meeting held on March 1 of 12,000 sailors, Red Army men and workers, a resolution was adopted which demanded: free elections to the Soviets with the participation of anarchists and Left Socialist Revolutionaries; legalisation of other socialist parties and the anarchists; restoration of 'free trade'; freeing of political prisoners, etc.

Communists do not abstract demands like these from the context in which they are put, by whom and to what end. As Lenin noted about Kronstadt at the time: "If you do not want yourself to be blinded by all sorts of slogans such as 'freedom', 'constituent assembly', 'free soviets' ... if you do not close your eyes to the alignment of class forces, you will acquire a sound and firm basis for all your political conclusions" (*CW*, Vol 32, pp279-84). Lenin correctly identified the revolt as counterrevolutionary, the democratic platform of the rebels as the political conduit for the return of the rule of capital, and moved quickly, though with heavy heart, to crush it.

Workers Power, on the other hand, give unqualified backing to the 'democratic achievements' of Eastern Europe's Kronstadt on a giant scale: "it has achieved much. Key pillars of the bureaucratic order have been knocked down: the leading role of the party has been ended; a multiplicity of candidates in free elections has been won; the party militias and secret police have been demolished" (*Stalinism in Crisis* p36).

Apparently, it matters not one jot that these 'achievements' have been won by pro-capitalist forces. In the pursuit of their programme of 'political revolution' WP, like other Trotskyites, have bowed before the 'anti-Stalinist' spontaneity of all classes in Eastern Europe and worse, tail ended the counterrevolutionary programme of international imperialism.

For daring to say this we have been castigated by the Trotskyites. Yet, as everyone knows, indeed as no one could have failed to notice, the bourgeoisie the world over has been ecstatic over WP's so-called 'political revolutions'.

This has nothing to do with guilt by association.

Let us again look back to what Lenin said about Kronstadt and the support given to that revolt by the left Menshevik leader Martov. Lenin said that "Martov shows himself to be nothing but a phillistine Narcissus ... He says in effect: 'Let us close our eyes to the fact that all the genuine White Guards hailed the Kronstadt mutineers and collect funds in aid of Kronstadt through the banks!' Compared with the Chernovs and Martovs, Miliukov is right, for he is revealing the true tactics of the real White Guard force ... He declares: 'It does not matter whom we support, be they anarchists or any sort of Soviet government, as long as the Bolsheviks are overthrown, as long as there is a shift in power'" (*CW*, Vol 32 p358). It is here you will find the real parallel with Eastern Europe, we think.

Let us note in conclusion the basic theoretical error (apart from crass, anti-communist reaction) that appears to underpin the Trotskyites' support for the Eastern European tragedy. It hinges, fundamentally, on their mistaken understanding of the question of class and class consciousness.

Marx tells us that "it is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do" (Marx and Engels *CW*, Vol 4, p37).

This quote goes completely against the Trotskyites' stated position that they will offer support to movements against 'Stalinism' "whatever form it takes" (*Workers Power*, February 1990).

Communists have a profound faith in the working class; it is the class that will bring communism and liberate the whole of humanity. However, that does not mean writing a blank cheque for "this or that proletarian" — Petrichenko and his Kronstadt Provisional Revolutionary Committee, Roy Lynk and his UDM, Eric Hammond and his EETPU, Yuri Budchenko and his Kuzbass Workers' Union, Lech Walesa and his Solidarnosc.

The task of revolutionaries is to destroy the influence of these misleaders and transform the working class as it is at the moment into "a class for itself", so that this class can carry out what it is historically compelled to do.

Groups like Workers Power seem incapable of making the distinction between the working class in Eastern Europe as it was in 1989 and the historical mission of the working class itself. This elementary mistake leads it to the most dangerous of conclusions: backing counterrevolution. To call such a position Marxism is worse than an insult, it is treachery.

Ian Mahoney



Which Road?

Part 7

HARDLY a day goes by when the bosses' press, radio or TV does not contain some reference to, or attack on, *Militant* and Militant Tendency. In spite of its status as the official bogey man of the media (vying with the 'anarcho-punks' of *Class War*) there can be no doubt about its real growth. When it was first launched, in October 1964, *Militant* was an obscure four page monthly; today it is a widely read 16 page weekly. As to *Militant Tendency* itself, it is Britain's biggest Trotskyite group and claims to be the "largest organised force on the left" (Peter Taaffe, *What we stand for* p33 - all quotes, unless otherwise stated, are from the third, June 1990, edition).

Yet in spite of its two *Labour Party* MPs, numerous *Labour Party* councillors, a layer of trade union officials and its domination of the leadership of the *Labour Party* Young Socialists and the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation, it is the ritualistic slanging match between the two front benches in the House of Commons that is primarily responsible for projecting *Militant* onto our carefully controlled TV screens.

For Thatcher and the Tories, *Militant* is the perfect cudgel with which to beat the eminently respectable Kinnock. It, not the pro-bomb, pro-traditional family, pro-market Welsh windbag, is the real face of Labourism, they say. All the lying mud slinging accusations that *Militant* "orchestrated violence outside town halls", and was responsible for the riot following the police assault on the 200,000 strong March 31 1990 anti-poll tax demonstration in London, are designed to harm Kinnock and Labour, not throw light on *Militant*.

That is why *Militant Tendency* has been the butt of attack after attack by the *Labour Party* leadership too. It is Thatcher who sets the *Labour Party* agenda, and, in a vain attempt to turn the tables on Thatcher, Kinnock does her bidding. This foolish Don Quixote likes to think of himself as brave St George fighting the *Militant* dragon. But the effusive media praise of every promised purge of *Militant* supporters plays into Thatcher's hand.

After all, although since Kinnock came to lead the *Labour Party* in 1983 there have been over 130 expulsions of *Militant* supporters, including its five editorial board members, for every one who is out 50 remain. Having agreed that the left of his own party is the problem, Kinnock must continue to attack his own party and impose what will eventually amount to an inquisition... in August 1990 Kinnock 'victoriously' secured a widening of the witchhunt, now not only against *Militant Tendency* but also supporters of *Socialist Organiser* (something *Militant*, with disgraceful sectarianism, kept quiet on; it wants its

A critique of 'Militant: What we stand for' and 'Militant'

readers to think of it as unique).

Putting media hype about *Militant* into perspective does not mean that *Militant* is not important. It is one of the most important barriers that will have to be overcome if we are to reforge the Communist Party of Great Britain our class needs in order to liberate itself from the shackles of decaying capitalism.

Where some use the caucus, the committee room and the lie, the main method Leninists use to combat opponents within the workers' movement is open ideological struggle. It is this time honoured and yet truly powerful weapon that we now turn on *Militant*.

Militant Tendency leaders complain that its detractors never mention "our programme" (p4). In the Marxist sense, of course, *Militant Tendency* has no programme, no democratically arrived at strategic document outlining its principles and minimum and maximum demands. Nothing to compare with the *Communist Manifesto*, the *Programme of the Communist Party of Russia*, or even the *British Road to Socialism*.

Nevertheless it does have *Militant: What we stand for* (we will simply call it *What we stand for*). Although far from being a programme, it is the nearest thing *Militant* has to one.

As its title suggests, *What we stand for* is an authoritative and broad ranging pamphlet. Written by *Militant* editor, Peter Taaffe, originally published in December 1981, and since then, showing its role, twice updated (February 1986 and June 1990).

While it might be true that the Tories and the *Labour* leadership ignore this 'programme', we will not. Naturally we agree with many things in *What we stand for*; the demand for a 35 hour week, an end to the poll tax, trade union independence from the capitalist state, etc. Our intention here, however, is to concentrate on differences - but not because we are bloody minded and simply like an argument for an arguments sake. No, we want to concentrate on the differences we have with *Militant* because its politics taken as a whole are, if not challenged and defeated through open ideological struggle, capable of taking the working class movement to disaster.

Precisely because it contains the politics of *Militant Tendency* in their most crystallised form we will focus on *What we stand for* in particular. Through discussing our differences with this document (and *Militant* in general) we will expose the falseness of *Militant Tendency's* claim to be a revolutionary, let alone a

Marxist, organisation. We will also show that, whatever the subjective intentions of its supporters, its "programme" does not "offer the political weapons for establishing a socialist society" (p33). Far from it.

No, just like the various versions and editions of the *British Road to Socialism* produced by 'official communism', the "programme" of *Militant* has, in the final analysis, a counterrevolutionary logic.

1. Labour pains and Militant's origins

Militant calls itself 'the Marxist tendency' of the *Labour Party*. This is wrong on two counts. As the reader will already have gathered, we question the Marxism of *Militant* (what follows will prove it). It is also well known that the *Labour Party* contains within it a rich variety of Trotskyites and semi-Trotskyites, all claiming to be Marxist organisations. Pretending to be unique, though, has the advantage of winning the politically inexperienced and mentally blinkering them to the rival claims of the many competitors in the *Labour Party*.

But the paramount concern of *Militant's* leaders is to wall off their supporters from the siren call of those outside the *Labour Party*, in particular communists, who say that what workers in Britain need if they are to overthrow capitalism and build socialism is a Communist Party, not a reformed *Labour Party*. To poison the minds of its supporters *Militant's* leaders ludicrously dismiss anyone not carrying a *Labour Party* card as being "outside the labour movement", a lie undoubtedly greatly helped by the present disarray in the communist movement caused by the wrecking activities of Euro, CPB and other varieties of 'official communist' opportunism.

Alas, to justify its political theory and practice *Militant* must lie, not once, but all along the line. For example, the treachery, strike breaking and imperialist warmongering of the *Labour Party*, the reason why it has operated as a "second eleven of capitalism", is, according to Taaffe, because the right wing has "infiltrated the labour movement" (p29). It is *Militant* alone that apparently represents the genuine, original, spirit of the *Labour Party*. "Marxism", maintains Taaffe, "has always been part, and an important part at that, of the *Labour Party* right from its inception"

(p29).

These claims are a tangle of falsehoods. Neither the implication that *Militant* somehow dates back to the origins of the *Labour Party* nor the idea that the *Labour Party* has some sort of Marxist ancestry (if not from both parents, then at least from one), has any foundation in truth.

The *Labour Party* was conceived in the bowels of the TUC bureaucracy and was raised to the level of a serious parliamentary party through the recruitment of a bevy of Liberal MPs. It was the TUC and defecting Liberals who were the mother and father of Labourism. There was no right wing "infiltration", the right dominated the *Labour Party* from the very beginning.

Marxism did not play the sort of role Taaffe and *Militant* would have us imagine. Marxism and the class struggle had as much to do with the formation of the *Labour Party* as it did with the election of Britain's first woman prime minister. The Social Democratic Federation, Britain's first Marxist organisation, wrongly or rightly walked out in disgust from the proto-*Labour Party*, the *Labour Representation Committee*, in 1901. Why? Because it refused to even formally recognise the "class war", let alone have "for its ultimate object the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange" (LRC conference report, quoted in R Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism* p17).

Clause 4, which Taaffe and *Militant* think so much of, and go on about so much, as any serious historian of the *Labour Party* would tell us, is informed by reformism, not Marxism. It was only adopted reluctantly and purely for propaganda purposes in 1918, in a preemptive move to stop workers turning to communism. Clause 4 had nothing to do with a genuine conversion to genuine socialism; rather it was "a blueprint for a more advanced, more regulated form of capitalism" (*Ibid* p62).

That is why, when the newly formed Communist Party of Great Britain applied for affiliation to the *Labour Party* in 1921, it was bluntly and fearfully refused, as it was in 1922, 1923, 1924 and on every other occasion it tried.

It was the real Marxists of the CPGB who were the first victims of a *Labour Party* witchhunt. The *Labour* leadership went on to expel individual communists who had dual membership and to prevent elected communists from representing their unions at *Labour Party* conferences. Later it drew up a McCarthyite list of bans and proscriptions to keep the *Labour Party* free of 'red contamination'.

True, there has always been a *Labour* left, and it has on occasions been influenced by

Marxism: the British Socialist Party was an affiliate till it helped form the CPGB in 1920. The CPGB was itself behind the influential Left Wing Movement of the mid to late 1920s. However, the essence of the Labour Party – including its parliamentarist left wing – has nothing to do with the struggle for socialism, which is, and can only but be, the struggle for revolution.

The Labour Party taken as a whole is, and always has been, a “bourgeois workers’ party” (Lenin). When in opposition it promises to run capitalism if only it was given the chance of government; and when in government it does just that. Militant’s Labour left loudly protests, but at the end of the day it always gives loyal support to the dominant right wing.

All in all it is quite clear that the main influence Marxism has had on the Labour Party has been marginal, and, when more than that, from the outside.

As to Militant, it has its origins not in the Labour Party, but in the Trotskyite movement of the early 1930s, which either broke away or was expelled from the CPGB. Specifically, it is the organisational and political continuation of one of the fragments of the Trotskyite movement in Britain, which shattered in 1951 (two years after the Revolutionary Communist Party – a united Trotskyite organisation – decided to take the advice of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International to begin “systematic work as a tendency within the Labour Party”, *International Bulletin of the Fourth International*, Vol 2, No16 1947).

Out of the resulting chaos of collapse and disintegration, Ted Grant, Militant’s founder/leader, managed to keep around himself a small body of former RCP members; originally known as the International Socialist, it later became the Revolutionary Socialist League. It published the journal *Socialist Fight*, until 1963, when it was closed in order to make way for the launch of *Militant* in 1964.

Now Grant and Taaffe would have us believe that *Militant* was purely the product of the Labour Party; that the idea that ‘Marxists’ (ie RCP/RSL/Militant) “infiltrated” the Labour Party is a “legend” (p29). This is dishonesty taken to absurd lengths.

Just like the government with MI5, they now deny the RSL. It was never publicly dissolved, of course, and there are those who say they are ex-members. Yet the history of Militant’s leaders, the decision to enter the Labour Party in 1949 and their rewriting history since then is well known. In spite of this, merely to mention the initials RSL, in the presence of leading Militant supporters, is like saying Jehovah in ancient Israel – the name of god, which was never spoken aloud by Jews (remember what happened to the poor sod who did in the *Life of Brian*).

We do not know for sure whether or not the RSL still exists. Frankly it doesn’t matter either way. What we are interested in is not Militant’s internal structure. We are interested in its political origins, current politics and political direction.

The fact of the matter is that Militant has taken Trotsky’s organisational entrism tactic to its farthest political point. From being a tactic to overcome the extreme isolation of the Trotskyites, entryism has become, in the hands of Militant, a principle (entryism is entering and then operating within mass reformist parties). Now, no matter what, Militant will do everything it can to stay within the Labour Party. That is why it will mystify its own history, original aims and even its existence prior to 1964.

There is, as is always the case, a price to pay for such opportunism. Militant’s founders might have entered the Labour Party as revolutionaries. Yet far from changing the Labour Party, it is they who have been changed. The pressures and demands necessary to maintain deep entryism on already weak politics, has produced assimilation. In conquering Labour Party wards, constituencies and the LPYS, they have been themselves conquered. Militant’s leaders are today to all intents and purposes part of the Labour left; they have become Labourised.

Either that, or we are to believe that nothing Militant’s leaders say is the result of what they actually believe. People do not do that (at least with consistency). It is not a matter of always expecting the unalloyed truth, but rather recognising that there is always some sort of a connection between word and intention. In spite of what media hacks say to the contrary, there is no devious secret master

plan which has convinced a group of dedicated revolutionaries to talk, write and act like reformists. They talk, write and act like reformists, because reformists they are.

Those who refuse to recognise the obvious would do well to remember the recent history of ‘official communism’. In the late 1960s and early 70s I well remember that sections of the bourgeoisie seriously thought that Eurocommunism was a dastardly plot by the Russians to take over Western Europe. No one says that any more. The Euros really were what they said they were: radical democrats (incidentally that does not mean they have not changed since).

Militant wants to be thought of as *different* from the rest of the Labour left. It is. But not in content, only in form. The content of Militant’s politics is left reformism, the form this takes, however, is distinct both in terms of its denial of reformism and its fake revolutionary packaging.

We have already touched upon Militant’s origins above. So let’s now turn to its politics and ideology.

2. Nature of epoch

Militant has no grasp or definition of our epoch – the epoch of imperialism, war and the revolutionary transition to communism. In fact neither imperialism, the *inevitability* of war (not just the “danger of nuclear holocaust” – p7) under imperialism, nor communism is mentioned in *What we stand for*. None of this can be put down to absentmindedness. If Militant ever did have any Marxism, it has forgotten it all and needlessly reinvented its own brand of social democratic idealism.

What we stand for does say we “are now moving into a period of unparalleled economic and social disturbances” (p26). We agree. However, where we have located a coming new general crisis within the movement of capitalism since the end of World War II from boom, to stagnation and pre-crisis – see in particular *The Leninist* Nos 2 and 3 – Grant has been predicting a crash almost every year since 1945. Like a clock that has stopped, he is bound to be proved correct eventually; but to call this Marxism is an insult.

What we stand for is decidedly Anglo-centric – its occasional references to internationalism are only for form’s sake. With such a starting point any attempt to actually square up to the crisis of Britain is hopeless.

Because of his theoretical blindness to the importance (or existence) of imperialism, Taaffe can only explain Britain’s historic decline through its “colossal expenditure on arms” compared with Japan (p10) ... *What we stand for* goes on to attack Kinnock for his “admiration” of Japan (p22). In spite of this the implication is clear: British capitalists should follow the route of Japan (incidentally, given the nature of imperialism, it is much more likely in the medium to long term that Japan will be forced to match and then overtake British levels of arms spending).

That is no doubt why Militant’s ‘programme’ contains a plaintive call for “massive arms cuts” (p7). Lenin dismissively called such slogans a “dream”. In opposition to Militant’s pacifistic dribbling, Lenin’s militant communist slogans remain as fresh and true as ever: Not a man, not a penny for the bourgeois army! Arm the proletariat to defeat, disarm and expropriate the bourgeoisie! (see VI Lenin, *The military programme of the proletarian revolution*).

Unlike Militant’s version of the permanent arms ‘economy’ theory, Lenin’s theory of imperialism gives a profound insight to the reasons behind the rise and fall of various capitalist powers. For Lenin, industrial decline in the heartlands of imperialism was a direct result of imperialism.

Lenin analysed imperialism as the highest and last stage of capitalism. It represented the triumph of monopoly over competition, the growing importance of the *export of capital* as opposed to commodities, the merger of banking and industrial capital and the emergence of finance capital. All this and imperialism’s creation of a fluid world money market greatly exacerbates uneven development within a country and between countries.

This is the key to a real, scientific, explanation of Britain’s relative decline, not arms expenditure; and certainly not the “rotten” stewardship by “British capitalists”, or the “ruinous policies” of Thatcherism (pp10,11).

Relative decline is due to the internal laws and dynamics of capitalism itself. It had nothing to do with the subjective failings of Britain’s or anyone else’s capitalists.

The reason Militant does not want to use Lenin’s theory of imperialism is transparent. It wants us to believe that reversing Britain’s decline simply depends on replacing Thatcher’s “ruinous policies” with “radical socialist measures” which would be carried through in parliament by the Labour Party (p39).

Naturally, by closing its eyes to the existence, effect and reality of imperialism, Militant will not/cannot see the capitalist world as being split into oppressed and oppressing nations. This is no abstract or sentimental question. It is crucial when it comes to politics in Britain and political practice. *What we stand for* only contains a passing reference to Ireland ... in 1914! Nothing about the presence of British troops in the Six Counties today, let alone a call for the unconditional defence of the forces of national liberation. For any sort of supposed Marxist this is inexcusable.

Given the pivotal nature of Ireland to politics in Britain, how it is used by the ruling class, as a training ground for oppression, to rally the masses behind it, Taaffe’s silence is an act of political cowardice and inchoate pro-imperialism (hardly an exaggeration: it should be remembered that during the Falklands War in 1982 Militant called for a Labour government ‘socialist’ war against Argentina).

Furthermore, by ignoring imperialism Militant is able to ignore the split in the working class movement. Buying off “certain sections” of the working class and the labour and trade union bureaucracy with “morsels of the loot” from imperialism’s table is one of the main political consequences of imperialism in the metropolitan/oppressing countries (VI Lenin, *The collapse of the Second International*). Again the reason for such determined refusal to use the Leninist theory of imperialism is transparent: Militant looks to the labour and trade union bureaucracy (namely the Labour Party and the TUC) as the force that will take the lead in the socialist transformation of Britain.

2.1. Socialist countries

The October Revolution and the resulting Soviet Republic represented a historic gain for the world’s working class: a gain that had to be defended unconditionally, be defended no matter what. The horrible backwardness, deprivations and bureaucratic perversions that deformed socialism in the USSR, the spread of a version of that deformed, bureaucratic socialism into Eastern Europe with the victory of the Red Army over the Nazi war machine, while necessitating a critical approach, does not for one moment mean that communists should relax or moderate their defence of these countries. No, critical, but unconditional, defence of the socialist countries remains a matter of the highest principle.

Not for Militant, at least as evidenced by their ‘programme’ *What we stand for*. Nowhere is there any sort of call for workers internationally to defend the socialist countries. *What we stand for* outlines measures of democratisation which it favours in the “Stalinist states”: no official to receive a higher wage than a skilled worker; for an armed people; for an end to one party regimes; etc (p8). All of this we agree with, but clearly Militant’s position is one sided and therefore wrong. It includes nothing about *its* duty to defend these states as they are, in order to advance them to what they should be. Militant’s desire not to be associated with the socialist countries as they are (or were) leads it straight into the opportunist quagmire.

Thus, when Eastern Europe was swept by counterrevolution (albeit peaceful and democratic), and the same process began to unfold in the USSR, Militant wholeheartedly welcomed it as a vindication of the naive Trotskyite belief that all spontaneous movements in the socialist countries would produce an anti-bureaucratic political revolution.

Militant has always maintained that there were only two possibilities in the socialist countries: there “will either be totalitarian control under a one-party state ... or there will be control of industry and the state by the workers” (Ted Grant, *Militant* October 3 1980 – quoted as an example of how “Militant was absolutely correct and borne out by events”, by John Pickard in his May 1989 glowing introduction to Ted Grant’s selected works, *The unbroken thread*).

Against this we have always warned of the third possibility – the *reversal* of socialism. Socialism is, after all, a *transitional* society between capitalism and communism, containing features of both – not least the state, according to Marx and Lenin a carryover from capitalism. Given this, the alienation of the masses and the fact that socialism was built on very backward foundations – the foundations of backward capitalism – there was an ever present danger of the bureaucracy developing independent sectional interests and slowly transforming itself into a capitalist class.

Because of this we declared that reversal (counterrevolution) in the socialist countries could come from above, as well as from below and from without. This danger could only but be exacerbated by the economic crisis that developed in the USSR during the Brezhnev years.

As we have argued for a number of years now in *The Leninist*, the bureaucracy in the USSR is no longer a *relative* fetter on the development of the productive forces. It has become an *absolute* fetter. Unwilling and unable to abolish itself, as historical progress demands, the economically and socially privileged bureaucracy, or at least its technocratic wing, is seeking salvation for itself through turning towards capitalism and transforming itself into a fully fledged capitalist class.

The political personification of this is Gorbachev. His promise to the west never again to do a Hungary ‘56 or a Czechoslovakia ‘68, to abandon the so-called Brezhnev doctrine for the so-called Sinatra doctrine, unleashed a counterrevolutionary process in an already over ripe Eastern Europe.

Now Taaffe has the cheek to claim that “in the past Marxists ruled out this [restorationist] possibility” (p45). Obviously Marxists didn’t. Militant did. After all, it was only a short time ago that Taaffe was saying – because of his one way mechanical world view – that talk of “capitalist restoration” in the socialist countries was a “chimera” (*Militant* July 21 1989); that “Gorbachev’s coming to power signified the beginning of the political revolution”; and that we are entering the “Red 90s” (*Militant* January 19 1990).

In *What we stand for* he at least admits that “there is now a real possibility of some or all” the socialist countries “returning back to capitalism”. Of course, some of the countries of Eastern Europe have already returned to capitalism. It is no mere possibility; it has happened.

We have always insisted that what was necessary for a genuine political revolution was the leadership of a genuine Communist Party. Without this, as *What we stand for* now admits, the masses in Eastern Europe were swept behind pro-market (read pro-capitalist) forces, who, while offering Swedish living standards, will no doubt deliver capitalism of a South American sort – unemployment, shanty towns, death squads, poverty and all.

3. The capitalist state and socialism

Militant comes from a different tradition to the ‘official communists’ who produced the various editions and versions of *British Road to Socialism* (which we have examined in previous supplements in this *Which Road?* series). It is from the Trotskyite stable, of that there is no doubt. Yet also of no doubt is that, after travelling along its own path for many decades, it has arrived back on the ‘official communist’ highway. Its split from ‘official communism’ has proved to be nothing more than a detour. Today Militant has many of the same ideological positions held by ‘official communism’ circa 1967. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than when it comes to the capitalist state and the transition to socialism.

For real Marxist, socialism begins with the smashing of the bourgeois state through revolution and ends with the dawn of communism. Socialism is a transitional society in between capitalism and communism; in this sense it is therefore the first, lower, stage of communism (to avoid mentioning the terrible word ‘communism’, Taaffe talks about abundance being reached with the “highest stage of socialism” (p38) – a theoretical contortion which is a bit like calling a mature adult the highest stage of a fetus).

Socialism, unlike full communism, is characterised by the continued existence of the state – the dictatorship of the proletariat – built on the ruins of the old state through the transformation of working class organs of

class struggle into organs of working class state power. All this is ABC Marxism. That in the name of 'Marxism', Militant takes a very different, indeed opposite position, says everything about its supposed 'Marxism'.

Some bourgeois authors have tried to paint Militant in lurid revolutionary colours, to pretend that lurking behind its respectable Labourite facade are plans for insurrection: an insurrection which will see parliament "superseded by workers' councils or soviets" and possibly even the Labour Party and the trade unions "outlawed" (Michael Crick, *Militant*, p70 - quoting what he claims to be a Militant internal document *British perspectives and tasks 1974*). And yet everything we know about Militant's theory and practice tells us different.

The real, as opposed to the fictional or left posing, Militant maintains that socialism will come, not through revolution and smashing the state power of the bourgeoisie, but "through an Enabling Bill in parliament". Parliament will nationalise "the top 200 monopolies with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need, with one third of places on the management board elected from unions in the industry, one third elected from the TUC representing the working class as a whole and one third nominated from the government ... This would then allow a socialist plan of production to be democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving trade unions, shop stewards, unorganised and small business men and women" (p8).

That is the true programme of Militant. There are differences between it and the Euros' BRS. But the differences are of detail, not substance. For example, Militant tries to distinguish its reformist schema from other reformist schemas by emphasising speed. Where the 1978 BRS fantasises about introducing socialism through a series of ever leftier Labour and then Labour/communist governments, Militant fantasises about introducing socialism in one foul parliamentary swoop via a Labour government and an enabling bill.

The "precedent" Militant quotes for enabling legislation is the Tories' rescue of the bankrupt Rolls Royce in 1971 and their "rushed" entry into the European Community in 1972 (p40). This is fully in the spirit of BRS parliamentary cretinism. As with the BRS, the emergence of a revolutionary situation does not enter into Taaffe's scheme of things. As with the BRS, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie will be the result of parliamentary legislation, not carried out through a revolution. And as with the BRS (and Margaret Thatcher for that matter) he equates nationalisation with socialism.

With great flourish Militant, as with the BRS, likes to refer to the role of the masses: "we have stressed" says Militant leader Rob Sewell, "that a socialist Britain can be accomplished through parliament backed by the mobilised power of the labour movement outside" (our emphasis *Militant International Review* No33 p9).

Except for those who refuse to be convinced by facts, it is perfectly clear from this that parliament is central for Militant; the masses are supportive and secondary. The liberation of the working class is, according to Militant, not an act of the working class; on the contrary it will come through an arm of the bourgeois state ("transformed" because of a 'socialist' Labour majority).

Rosa Luxemburg, in particular, pointed out that the real difference between the parliamentary road of those like Militant and the revolutionary road was not two ways to get to the same end: ie, socialism. No, these different strategic approaches (means) lead to very different conclusions (ends). The reason is simple.

Communists - that is genuine Marxists - seek to mobilise the working class to smash the bourgeois state, including parliament (to do that we fully accept the need to stand candidates and get MPs elected). Reformists, on the other hand, regard parliament as something to treasure and protect. Is it not the vehicle which will primarily be responsible for ushering in the socialist order? No wonder Militant leaders insist that "the idea ... that we want to 'smash parliamentary democracy' is completely untrue" (*Ibid* p9).

Serious revolutionaries should believe them. This does not mean that Militant's leaders are harmless, safe, nice people. At least, as far as the working class goes, it means that Militant is dangerous and must be fought and ideologically destroyed.

When the question of the state and parlia-

mentary rule goes from the realm of theoretical dispute and is posed point blank in a revolutionary situation, the leaders of reformism are inevitably propelled pell mell in a counterrevolutionary direction. After all, the major threat to 'parliamentary democracy' in such periods comes, at least initially, from the left, from the revolutionary parties and the revolutionary proletariat organised in workers' councils and workers' militias.

This in essence was the case in 1917 Russia. The Mensheviks and Right Socialist Revolutionaries - who in terms of theory are far to the left of Militant - saw in the Provisional Government a vehicle for social progress. Quite rightly they considered that the biggest threat to this body - which although cobbled together eventually looked to securing its authority through a parliamentary Constituent Assembly - came from Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

That is why after the July days, which saw armed workers' demonstrations demanding a second revolution, the Mensheviks and Right SRs who came to dominate the Provisional Government joined the camp of counterrevolution, suppressed the Bolshevik press and forced Lenin to go into hiding, as had the Tsars. In a revolutionary situation in Britain, who can doubt that the leaders of Militant will be commanded by the same iron laws of history to play out exactly the same sorry logic.

3.1. Arms and the Milie

Because it is now committed body and soul to bourgeois democracy, Militant finds accusations that it is out to smash parliament annoying to say the least. What it finds infuriating, though, is the "cry that Militant would establish a socialist Britain by violence". That, says Taaffe, is a "red herring" (p42). Pointing to the overthrow of the left reformist Allende government in 1973, Taaffe insists that "it is the capitalists, not the working class or the Marxists, who have always attempted by violence to overturn the results of elections that threaten their position" (p42).

It is true, of course, that the capitalist class has carried out military or fascist coups to protect its interests. But it must also be said that Marxists have carried out revolutionary insurrections and have always had that aim.

Revolutionary situations are messy, complex phenomena, which surface at the most unexpected of moments. They do not usually have the domesticated habit of neatly coinciding with general elections. While it is true that if we cannot get people to vote for us, it is unlikely that they will die for us, and that parliament must be utilised as a barometer of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, our authority to make revolution comes from below, not above, and from the active, not the passive. Specifically our authority comes from the workers' councils and other such bodies which a revolutionary situation creates at the base of society, in the factories, offices, mines, mills, hospitals and other workplaces. We do not look to the electoral college in the House of Commons that results from the peculiar arithmetic of an atomised electorate, but to the organs of mass revolutionary action.

Making revolution is not a romantic luxury, which we fight for because of some strange desire to re-enact Sergei Eisenstein's *October*. It is a task presented by life itself; indeed it is a matter of life or death.

As we have said, in a revolutionary situation the first threat to an existing bourgeois government comes (or at least should come) from the left, from the forces of revolution. If, however, for one reason or another the proletarian vanguard fails to make revolution, the forces of reaction will resolve the revolutionary situation negatively through fascist counterrevolution. That was the case in Italy in the 20s, Germany and Spain in the 30s, Greece in the 60s, Chile and Turkey in the 70s.

Precisely because Militant believes the election of a left reformist government in a revolutionary situation would be a fulfilment of its programme, it would oppose Bolshevik style moves to overthrow it. To the extent that this took an active form, Militant would go over to the camp of counterrevolution. It would also directly play into the hands of fascist counterrevolution. A revolutionary situation can only have one of two outcomes; revolution or counterrevolution. Those in the workers' movement who do not fight for the revolution can only but pave the way for the counterrevolution.

In the same way that it dismisses the need for revolutionary violence, Militant complacently plays down the danger of counterrevolutionary violence. Taaffe claims that "all the scheming and conspiracies of the capitalists can come to nothing on the basis of a bold socialist policy backed by mass mobilisation of the labour movement. An entirely peaceful transformation of society is possible in Britain, but only on the condition that the full power of the labour movement is boldly used to effect this change." (p43)

Hence for Taaffe there is no need at all for the working class movement in Britain to arm itself. If by chance the generals move to carry through a military coup, Militant believes it can scotch any such attempt by a simple "appeal to the ordinary soldiers" (p46). In another work, Taaffe actually says, "by offering the perspective of a new society, that the officer caste can be neutralised, or sections - even a majority - won over to the side of working people" (*The State* p42).

We are all in favour of appeals to "ordinary soldiers". Appeals to turn guns on officers and to join the revolution. But it cannot be emphasised too strongly that such appeals will only be taken seriously, the wavering "ordinary soldiers" will only have the courage of their convictions, if the forces of revolution are utterly determined and look as if they are going to win. Having arms - even of the most rudimentary sort - is an essential aspect of this. It shows we mean business.

Although it is nowhere mentioned in *What we stand for*, workers' violence has been considered legitimate for Britain by various Militant leaders. But, and it's a big but, only as a defensive not offensive action. It is considered legitimate only as a response to an 'illegal' Tory or military coup attempt after the election of a socialist government. Frankly, such bold promises of "ferocious resistance" are not worth a brass farthing (p46). Militant's "ferocious resistance" would be a rerun of the slaughter of Chile.

It is criminal to tell the working class that socialism will come peacefully, through parliament, and that the "best equipped and largest armies" can be brought to the point of disintegration by "appeals to ordinary soldiers". For when the other side predictably turn out their bodies of armed men, the last minute call for "ferocious resistance" can only but lead to disaster.

The class struggle will inevitably grow more and more fierce and at a certain point the question of a revolutionary insurrection will be posed. Therefore in order to be capable of overcoming the "ferocious resistance" of the bourgeois state, the working class must be prepared, first, through propaganda and agitation, and then as quickly as possible through organisation, for violence. Yes, we must systematically imbue the working class with the understanding that violent revolution is inevitable; Lenin said that "this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the entire theory of Marx and Engels" (*State and Revolution*). Who can doubt that Militant has betrayed this theory.

3.2. Bolsheviks and peaceful revolution

Militant tries to give its peaceful parliamentary road to socialism some sort of orthodox status by quoting Marx, Engels and Lenin. Their arguments and quotes are exactly those used by the 'official communists' of the mid-1960s to give their opportunism some sort of orthodox status.

Bob Sewell, for example, claims that Lenin's attempts to secure a peaceful handing over of power from the Provisional Government to the Bolsheviks and the soviets can be generalised because in Britain the "balance of class forces is overwhelmingly in favour of the working class." (*Militant International Review* No33 p11). Letting pass what we must assume to be Sewell's crass equation of the size of the working class in Britain with the balance of class forces, let us see what he has to say about the aims of the Bolsheviks.

The "aim of the Bolsheviks in 1917," writes Sewell, "was to secure peaceful change in society". (*Ibid*) This is hardly true of the whole of 1917. Nonetheless it is certainly the case that from April to July 1917 the efforts of the Bolsheviks were directed to making possible a peaceful change of power through the soviets.

Within Russia there existed a dual power

situation. Besides the Provisional Government, workers', peasants' and soldiers' soviets had emerged from below. It was because there was a rapid shift within these soviets - organs of the armed revolution - from the Mensheviks and Right Socialist Revolutionaries to the Bolsheviks and the parties of the revolutionary left, that Lenin held out the "last chance" of a peaceful handover. The main reason the Provisional Government had any authority was because of the support it was given by the Menshevik and Right SR majority in the soviets; once this body peacefully changed hands it could be peacefully dissolved.

As the Menshevik/Right SR majority was steadily whittled down and looked like quickly giving way to a Bolshevik majority, a peaceful - second - revolution was conceivable. But, as we know, it was not to be.

In the face of Menshevik and Right SR stubbornness and the danger of an imperialist backed military strike against the heartlands of the revolutionary proletariat in Russia, the Bolsheviks acted. In late October old style/early November new style, organised "under the immediate leadership of the the chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky" (Stalin), the Military Revolutionary Committee carried out an almost bloodless, but nonetheless violent, insurrection. Dual power was ended positively with the toppling of the Provisional Government and handing of power to the Congress of the Soviets, which by that time had a Bolshevik majority.

Ironically the quote that Sewell uses from Lenin to justify Militant's parliamentary dreams utterly undermines his claims that there exists some sort of parallel between Militant's parliamentary cretinism and the Bolsheviks of 1917.

Sewell quotes an article by Lenin written just before the Bolshevik insurrection in early October 1917 as offering "to help to do everything possible to secure peaceful development of the revolution." What comes later in the article sends Militant's schemes crashing about its ears: "Having seized power," says Lenin, "the Soviets could still at present - and this is probably their last chance - secure a peaceful development of the revolution, peaceful election of deputies by the people, a peaceful struggle of parties inside the Soviets, a testing of the programme of the various parties in practice, a peaceful passing of power from one party to another" (my emphasis).

It is worth noting that while I have emphasised 'soviets' in the above quote, Sewell emphasised the word 'peaceful' throughout. Even more revealingly, he completely fails to draw any distinction, let alone see a contradiction, between soviets and parliament.

The reason Lenin could envisage any sort of peaceful transfer of power was that a revolution had already taken place in February 1917 which was not only violent, but had created a dual power situation. It was not because he had any illusions in parliamentary democracy or a peaceful transfer of class power through parliament. This is something Lenin vehemently denied and consistently polemicalised against throughout his politically active life.

We expect that Grant, Taaffe, Sewell and other leaders of Militant know all this full well. But now that they have gone from being revolutionaries to reformists, and yet still claim to be revolutionaries, they have to engage in all sorts of distortions, double talk and downright lying to keep their supporters in the dark about the gulf that separates the politics of Militant from the politics of Lenin and Leninism.

3.3. Miners' strike

The 1984-5 miners' Great Strike put all the theories and programmes of the left organisations in Britain under the microscope. It was unquestionably "a decisive turning point in the post-war history of Britain" (p18). It also brilliantly showed the creativity of the masses. New organs of working class class struggle were thrown up which owed nothing to reformism in inspiration: support groups, hit squads, women against pit closures.

The significance of these organs is not frozen in a particular moment of time, as in aspice. Like the Councils of Action of 1920 (which Lenin called "embryonic soviets") and the Councils of Action and Workers' defence Corps of 1926, they give us a glimpse of the future proletarian state in Britain. Everything we know about dialectics tells us that if the bodies created in 1984-5 were allowed to go to

full development they would have been transformed into Councils of Action, Workers' Defence Corps and a working class women's movement, which would have stood in parallel and in opposition to the bourgeois state, parliament included.

Not surprisingly, given its commitment to the bourgeois parliament and the peaceful, reformist, road to socialism, none of this seems even to occur to Militant. The miners' Great Strike is seen purely in the negative, seen as a warning of "the long term measures which the ruling class are preparing against the working class" (p18).

Fortunately, although Militant wrongly declares as a matter of doctrine that the balance of class forces is overwhelmingly in favour of the working class, it at least admits that the "miners were defeated" (many, for their own reasons, refuse to admit this obvious truth). But what did Militant do, itself, during the 1984-5 strike? *What we stand for* is quiet on this, again not surprisingly.

According to Taaffe the miners were defeated "only because the right wing dominated TUC failed to organise effective support and solidarity from other unions" (p18). This is simply not true. The trade union bureaucracy, right and left, failed to organise effective solidarity. But what do we expect from such as these. Primarily the miners were defeated because there existed no vanguard party in Britain, no genuine Communist Party capable of breaking, or at least seriously challenging, the stranglehold the TUC and the Labour Party have over the working class. From what we have seen thus far, Militant is hardly a candidate for the job.

In 1984-5, like many others on the left, Militant devoted itself mainly to telling miners and other workers what they already knew. Worse, it tried to pull the wool over the eyes of militants by repeating the NUM leadership's 'official optimism' about imminent power cuts and coal stocks being reduced to mole hills etc. Not once did it set tasks for the workers' movement which would really take the struggle forward onto a qualitatively higher stage, which was vital if the miners were going to win.

With Liverpool, moreover, Militant had the opportunity to link the fight against rate capping to the miners' strike in practice. Militant supporters were in positions of the highest authority within the council and the council's workforce. Derek Hatton did talk a lot of rubbish about Liverpool being Britain's Petrograd, yet nothing was done to mobilise the city's workers into a united front with the miners.

The most notable thing about Militant was its determination to channel the anger and militancy of the miners into the dead end of the Labour Party, and the lame call for a 24 hour general strike: a tactic all very well as a protest but hardly what was needed to see the miners to victory.

What was needed was the organisation of a general strike. Only then could the Tories' anti-working class offensive be halted and replaced by a workers' anti-capitalist offensive.

While it was vital not to let the TUC off the hook, while it was vital to demand that it called a general strike, it was more than likely to do everything in its power to sabotage such an action. That is why we Leninists raised the necessity of organising working class resistance in an alternative centre, namely a National Council of Action. We argued that such a National Council of Action could be created through basing it on transformed local support groups (making them into bodies of elected and recallable delegates from all working class organisations). With a National Council of Action and bold, decisive, daring leadership, the balance of class forces could have really been shifted in favour of the working class.

A general strike 'with or without the TUC' would have had to be in support of the miners, that goes without saying. But it would also have to encompass the interests of the mass of workers if it was to be sustained and carried through successfully. Hence we linked the call for a general strike to the smashing of the Tories' anti-trade union laws; laws which have crippled one strike and one union after another, not only the NUM. Militant was and is incapable of thinking such dangerous, but practical and necessary, thoughts.

Let us turn again to the question of violence, this time briefly. As the temperature of the class war rises, social peace melts and with it the state and its monopoly of violence begins to be challenged. The miners' strike certainly saw ruling class state violence on

both scale and method reminiscent of the Six Counties. This met its answer from below in the miners' hit squads. It must be said that Militant liked them just as much as it likes the IRA. In other words, it loathed them.

Although they were ripe for expansion into Workers' Defence Corps, by drawing in other workers, Militant could hardly make any such call. Its belief that the police are nothing but 'workers in uniform', that socialism will come via the Labour Party and parliament, peacefully and without any fear of a counterrevolutionary coup, meant that Militant was paralysed. What hope for it in a revolutionary situation?

3.4. Poll tax

The fight against the poll tax provides an even greater exposure of Militant's politics. In *What we stand for* Militant tells us how wrong Thatcher has been to try and push through the tax and pats itself on the back for its ability to predict the "widespread revolt" against it. Militant is also understandably proud that its supporters are the "backbone" of the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation (p19).

Yet it has no plan to develop the local Anti-Poll Tax Unions, no tactic beyond non-payment, no aim to smash the poll tax through an indefinite general strike. And where we say no taxes on the working class, because its main preoccupation is staying within the Labour Party and being seen as loyal Labourites, Militant has come out first in support of Labour's 'roof tax' and now its 'fairer rates'.

As well as again thoroughly exposing its Labourism, the struggle against the poll tax thoroughly exposes Militant's pacifism. After all, what happened when the police attacked the ABAPTF March 31 1990 anti-poll tax demonstration in London's Trafalgar Square? Did Militant leaders respond by organising the construction of street barricades and co-ordinating the defence of the demonstration? No! Instead, with the unerring instinct of the reformist, they appealed to "a very senior police officer" to pull his men back. That proved unsuccessful. So as 3,000 actively and bravely, but without weapons or coordination, fought back - with the encouragement and sympathy of the overwhelming majority of the 200,000 strong demonstration - the Militant ABAPTF leaders quietly and with cowardice pulled their 650 stewards out and headed home.

Having seen "mounted police officers charge the crowd, including elderly protesters and mothers with young children" (*Daily Telegraph*, April 1 1990) it was frankly disgusting for Militant leaders to then blame the violence on "anarchists and lunatics". Worse, Steve Nally went on TV and promised to "name names" ... in other words line people up for arrest and imprisonment by the bourgeois state.

A genuine revolutionary organisation would expel any leader who said such a thing (Militant isn't and hasn't). A genuine revolutionary organisation would at least learn the lesson of Trafalgar Square and make the call for Workers' Defence Corps to ensure that in the future our demonstrations are defended, along with non-poll tax payers under threat from bailiffs (Militant isn't and hasn't).

3.5. Dangerous words

For a supposedly 'Marxist' 'programmatic' document *What we stand for* is remarkably lacking in basic Marxist concepts. We have already noted its refusal to face up to the Leninist theory of imperialism, its contorted formulation to avoid the word 'communism' and its denial of the inevitability of violent revolution. Hence, especially given its parliamentarianism, it is hardly surprising that *What we stand for* contains no reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is not that Militant is engaging in a conspiracy of silence. Elsewhere Militant comes out against the term dictatorship of the proletariat. Writing in the already quoted *Militant International Review* No33, Bob Sewell says that "the events of the last forty years have indelibly stained the term." Apparently "the monstrous totalitarian dictatorships that have arisen in Germany, Italy, Spain and also the Stalinist regimes, the connotations of totalitarian repression associated with the word 'dictatorship', have blotted out the meaning intended by Marx: 'predominant

rule.'" (p11) In place of proletarian dictatorship, Militant therefore substitutes "proletarian democracy" as the "correct term".

This is old as the hills revisionism. There have been a long line of 'Marxists' - stretching back to Bernstein in the 1890s - who have repudiated, or as they say 'corrected', Marx's scientifically precise term to describe socialism: the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Militant could just as well argue that events of the last 40 years (and bourgeois propaganda) have indelibly stained the terms socialism, revolution and Marxism. How quickly Militant will take to arrive at that well trod conclusion is not easy to predict. Yet its fawning before bourgeois respectability today surely gives us more than a clue. Because Militant is tied to one person one vote, 'who will misrepresent us this time' bourgeois democracy, it must reject the dictatorship of the proletariat and pretend that socialism is merely the "predominant rule" of the working class.

Only for philistines such as Militant do democracy and dictatorship stand as opposites. For Marxists it is elementary that democracy is merely a form of the state, and that all states are class dictatorships. However democratic, all are ultimately based on the use of force by one class against another. The socialist state is no exception. It is the dictatorship of the proletariat, "the organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class", the rule of the working class unrestricted by any laws, not the "predominant rule" of the working class.

Compared with bourgeois democracy, the dictatorship of the proletariat - with its soviets, workers' militia and subordination of the bureaucracy - is a thousand times more democratic. Nonetheless it cannot be denied that democracy itself means the suppression of the minority: under socialism the suppression of the old ruling class, the expropriated capitalists. This can be peaceful, but if needs must it will be ruthless and violent.

Quite clearly the term dictatorship of the proletariat is central to the Marxist world view. That is why Lenin insisted on more than one occasion that: "Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

4. The Leninist tactic of affiliation and the Militant strategy of entryism

For Lenin it was a principle that communists should always, no matter what the circumstances or difficulties, organise themselves independently of, and if needs be against, other trends and forces within the workers' movement. Firstly, so as to openly declare and spread their politics, and secondly, to begin the slow, painful but necessary task of building a genuine Communist Party capable of uniting, training and organising the vanguard of the proletariat and successfully leading the mass of the working class to the conquest of political power. Only with a Communist Party, not a 'radical' Labour Party, can we hope to see socialism.

Naturally there was no universal blueprint detailing how to build such a party. Tactics have to be developed that take full account of the tempo of the class struggle in each country and all other national peculiarities. It was with this in mind that, when it came to Britain - and only Britain - Lenin sided with those who called for the newly formed CPGB to seek affiliation to the Labour Party: a party of the Second International from which he was doing his utmost to lever away the communist and revolutionary forces in order to win them to banner of the Third International.

Wanting to affiliate to the Labour Party did not mean having or fostering illusions in it. Lenin called the Labour Party a "bourgeois workers' party" which "exists to systematically dupe the workers". However, given the small size of the CPGB and the strength of Labourism, it was vital to open up an active dialogue within the working class between the advanced, communist, minority and the backward, Labourite, majority. If the CPGB was unable to do this and establish close links with the mass of workers, "then it is not a party, and is worthless in general" (Lenin).

What made the 'British exceptionalist' tactic of affiliation viable was the unique federal structure of the Labour Party. Before 1918 it was not a party in any full sense of the term; membership relied purely on membership of

one of its affiliated trade unions or socialist societies. Even after 1918, when the Labour Party began to organise individual members, affiliation remained the source of most of Labour's support and finance.

Of course, such 'British exceptionalism' was very limited. Affiliation was always viewed as a tactic, and a short term tactic at that. There was never any Militant style idea of winning the Labour Party, let alone winning it to take the lead in the fight for socialism.

As far as Lenin was concerned, CPGB affiliation to the Labour Party would give the communists a far wider audience; indeed it could only have been the result of successful communist mass work in the trade unions and Labour Party wards and constituencies. On the other hand, if the CPGB were turned down, Lenin said that "we shall gain more, for we shall at once have shown the masses that [the Labour Party leaders - JC] prefer their close relations with the capitalists to the unity of all the workers."

The tactic of affiliation was very much of its time. Conditions change and so must communist tactics; in 1946, for example, the Labour Party put a bar on any new affiliations. That does not mean that conditions could not change again or that in the future the Communist Party should refuse on principle to again consider the affiliation tactic. Nonetheless today, because of the wrecking activities of the 'official communists', the main task is not for communists to gain mass influence but to reforge our Communist Party.

Militant, at least in private, likes to draw a direct parallel between the Leninist tactic of affiliation and its strategy of entryism. Yet the very fact that it does not openly admit it is an entryist organisation says it all. It is said that it circulates the pamphlet *Entryism* to new recruits, but it will never publicly admit this strategy. It prefers to keep its history and perspectives secret.

Such entryism is by definition uncommunist. Where Marx insisted that communists deign not to conceal their views, the Trotskyites entered the parties of social democracy slyly and dishonestly, not because as individuals they kept their organisational secrets close to their chests, rather because their organisations and press made no declarations of revolutionary intent. Instead they pretended to be products of left reformism.

The supposed real views of these entryist organisations were kept concealed, as were their criticisms of left reformism. Of course, we Leninists defend the right of revolutionaries to organise in the Labour Party. But there is all the difference in the world between conspiracy and secrecy in organisation and conspiracy and secrecy in politics and ideology. One is principled, the other unprincipled.

The affiliation tactic predisposed as a matter of the highest principle that the CPGB openly demand from the Labour Party that it would have "full freedom of criticism and is able to conduct its own policy". The CPGB would openly say that it would support the Labour Party leadership like a "rope supports a hanged man", have its own independent organisation, democracy and international links, namely the Third (Communist) International.

The affiliation tactic was not only short term, it was also free of the slightest illusion in the Labour Party. Entryism, by contrast, involves feeding on and reinforcing the existing illusions workers have in Labourism and social democracy in general: after all, the Trotskyites applied it to all social democratic parties throughout the world - revealingly, showing its direction, the Militant brand of Trotskyism has extended this to include bourgeois organisations such as the People's Party of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and the ANC in South Africa.

5. In conclusion

Militant's claim to be revolutionary and its reformist practice defines it as a centrist organisation. What is important about such organisations is their direction. Are they going to the left or the right? Having examined Militant's origins, its revisionist denial of elementary Marxist truths and concepts, its increasing assimilation by the reformist left, there can be no doubt that it is drifting steadily to the right. Whatever the subjective beliefs of its members and supporters it is a right centrist organisation; as such it is an obstacle to the forces of genuine communism and a danger to the revolutionary proletariat.

Jack Conrad

Communist Party of Great Britain (The Leninist)



Communists say: Break with 'Militant' Labourism! For indefinite general strike to smash the Tories and their tax!

LIKE ALL genuine partisans of the working class, the National Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*) welcomes the Glasgow to London anti-poll tax march called by the All Britain Anti-poll Tax Federation.

The march, setting off from Glasgow on September 3 and to be joined by feeder marches from Liverpool and South Wales, will provide an excellent opportunity to mobilise the literally tens of millions who hate the Tories and their tax, and want to see them and it wrecked.

Working class versus Labour

But what does the Labour Party say? "Have nothing to do with the march," it tells its membership, it is "dominated by Militant Tendency". Again this only goes to prove what we have always said about the Labour Party — it is a bosses' party, the "bourgeois party of the working class" — in Lenin so aptly called it. Labour's recently released Thatcherite manifesto makes all too clear that Kimock leads a party which wants to run capitalism, not fight it. To ingratiate himself with the bourgeoisie, to show that their system would be safe in his hands, Kimock fawns and sycraps, and completely dissociates himself from anything that challenges their law, let alone advocates breaking it, as does the campaign for non-payment and non-collection of the poll tax.

Labour's opposition to the march must act as a spur to all those who really have the interests of the working class dear to their hearts. The march must be given maximum support. As it weaves its way down the country, town by town and city by city, Anti-Poll Tax Unions should see to it that as well as providing the occasion for local demonstrations against the poll tax, workers are won to take strike action for the day.

Strike to smash the tax!

This is the best way to ensure that, when the march reaches London in mid-October, it is met by the most massive manifestation of working class power and militancy the country has ever seen. The Militant leaders of the ABAPTF must not be allowed to get away with their plan to bring the march to a quiet sanitised respectable end with an indoor meeting and a festival. The Trafalgar Square Defence Campaigns have shown the way forward by winning the London Anti-Poll Tax Federation to organise a London march on Saturday October 20, against the opposition Militant supporters. This must be

accompanied by strike actions as the best way to prepare the working class for an indefinite general strike against the tax. Only the working class, organised as a class, can smash the poll tax along with the government that introduced it. Marches and demonstrations, no matter how big, cannot do that.

Yet we all know what happened the last time the ABAPTF organised a mass demonstration in London — following it *The Leninist* said "never again". An estimated 200,000 turned up in a tremendous display of anger, determination and defiance, only to be subjected to a sustained, vicious and well orchestrated attack by police. Thousands were injured and 500 arrested. Subsequently a shop your neighbour which burnt was launched, and over 100 people have been hauled in.

'Revolutionary' Labourites

As we have made clear, it could have been different. The organisers — who, after all, say they are revolutionaries — should have taken the lead in throwing up barricades against charges by mounted police and speeding crip wagons. They should have distributed makeshift weapons, eg. iron railings and broken up paving stones. Using their stewards, walkie-talkies and other communications equipment, they should have co-ordinated the thousands able and willing to fight back against police terror.

Instead, while some 3,000 bravely fought back at their own volition — with the approval and sympathy of the overwhelming majority of the demonstration — the Militant Tendency leaders of the ABAPTF withdrew their 600 stewards and headed home.

If this cowardly act of desertion were not bad enough, leading Militant supporters then went on to blame the violence, not on the police, but on "marchists and lunatics". Steve Nally, ABAPTF secretary, insisted that "deliberate attacks" on the marauding thugs in blue had to be condemned, and promised on the bosses' media to "name names" — in other words to line people up for arrest and imprisonment by the state.

Although these parliamentary Trotskyites have done their best in *Militant* to backtrack on the more outrageous rightist statements Nally and other leading Militant supporters made in the immediate aftermath of Trafalgar Square, they have not disowned them. Why? Because Militant is tied body and soul to the Labour Party.

Not a penny for the bourgeois state!

Militant desperately wants to avoid further expulsions of its supporters. Therefore it goes out of its way to prove itself the loyal left wing of Kimock's party. That is why its supporters behave and act as good law-abiding subjects of Her Majesty and why *Militant* has recently come out in support of Kimock's version of the poll tax, first the roof tax, and then higher rates! In an editorial it advised the bourgeoisie state that the 'roof tax' was a "good starting point" which, if implemented, would be "fairer" and "cheap and easy to collect" (May 18 1990).

Given this thoroughly reformist approach, while it is vital to give the Glasgow to London march maximum support, there can be no trust whatsoever placed in its organisers. Indeed, every effort must be made to facilitate a quick change in leadership. We need a real, not a fake, militant leadership of the anti-poll tax movement. To get it there must be the fullest democracy in the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation and on the march itself. Only then can the march be safe and the anti-poll tax movement effective.

Fight for the Communist strategy:

• Marchers should be allowed to elect delegates to a march committee. It, not self-appointed functionaries, should be responsible for every aspect of the march. Delegates should report back daily to the marchers and be instantly recallable.

• Local Anti-Poll Tax Unions must begin now forming Worker's Defence Corps to protect the march and the end of march London demonstration from police attack, and to confront the bailiffs.

• Anti-Poll Tax Unions should be made up of elected and recallable delegates from local working class political groups, trade unions, unemployed groups and tenants' associations and other working class organisations committed to non-payment of the poll tax.

• The All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation should consist of elected and recallable delegates from local Anti-Poll Tax Unions. Transform it into a National Council of Action.

• Break the Tories' anti-trade union laws and the Tory government. For an indefinite general strike against the poll tax.

National Committee
Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*)

Read *The Leninist* fortnightly paper of the Communist Party of Great Britain (*The Leninist*). Individual copies 70p from: TL, BCM Bow 928, London, WC1N 3XX. (Tel: 071-431 5135)