

IRELAND WILL WIN

A NEW WAVE of Loyalist violence is sweeping the Six Counties. Far from the prime target of this terror being the RUC, as the British press insists, it is Catholics who are the main victims. Despite this, Loyalist attacks on the RUC prove yet again how profound the revolutionary crisis gripping the Six Counties really is.

Revolutionary situations do not just propel into action the most oppressed section of the population but, because the ruling class cannot rule in the old way, all sections of the population. Of course this happens not all of a sudden, out of the blue, but around major political questions resulting from ruling class attempts to resolve the revolutionary crisis negatively.

This was the case over the Hillsborough Accord.

Having brought the Twenty-six Counties government into the anti-republican movement struggle, the British government found itself with furious Loyalist politicians screaming 'sellout' on its hands and a fearful Protestant working class taking to the streets burning effigies of Thatcher.

The Ulster Loyalist Coordinating Committee was set up drawing in virtually every section of Loyalism. Illegal Orange Order parades went ahead in defiance of the RUC and Loyalist protests culminated in a general strike. Almost the whole of industry in the Six Counties was shut down as hordes of masked, and sometimes armed, Loyalist thugs set up road blocks throughout the province. The RUC stayed true to their Loyalist brethren and stood quietly by.

But what lies at the root of Loyalist objections to the Accord and their violence?

In part it is a question of Loyalist politicians being increasingly marginalised, in part a simple question of xenophobia. But to this has been added a sense of desperation engendered by the Six Counties' continued economic slide, growing Protestant unemployment and the inability of the British state to smash the IRA.

To counter this the Thatcher government has, as is known, deployed extra troops to combat the IRA and ensured that a £200 million order went to Harland and Wolff shipyard which employs almost exclusively Protestants. Thatcher has also promised to implement the Accord with 'sensitivity'. It will not be scrapped but Paisley and Molyneux can take part in round table talks with her. Whether these morsels will satisfy the Loyalist dog remains to be seen; what is certain is that they will not resolve the crisis of British rule in the Six Counties.

Britain has of course no intention of unifying Ireland. As Tom King said, "for all intents and purposes and in perpetuity there will never be a united Ireland." Nor does it intend to let Fitzgerald have a serious say about the internal workings of the Northern Ireland statelet.



Nonetheless the fact that many Loyalists see the RUC as custodians of the Hillsborough Accord has led to attacks on RUC members, especially when Kevin White was killed by a plastic bullet. Such violence is largely being carried out by small groups of young Loyalists. And yet argument around these attacks have caused great problems for established Loyalist leaders. Paisley and Molyneux have reluctantly come out against their 'hot heads' and insist on their rather meek 12 point anti-Accord campaign remaining within the law, this they recognise might open the door for mass support for 'final solution' bigots like the DUP's Peter Robinson.

Historically the Protestant working class has always stood for the defence of Loyalist privileges against its Catholic brothers and sisters. This was seen in the 1920s and 30s pogroms, the attacks on civil rights marches in the late 1960s, the anti-power sharing 'Ulster Workers' Strike' of 1974 and the Loyalist Strike of 1977.

Protestants owe their material

privileges over Catholics, not to any particular British government, but to the British state itself and the maintenance of the link with Britain. Loyalism is a lap-dog of British imperialism but a lap-dog which will snap at anything it sees as threatening this link.

Many in the workers' movement in Britain, from Neil Kinnock and the *Morning Star* to the Trotskyites of *Militant* and the Spartacist League, would in essence equate the violence of republicans and Loyalists. Against this, for them, 'irrational' violence, they preach unity around trade union issues. The Sparts' *Workers Hammer*, like Kinnock, *Militant* and the *Morning Star*, calls for Irish workers to forget their national oppression and insists that the Six Counties' working class, irrespective of their relationship to British imperialism "combat Orange and Green terror" (January 1986). After all it says in true economic style "Catholic and Protestant workers alike rallied in class solidarity behind British miners."

This view is of course utopian, reactionary and thoroughly un-

Marxist, failing as it does to understand that the major contradiction in Ireland is imperialist domination of Ireland, not a clean cut labour vs capital contradiction pure and simple. Objectively, calls for the Irish to forget the national struggle are pro-imperialist, missing entirely as they do the real and deep division in the Six Counties' proletariat maintained by the border and British imperialism. Such workerist nonsense inevitably fails to differentiate between the violence of the oppressed and the violence of the oppressors — and that is unforgivable for those who claim to be the heirs of Karl Marx — a man who tirelessly fought for British workers to side with the IRA of his day — the Fenians.

Orange violence is reactionary, pro-imperialist and anti-Catholic. IRA or INLA 'Green violence' like that of the Fenians, no matter how blunt and misdirected on occasions, is revolutionary, directed against British imperialism and its minions. The task of communists is not to wring our hands in anguish at the

'uncivilised' behaviour of the Irish but to fight for the working class in Ireland to realise itself as a class and win its hegemony over the struggle for national liberation.

Only in this way can sections of the Protestant working class be won away from Loyalism. Only through a programme aimed towards the triumph of the Irish anti-imperialist democratic revolution under working class leadership and the establishment of a new order which can go uninterruptedly from democratic to socialist tasks can working class unity be forged.

Economism, whether of the 'left' or right is no answer. It is true that both sections of the working class are threatened by unemployment, but, thanks to the very nature of the sectarian statelet, Catholics suffer unemployment rates two to three times higher than Protestants.

Indeed, although the Loyalist working class is exploited by capital, its privileged position in the labour market transforms it into a labour aristocracy. Therefore, when the Loyalist working class considers its jobs, living standards and rights threatened, it will not look to class solidarity. It correctly identifies the source of its relative privilege as stemming from British imperialism's division of Ireland and the oppression of the Catholic population. It will therefore lash out at anything or anyone thought to threaten this division, whether it be the IRA, the Dublin government, or, paradoxically, a Thatcher British government.

Whichever way Britain turns, it seems to get deeper into the quagmire. Every measure it takes to end the revolutionary situation seems to succeed in suppressing it for a short time. Yet all these measures have in the end the effect of throwing oil on the flames of revolution.

The sending of troops in August 1969, the disbanding of the B Specials, internment, power sharing, the abolition of Stormont, the promotion of the so-called Peace People, 'Ulsterisation' all backfired. No wonder Thatcher opted for a 'do nothing' policy for so long. But even this did not work, thus the bringing in of the Dublin government and the counterrevolutionary Accord.

This might have tidied up cross border security, strengthened extradition arrangements between the two states and revived the flagging SDLP, but already the balance is tipping against British imperialism and the flames of revolution are burning fiercer and could spread to a wider area.

The Accord is exposing the Dublin government before all nationalists in the South, the SDLP is becoming seen as simply pro-British, the IRA remains undefeated, Sinn Fein retains a mass base and — to cap it all — the Loyalists are running riot. The counterrevolutionary Hillsborough Accord is backfiring before our eyes.

Alan Merrik



Tell the truth

A RECENT issue of *Gercegin Sesi*, the scandal rag of the 'official' Communist Party of Turkey, denounces us for using of all things a silhouette of a mosque in a supplement we carried on Turkey.

Of course in Britain such a design is nothing more than an instantly recognisable symbol for Istanbul, much like St Pauls for London or the Statue of Liberty for New York. So why is *Gercegin Sesi* so uptight?

Could the answer lie in the fact that at the so-called congress the crisis ridden 'official' Communist Party of Turkey organised in 1984 they hung a giant silhouette of a mosque behind their leaders? In Britain this would be akin to using the cross. No wonder they were mocked with derision by the Leninist party in Turkey the Communist Party of Turkey (*Iscinin Sesi*). It is in a pathetic attempt to tar the CPT (*IS*) with the religious brush that these hypocrites quote our paper. They conveniently say we are nothing more than an adjunct of *Iscinin Sesi*.

The Mensheviks have not, though, contented themselves with the purile 'ideological struggle' of *Gercegin Sesi*. Over recent weeks their members have staged the most blatant provocations against *Iscinin Sesi*.

Unfortunately the *Morning Star* has, despite its broad labour movement claims, cynically given its services to this desperate campaign. Last month it carried a report headlined "Turkish workers' amnesty call" (April 28 1986). The story is obviously the product of the same school of journalism as *Gercegin Sesi*.

It claimed "Almost 1,000 Turkish workers" attended a meeting to "launch the Immigrants Rights Campaign". In truth the number was between 5-600. But more importantly it claimed "men (recognised as members of *Iscinin Sesi*, armed with sticks tried to prevent them entering the hall." This is not just an exaggeration but a straightforward case of lying.

The fact is that the Mensheviks could not tolerate those with whom they disagree, selling and distributing their literature, which included not only *Iscinin Sesi*, but even Labour Party election material. It was they who were armed with "sticks" and it was they who, finding threats did not work, launched an unprovoked assault, including on women comrades.

Ironically they found themselves outfought. Then acting in the most uncommunist fashion possible they called the notoriously racist Stoke Newington police, pointing out victims for the police to arrest.

The *Morning Star* article is clearly yet another attempt to discredit *Iscinin Sesi* and the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey. Previously it was Euro comrade Chris Myant who had this job. Now the Menshevik 'officials' are using the CCG. But all to no avail. Although the *Morning Star* tells its readers "At one time the CDDRT had the support of many MPs and British unions, but most have withdrawn their backing over recent years" no MPs or trade unions have withdrawn sponsorship, indeed the majority of the CDDRT general council are Labour Party members.

According to the *Morning Star* *Iscinin Sesi* is "an ultra-leftist group expelled from the Turkish Communist Party" (sic). We can ignore the "ultra-leftist" label coming as it does from congenial rightists. As to the expulsion this is one of the few truths in the *Morning Star* report.

The Menshevik 'official' CPT have pleaded to the Turkish ruling class on countless occasions for legality. To prove their credentials they expelled the Leninists in 1979 and have promised to be good "Western Europeans" and model themselves on the communist parties of Spain, France and Italy. This thirst for respectability has forced on them the most opportunist political positions and the most bureaucratic methods to deal with those who fought this opportunism.

No wonder over the past year 'official' CPT organisations in Berlin, Frankfurt, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Holland and France have gone from opposition to rebellion. There comrades have issued a statement accusing the leadership of having liquidated the party region by region and even of "betraying many individuals and organisations" to the police.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Vanguard I

Comrade Conrad's review of the *Vanguard* No.1 had certain weaknesses which are inconsistent with the principled position he takes on Ireland. It is imperative for communist unity and proletarian internationalism to understand the nature of all the tasks in the fight against liquidationism.

I begin with a quote from Lenin (from the *Right of Nations of Self-determination*) "As far back as 1902, Plekhanov, in defending the 'right of self-determination' in the draft programme, wrote that this demand which is not obligatory for bourgeois democrats, is 'obligatory for social democrats'.

"If we forget or hesitate to advance it" wrote Plekhanov 'for fear of offending the national prejudices of the present generation of Great Russians ... the call "Workers of all countries unite!" on our lips would become a shameful lie."

Lenin continues "The renunciation of this point, no matter what the motives, means in reality, a shameful concession to Great Russian nationalism." (Read for our purposes 'Great British nationalism'.)

To recognise the right of self-determination but not to advance it, is objectively not to recognise it at all: "The interests of the unity of proletarians, the interests of class solidarity demand the recognition of the right of nations to secession" (Lenin *Ibid*). To ignore this is to concede to nationalism and enhance liquidationism.

Let me continue by pointing to an incorrect characterisation made by comrade Conrad of John MacLean's "nationalistic response to the CPGB and Comintern". John MacLean saw the move for Scottish "separation" as part of the process of the decline of the British empire. This is, in reality, an internationalist position he held before the formation of the CPGB.

The CPGB and Comintern were not infallible as subsequently was proven later. Marx, himself, in the study of Ireland, initially believed that Irish freedom would come through English ascendancy and through deeper study came to the opposite conclusion.

It is a strong conviction of the present-day followers of John MacLean that had Lenin made a deeper study of the Scottish situation, that Comintern would not have allowed only one British organisation of communists.

On the other hand, in my opinion, John MacLean responded to the mistaken position of Comintern by an over-reaction to the subjective weakness and the tailism of the early CPGB, which left him isolated, due to the moral authority of the Comintern at that time. Genuine communists must direct themselves towards the struggle to reforge the Communist International and do so by participating in the revolutionary heritage of the CPGB, but, where that heritage fails our cause and is mistaken, we must heal our wounds before they worsen.

Al Donaldson
Glasgow

Vanguard II

Jack Conrad criticises the new *Vanguard* and before it, John MacLean for advocating a Scottish Workers' Republic. But his criticism fails to confront MacLean's reasons for advocating the Workers' Republic.

Leninist politics are based on concrete analyses of concrete conditions. Statements of general principles without concrete investigation of how they apply are no use. He says that your position on

MacLean is "not a manifestation of London based chauvinism but flows from proletarian internationalism and the imperative need for all workers in Britain to unite against their common enemy." Well, we communists favour not only unity of all workers in Britain, but for some 140 years we have been calling upon workers of all countries to unite. But this does not help decide the issue. We need to be more specific. We must ask the following:

1. Would the establishment of a Scottish Workers' Republic be in the interests of the international workers' and socialist movement?

2. Is this a realisable political objective?

3. In fighting for this objective do we forgo any alternatives that are both more realisable, and on balance more advantageous to the cause of international socialism?

John MacLean's answer to these questions was, yes, yes, no.

1. A Workers' Republic would be a serious blow to British imperialism, then the main world force for reaction. Hence it would be in the international workers' movement.

2. It was realisable because Glasgow and the west were the biggest concentration of heavy industry in the empire and had the most militant working class. The Irish national liberation movement had shown the practicability of organising an insurrectionary movement within only part of the British state.

3. The alternative objective of an all British Socialist Republic was less realistic because of the less favourable balance of class forces in England. But the overthrow of capitalism in England was unlikely to be retarded by a successful revolution in Scotland. It was more likely that emulation would act to advance it.

It is not enough just to say that MacLean disagreed with Moscow on the issue of a workers' republic. Conrad must demonstrate that MacLean's assessment — that Scotland was the weakest link in Britain's imperialist chain — was wrong, and that the Comintern assessment was right. It've keep in mind that since 1917 there has not been a single successful socialist revolution that was not intimately linked to a national liberation movement, and that there is no evidence that the application of the Comintern strategy did bring about a socialist revolution in early 20th century Britain, the Comintern's case does not seem strong.

If you are willing to clearly state the premises from which you are arguing, and examine the concrete conditions under which we operate today, then it should be possible for the *Vanguard* and *The Leninist* to conduct a fruitful debate.

W P Cockshott

Jack Conrad replies:

Very briefly. Comrades Donaldson and Cockshott make different criticisms. Nonetheless I hope they won't mind my replying to them collectively.

1. We advance the right of any nation in Britain or anywhere to form their own state. But we do not advocate the use of this right in Britain. Indeed in general we are against separatism. In the same way, Lenin stood for the right of nations in the USSR to secede, but fought nationalism. The majority of people in Wales and Scotland do not want separation from England and yet you as communists seem determined to win them to this nationalistic response to British capitalism's deepening problems. This is both divisive and diversionary. Comrade Cockshott in his recent pamphlet quite contrarily advocates separatism for the Scottish who don't want it, but calls for British workers to defend the so-called rights of the pro-imperialist labour aristocracy in the artificial statelet of

Northern Ireland to remain "British" against the majority of the Irish people.

2. Logically you are both liquidationist. You implicitly deny the task of reorganising the CPGB and its task of organising workers in all parts of Britain. The Bolsheviks advanced the right of self-determination but argued against its use except in Finland and Poland, as we do over Ireland, because the masses in those countries were determined on independence. Lenin therefore insisted on their right to organise throughout what is now the USSR.

3. We stand by the theses and resolutions of the early Comintern because they represent some of the best examples of the theory and practice of proletarian internationalism. As there has not been a revolutionary situation in Britain this century it is hardly surprising there has not been a revolution. This does not invalidate the Marxism-Leninism of Comintern.

4. It was not Comintern but John MacLean who made subjective mistakes. The idea that Lenin would have come over to his view after "study" is foolish. Lenin's position on organising communist parties on the basis of existing states was not a whim. Should he have called for independent and separate Ukrainian, Georgian, etc states and communist parties as opposed to the Bolshevik Party with its subordinate Ukrainian and Georgian etc organisations and the Soviet Union with its Ukrainian and Georgian etc republics?

5. A Scottish Workers' Republic is, and was, a utopian diversion. The fight for one by communists in Scotland does indeed weaken the fight for the British revolution. So while I as an English communist support the right of the Welsh or Scottish people to have their own state if they see fit, you as Scottish communists should, given the concrete situation in Britain, be fighting for the unity of our working class not against it.

South Africa

It was with some upset I found you had gone to press with *The Leninist* of April 1986 without consulting me with regard to the transcript I received of the conversation I had with your interviewer.

You have done your readership and me a disservice. You have published what I consider to be an unresearched draft of a taped conversation — not the thing to achieve political understanding or accuracy. I had not been given any indication of urgency, but it would have been easy enough for you to pick up the phone. Then for instance more of the names in the piece would have been spelled correctly. It is Mofutsanyana (who was editor of *Inkululeko*, not *Kotane*), Sam Kahn, Mike Harmel, Luthuli and, while I am about it, Mabhida. I am outraged. Yours fraternally David Kitson London

Jack Conrad replies:

We did of course send comrade Kitson a transcript of the interview. But clearly there was a misunderstanding for which we take full responsibility. We apologise.

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



WRITE TO:
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The CCG says it will have a "stab at democracy". There is little evidence of it so far.

London CCG Conference

THE LONDON CCG Conference proved to be a bit of a non-event. Although 94 supporters turned up (not the 150 reported in the *Morning Star*) the organisers apparently considered it of more importance to demonstrate CCG solidarity with Libya than getting down to much needed serious debate. Because of this the "one day conference" was cut short after only three hours.

Even within those few hours debate was virtually non-existent. Instead the audience was treated to speechifying from CCG leading lights.

Derek Robinson was given the task of presenting the main political report. He hit off in masterly fashion by declaring the US bombing of Libya to be the "most serious crisis since World War II". As if this silly, if rather innocent, exaggeration was not bad enough, he went on to make a real clanger, by praising Cold War warrior Denis Healey on peace. According to the CCG's vice chairman: Healey is "probably making the most progressive statements of any Labour leader".

Surely Robinson's speech was checked beforehand by the CCG National Committee? If it was, and it must have been if the CCG is any sort of organisation, this stuff about Healey is an indictment of the entire CCG leadership. But worse was to come from an increasingly pale pink Red Robbo.

As well as the usual reformist clap trap about the AES and electing a Labour government of "a new type", Robinson spoke about the Communist Party. Its Executive Committee had, he said, with its "acceptance" of Pete Carter's report to the March meeting represented its "break with the organised working class".

Logically Robinson and the CCG must think the wonderful Denis Healey is in the workers' movement (as he unfortunately is) while the CPGB EC along with Mick McGahey, George Bolton are not (which of course they are).

The second platform speaker, Ray Colvin, the CCG National Organiser, contradicted Robinson by implication. "The CCG" aims, he said "to become the effective daily leadership of the CP". A body which Robinson says is outside the workers' movement.

Does this difference between Robinson and Colvin represent the first manifestations of divergence in the CCG, or is it simply a lack of clarity amongst its leadership? Either way it bodes ill for the CCG.

On the CCG itself, Colvin announced that its journal, first promised for late last year, then the summer of this, has now been delayed until September 1 in time for TUC week; an awful admission of the awe in which the CCG holds the trade union bureaucracy. The Communist Campaign Review will need £10,000 for its launch he said; surely £1,000 would be enough for a first edition? Is the CCG reluctant to put its views down in length for fear of us pointing out differences and inconsistencies? If not, why the constant delay in launching a journal?

Colvin insisted that the CCG was "not a separate party". Nonetheless,



Rosser, Hicks and Gill: CCG bigwigs.

although no thorough ideological discussion has taken place, presumably to prepare the day when it is, its leadership is going ahead immediately with plans for organising a national structure: from a National Committee down to Area and Regional Committees and branches. Interestingly it will also "have a stab at democracy" and will "operate the essence of democracy" — something sadly lacking in the CCG so far and impossible in a communist organisation without the struggle to obtain theoretical clarity on the basis of genuine Marxism-Leninism.

An indication of this was the fact that only seven floor speakers were allowed into the first of two discussions. That they included CCG bigwigs like Bill Freeman and Mary Davis, shows in practice the CCG's rather dismissive attitude towards genuine debate from the rank and file.

Intriguingly Mary Davis called for those in the CCG to "stick together despite tactical differences". Are these "tactical differences" over whether or not the CPGB is in the workers' movement, the CCG's loyalty to the reformist programme of the CPGB, the *British Road to Socialism*, or what?

We can only guess. But if they are, these are matters of principle, not tactic. As such they should be fully debated and not buried for the sake of CCG anti-Euro unity. Such false unity is a sham, is unprincipled and destined to shatter at the first serious test.

The most interesting of the floor speakers was Ken Keable. Going to the heart of the enigma inside a contradiction, that is the CCG, he declared: "don't hide disagreements". And to the obvious embarrassment of the platform he went on to say, "CCG leaders and supporters share responsibility for the long list of opportunist developments towards Eurocommunism".

To prove his point, he listed the move "away from class politics" that the name change of the *Daily Worker* to the *Morning Star* represented; the "massive over-emphasis on electoral work"; the failure to "fight racism, sexism, anti-gay prejudices in the Party"; the anti-Sovietism of the *Morning Star*; and the failure to develop Marxist-Leninist education. Keable called for "self criticism of the past — especially from leaders", and quite rightly noted that CCG leaders "spoke as if all was well before 1983".

These telling points and his healthy call for self criticism were not answered because now it was 11.30 am and time for Mike Hicks.



He spoke on the Wapping dispute. Characteristically he let rip with one over-statement after another, and thereby destroyed any claim to be taken seriously. The "multi-nationals" had produced in Britain "the most oppressive anti-trade union laws in the world" (tell that to workers in South Africa, Turkey or Chile); "all trade union actions are illegal" (really effective action may be, but all ...?); the "Euros and Straight Left are totally irrelevant to politics" (come off it Mike).

Tom Durkin, again a platform speaker, followed. He bemoaned Reagan's attack on Libya for damaging the "first frail roots of peace" seen at the Geneva summit. Durkin was absolutely correct to attack Kinnock for his let's squeeze Gaddafi rather than bomb him 'alternative' to Thatcher. Disappointingly though, the US anti-Soviet war drive was put down to Reagan being 'mad' and the task of communists in Britain was limited to campaigning for 'US bases out of Britain' — as opposed to the Leninist perspective of fighting the threat of war by fighting for revolution.

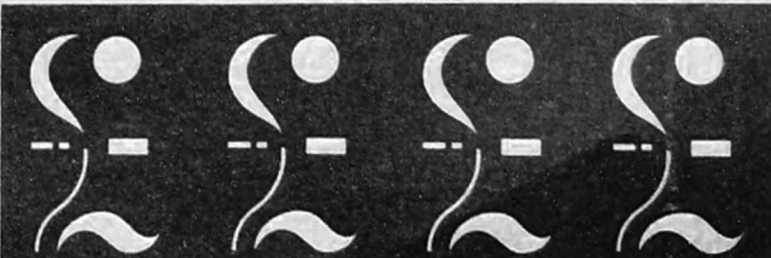
A move to make an amendment to the CCG protest against the US attack on Libya followed, but this was not allowed, and after seven rather uninteresting floor speakers, the conference was drawn to a close with a collection and a speech by Mary Rosser of the PPS. Her remarks were of some import, dealing as they did with the relationship between the *Morning Star*, the CCG and the Communist Party.

"The CCG" she said was not "a narrow or sectarian faction" or a "bunch of splitters" and should therefore "not limit itself to fighting for reinstatement" (for those expelled by the EC). The *Morning Star* she went on is "not the mouthpiece for the CCG" and "should not and cannot take on the role of the CP". Its role, Rosser maintained, was to "take CP policies into the movement". Is this a veiled warning to CCGers who might dare to contemplate revising or even ditching the *BRS*? Certainly Ken Gill, leader of the CCG 'heads down' tendency, is known to be unhappy about the *Morning Star* being seen by his TUC chums as a CCG mouthpiece. Could the PPS Management Committee bigwigs be giving the CCG rank and file notice of who is in charge? If so it seems that fighting reformism and taking Marxism-Leninism into the working class will have to rely on *The Leninist* not a CCG *Morning Star*.

The latest edition of *Umsebenzi* (Vol.2 No.2), the paper of the South African Communist Party, is now out. It contains several pages of tributes to Moses Mabhida, the Party's General Secretary, who died in Maputa on March 8 1986. His funeral which took place in Mozambique was given full military honours. Attended by representatives of every section of the liberation movement, from inside and outside South Africa, the funeral was also an occasion which the participants used to express their commitment to the struggle for which Moses Mabhida lived and died. Extracts from the funeral oration delivered by SACP Chairman, Joe Slovo, are contained in *Umsebenzi*. Comrade Slovo stressed that Mabhida saw in the working class "the key force in the alliance of classes facing the enemy." The comrade pointed out that there was "no conflict between" Mabhida's leadership of the Communist Party "and his role as a top leader of the African National Congress." Comrade Slovo said that Mabhida was dedicated "to the task of creating a united South African people and, more especially, a united force of all workers whose organised strength would ensure that the fruit of the people's sacrifice will not be appropriated by yet another group of exploiters who might present themselves with faces of another colour." Other orations reprinted in extract in *Umsebenzi* came from ANC President Oliver Tambo, John Nkadimeng, General Secretary of Sactu, and President Samora Machel of Mozambique. *Umsebenzi* also reports a mass rally in Port Elizabeth in honour of Moses Mabhida which attracted 20,000 people. We communists in Britain have a duty to do all in our power to aid the struggle of our comrades in South Africa. One small way this can be done is to raise money for *Umsebenzi*. Already our readers and supporters have raised £290 and we are aiming to up that to £500 as soon as possible. Unfortunately other sections of our communist movement has not been as generous. We therefore repeat our call for our readers to make regular collections at every trade union, Party and AAM meeting they attend. We also call upon our readers to join our militant contingent on the AAM demonstration on June 28. Assemble behind our banners at 11am in Hyde Park.

Those who only read the *Morning Star* (a mistake) might be at loss to understand the recent disappearance of Graeme Atkinson's name from the paper. They would be even more at a loss about the obscure column inch from the editor about Graeme Atkinson and *20/20 Vision*. *Morning Star* readers who bothered to read Tony Chater's note must have been bemused to say the least. As most of our readers will know, the truth went something like this. Graeme while on assignment in Bulgaria for the *Morning Star* was approached by that country's secret service and asked to help track down a Soviet citizen for the umbrella treatment. This worm who had defected to Britain, had since specialised in fingering Tudeh Party members for Khomeini's regime's butchers and torturers. Not content with simply turning the Bulgarian comrades down, with a polite "no thanks", Graeme went to *20/20 Vision* and let the cat out of the bag. We call this a contemptible act for a communist — why did Tony Chater employ him, why hasn't he been sacked, and why hasn't the Party's Executive Committee begun disciplinary procedures?

The 1.6 million strong Italian Communist Party held its 17th Congress over April 9-13. Its official congress slogans were: *The PCI — an integral part of the European Left*, and; *The PCI — a modern party of reform*. The 1,000 delegates voted to continue the PCI's drift to the right. They reaffirmed their opposition to nuclear weapons but also their approval of Italy's continued membership of NATO. In the same fashion they backed the EEC and monetary union and came out against nationalisation. To cap it all PCI General Secretary Alessandro Natta declared communists nothing special and pointed to the future of the PCI in alliances with European social democrats. Already links with other communist parties have been lessened in favour of cultivating the Federal German SDP and the French Socialist Party. Sadly, serious opposition to this social democratisation is lacking.



Comrades, *The Leninist* needs your help urgently. Our organisation has been robbed of £1,200 worth of equipment vital to our continued growth. This is at a time when our financial resources are stretched to the very limit with the launch of our fortnightly. Two individuals have betrayed the trust we placed in them. The revolution will judge them. We brand them before the workers' movement as common criminals, but we will not resort to bourgeois law. Instead we are forced to make a plea to you, our hard pressed readers and supporters, for £1,200 on top of our £600 monthly fund, all within the month of May. This is the best answer to give the traitors harboured in our ranks. We will raise the money stolen within two weeks. We know our readers will help us do it. Already since the launch of our fortnightly our £600 monthly fighting fund stands at £389. This must be hoisted to at least £1,800 by the end of the month if our plans for growth are to go ahead.

"In 1983, the first Militants to be elected as MPs — Mr Terry Fields and Mr Dave Nellist — took their seats in parliament.

"Had they been chosen by *Militant* headquarters specifically to counter the thuggish image of *Militant*, they could not have done better. They have adopted a very low profile at Westminster — indeed Mr. Fields has sunk without a trace, while Mr. Nellist's laborious efforts to master procedure and his fearless, if bumbling, assaults on ministers at Question Time have endeared him to many" (*Financial Times*, February 26, 1985).

HOW SWEET. But if the ruling class is so unperturbed about having two "Marxist" MPs in its very midst, why is Neil Kinnock so determined to kick them out of his 'broad church' Labour Party? Week after week in *Militant* events of mere world significance are relegated to inside news as the paper chronicles the developing witchhunt. So why is this purge of the left being launched during this period? Why haven't *Militant* responded in a more aggressive way to the onslaught? And who is this pond-slime Nick Raynsford? What on earth is going on?

The Labour Party

For *Militant*, working class politics in Britain begin and end with the Labour Party. In order to justify their subordination before social democracy past, present and future, this organisation has to invent a past that the Labour Party never truly had. Thus, according to Tony Aitman, one of the 'Liverpool 12', "When the Labour Party was formed, it was through the coming together of a number of organisations sharing the common desire for a socialist transformation." (*Militant*, April 11, 1986).

In actual fact, socialist principles played very little part in the founding of the Labour Party. Most of the delegates to the Labour Representation Committee in February 1900 were largely radical liberal trade unionists, either explicitly hostile to, or with very little sympathy for, socialist ideas. In fact one of the main impulses behind the founding of the Labour Party was the need of the labour bureaucracy for a wider and more coherent political vehicle than the trade unions, existing as they did under Liberal patronage, allowed them. The much vaunted Clause IV of the party hailed by successive generations of left-wingers as proof of the 'socialist' credentials of the party, was only adopted in 1918, in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and in hurried response to the wave of upheavals that shook all of Europe in this period.

Lenin saw the founding of the Labour Party as only "the first step on the part of the really proletarian organisations of Britain towards a class conscious policy and towards a socialist workers' party." (our emphasis). The "first step" it might have been, but Lenin was unequivocal on the actual political character of the new Labour Party. It was a "thoroughly bourgeois party led by reactionaries", an "organisation of the bourgeoisie which exists to systematically dupe the workers".

A materialist understanding of what the Labour Party represents was and is a key issue for communists in Britain. Without it, the magnetic pull of social democracy, given prevailing conditions in this country, would ultimately be irresistible. Working class activists often argue with us that the politics of *The Leninist* are fine, but unless we decide to pursue them inside the mass political organisation of the working class, then they are simply abstract principles with no practical effect and we are in fact guilty of that bugbear of the British working class movement, "sectarianism". This argument is a powerful one in some ways.

The left of the Labour Party, viewed from the outside in a non-Marxist way, appears to pursue worthwhile and (importantly) realisable aims. 'The next Labour government' is always the cry of the left wing of the Party. 'The next Labour government' must adopt a bold socialist programme; the 'next Labour government' must reinstate all sacked miners; the 'next Labour government' must not be like the one before it (or the one before that, or the one before that, etc ...). So why not simply join the party and throw our weight behind this worthy battle to transform it into an organisation that will bring socialism to Britain?

In reality however, the struggle of the left of the Labour Party is an impossible one. The party is wedded body and soul to British imperialism: it is the party of the venal labour bureaucracy, a bourgeois workers' party. The

role of the left and right in such a political formation is therefore complementary and symbiotic rather than fundamentally antagonistic.

What do we mean by this? And how dare we say such a scandalous thing! After all, the left and the right of the Labour Party are normally at each others' throats most of the time: with the right wing at the moment viciously attacking and proscribing *Militant*, isn't it rather 'sectarian' to suggest that in fact on one level the fight is just shadow dancing, that their duels can never be to the death and that in fact at the end of the day, both wings of the Party need each other.

Bosses' Man

Few people now argue that Kinnock is anything other than a straight-down-the-line bosses' man. He has had success after success in moulding Labour as a moderate, "classless" party for the upwardly mobile video owner. Shortly after the launch of the new manifesto of the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee, *A new partnership, a new Britain*, the *Financial Times* commented: "overall, it seems likely that Labour will end up with a modified brand of Reaganomics ...". Workers will hardly need to be told what this in practice will mean for their living standards, trade union rights and the length of the dole queues. Just take a long, hard look over the Atlantic to the 'land of the free' if you have any questions.

The right of the party, taking their lead from the Welsh wizard, have hounded and humiliated *Militant* around the country. The actions of the candidate at the recent Fulham by-election, the creepy Nick Raynsford, have been fairly typical. Ten days before polling, Raynsford was asked to comment on the imminent arrival of Derek Hatton, a member of his own party still facing attacks from the state for leading a militant struggle against the Tories, into the constituency for a LPYS meeting. Nick, frankly, was miffed:

"I will send a message to tell him he's not welcome." He added (just in case anybody hadn't got the point) "I will not speak on a platform with Derek Hatton and I do not welcome his involvement."

Of course, the date ten days before the Fulham polling day was April 1: Derek was never coming and when the press let Nick in on the joke everybody laughed like a drain and agreed what a good wheeze it had all been. As if Hatton would dare show his face in an area whose Labour Party had put out a campaign newsletter assuring voters that "the few extremists that do exist are being firmly dealt with by the Party!" As if *Militant* would do anything to ruin the electoral chances of their beloved organisation! Those few supporters of Ted Grant brave enough to make the trip to Fulham were not exactly bowled over by the warmth of their welcome:

"...Militant sellers and young socialists were subjected to harassment, swearing and physical abuse. Some were told they would be reported and expelled." (*Militant*, April 18).

Of course, the 10% swing to Labour in Fulham which allowed Raynsford to join his mentor, Kinnock, in Parliament was pleasing for the party leadership; this guarantees that Kinnock and the right will be launching more attacks on the toady left in order to convince the British establishment that they are statesmenlike enough and pro-capitalist enough to be trusted with power. But how will *Militant* respond?

Thrust

The main political thrust of *Militant's* political campaign against the witchhunt against it by the right has been to bewail how this is a diversion from the 'main task' of fighting the Tories. Thus, presumably it sought to lead by moral example and put a positive face on Labour at the polls in Fulham:

"After the Fulham by-election, Labour must use the 8 May elections as a platform to demand a general election. We must fight for a Labour government on a socialist programme." (*Militant*, April 11)

Quite how you fight for a Labour Party committed to socialism (assuming this was possible anyway) by not politically confronting and fighting such openly right-wing elements as Raynsford is not made clear. *Militant* though, both before and after the Fulham by-election were anxious to prove themselves more concerned for the electoral fortunes of social democracy than the right wing, for:

"...a continued internal war on the left would eventually have a seriously damaging effect on



Britain's Bolsheviks or Britain's Mensheviks?

NEIL'S MI

Labour support. A split and divided party would become a vote losing issue as it was in the 1983 general election." (*Militant*, April 18)

This of course, is quite probably true. Because of this *Militant* finds the attacks by the right wing on them to be quite irrational and thus possibly inspired by some sort of vendetta the leadership are determined to pursue against the "Marxists" in the Party. 'We just can't win', they moan:

"Much was made of the big swing to Labour [in the Fulham by-election — IM]... Roy Hattersley claimed that this was due to the moderate policies of the candidate and that the influence of *Militant* had been 'penned in'. The right will undoubtedly use such arguments to continue the attacks on the left and to further water down Labour's policies.

"But they would have used exactly the same arguments and come to the same conclusions if Labour had been smashed." (*Ibid*)

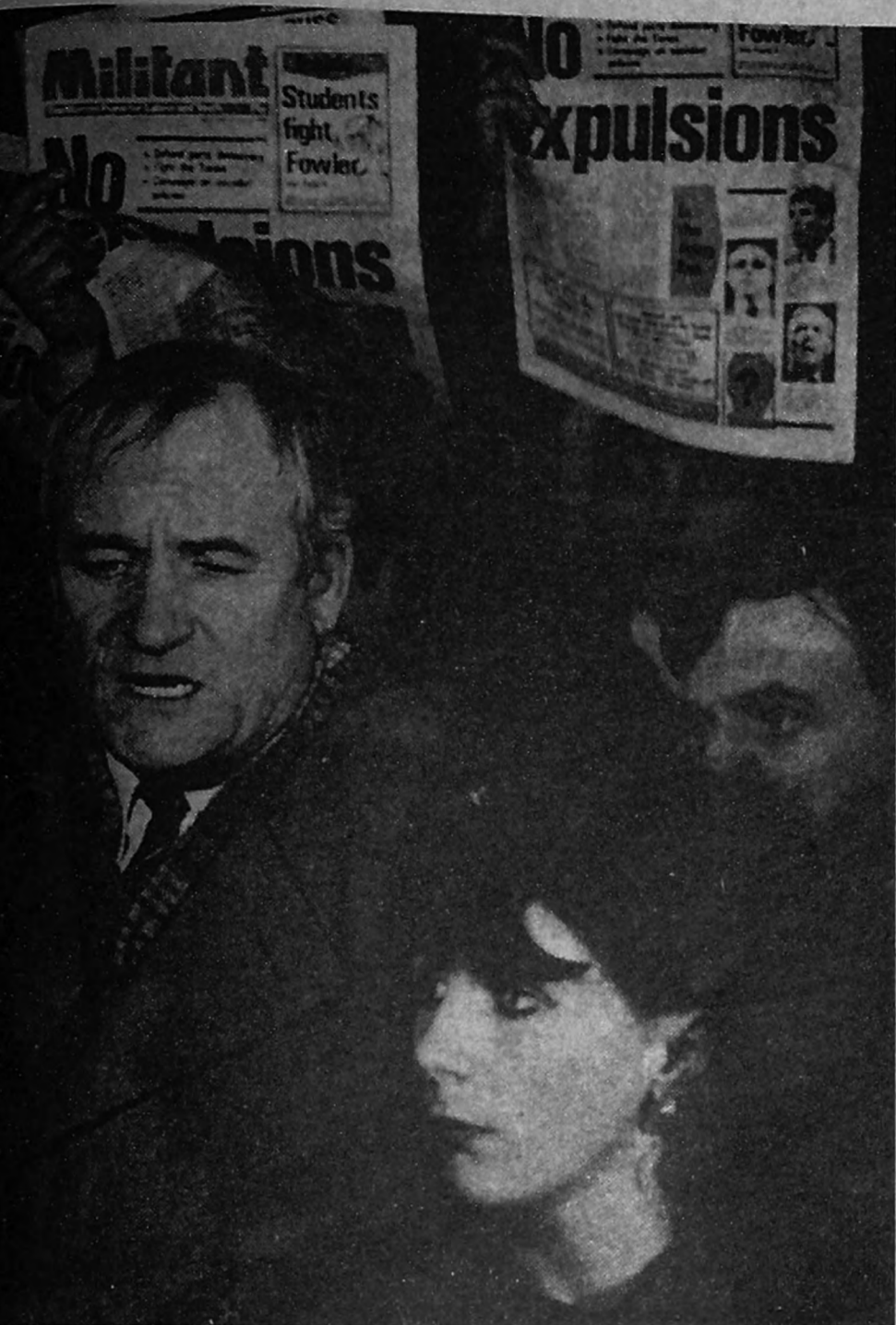
Exactly. So that simple fact ought to tell us something about the character and motives of the witchhunting campaign of the right; shouldn't it? Obviously, the audience that the right are playing to is not the electorate in general, still less the militant working class. They are busy showing the British bourgeoisie that capitalism is safe with them; that they can be steadfastly relied on to make the workers pay for the crisis of the system. Meanwhile, left social democrats including *Militant* and the hosts of other less successful Trot entryists can be trusted by the right wing to work their guts out to maintain in the allegiance of the working class to 'their' Party. *Militant's* post-Fulham analysis contains a significant line in this context:

"Labour won because of the polarisation of class interests as a result of the miners' strike and the unrelenting attacks on working people by the Tories." (*Ibid*).

Even accepting this analysis why on earth should this anger and class restiveness be channeled in the direction of putting Kinnock into No 10? The 'nightmare ticket', Ramsay McKinnock/Rattersley, shamelessly denounced the miners' fight for jobs, equated the violence of the heroic pickets with that of the state's scum in blue, the police, and have insisted that those miners "properly tried and convicted" by the bosses' courts will rot in prison under a Labour government as well as a Tory one. They have offered no alternative to the mass unemployment, poverty and ruthless state attacks offered up by the Tories — in fact they have simply promised more of the same to the working class when they are elected! According to Hattersley the Labour Party's 'alternative budget' recognised the need to "fight the budget on the government's grounds rather than on the Labour Party's."

The Tory government's "grounds" are of course, the maintenance of the profit levels of British imperialism; the Labour Party's supposed "grounds" are the interests of the working class. Where, pray, is the common ground? Why should workers, faced with such open treachery have any illusions whatsoever left about the Labour Party?

In point of fact, it is the role of left-social democracy, and *Militant* in particular as a big left social-democratic group, to direct all that anger and working class potential into the fruitless quest that has wasted so many good fighters: the battle to change the Labour Party and to make it a vehicle for the socialist revolution. While their left flank is thus covered and their electoral base assured, the Labour right get on with the serious business of presenting their 'reasonable' face to British imperialism. This symbiotic division of Labour between left and right social democracy, and the cynical use the right make of it was outlined



MILITANTS

...stute former Labour cabinet minister, ...ard Crossman:

The Labour Party required militants ... ically conscious socialists to do the work of ... nising the constituencies. But since these ... ants tended to be 'extremists', a constitution ... eeded which maintained their enthusiasm by ... rently creating full, party democracy while ... iding them from effective power. Hence the ... sion in principle of sovereign powers to the ... ates at the annual conferences and the ... val in practice of this sovereignty through ... ade union block vote on the one hand, and ... mplete independence of the PLP on the ...

...e right can quite securely rely on the left, ... nt et al, to maintain the allegiance of the ... nt working class during this particular ... d basically for two reasons:

...st the traditional allegiance of the working ... to the Labour Party — reinforced by ... g militants with respect and influence ... g broader sections of the class, drawn into ... rty by the promise of 'one day', 'the next ... transforming the Labour Party held out ... e likes of *Militant* and other Trot/left ... rities.

...nd, and crucially, the lack of a coherent ... edible revolutionary party which could ... a major pole of attraction to class ... s.

...e today left will always cover for and ... the right, even when that right is kicking ... in the teeth, as now in the Labour Party. ... m underlined and reaffirmed this course, ... litant are determined to put a brave face ... ll:

...e Tories are on the ropes. They can be ... ed out in the next round, the council ... ns, if the labour and trade union ... ships concentrates its campaign fire on ... g the real enemy, the Tories." (*Militant*,

April 11).

In this way the left social democrats of *Militant* tie the interests of workers to open and unashamed representatives of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the workers' movement. For Kinnock and co. "the real enemy" at the end of the day will not be "the Tories": it will be the working class itself.

Liverpool

Despite the hysterical headlines in the yellow press *Militant* actually have very little in common with revolutionary politics of any kind. Trotsky originally advised his followers, particularly in France, to enter the mass organisations of social democracy in a desperate attempt to find some relevance *somewhere* after they had put themselves in self-imposed exile from the vanguard of the world's proletariat organised in the communist parties. Slowly, inexorably, many Trot groups began to take on the characteristics of their social democrat surroundings. By 1967 the *Militant* tendency was the sole surviving Trotskyite faction left in the Party. They treasure their Labourism and now can never give it up;

"It is true that the conditions for entry as Trotsky outlined them, are not still present. But it would be the height of stupidity to abandon work in the LP (Labour Party) now and launch into 'independent' adventures after a decade or more of work there." (Ted Grant, *Problems of Entryism*).

Militant claim they have "extended and given a new scope to Trotsky's concept of entry": we in *The Leninist* beat around the bush less, we say they have in fact become social democrats. *Militant's* basic reformist premises — that socialism can come through an 'Enabling Act' passed through parliament — is

no different in essence from any other left social democrat's strategy for achieving socialism. According to these reformists, the bureaucratic/administrative apparatus of the bourgeois state can be used to make 'revolution'. In Liverpool, this approach was to effectively demobilise and demoralise the working class.

In May 1983, the *Militant*-controlled Liverpool District Labour Party gained eleven council seats and took control of Liverpool for the first time in a decade. They promised a lot:

"No privatisation, a £2 rent cut, no spending cuts, a massive house repairs programme, 6,000 new council homes, 4,000 new council jobs, and no rent rises."

The *Militant*-led Labour group on the council, however, steadily backtracked on all of these promises: the rent 'cut' became 'no massive rent rises' and the much vaunted housing scheme was eased off. Hatton's Labour troops sowed illusions in the council — that it was a 'socialist council' pursuing 'socialist policies', in effect a small island of socialism in a sea of capitalism. Frankly, however, what could be achieved by revolutionaries of any hue (let alone *Militant*) isolated in a particular section of local government was always going to be limited, for central government held the purse strings at the end of the day. The failure of *Militant* in Liverpool is therefore a failure of the schemes of reformists for transforming the bourgeois state. If they had truly been a revolutionary group *Militant* would have used the chance of Liverpool to:

- Do everything in their power to encourage the development of the collective strength and combativeness of the working class, through the development of rank and file workers' action councils which could have taken a lead in the fightback.

- They had considerable material resources available to them through the Liverpool council. This should have been used to draw ever more wider sections into battle and to link up with other workers in battle, in particular during the miners' Great Strike of '84/'85.

Instead *Militant* blustered and bluffed and dodged a real fight with the Tories. The fighting spirit that brought 50,000 Liverpool workers out onto the streets to defy the government in March of '84 was criminally dissipated by these Labourite Trots as they made any workers' action dependent on what happened to their councillors/employers. It was the same old reformist song the Labour left have sung for years: 'if you want socialism, just elect us, relax and let us get on with it.'

The working class, thus demobilised, were led into a defeat by *Militant*. And given the fact that *Militant* have fought to ensure that the actions of the workers remained tied to defending 'their' councillors, not their jobs and livelihoods, the Liverpool proletariat will have gained little either in organisation or political terms from this confrontation.

Parallels

An article in the *Militant* newspaper of April 11 illustrates perfectly this tendency's total subordination to the Labour Party, past, present and future. In it, Tony Aitman attempted to draw parallels between the leadership's purge of Communist Party members from the Labour Party in the 1920s and today's against *Militant*. However, Mr Aitman notes that by the "... latter part of the decade" parallels between the purge of the communists and *Militant* "begin to wear thin". On the face of it Mr Aitman has a point:

"Apart from the fact that the Communist Party was a separate organisation, which today's Marxists are not, the CP of the time was also deeply infused with sectarianism."

'Ah, yes', you may say, 'the sectarianism of the Third Period line of the late 1920s when the world communist movement, increasingly under the disorientating effects of the growth of centrism, called the social democrats "social fascists"'. But I'm afraid Mr Aitman locates the Communist Party's "sectarianism" earlier than the later part of the 1920s:

"All the features of which allowed the British Communist Party to become the political tool of Stalin and the Comintern — during the General Strike and after — were present in 1925. From the inception of the National Left Wing Movement, sections of the Communist Party were opposed to it in the most virulently sectarian terms." (*Ibid*)

So the CPGB's "sectarianism" goes back even to 1925, not simply to the "latter part" of the 1920s. In actual fact, for Aitman and *Militant* the Communist Party's "sectarianism" goes back to the very foundation of the Party. For under the guise of attacking leftist

deviations by the communists, he attacks the very political understanding of the nature of Labour Party and international social democracy that led to the formation of the Communist Party in the first place:

"This sectarianism was itself a product of the growing 'Third Period' ultra-leftism emanating from the now Stalinist Communist International ... this body attacked social democratic parties as 'counterrevolutionary'..."

Aren't social democratic parties actually counterrevolutionary then. *Militant*? If they are not, then surely it was a sectarian act to set up communist parties around the world in the first place. This has always been the position of Labourites since they came into existence and today is still the moan of wily bourgeois politicians like Benn or Heffer. Isn't it instructive that *Militant* is now starting to repeat it ...?

Conclusion

The communists were organised inside the Labour Party in the 1920s in order to split it and destroy it. Aitman, however, bemoans the fact that the Communist Party turned away from the Labour Party not because it lost a good opportunity to wrench large numbers of workers out of it but because in his view they should have been in there, slogging away in their constituencies in order to transform it.

If *Militant* were actually a revolutionary group, like our Communist Party of the 1920s which they rather presumptuously compare themselves to, then its response to the purge would have been rather different. They would have explained that this attack was inevitable given the dual nature of the Labour Party. They would have mounted a spirited fight against the purge, a fight that would have had the aim of splitting the Party right down the middle, for they would have explained to the workers they influence that it was impossible to take on the Tories until they had settled accounts with the Tories in their own ranks. They would have even laid the basis for the formation of an independent, explicitly revolutionary mass Communist Party which could then clear the decks between it and what was left of the Labour Party for a good open fight for the allegiance of workers.

'Ifs' and 'woulds' a revolutionary party do not make however. As we have shown, although the assault of the right in the Labour Party is particularly vicious at the moment, they will never really cut the left out of the Party: they are far too useful to it for that. Left social democrats like *Militant* simply could not exist outside of the Labour Party, indeed they regard it as 'sectarian' to even suggest such an idea and now defend their precious party against the communists right from the beginning. They bind workers to the representatives of the bourgeoisie in our ranks: for Kinnock and his ilk are not simply the right wing of the labour movement, they are the left wing of the ruling class. Yet *Militant* promise that they will be the "hardest workers to get Neil Kinnock elected to Number 10." Why for God's sake? Surely the least they should be doing is 'working hard' to oust the bastard from the leadership of the Party?

The list of tame lefties expelled from the Labour Party in the past is an impressively long one, so while we defend *Militant* against the witchhunt, we do not have many worries for their future. Foot, Bevan and Stafford Cripps were all in their time given the bum's rush. *Militant's* quibble with the leadership will not be any more traumatic at the end of the day, they will stay the tame and useful poodles of the right wing:

"They have never got anywhere near the centres of power in the party or had any perceptible influence on policy making. But... the *Militants* were providing a form of leadership and inspiration that was needed and that was not supplied by the national leadership." (*Financial Times*, February 26, 1986).

People tend to forget that the Bolsheviks actually made the revolution not against the Tsar, but against the Provisional government which included Mensheviks and other leftists which was headed by Kerensky, a Social Revolutionary. The bourgeoisie, as a next to last resort in a revolutionary situation could actually install an extreme left social democratic government in order to confuse and misdirect the attacks of the revolutionary proletariat. So who knows? If Hatton and his *Militant* chums can hang on in there long enough and do not tread on too many toes they may even find themselves one day holding government office after all. Or at least that is, up to the day when we take it away from them through the British socialist revolution.

Jan Mahoney

Remember back in 1984 before the anti-Militant witchhunt? Remember David Blunkett opening the Militant backed BLOC Conference in Sheffield? How he told Derek Hatton that other councils wouldn't let Liverpool down; "I think they would help you in whatever way they could" he said. Remember NUPE's general secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe at that year's Labour Party conference thundering "It's not a question of shall we break the law but which laws should we obey" and shadow cabinet member Jack Cunningham agreeing that "we must fight the rates act and run it into the sand"? All good stuff. But now these Labourites spit at Derek Hatton for carrying out the very policy they all voted for. Even future Lord Red Ken has joined in the witchhunting describing Derek Hatton as "one of the most attractive members of the Labour Party — since Sir Oswald Mosley."

What about his heroes in Europe? When in opposition, Felipe Gonzalez declared "Spain's entrance into NATO represents a serious risk to world peace." Once elected he decided to keep Spain a risk to world peace. When in opposition Francois Mitterand promised a huge reflation of the economy, a 35 hour week, a massive increase in the minimum wage and an amnesty for illegal immigrants. When in office his government attacked, abused, betrayed and cheated the working class. That Kinnock is not even promising radical measures in opposition means there can be no doubt that the 'next Labour government' will, like all previous Labour governments, be a servant of the ruling class.

The ruling class might have the dominant culture in Britain but it does not stop it being rotten and them being stupid. Certainly judging by the recent Derry Mainwaring Knight case it is clear that our ruling class is long overdue for history's scrap yard. This self confessed satanist managed to persuade Mrs Sainsbury, wife of the Tory millionaire and MP, to hand over £80,000, the Earl of March £10,000, and Viscount Hampden a £37,000 white Rolls — and in the name of combating worship of the devil.

A recent letter in Socialist Worker from a SWP supporter made a telling point: "I convinced the Malaysian customs that Socialist Worker Review and Socialist Worker are not leftist, but some social work papers." Exactly.

BOB Geldof's Charity bandwagon is off and running on May 17 with the launch of Sport Aid, an organisation for the Geoff Capes and Seb Coes of the world to do their bit for humanity's starving millions. The Morning Star reported the arrival of Sport Aid totally uncritically and has in the past filled its editorials and pages with quite revolting charity-mongering. Sport Aid is officially launched with an Olympic flame type run by an Ethiopian athlete through some of the world's major cities. As he lights the Sport Aid flame, at that moment, hundreds of thousands of people all over the world will start a mass sponsored run. The Ethiopian runner will then deliver a message to the heads of state assembled for the first-ever UN General Assembly special session on Africa.

You can become almost insensitive to the statistics of global famine. Every single year some 40 million people of the world — that is over one person every second — die from either hunger or hunger-related diseases. Sub-Saharan Africa is tottering on the edge of a quite horrendous human calamity. The press and TV coverage of such Ethiopian famine centres as Mekele, Korem, Keren, Lalibela started the whole Geldof 'Aid' roadshow and provoked a mass response to the horror from literally millions of people in Britain and now the world. Last year Live Aid raised a quite staggering \$100 million. Charity officials at the beginning of this year were beginning to worry about the prospect of "donor fatigue", but the continued commitment of the public to help ease the suffering of the African masses seems to be more or less as strong as ever. Bob Geldof, however, and the multifarious other charity do-gooders who tapped the liberal and humanitarian impulses of the population, have no answers to the plague of world starvation; in fact they help to obscure and hide the real reasons why millions of our fellow human beings will slowly, painfully starve to death this year.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) itself estimated in 1984 that if indigenous African grain yields could be upgraded to just half of those being produced in Western countries, then Africa could quite comfortably support about 10 billion people — or, put another way, more than double the present population of the world. The bourgeois economists of the various 'Third World Studies' departments of the Western universities have produced many learned studies about the great potential inherent in the African food production sector; Ethiopia for example, the very country associated most with poverty and environmental disaster in most people's minds, has highlands alone that could feed both itself and then all of Western Europe on top of that. So what's the problem? Why for example is only 20% of Africa's cultivatable land currently under the plough?

Ethiopia for example had until recently only 6% of its potential land surface suitable for arable use under any sort of permanent cultivation. The agriculture of the country remained mostly medieval in Western terms, conducted by single peasants on tiny strips of unproductive land. Serfs under feudalism produced just about enough to feed themselves and one other (maybe). With the penetration of capitalist social relations into the countryside however, production soared. The amount of wheat produced for example in Western Europe went up five times. Yet Ethiopian agriculture until very recently did not go through the process of the smashing of old feudal relations. And the force that thus retarded the development of the social structure of Ethiopia is



Race against time

exactly the force that Bob Geldof, the Morning Star and the other pious and liberal utopians of the international charity movement look to in order to now help Ethiopia out: imperialism. It's like asking the Big Bad Wolf to keep an eye on Little Red Riding Hood to keep her out of trouble...

Imperialism is moribund, parasitical and decadent capitalism. It has no progressive potential whatsoever and wherever it has settled in the world it has ensured that that area remains primitive and incapable of rounded development. Development in Ethiopian agriculture was suffocated by the imperialist stooge, the Emperor Menelik. He propped up the power of the old feudal landlords in the countryside against the progressive penetration of capitalist relations into the countryside as a means of social control. As with other countries under the domination of the imperialist world system any potential Ethiopian industrial development was effectively wiped out by the flood of cheap industrial products from the West and the harsh restrictive practices imposed on it by the imperialists. The Ethiopian economic infrastructure still bears the scars of the years of domination by imperialism:

"In some African countries you may find cash crop farms growing strawberries or carnations for export to luxury markets in Europe while there is rock bottom poverty a short walk away." (Harford Thomas, writing in the Guardian July 9, 1985.)

The small indigenous Ethiopian bourgeoisie was therefore a fragile, comprador one, tied and dependent on the West for survival. Because of the way the country's industrial

development had been so stunted by imperialism, the home market in the country remained very small. Industries emerging, therefore, whether they are Ethiopian or foreign in origin, developed with an orientation towards export. The home market, meanwhile, starved.

We in *The Leninist* have been criticised by some readers for not going into the issue of world famine and the response to it by charity organisations. Obviously, the plight of the so-called 'Third World' has had a big, or potentially could have an even bigger emotional pull with petty-bourgeois and radical youth than even CND. More than that, who can doubt that many working class people have been moved to take action of some sort. It is the duty of communists to elaborate an independent approach to the very real problems of world hunger that are concerning millions; should we instead stand aloof from it?

Therefore, if we had the ear of that Ethiopian athlete who stands in front of the assembled heads of state of the world, including the imperialist countries whose economic rape of his country has ensured its underdevelopment and the death of millions of his people, we would explain to him that he can approach the question in two ways: ● Either he can marshal a host of facts and figures *a la Morning Star* and its hero Geldof which juxtapose Western 'affluence' and waste to 'Third World' poverty. He could point out that the \$90 billion paid out to farmers in the EEC countries and the US to not produce food is not simply sufficient to fill the mouths of the hungry in Africa, but to actually fly them all to New York or London and actually feed them

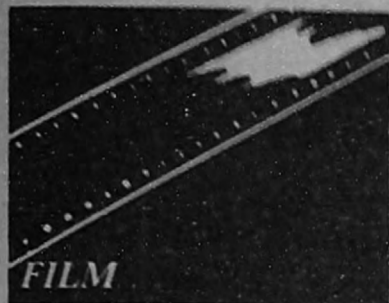
all in restaurants for a year! Such an approach will reinforce the notions of African backwardness being arbitrarily produced by weather or stubborn peasants and at the end of the day solve nothing because of the basically stunted economic structure of countries such as Ethiopia that imperialism has dominated and robbed.

● Or the second approach. We too can throw figures about. Like, for example, the fact that socialist China, once a country under the imperialist yoke and thus desperately poor and backward, today feeds almost a quarter of the world's population with just 7% of its arable land. Planned production is the only way to break the chain of world poverty and hunger that enslaves many African countries. The only chance for full bellies for the people of these countries is to follow the path blazed by countries like China and, of course, the Soviet Union. *Socialist revolution will feed the world.* Of course, a speech like that would not go down too well with certain delegates to the UN, but it's the only one that makes sense.

Our job in Britain is to use the genuine sentiments of fellow human feeling that the horrific sights of poverty evoke in workers to convince them that the only way they can truly help these unfortunate people is by taking on the real oppressors of the African masses: not the weather, not too many babies, but imperialism in general and British imperialism in particular. While thousands run through the streets of Bonn, Washington and London, time is running out for the people of famine-threatened areas of the world. And running out fast...

William Hughes

Tame patchwork



FILM

Julian Temple (director) *Absolute Beginners*.

CALL ME A philistine if you will (though don't write in), but I must admit that my simple criterion for a good musical is whether five minutes after walking out of the cinema, I can still hum one of its songs. Apart from Bowie's sub-*Heroes* dirge that has drip-dripped its way into my consciousness largely because of the massively over-generous air-play it has received on radio (those pro-imperialist jocks at Radio One seem to be backing the film as part of their ongoing 'Buy British' campaign rather than because of any dubious artistic merits), the film thus failed for me where *Top Hat*, *West Side Story* or even something as innocuous as *Oklahoma* succeeded. Can even you, hep cat reader, name another song from the film (O.K. — there is that Style Council thing, but even that sounds like Weller recorded it in his sleep). Similarly the choreographing lacks anything new or imaginative to say, though it tries desperately hard. Of course, choreographing a chaotic Notting

Hill race riot is by definition more difficult than, say, the highly ritualistic and structured gladiatorial contests created by Jerome Robbins for *West Side Story*. But even given these problems, the film never appears as much more than a patchwork of Temple's much praised pop video work.

Temple does capture quite well, however, the tackiness and sleaze of the way the 'teen revolution' of the 'fifties hit Britain. Hollywood was dead and as Julie Burchill put it:

"Something had to come along that was as epic, as shoddy, as greedy, as naive, as cruel, as corrupt, as desperate as the dead magnet ... In the 'fifties Locustland moved location, and Sammy Glick changed horses. And they call it rock and roll."

Youth became an importantly marketable commodity and there were plenty of middle-aged buyers. One of the most successful characters in the film is therefore Lionel Blair's pushily homosexual Tin Pan Alley Svengali with his stable of single-hit, disposable boy singers. During this decade, really for the first time, the leathery squeak of the casting couch began to play a different tune as the boys began to discover that you can sometimes get further in the music biz by exploiting orifices other than your mouth. As a period piece therefore, Blair's 'Hey cutie, do you wanna be a rock star' pastiche is successful and I felt it a pity that more time was not devoted to this type of figure.

Temple though, probably did not intend his film as a 'period piece': the music, apart from being pretty naff, is curiously time-warped for instance. Rather the film has attitudes and references fairly typical of youth subculture during the last thirty years or so. Temple



Absolute beginners Colin and Big Jill

knows a lot about youth culture in abstract, but has little conceptual framework to fit it into. The film therefore has a certain impressionistic charm but neither the vision or the content in terms of songs or dance routines to sustain interest.

The struggle to get *Absolute Beginners* to the screen in the first place is quite an epic story in itself. The fight for financial backing was apparently a long and hard one and so relieved were the team pushing the film to get the money that they were happy to be accommodating to the film's financiers. Orien — the major American backer, for example, were quite awkward:

"If Orien wanted film making to begin in January — so be it. If every scene had to 'advance' or 'retard' Colin and Suzette's (the mawkish and

uninteresting couple at the centre of the narrative — A.L.) relationship, fine. If Suzette should be just 'engaged' to the older man Henly and not married as per MacInnes' original, was anyone really complaining?"

Perhaps such financial strictures accounts for some of the film's blandness. Where, for example, is the Christine Keeler-like lust for black men on the part of the Suzette character in MacInnes' novel? Surely given the period and the racial themes involved in the novel/film a jazz musical would have been more appropriate? And also, is the film rather too glib and slick in style given some of the themes it deals with?

Certainly, much is expected of the film by the people who put up the

money. As Al Clark, one of the executive producers has commented, Virgin, Goldcrest and Palace are "all going into *Absolute Beginners* with a hard on". Given the curiously sexless quality of a film concerned with youth sub-cults, I can only presume that they are thus agitated by the promise of financial returns. Temple's earlier chronicle of the sordid careers of the Sex Pistols had a similar feel. The abiding impression I got from *The Great Rock and Roll Swindle* (apart from what a twerp Malcolm McLaren was) was how terribly British and tame it all was: a better title might have been *Carry On Up The 100 Club*. *Absolute Beginners* is better, but I'm afraid the real film of the book is still waiting to be made.

Alec Long

ANC: its origins



Mary Benson, *The Struggle For a Birthright*. International Defence and Aid Fund For South Africa, London 1985, pp.314, £4.00

THIS book gives a graphic account of the history of the ANC from its formation in 1912 (as the Native National Congress) until 1965.

Importantly for revolutionaries, the book illustrates how and why a petty bourgeois movement could come to reject many of its idealistic positions to become a movement that fights for violent revolution and the overthrow of the South African apartheid state.

With the Act of Union in 1910, the first South African cabinet initiated measures that would lay the base for the future super-exploitation of black labour. The most important of these measures included depriving Africans of their land, restricting them to low paid jobs and the introduction of the hated pass laws which were to become the focus of mass black protest over the next seventy years. Action against these repressive laws soon followed, and the voice of the Native National Congress was asserted in 1918 when as a result of two strikers being sentenced to two months' hard labour during the Johannesburg sanitary workers strike, "Congress led a storm of protest by calling for a

general strike for a shilling a day increase in wages".

This intervention in workers' struggles was combined with the demand for black parliamentary representation and political change through the use of mainly constitutional means. Although these demands were undoubtedly based on appeals to "better natures", they were implicitly revolutionary demands simply because they posed the question of black rule in the country.

The 1920's and early 1930's saw a worsening of the objective conditions, but — except for a short period around 1927 — the ANC moved to the right. This was because of the weakness of the Communist Party of South Africa in exerting any influence among the masses, although the work of individual communists such as JB Marks and Moses Kotane gained much respect from black activists.

The period from 1935 to 1945 was one of relative social peace, but this ended in 1946 when 70,000 miners came out on strike in support of reforms. The strike was heavily influenced by the ANC through the Natives' Representative Council and the African Mineworkers' Union to such a degree that a "mild panic" (p.99) was reported in the Stock Exchange and businessmen went to the president for advice on how to combat the strike. Even so, during the strike, sections of the ANC vacillated as Mary Benson illustrates: "Some of the ANC felt the strike had been precipitate and should not have been called until the union [the AMWU] had achieved far greater strength ..." (p.104)

With the election of communists to the executive committee of the ANC at its 1949 conference, the leadership decided to fully adopt the "Programme of Action". It concluded that "There must be a total boycott of elections" and "strikes, civil disobedience, non-cooperation". (p.129)

After the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 which banned the CPSA, many communists increased their work inside the ANC. As a consequence, throughout the 1950's, opposition and resistance to the South African government continued to grow and, despite many of its leaders being arrested (normally under the Suppression of Communism Act), the ANC could already register 100,000 paid up members by autumn 1952.

The fact that the state, even though it used increasingly repressive measures, could not quell the mounting opposition, was a tribute to the alliance of nationalists and communists, the ANC's mass support and organisation. At this time, the ANC adopted the Freedom Charter — a bourgeois democratic programme for national liberation.

The next major conflict proved a turning point in the history of the

ANC. On March 21 1960, 69 Africans were murdered by police at Sharpeville, and two were killed at Langa for peacefully protesting against the pass laws — 229 were injured. Nine days later, a state of emergency was declared resulting in mass arrests and police patrols of black areas. On April 8, the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress were declared "unlawful organisations". In response, Nelson Mandela, the newly-elected leader of the National Action Council called for a National Convention to establish a new union of all South Africans, with a three day stay-at-home threatened if the authorities did not comply.

In May 1961 this stay-at-home was realised, but was defeated by the mass mobilisation of the armed forces. However, Mandela came to the conclusion that "If naked force was to crush every peaceful demonstration, it was futile to rely on non-

violent methods [of struggle]". Thus in deciding to set up Umkhonto we Sizwe, a qualitative change had occurred within the ANC — a change caused almost entirely by the objective conditions within the country.

Therefore, the position is arrived at where the ANC is a truly revolutionary organisation which has the support of the South African masses. Of course, we Leninists do not tail national liberation movements but seek to build the independent political parties of the working class, the communist parties in Britain, South Africa and the rest of the world. That is why we say it is of fundamental importance that the working class becomes the hegemon of the bourgeois revolution, for — as Lenin wrote — the working class is "the only consistently revolutionary class of contemporary society".

Bob Archer

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The LENINIST

THE BRITISH LEFT'S response to Reagan's anti-Gaddafi crusade has been revealing. Quite correctly the US has been attacked for using state terrorism and Thatcher's connivance has been condemned. But more is needed than simply disagreeing with Thatcher.

After all the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition puffed himself up into a typically shallow parliamentary rage against Thatcher's help to the Americans. Nonetheless the essence of Kinnock's case was that bombing Libya would prove ineffective in combatting Gaddafi. In place of this sledgehammer approach he argued for sanctions to "squeeze" Libya.

Against such pro-imperialism Leninists have always argued that workers should fight for political independence against their ruling class. On this score a number of left groups have proven their hostility to imperialism, at least to British imperialism, is only skin deep. *Militant* for instance came out with a line not a million miles removed from that of Kinnock, their party leader.

Militant

The headline over their centre page spread on Libya read: "Raids strengthen Gaddafi regime" (April 25). Like Kinnock they argue that the attack on Libya dashed hopes of overthrowing Gaddafi and by implication this was the reason why the bombing should be opposed. Being *Militant* this shameful position is dressed up in dishonest workerist rhetoric, but this does not excuse the failure to take a clear and unambiguous anti-imperialist stand. Of course *Militant*, although it is denounced for being "ultra-leftist", has objectively lined up with British imperialism over the Falklands, Ireland, and one question after another.

Most left groups have steered clear of the almost open pro-imperialism of *Militant*, although the *New Worker* did let its Little England chauvinism get the better of it. It branded Thatcher as "treacherous", and, ignoring Britain's No.2 world imperialist status, issued the slogan "Defend Britain's independence" (April 25 1986).

Yet it must be said that some have come out with positions that are not much better. *7 Days* reduced the whole debate down to terrorism. "The biggest terrorist goes free" ran the banner headline of its April 26 edition. As if the US attack on Libya was anything to do with combatting terrorism. Others, like our CPGB Political Committee, concentrated their opposition to the US violation of Article 51 of the UN Charter and Thatcher's failure to consult parliament.

Madness

But what united almost all left groups was the notion that the bombing of Libya was simply an act of madness. The SWP insisted that "Reagan is the real mad man" and the *Morning Star*, *Socialist Action*, and the Sparts, came out with their own version of the psychological theory of world politics.

Journalistic sweep is one thing, but surely when faced with a carefully calculated act of aggression, those whose profession is the use of words, certainly those who claim the mantle of scientific socialism, should write more carefully. Sadly some on the left

have retreated so far from materialism that their politics have ended up being little more than liberalism.

It would, though, be dishonest on our part to simply say that most of the left have contented itself with saying "Reagan is mad". Correctly many have pointed to Reagan's whipping up a phobia against Gaddafi and 'terrorism' as a ploy to win Congressional approval for US sponsorship of counterrevolution in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Angola. At the same time it must be said only a few have understood this to be part of a broader plan linked to the US anti-Soviet war drive.

Indeed with a few exceptions, like the Sparts, the left overwhelmingly played down the Soviet connection, or ignored it completely. This was the case with most Trotskyites but also with our communist movement, including those who noisily proclaim their "pro-Sovietism". In place of this crucial dimension, which explains Reagan's "madness", the left reacted to the racist outpourings of the bosses, press against Gaddafi with a knee jerk support for Gaddafi and his regime.

This was an error the left committed over the Falklands War. Most left groups considered it their anti-imperialist duty to support Galtieri, a fascist monster with the blood of an estimated 30,000 'disappeared' on his hands.

Of course Libya is not being forced to attempt to transform itself into some sort of imperialist power. But it is a capitalist country and it is no longer one that is simply backward.

Then there is the nature of the Gaddafi regime. Most of the left tends to paint Libya in anti-imperialist, progressive and almost socialistic colours. So what is the truth?

Anti-communist

Gaddafi came to power through a typically 'Third World' military coup when in 1969 he and fellow officers ousted King Idris. So this was no Afghanistan, Nicaragua, or Angola. No political revolution, and certainly no social revolution took place. In fact Gaddafi modelled himself on Egypt's Nasser and such was his anti-communism the CIA provided him with protection well into the 1970s.

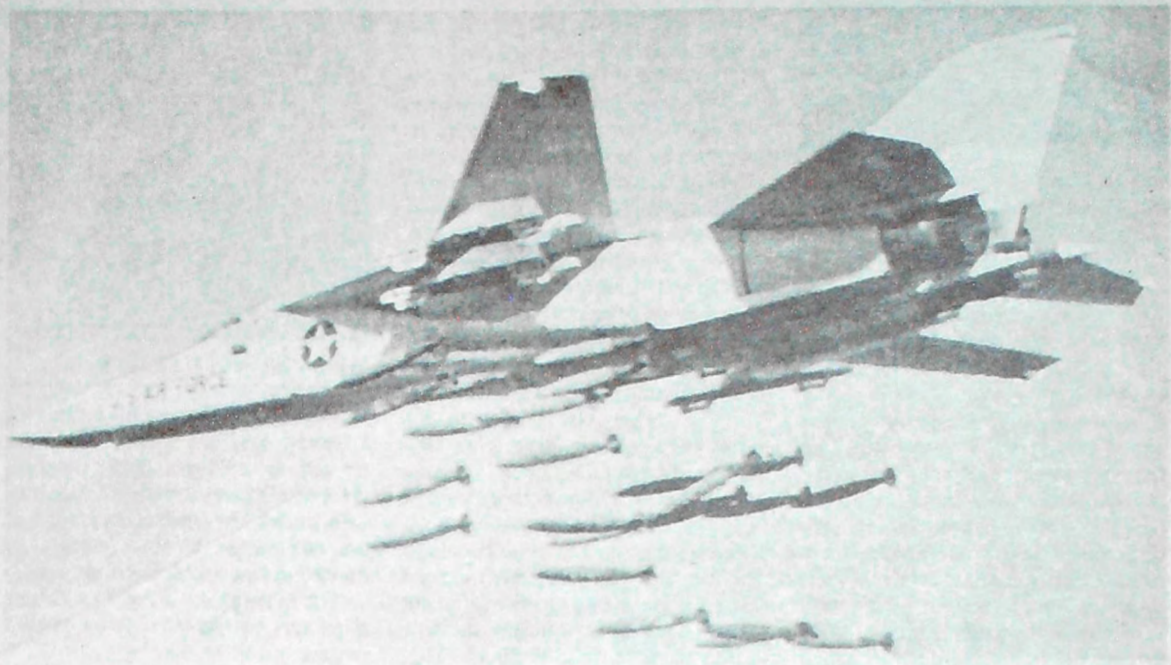
In 1971 Libya backed a counterrevolutionary coup in Sudan which saw Sudanese trade unions and the country's Communist Party forced underground. Also Libya forced down the plane in which the Sudanese CP leader was fleeing, handed him over to Numeiri, who then had him executed. It was Gaddafi who sponsored the invasion of socialist oriented South Yemen in 1972 again in the name of Islamic anti-communism.

Having nationalised most of the oil industry, with the rapid increase in Libyan oil production and especially after 1973 oil revenues, Gaddafi was able to ply an increasingly independent course, both domestically and internationally.

Based on his so-called 'Third Universal Theory', a utopian Islamic alternative to both capitalism and communism, land reform took place, a £100 minimum wage was introduced and later state supermarkets with cheap food and consumer durables were introduced. Libya became a 'Socialist Arab Jamahiriya' ruled directly by people's committees. At least in theory. For not only have these

Is Gaddafi a progressive?

The Left and Libya



committees been kept out of the army, the oil industry, banking and insurance but real power has been kept in the hands of the army and state bureaucracy. As to the working class it is not allowed to organise autonomously, and as it consists of around 50% of foreign nationals, large numbers have been callously deported back to Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, because of recent economic stringency caused by the oil price slump.

Libyan Bonaparte

So Libya is an oil rich country where capitalism has developed in state form. Gaddafi is no revolutionary but a Libyan Bonaparte. But because he can use the riches derived from oil he has been able to engage in all sorts of foreign adventures, as

in Chad, and at the same time significantly raise the standard of living of the masses.

In contrast, with the growing economic difficulties of the 1970s, and the defeat of Syrian and Egyptian forces in the 1973 Yom Kippur war, many of the Arab states which had been struggling for independence from imperialism were with varying degrees bought back into a closer relationship with the US. Egypt in particular under Sadat became a close US ally.

This meant that Gaddafi found himself more and more isolated and at odds with his 'brothers'. In frustration he lashed out against Israel, the US and the Arab 'traitors' using all sorts of different and often contradictory methods. Wild calls for state mergers, financing the IRA, the WRP plus an array of desperate groups which look to

individual terror as a method of changing society not mass action, as well as the fascist Grey Wolves in Turkey, has gone hand-in-hand with shrill chauvinistic anti-semitism and a shift towards the Soviet Union.

In this light of Libya's state capitalism, its erratic foreign policy, above all the fact it is an anti-working class state we must question the Banda WRP for its "Dear Comrade... with warmest fraternal greetings" solidarity letter to Gaddafi, the RCP's "We back Gaddafi" posters, and *Socialist Action's* claim that the "main beneficiaries" of the Gaddafi's "Arab revolution" has been the workers, peasants and sections of the middle class.

To defend Libya against imperialist aggression there is no need to tail Gaddafi.

Jack Conrad

Chernobyl nuclear disaster

THE SERIOUS accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station has been used by the bosses media to whip up an anti-Soviet hysteria. Horror stories of thousands of dead were cynically manufactured in a desperate attempt to roll back the recent improvements in the popular image of the Soviet Union due to its offers to ban nuclear tests and carry out sweeping disarmament measures. This is of course only to be expected from the bosses' misinformation service.

Yet, the bosses' media has not been alone. A host of 'leftist' enemies of socialism in the USSR have used the Chernobyl meltdown as an occasion to attack the Soviet Union and indulge a thoroughly petty bourgeois hatred of technology. It was boringly predictable for the SWP to come out with the pox on both your houses call 'Shut the nukes — East and West', but hosts of others have joined them, not least the *News Line* with its lurid May Day headline "Death cloud over Europe". These anti-Soviet groups play the bosses' game, they have shown they are more concerned with exploiting the disaster for their own narrow sectarian purposes than basing themselves on facts, let alone the need to defend living socialism in the face

of a concerned propaganda attack by the enemies of the working class.

Having said this it is wrong to simply offer the Soviet people our sympathy and then leave it there. There has been an accident of devastating proportions. While we will not venture detailed criticism of the causes of the tragedy, general criticism has to be levelled against our Soviet comrades. The fact that Soviet officials have always insisted that a serious nuclear accident was impossible led them to commission nuclear reactors with less safety facilities than acceptable in capitalist Britain. The lack of an immediate public announcement of the accident was another mistake to say the least.

Would the world have been told about the Chernobyl accident if radioactive contamination had not found its way to other countries? That it was the authorities in Finland and Sweden which were the first to sound a warning bell to the world is a disgrace. Likewise although the Soviet government quickly acted to make up for this, it must be said that the citizens of the Soviet Union were to a large degree left to their own devices on questions of health and dietary precautions, left exposed to rumour fed by the

BBC, the Voice of America, etc. and generally kept in the dark about what had happened.

This exposes the continued problem of the lack of democracy in the Soviet Union. *The Guardian* reported how Lyubov Kovaleska, believed to be a manager at the Chernobyl complex, had warned of dangers in a Kiev newspaper article published in March.

The article complained of bureaucracy, incompetence and corruption which plagued the building of the reactors at Chernobyl. The rush to complete the project, the sub-standard construction materials and despair of the workers at their inability to influence matters were specifically cited and the warning issued that "the failures" would be "repaid over the decades to come". It is unlikely that such an article would have been allowed into print before comrade Mikhail Gorbachev became CPSU General Secretary. Nonetheless that Chernobyl was not investigated, that the accident has proved more damaging to the Ukrainian economy and the standing of the Soviet Union than need have been, points to the necessity to turn the 27th Congress resolutions on grass roots control and the need to extend democracy into practice.