

COMPASS

MUNIST LEAGUE

THE LIQUIDATION OF THE SOVIET UNION

No. 94. February 1992

ON 8 DECEMBER 1991 THE LEADERS OF RUSSIA, BYELORUSSIA AND THE UKRAINE PROCLAIMED THE LIQUIDATION OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS (THE SOVIET UNION), AND THE FORMATION OF A NEW 'COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES'.

Before formally resigning as 'Soviet President', the revisionist leader Mikhail Gorbachev declared:

"My life's work has been accomplished".
(*'Times'*, 9 December 1991; p. 1).

As part of the programme of making private enterprise sufficiently profitable, on 2 January price controls in the CIS were virtually removed:

"The removal of price control and subsidies decreed by the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, is intended to accelerate the transition to a market economy. . . .

The price reform abolishes all state controls on many consumer goods and services. . . . But the decree stops short of a complete liberalisation of prices by setting maximum prices for some items, including staple foods, transport and fuel.

The cost of coal and gas may rise no more than fivefold, vodka 4.5 times, medicine fourfold, sugar by 350%, and bread, milk, butter, salt, vegetable oil and petrol threefold".

(*'Independent'*, 2 January 1982; p. 1).



In consequence,

" . . . electricity for urban consumers will be nine times as expensive, water five times, telephone charges 4.5 times, heating three times, inter-city rail travel three times, and local transport double".
(*'Guardian'*, 2 January 1992; p. 1).

and

"Millions of Russians will be condemned to unknown poverty overnight.
. . .
There is little hope that catastrophe can be avoided".
(*'Independent'*, 2 January 1992; p. 8).

Within a few days,

". . . tens of thousands of Muscovites took to the streets yesterday to

protest at Russian President Boris Yeltsin's economic reforms.

The crowds, carrying red flags and portraits of Lenin and Stalin, packed a square near the Kremlin. . . .

Banners denounced Yeltsin . . . as 'a traitor to the country' and said he had sold out to America and organised crime". ('Today', 13 January 1992; p. 10).

The demonstrations continued in the following weeks:

"They came in their hundreds, many carrying red flags, others with home-made placards, . . . to protest at Boris Yeltsin's economic reform programme. . . .

Most had been in the Communist Party, and many said that they still considered themselves members, even though the party is banned.. But these were not former officials. They were the rank and file, bitter beyond words at what they saw as the final corruption of the leadership, and its final betrayal. . . .

They pointed to the banners of the small neo-communist parties which have started to appear, the Russian Communist Party and the Russian Communist Workers' Party". ('Guardian', 10 February 1992; p. 6).

The spokesmen of imperialism are naturally joyful at the liquidation of a rival superpower. But, as was shown at the time of the Gulf War, this does not mean that the cause of peace in general has been strengthened. New imperialist contradictions are growing -- particularly between American, European and Japanese imperialism.

However, one minor positive local development arising from the disappearance of the Soviet super-power is that the United States imperialists are less dependent upon keeping the Israeli government content as their main bulwark in the Middle East. Thus, at the Middle East conference in Washington:

" . . . unprecedented diplomatic and economic pressure from the United States, which is withholding £5.6 million in loan guarantees for Russian Jews emigrating to Israel, forced Israel's right-wing Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, to bite his tongue and accept Palestine Liberation Organisation-appointed delegates as equal partners" ('Observer', 12 January 1992; p. 14).

LOCKERBIE

In recent months, Libya has replaced Iraq as 'Public Enemy No. 1' in the eyes of the Western Powers.

In a unanimous resolution on 21 January, the UN Security Council demanded that Libya hand over for trial by Britain or the United States the two Iraqi nationals they claim are responsible for the Lockerbie bombing in 1988.

"Unless Libya complies within a short period, the US and Britain will begin pressing for economic sanctions to be applied. . . .

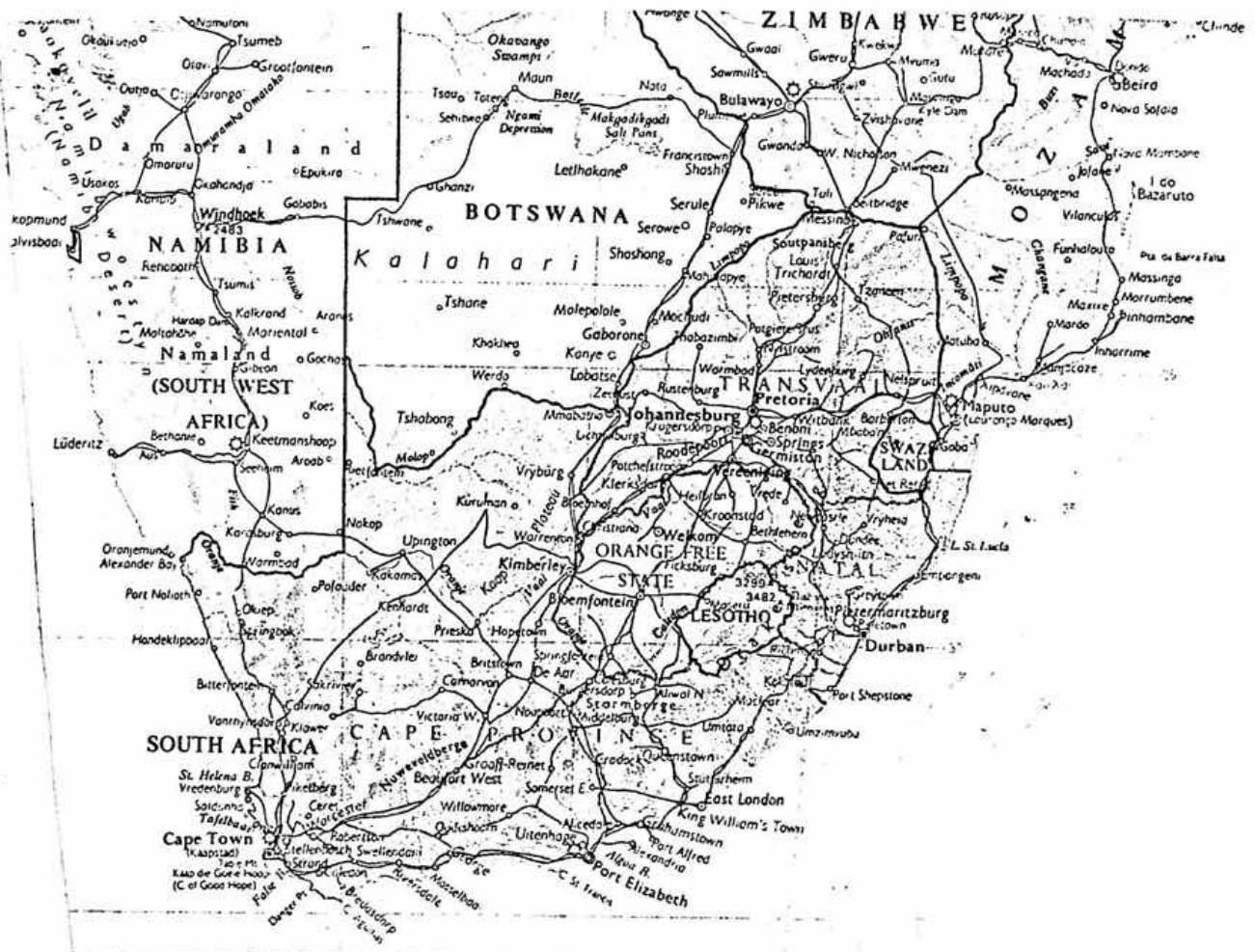
The resolution means in effect that the council supports the British, French and American charges of Libyan complicity". ('Guardian', 22 January 1992; p. 20).

On 16 February the Palestine Liberation Organisation stated that investigations carried out by the PLO established conclusively that Libya had not been involved in the Lockerbie disaster. ('Guardian', 17 February 1992; p. 26).

PARTITION IN SOUTH AFRICA?

South African President Frederick de Klerk is attempting to negotiate a new Constitution which will give a semblance of multi-party bourgeois democracy to South Africa. But he has pledged that such a constitutional change would be brought into force only after approval of white citizens in a referendum, i.e., he has promised the whites a veto over the changes.

But the majority of Afrikaners are unquestionably opposed to any changes which would deprive them of the highly privileged position they occupy in South African society. In an effort to prevent the development of the highly explosive situation where a new Constitution had been negotiated, accepted by the majority of the black population and then vetoed by the white population, de Klerk is attempting to split the white opposition by offering to consider a 'Partition' solution -- the secession of a separate Afrikaner homeland.



Some secessionists want this homeland to be composed of the old Boer Republics of Transvaal, Orange Free State and northern Natal, with a corridor to the sea. Others, such as Koos van der Merwe, have more modest aims of

carving out a narrow strip of territory running north from Pretoria which they claim to have a white majority.

Still others, like Professor Carl Boshoff, want an 'Orange People's State' in the barren north-west, stretching from the arid Karoo to the even dryer fringes of the Kalahari and Namib deserts, with the dusty little desert town of Kuruman as its capital. The Boshoff scheme avoids separating any of the main cities from South Africa, but even though its population would be small, there would still be a black majority -- which, says Boshoff 'must be moved'.

'BLOODY SUNDAY' COMMEMORATED

On 26 January 1992, the 20th anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday', when 13 unarmed Irish demonstrators were murdered by the occupying British army, some 5,000 people marched through Derry, led by a Civil Rights Association banner and relatives of those who died. The meeting which followed by the Guildhall was addressed by Sinn Fein President, Gerry Adams.

Lieutenant-Colonel Derek Wilford, then commanding officer of the paratroops involved in the atrocity, said on BBC Television:

"I hear people saying: 'Troops out of Ireland'. It's like 'Troops out of Aden'. We need to make a positive decision now about the ending of the war in Northern Ireland. If that involves withdrawing the troops, then yes, take the troops out".

('Guardian', 27 January 1992; p. 3).

ONE LAW FOR THE RICH. .

After a year-long trial, the four defendants in the 'Blue Arrow' Stock Exchange fraud case -- headed by Jonathan Cohen, former head of the City arm of the National Westminster Bank -- were found guilty, but given suspended sentences by the judge, who also refused the application of the Serious Fraud Office that the defendants should contribute to the £40 million cost of their trial. No fines were imposed.

THE 'DISCOVERY' OF AMERICA

THIS YEAR, 1992, MUCH OF THE WORLD CELEBRATES THE QUINCENTENARY OF 'THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA' BY CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (1451-1506) IN OCTOBER 1492.

In fact, the ancestors of the American Indians migrated across the Bering Straits land bridge into North America some 20,000 to 40,000 years ago.

The myth of Columbus's 'discovery' was peddled to create the justification for the invasion, conquest, enslavement and genocide of the Amerindian inhabitants for the benefit of the greed of the European powers.

The Spanish historian and missionary Barolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566) gives a vivid description of this process in his book 'Brevisima Relación de la Destrucción de la Las Indias' (1552):

"Upon such people the Spaniard fell as tigers, wolves and lions fall upon lambs and kids. For forty years they ravaged those lands, massacring the wretched Indians until in the land of Espanola, which in 1492 had a population estimated at three million of people, scarcely three hundred Indians remained to be counted. The history of Espanola is the history of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Jamaica. Thirty islands in the neighbourhood of Puerto Rico were entirely depopulated. On the continental side, kingdom after kingdom was desolated, tribe after tribe exterminated. Twelve million Indians on those continental lands perished under the barbarous handling of the Spaniards.

For greed of gold, ornaments were torn from neck and ear and, as the masked bandit threatens his victim until he reveals the hiding place of his wealth, the Indians were subjected to the most cruel tortures to compel the disclosure of mines which never existed and the location of gold in fields where the Almighty had never planted it. Faithful service secured no better treatment than treachery, The meanest Spaniard might violate the family of the most exalted chief, whose home had no sanctity in the bestial eyes of the soldier. The courtiers rode proudly through the streets, their horses terrifying the poor Indians as their riders shook their plumed heads and waved their gleaming swords.

As they rode along, their lances were thrust into women and children, and a favourite pastime was to wager as to a cavalier's ability to cleave a man in two with one dexterous blow of his sword. No cards or dice afforded equal sport. Another Spanish knight would wager that he could sever his victim's head from his shoulders at the first sweep of his sword.

Children were snatched from their mothers' arms and dashed against the rocks. Other children were thrown into the water that their mothers might witness their drowning struggles. Babes were snatched from their mothers' breasts, and a brave Spaniard's strength was tested by his ability to tear an infant in two by pulling apart its tiny legs. And the pieces of the babe were then thrown to the hounds, so that in their hunting they might be more eager to catch their prey.

The pedigree of a Spanish bloodhound had nothing prouder than the credit of half a thousand dead or mangled Indians. Some natives they hung on gibbets, and it was their reverential custom to gather at a time sufficient victims to hang thirteen in a row, and thus piously to commemorate Christ and his Twelve Apostles.

I have been a witness to all these cruelties, and to an infinite number of others which I pass over in silence".

POLICE GAZETTE

The High Court ruled on 24 January that

" . . . three former police officers accused of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice in their investigation into the 1974 Guildford pub

bombing must stand trial".
('Guardian', 25 January 1992; p. 3).

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A Jewish police officer . . . said yesterday he was resigning from the Metropolitan Police because of anti-Semitism.

PC Nigel Brown, aged 34, who has four commendations for bravery, said he could no longer stand his colleagues' racism and claimed that fellow officers had made threats to 'fit him up' unless he left. . . .

Mr. Brown . . . said: 'The worst example of anti-semitism I experienced was at a Christmas party.

When I entered the room, they started singing the Nazi party anthem and giving the Nazi salute. They thought it was funny".

('Guardian', 10 February 1992; p. 4).

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On 18 February two black people who sued the Metropolitan Police for false imprisonment won £20,000 in an out-of-court settlement. Our only crime, they said,

" . . . was being black".

('Guardian', 18 February 1992; p. 4).

HEALTH NEWS

"Conditions at a Manchester teaching hospital have been found by government inspectors to be 'desolate and dispiriting'.

Some wards are described as 'deplorable' and 'a source of despair'".
('Guardian', 18 January 1992' p. 2).

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A BBC Panorama survey on 20 January revealed

" . . . that the total number of NHS geriatric beds will fall from 42,000 in 1990 to 29,000, while the total of psycho-geriatric beds will fall from 32,000 to 20,000".

('Guardian', 20 January 1992; p. 4).

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On 21 January

" . . . the European Court issued a provisional ruling indicting Britain for breaking EC clean water directives".

('Guardian', 22 January 1992; p. 3).

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"A sixty-year-old heart patient has died because no money was available for life-saving operations at Guy's Hospital Trust, London.

Doctors at the trust were ordered to stop treating local patients last September because . . . there would be no more cash.

Leading cardiologist Graham Jackson, a member of the Conservative Party, warned at the time that the ban could result in patients dying. 'Now, unfortunately, I have been proved right', he said yesterday. ('Observer', 9 February 1992; p. 4).

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Official figures show that, under the government's health service 'reforms'

" . . . the number of NHS managers has soared by 1,800%, but the number of nurses has fallen". ('Guardian', 10 February 1992; p. 2).

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On 1 April the charge for dispensing an NHS prescription goes up by 10% to £3. 75 per item.

"The 35p increase is the 14th rise since the Government took office, taking the charge to almost 19 times the 20p it was in 1979". ('Guardian', 14 February 1992; p. 2).

THE UNACCEPTABLE FACE . .

On 8 January 1992 British Steel confirmed that it would close down the steel-making capacity at its Ravenscraig plant at Motherwell by September, with the direct loss of 1,220 jobs and a further 1,200 indirectly.

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A report by the Low Pay Unit revealed in January that more than 10 million adult workers earn less than the Council of Europe's 'decency threshold'.

"The number of low-paid workers has risen rapidly since 1979, when 38% earned less than the Council of Europe's threshold. Now it is 46%". ('Guardian', 14 January 1992; p. 5),

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"Ministers were last night in a legal dilemma over poll tax non-payments because they fear that using their powers to clarify the law over computer evidence could open the way for millions of appeals against liability orders granted against earlier non-payers.

The problems have arisen because of successful challenges to the admissibility of computer evidence in magistrates' courts. . . .

And many of the about 170 people who have gone to prison over non-payment of tax could start actions for damages for false imprisonment". ('Guardian', 17 January 1992; p. 2).

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"The 21st successive monthly rise in the official jobless total in December left Britain with the second worst unemployment record of any

Western industrial nation last year, according to government figures released yesterday,

A jump of 31,100 to 2,546,000 in the seasonally-adjusted figure meant the dole queues swelled by 701,000 during 1991, pushing the unemployment rate up to 9%".
('Guardian', 17 January 1991; p. 14).

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"Job losses of 1,200 at four Yorkshire pits and the premature closure of British Coal's clean coal project dealt two fresh hammer blows to the industry last night".
('Guardian', 22 January 1992; p. 20).

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Despite the presentation of the government's privatisation drive as moves towards a 'people's capitalism', the Central Statistical Office's 'Social Trends' reveals that

" . . . more than half of all shares were privately held in 1963, but by 1990 only 20% were not in the hands of institutions".
('Guardian', 23 January 1992; p. 5).

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"Tax changes under the Conservatives have helped the well-off at the expense of the poor, the annual 'Social Trends' statistical survey confirms today. . . .

'Social Trends' is published by the Central Statistical Office. . . .
The division is accentuated by indirect taxes. 'Social Trends' estimates that they took 24.4% of gross income of the poorest fifth. . .

By contrast, indirect taxes took 12.4% of the gross income of the richest fifth".
('Guardian', 23 January 1992; p. 5).

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"A chronic shortage of jail space is forcing the Home Office to consider the aquisition of prison ships aboard which unconvicted inmates would be locked up awaiting trial or sentence.

The proposal for 'floating detention facilities' is included in a confidential minute of the prison board's estate management committee, which has been seen by the 'Guardian'"
('Guardian', 30 January 1992; p. 22),

* * * * *

On 7 February Ford announced the axing of 2,100 jobs at its British plants.

"The cuts follow the loss of 2,000 jobs at Ford last year, and will reduce the company's British workforce to around 38,000, compared with 72,000 in the early 1980s".
('Guardian', 8 February 1992; p. 1).

"On Thursday, the Council of Mortgage Lenders, will announce record repossession figures, revealing that 80,000 families lost their homes last year. . . .

In addition, at least 160,000 home owners are in serious arrears with their mortgages. . . .

A survey of company insolvencies by the Association of Chambers of Commerce showed that 21,827 companies went out of business last year". ('Observer', 9 February 1992; p. 26).

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Phil Bateman, Chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities' public transport committee, said on 9 February

"The free pensioner travel pass could soon be a thing of the past". ('Guardian', 10 February 1992; p. 5).

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"According to the Department of Employment, the 53,000 increase in the number of people out of work and claiming benefit in January took the seasonally adjusted total to 2,604,000" ('Guardian', 14 February 1992; p. 1).

THE ELECTION COMETH

As a prelude to the general election due this year, on 3 February 1992 the 'Sunday Times' published a report of an alleged meeting between Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock and the Soviet ambassador in the early 1990s. Although the report is

" . . . largely banal", ('Guardian', 3 February 1992; p. 23).

it was publicised on the newspaper's placards as: 'OFFICIAL: KINNOCK'S 'KREMLIN CONNECTION'!



"Mounting evidence of a 'dirty tricks' campaign to destabilise the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties is emerging in the run up to the General Election.

Prompted by the continued disclosure of burglaries at MPs' and party offices, and allegations of underhand tactics by pro-Tory newspapers, senior figures from both main elements of the Opposition are beginning to voice fears of a 'conspiracy'. They are drawing parallels between the present 'Commonsgate' and the so-called plot against Harold Wilson, in which smears against Labour were spread by MI5 to the Conservative press.

... The Rupert Murdoch-owned 'News of the World' is believed to have offered more than £25,000 to Tricia Howard, Mr. Ashdown's mistress of five years ago, for letters or reminiscences of their affair. . . . This

sum, it is understood, was merely an opening bid". ('Observer', 9 February 1992; p. 6).

Clearly, the capitalist class are preparing to hold an election!

CORRECTION

In certain documents of the Communist League, an inexact definition of the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is given, in that the term 'working class' is wrongly confused with the term 'working people'. The Committee of the Communist League is satisfied that the formulations below are a more exact expression of the Marxist-Leninist view on this question.

In making this error, we mistakenly followed the example of a number of Communist and Workers' Parties in Eastern Europe in the years 1945 onwards. A future article will discuss the significance of this error in the development of revisionism in Eastern Europe.

We are indebted to the Communist Party of New Zealand for pointing out this error on our part.

The proletariat or working class is composed of working people who are employed directly by capitalists or capitalist firms, that is, who sell their labour power directly to capitalists or capitalist firms; proletarians involved in farming are known in some countries as landless peasants.

The working people is composed of all those who live primarily by their own labour. In addition to the working class, it consists of:

1) the semi-proletariat, composed of working people who obtain their livelihood partly by working as employees of capitalists or capitalist firms and partly by working, with their labour and that of members of their family, small means of production over which they have tenure; semi-proletarians involved in farming are known in some countries as poor peasants;

2) the petty-bourgeoisie, composed of working people who work small means of production with their labour and that of members of their family; petty bourgeois elements involved in farming are known in some countries as middle peasants.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the state form necessary to build and maintain a socialist society:

"The revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, to maintain its victory and to push forward to the final victory of socialism unless, at a certain stage in its development, it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principal mainstay".

(J. V. Stalin: 'The Foundations of Leninism', in: 'Works', Volume 6; Moscow; 1953; p. 112).

In the dictatorship of the proletariat, political power is held by the working class alone:

"The class which took political power into its hands did so knowing that it took power alone. That is a part of the concept dictatorship of the

proletariat. . . .

The class of the proletarians . . . does not and cannot share power with other classes".

(J. V. Stalin: 'Concerning Questions of Leninism', in: 'Works', Volume 8; Moscow; 1964; p. 27).

The establishment and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat requires an alliance between the proletariat and other strata of the working people:

"This power, the power of one class, can be firmly established and exercised to the full only by means of a special form of alliance between the class of proletarians and the labouring masses of the petty bourgeois classes, primarily the labouring masses of the peasantry".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 27-28).

The term 'alliance' does not mean a 'sharing of power', for

" . . . the class of the proletarians . . . does not and cannot share power with other classes".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 27).

It is an alliance in which the leading role is taken by the political party of the proletariat, which does not share power with other parties:

"Does not this alliance with the labouring masses of other, non-proletarian, classes wholly contradict the idea of the dictatorship of one class?

This special form of alliance consists in that the guiding force of this alliance is the proletariat. This special form of alliance consists in that the leader of the state, the leader in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat is one party, the party of the proletariat, the Party of the Communists, which does not and cannot share leadership with other parties".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 28).

'COMpass' is published by THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE, whose principal aim is to build a Marxist-Leninist Party in Britain, free of all revisionist trends.

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