

# Workers power



**INSIDE:  
THE  
LESSONS  
OF  
CHILE**

## U.S. IMPERIALISM OUT OF CENTRAL AMERICA

REAGAN HAS DECLARED war on all forces struggling to overthrow the dictatorships that back up US imperialism in Central America. A task force of 8 ships has started 6 months of manoeuvres off Central America's Pacific coast. Another carrier is ready to patrol Nicaragua's Caribbean coast. Soviet vessels bound for Nicaragua have been stopped on the High Seas. Green Berets are training Honduran soldiers and joint manoeuvres are underway between US and Honduran troops.

Reagan has set up a special commission on Central America to advise on policy. At its head is the sinister Kissinger whose credentials for the job include the destabilisation of Allende's regime in Chile, the merciless bombing of Kampuchea and a view that "If we cannot manage Central America, it will be impossible to convince threatened nations in the Gulf and other places that we know how to manage the global equilibrium."

Increased arms are to be ferried to the "contras" who are fighting the Sandinista regime from Honduras. Joint US-Honduran exercises last year saw major arms dumps and radar back-up created for the contras. Israel has recently ensured the supply of arms to Eden Pastora's forces.

What is at stake for the Reagan administration and its fawning That-

cherite allies is holding the line for American profits and the regimes that guarantee them throughout the globe. The overthrow of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua and the coming to power of the Sandinistas threatened US interests in that country and served to encourage all those fighting hated dictatorships in a region that is crucial for US imperialism. Reagan has made it clear that he sees all of Latin America as legitimately and necessarily under the heel of the US. As the fleet set sail he declared: "From the tip of Tierra del Fuego to Alaska's Point Barrow, we are all Americans. We worship the same God and cherish the same freedoms. Can we stand idly by and allow a totalitarian minority to destroy our common heritage?"

The US wants to force the Sandinista regime to its knees. Either it will have to accept compromise on its terms or the US will bring it down. Either the bourgeois in the Sandinista government will have to take control or the contras and the Honduran army will get the backing to bring it all down. Reagan has already said that "What is really needed is what the contras are after."

The US also wants to isolate the El Salvadorean guerrillas by cowing the Sandinistas, closing any arms routes and arming the far right military regime there. They hope

this will be enough to split the guerrillas and win the pro-bourgeois elements within them to compromise. If they refuse, then the US has served notice that it has the will and the fire-power to crush them.

Lastly the US wants to blockade the USSR and Cuba out of giving the kind of material aid that any regime in the region would need should it break decisively with imperialism. At this moment Nicaragua is dependent on the US for the majority of its trade.

If the US succeeds in crushing Central America it will be an enormous blow to all those who are struggling against imperialism. If the US is to fail, the workers and peasants of Central America need solidarity action by the workers in the imperialist countries. The US must not be allowed to celebrate ten years since Chile's bloody coup by toppling the Sandinistas and defeating the El Salvador gerillas.

- Black all supplies to the Central American dictatorships!
- Withdraw British troops from Belize!
- Stop Thatcher's veto of EEC aid to Nicaragua!

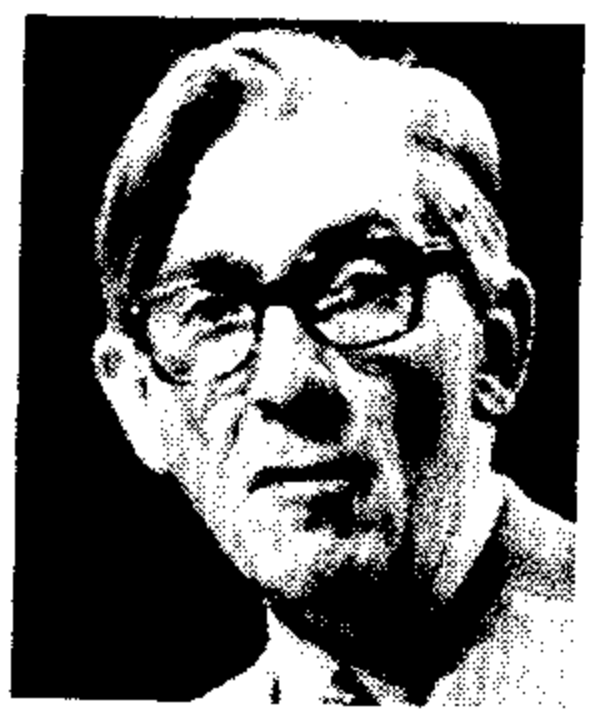
Demonstrate September 11th: Join the Chile Solidarity Campaign Demonstration: No More Chiles Assemble Clerkenwell Green 1 pm.



## T.U.C. LEADERS: STILL ON THEIR KNEES

NORMAN TEBBIT HAD a most relaxing summer. The TUC leaders made sure of that. The Tory government pressed on with its plans to cut dole payments to youth, to ransack the NHS, to prepare a confrontation with the miners and for the enacting of new anti-union laws. Meanwhile the Trade Union leaders scurried regularly to Tebbit's office waving the white flag and asking no more than to be talked to occasionally and that their request be rejected politely.

The TUC leaders have no pride or dignity to get in their way as they throw in the towel to Tebbit. On August 18th they slinked into Tebbit's office to discuss the Tories' refusal to accept a Manpower Services Commission proposal to increase Youth Training Scheme payments above £25 a week slave-wage. Tebbit refused to budge, but this did not deter the TUC leaders. In his calm and confident refusal they managed to detect a new, more reasonable Norman Tebbit. Len Murray was most impressed with his first audience with Tebbit for eighteen months. "Mr Tebbit appeared to be listening to what we were saying and to understand what we were saying", he declared after re-discovering the joys of ministerial offices. Bill Keys sang the same tune, he was "more hopeful, however, than after previous discussions I have had with Mr Tebbit."



Norman Tebbit had a better measure of these cowards than they did of him. He realised that they were in headlong retreat from any hint of a conflict with the Tories. While Murray was blathering his praises of the Tory minister, Tebbit had this to say of Mr Murray and his crew - "up until the general election the TUC had entertained some hopes that a Labour government would be returned and it therefore felt it had no need to talk to a conservative government. But they now take a more realistic view of a Labour government being returned."

Murray was back with Tebbit the next day too. This time he failed to get any concessions from Tebbit on the government's plan to repudiate International Labour Organisation conventions in a bid to get all workers' pay put directly into the hands of the banks. Once again Len Murray was impressed with Tebbit's form "We have had a serious discussion about a serious issue. No one was trying to score points today." There could be no doubt that the TUC leaders were out to trample on the 1982 Wembley conference decision to stop talking to Thatcher's government. They wanted to



present resumed and "fruitful" talks as an accomplished fact to this year's TUC Congress in Blackpool.

Under the last Tory government the TUC leaders ran for cover, praying for the day that a Labour government would be elected and draw them back into the inner sanctums of Whitehall. They systematically sabotaged all attempts to confront the Tories hoping that the ballot box would save them. Two rounds of anti-union legislation went through virtually unopposed by the TUC. The General Council's Report to the 1983 TUC Congress makes all of this abundantly clear. The long and unedifying report contains Congress House's record of its dealings with the Tories and a pitiful record it is.

Faced with January's "Green Paper", yet more anti-union legislation, the TUC declared its refusal to discuss the proposed legislation with the Tories. But did they prepare to fight against it? Not at all. The report chronicles the production of a reply "in popular style" which the TUC published under the title "Hands Up for Democracy". Although there are officially 10½ million trade unionists affiliated to the TUC, Congress House



could only shift 60,000 copies of its brochure, with 15,000 of these supposedly being dispatched in response to individual enquiries to Congress House. Not even protest demonstrations of a local or national nature were called. All hopes were focussed on the return of a Labour government. It may have been hands up for democracy but it was thumbs down for action. No wonder then that immediately after Labour's disastrous showing in the General Election the July General Council set out to get back round the table with Tebbit. As the report itself put it, the General Council decided "that a meeting should be sought with him (i.e. Tebbit -Ed) to enable the General Council to express their strong opposition to the proposals." Under the cover of going to tell Tebbit what they thought of him the TUC had opened the door to doing business as usual with the Thatcher government. Sure enough, when they did meet him he had them eating out of his hand!

That the TUC had no plans to fight Tebbit is also evidenced by the resolutions that found their way onto the TUC Congress agenda. The TUC is not even making a pretence of organising resistance. Standard resolutions reached the agenda paper from the AUEW and ASLEF declaring opposition to anti-union laws but with no commitment to any form of action against them. Even such empty rhetoric proved too strong for Clive Jenkins and Duffy. They put their weight behind a CPSA amendment that explicitly rejects industrial action and declares that the proposals "are best opposed by reasoned discussion with the government and by explaining to the public the unfair and impractical nature of the proposals."

AUEW(TASS) and the NUM have proposed a re-affirmation of the 1982's position of "no discussion with the Government on the subject of anti-union legislation", but the weightier bureaucracies have set their hearts on talking to Tebbit again. Only the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union summoned up the nerve to propose any action against Tebbit in the form of a "24-hour General Strike as the first step in solidarity action" in the event "of restraint of any union funds, or the arrest of trade unionists under these laws". All the bureaucratic tricks of Congress House were used to try to persuade the Bakers to drop their call in the interest of unity.

With no immediate prospect for returning to the corridors of power as the partners of a Labour government, the TUC leaders are keen to sneak back in as subalterns for the Tories. To fulfil this inglorious role the "General Staff" of the labour movement have to prove to the Tories that they are willing to negotiate not for their members' interests with the Tories, but for the Tories' interests with their members. In return they get the chance chat over the Tories' plans, pretend they have got concessions as a result and then make sure that they do their utmost to sabotage any rank and file resistance to these plans. In a recent interview with *The Guardian* Len Murray made clear that this was the TUC's aim. He calmly explained that his job was not to lead a fight against unemployment, but to distribute it more evenly across the whole working class, "I don't think full employment is necessary or desirable. I don't see why we should accept full employment axiomatically."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# STOP THE WITCH-HUNTS

...AGAINST THE LEFT

TALES OF TROTSKYIST "moles" gave the Fleet Street rat-pack the chance to launch a full-scale red scare this summer. Thirteen people were sacked from BL's Cowley works for allegedly giving false information on their application forms. Taking a leaf out of the right-wing Labour NEC's book, the company tipped the wink to the press that the 13 were Trotskyists and, hey presto, a witch-hunt was set in full swing.

In their flights of fancy about the "march of the Marxists" and "red webs of evil", the press chose to leave out the most important facts about the Cowley 13 case. They failed to mention that the 13, along with thousands of workers, were forced to give false information because of management policy in BL and throughout industry of black-listing union activists. They ignored the fact that with millions out of work, numerous people, desperate for a job, have to conceal educational qualifications. Moreover, they deliberately twisted what happened to imply that Trotskyists are furtive, conspiratorial types hell-bent on "wrecking industry". Yet not a shred of evidence could be brought forward to support these ludicrous claims.

The witch-hunt stories were not just silly-season fillers. The press is owned and run by a small gang of millionaires - Murdoch, Matthews, Rothermere and Co. Week in, week out, their papers peddle stories glorifying the Royal Family, the rich and famous, the Tory Party and all of the other pillars of existing society. They loudly denounce workers who strike for a living wage, or who protest against mass unemployment as callous wreckers, saboteurs and so on. In short, the press are a crucial means of purveying the bosses' ideas to the great mass of the people. For them, therefore, a story like the Cowley 13 is an ideal opportunity to wage an ideological offensive against the left. Anyone who opposes the system that inflicts low wages or the pittance from the dole on millions can be branded as a mole, an outcast with no right to a job. This way the press from the so-called liberal *Guardian* to the venomous *Sun* hope to isolate revolutionary Marxists from the mass of workers, with their defence of a blatantly political sacking.

For BL and British industry at large the witch-hunt serves another purpose. In their drive for higher profits the bosses necessarily have to boost productivity and cut labour costs. In plain language, make workers work harder for less money. The trade unions, and in particular the rank and file at shop stewards level, are a constant obstacle to the plans of the bosses. Even bureaucratized unions led by the people committed to the bosses' system, cannot stand by and let their members be smashed by the management. For the bosses, therefore, the power-actual or potential - of the unions has to be broken. Their right to manage - to sack us when they want and dominate our lives - has to be asserted. First in the firing line is the Left. BL has led the way in this anti-union campaign. It sacked the Communist Party convenor of Longbridge, Derek Robinson. It sacked nine Left stewards in Longbridge not long after. It sacked leading Cowley militant Alan Thornett. Now it has had a go at 13 alleged supporters of the Left paper *Socialist Action*. These militants have all been sacked by BL because of their political views. They have been sacked because their views could be translated into action by thousands of workers who oppose BL's job-slashing, wage-cutting policies. This is the truth behind the recent sackings. The false information on application forms was a spurious pretext.

Unless these latest witch-hunts are opposed by the labour movement more will follow. Already the Socialist League is being accused of plots in the CND and the Labour Party, as the press tries to maintain a McCarthyite atmosphere. The sinister bosses' outfit, the Economic League, has been openly touting its services and its computerised blacklists to the bosses. Last year 54 companies gave this body a total of £125,000 to fund its spying activities on union activists and left-wingers. They want their money's worth.

Revolutionary Marxists are not afraid to declare their views to the working class. In the face of the witch-hunt we call on workers to judge us by our views and our deeds, not by the lies and slanders of the yellow press. Yes we want to overthrow the bosses' misery-inflicting system. Yes we will be at the forefront of every struggle by workers to improve their wages and conditions and defend their rights and jobs. In the interests of workers' democracy we urge all forces in the labour movement to defend our right to do this in the unions, the workplaces and the Labour Party, against the attempts of the bosses and their agents in the labour movement to stop us.

...AGAINST P.I.E.

LED BY THE *Sun*, the bosses' press that specialises in head-fixing working class people has been whipping up a frenzied campaign over sex crimes this summer. Using the brutal assault on a young boy in Brighton, these rags have combined their usual lurid and titillating reportage with attempts to orchestrate an attack on all who resist Thatcher's "Victorian" moral values. The soft-porn *Sun* pulpitering about morality is enough to turn many people's stomachs, but there is method in their madness.

They have sensationalised a genuinely horrific case of sexual assault in order to stigmatise all those who do not conform to their sexual mores, as perverts and potential child rapists. The gay community were the first target, since there is a large gay community in Brighton. Baseless innuendo was used to link the two. Then the Paedophile Information Exchange were drawn in. PIE is a group that campaigns for a change in the law to allow sexual relations between adults and children based on consent. It disavows and indeed condemns "child molestation".

"Scum" - shrieks the *Sun*, sure that millions will agree - ban them, drive them out of their jobs, hunt down any who are teachers or scout-masters. In one fell swoop a gang of child rapists, the gay community and PIE are lumped together.

Then in came the Tories - more circumspect in their language perhaps but eager to press home the assault on permissiveness, to defend "the family" and so on. The labour movement must resist the tide of moral reaction. It must fight any attempts by employers, the state or right-wing "private individuals" to launch a witch-hunt against gays or to outlaw PIE. The state, the church, the media must not be given the right to poke their noses into people's personal lives or to outlaw pressure groups. ●

WRITE IN - In future issues of *Workers Power* we will be featuring a regular space for readers' letters. We invite our readers to send us letters, of no more than 400 words, expressing your views on our paper, our politics, the class struggle, or anything you feel strongly about. Send letters to *Workers Power*, BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX

# LABOUR DREAMS BUT CAN'T WAKE UP

THE LABOUR PARTY Conference meets this October against the background of Labour's most stunning general election defeat since 1931 and its worst result in terms of the percentage of working class and trade unionist votes gained. As a resolution to Conference sadly notes "60% of trade unionists ... did not vote Labour." Indeed only 39% of trade unionists did.

Labour only owes its near monopoly of the Westminster opposition benches to the grace and favour of a most scandalously undemocratic electoral system.

Not surprisingly a debate on this debacle is due to be one of the main items for discussion at this year's Conference. But none of the solutions proposed will come within an inch of stopping Labour's rot. The "dream ticket" Right and Centre want to blame the defeat on a lack of professionalism and party disunity. The left want to blame it all on the pussy-footing over conference policies and the lack of conviction, or outright sabotage, of the parliamentarians.

## REFORM THE E.E.C.

A large majority of resolutions defend existing policies and there is little sign of the Dutch auction of "unpopular policies" that the media have been trying to encourage in the post-election period. The one issue that is definitely up for revision is that of EEC withdrawal, where four resolutions call for an abandonment of the former position. Given that a "reform the EEC position" is an implicit part of the programme of the "dream ticket" things are likely to go hard with this once popular shibboleth of the little Englanders of the Labour Left.

The Labour Right, spearheaded by Terry Duffy and the AUEW Engineering Section will attempt to challenge conference policy on unilateral disarmament. Their resolution calls on conference to "oppose a policy of unilateral disarmament as it would leave the United Kingdom naked in a world of ever increasing nuclear weapons." This frontal assault on unilateralism is probably too crude to succeed. Unilateralism will more likely be dispensed with when the new leadership team come up with a new peace policy taking their cue, in probability, from the new "realism" of Monsignor Bruce Kent and the CND leadership.

## BACK SEAT FOR POLICY

In general, however, policy debates will take a back seat to the drive by the majority of Trade Union leaders to railroad through the Kinnock-Hattersley ticket.

The last five years was marked by an impasse in the struggle between the traditional Callaghanite Right and the new Bennite left. The Right failed to install its old champion - Dennis Healey - as party leader. The Left did not dare force things to a break with the Right. The impasse reflected the decrepitude of the Labour Party as a whole. Its result was a Foot - and now Kinnock - regime which combined the empty formalities of "Left policies"

like the AES, a rejection of incomes policy, unilateralism and an espousal of withdrawal from the EEC with Right wing control of the shadow cabinet, the preserved independence of the Parliamentary Party and a witch-hunt designed to keep the Left cowed and defensive.

## FOOT'S RIDICULOUSNESS

Since Bishop's Stortford, all this has worked like a dream against the Bennites but Foot's leadership was, in fact, an electoral nightmare. Foot's failure though did not lie in his age or appearance. In reality what appeared ridiculous in him was the "compromise" between empty Left rhetoric (which drew the fire of the yellow press) and right-Labourite actions. Half-hearted witch-hunting could not satisfy the neo-McCarthyites of Fleet St. But it did serve to seemingly confirm their claims that the reds were taking over the Labour Party.

The chief Trade Union bureaucrats around Basnett and Co hope that the renegade "Left" and arch-careerist Kinnock and the radical columnist Hattersley will maintain the status quo with none of the disadvantages of Foot, Benn and Healey. Neither of their "programmatic" statements show any sign of original thinking.

Kinnock, an orator in the decayed South Wales style, who likes to pose as Nye's successor, is as empty of ideas as today's valley chapel. He may quote Engels, Gramsci and, Lord save us... Trotsky (See *Labour's Choices: Fabian Tract no. 489*) but the general impression is just self-contradictory waffle.

"I do not believe that our choice of socialist direction should be merely a matter of deciding between the 'left' or the 'right' - and certainly not as these classifications have been used over the past few years." Kinnock wants to be both left and right, or again perhaps he doesn't know left from right. What exactly does he stand for?

"Democratic socialists have a radical and rational vision. We believe that the significant changes which we seek require a wholesale transformation of existing society. We do not believe it to be possible to create 'equality' or 'justice' in sufficient quantity or with sufficient quality in an economy which is permanently ruled by the values of minority privilege and majority sacrifice. In the Labour Party we are neither impossibilists nor adventurists. We do not gamble on a sudden crisis which will, somehow, as if by magic, precipitate a socialist utopia. Nor do we put forward a programme to be achieved by violence and bloodshed. Nor do we offer a programme whose justification lies in its pristine socialist purity."

The sheer emptiness of all this - its poverty as regards any programme, any action, will not be lost on the working class. Youth, quick wits, a slick turn of phrase will not cover up its essential bankruptcy for six months. Hattersley, whom Kinnock once described, accurately enough, as a second-rate essayist - tries to do for Crossland's "egalitarianism" what Kinnock does for Bevanism - mimic it.

It is a sign of the decay of Labourism that these contenders can only serve up the husks of old Bevanite

and Crosslandite nostrums and neither of them can do so with any real vitality or verve. The profound recession and Labour's declining organic links with the working class render both traditions ever more empty and unviable. Crossland was the ideologist of the Labour Right during the long post-war boom. No wonder Hattersley's glib offerings seem so shallow in the face of a world capitalist recession, for example.

"We have to remove those positive barriers to a more equal society which have intentionally been erected by the rich and powerful to preserve the gap which divides them from their fellow citizens - the public schools, private medicine parasiting on the National Health Service - emphasise the class division in our society."

A combination of Kinnock and Hattersley is not so much a dream as a sleep-walker's ticket. It will end in a rude awakening for the dreamers. Both of them support the maintenance and indeed continuation of the witch-hunt. Not a hairs-breadth separates Kinnock from Hattersley on this, despite their "historic" differences. To vote for the former will not "Stop the Right" or the witch-hunt.

The only candidate to clearly and unequivocally state his opposition to the witch-hunt, to consistently vote against it on the NEC and to call for the re-instatement of the five members of the Militant EB is Eric Heffer. Heffer's politics and programme are themselves a warmed-up Bevanite hash and deserve no endorsement. His appalling record on women's rights is well known on the Left. But his election would be a tremendous blow to the Right and put the whole "Left" Bennite faction so passive since Bishop's Stortford to the test. For this reason we say - Vote Heffer with no confidence in his politics.

Meacher, a young and ambitious trimmer who has already stripped off his support for the re-instatement of the expelled members is a less clear case. Nevertheless his election would bust up the dream ticket.

If Meacher and Heffer were elected then the pampered Right parliamentarians would almost certainly defect to the SDP. The Left fear this almost as much as Kinnock and Foot. But it is in the interest of working people that the open and unashamed lackeys of the bosses should take themselves off to their natural home. Voting Heffer and Meacher will be a blow against the Right and the renegade "Left". It will put the Bennites to the test, as will voting for the Tribune slate in the NEC elections.

The real solutions to the agony of the Labour Party lie beyond the Bennites and their penumbra of "Trotskyist" or "hard left" hangers-on. They lie in a programme and an organised body of militants who can come to the fore in the real class battles against the Tories.

The "wait for a Labour victory" approach was a defeatist mirage in the battles on the early eighties. The sleep-walking of Kinnockism or Bennery will lead straight to the precipice in the late eighties. The Labour movement must be woken up. We intend to do our utmost to do so. Those who are already awake should join us! ●

by Dave Stocking

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

With millions out of work and with Thatcher's government lining up further candidates in the public sector for more redundancies, this is a signal from Murray that he accepts the Tories' rationale. He tried to justify his position by stressing the importance of leisure, and cynically applauded voluntary recreational schemes that youth had been involved in. This fat-salaried bureaucrat forgets that if you are on the dole or Social Security, there isn't much cash left for leisure after rent, food and bills are paid. Undeterred by such considerations he is set in his determination to lick Tebbit's boots. Mass unemployment is acceptable if only the TUC can be in on "who gets what, and how work is divided," said Murray. He was gleeful that the monetarist cut-throat Lawson had been "cautiously positive" about his proposals and optimistically declared that as for talks with the government were concerned he could see "bits of blossom on the tree".

Murray, Jenkins, Duffy and co. are set on a deal that will lead to yet more attacks on the working class. Thatcher

herself, far from blossoming with endeavours for the unions, declared that she thought anti-union laws could require a "Bill on alternate years until we've got it right". It will be the rank and file - their jobs, wages and rights - that suffer from Thatcher getting it right. No amount of talking can alter the fact that the Tories have a strategy, that they intend to pursue, of solving the economic problems of Britain's capitalist system at the expense of the working class.

That is why it is down to rank and file militants to break up the new cosy deal between Congress House and Tebbit. Every workplace organisation and every union branch must be put on a war-footing, tirelessly arguing the case against Tebbit and organising for a one day stoppage the moment his proposals for actual legislation see the light of day.

In every union we must organise now to hold these spineless leaders to account, to pull them out of all negotiations with the Tories and put the unions on a course of collision with the Tories that can wreck all their plans and destroy the rotten system they represent. ●

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# IMPERIALISM'S 'SOCIALIST' GENDARME AT WORK

**CHAD** — The latest episode in the long-running civil war has made this central African country the focus of world attention. The defeat of government forces at the oasis town of Faya-Largeau by rebel forces led by Goukouni Oueddi, has called forth French imperialism's biggest military intervention in Africa since the Algerian war.

Chad's pro-imperialist President Habre is being held in power courtesy of French and Zairean troops, and 25 million dollars' worth of American military aid. The current stalemate, however, cannot last. It would in effect institutionalise the division of Chad between Goukouni in the North and Habre in the South. This is something France, Reagan, and virtually every African state cannot tolerate. Further conflict in Chad is inevitable.

Since Chad gained formal independence from France in 1960 it has suffered almost two decades of civil war. French imperialism installed a vicious dictator, Tombalbagne, who faithfully served their interests. In doing so he condemned the majority of Chadians, in particular the Muslims of the north, to poverty and repression. His policy called for a rebellion by a coalition of nationalist forces, Frolinat, in 1966. Tombalbagne's government held on thanks to the intervention of the French in 1968.

## DIPLOMATIC MANOEUVRES

French troops stayed in Chad till 1976. Their second puppet, Felix Malloum, who had overthrown Tombalbagne in 1975 was also unable to contain the Frolinat rebellion and the French marched in yet again in 1978. Their latest intervention is, then, a continuation of long standing French imperialist policy by the supposedly "anti-colonialist" Mitterrand administration.

When it became obvious to France that a military victory over Frolinat was impossible, it turned to the Organisation of African Unity to achieve the same end by diplomatic means. To aid in this diplomatic solution they suborned Hissene Habre - then a leader of Frolinat - into breaking with the rebels and doing a deal with Malloum, who made him Prime Minister for his services. Yet still the rebellion went on, led by Goukouni Oueddi. French imperialism decided to broaden the government which would collaborate with them by including Goukouni. In 1980 they succeeded in forming a transitional government (GUNT) with Goukouni as president and Habre as defence minister.

Tension grew between Habre, who accepted with alacrity the role of dictator for the interests of French imperialism, and Goukouni, who sought to pursue a more independent nationalist policy via aid and support from Libya.

Goukouni's pro-Libyan moves were met with a renewal of civil war by Habre in 1980. This new round of civil war left the capital N'djamena in ruins. By 1982 Goukouni was desperately attempting fusion with Libya whilst Habre had assembled a large and powerful army with the backing of Egypt, the Sudan and the CIA.

French orchestrated pressure from the OAU forced Goukouni to abandon his unification project

with Libya and request the Libyan forces to withdraw from Chad. Goukouni paid dearly for his compromise. His concession was a signal for the CIA backed Habre forces to advance and oust him from power in June in 1982. The latest round of fighting represents Goukouni's Libyan backed attempt to topple Habre.

The western press revels in presenting this war as either a sinister Russian plot to take over Chad or a senseless shoot-out between feuding war lords. The former is the prevailing conservative view. The latter that of the liberal press and their Labourite hangers on. That so-called Trotskyists should retail the latter view is perhaps surprising - unless one remembers the Falklands War. We refer to an article in *Socialist Organiser* by Martin Thomas (dated 18.8.83). Here he declares that "Chad thus becomes a football in the rivalries of the two international blocks - the US and the USSR and their respective clients and lieutenants". He adds, "But whichever warlord wins, the people of Chad will lose" and offers as a solution the "aim of the revolutionary leaders of African independence - a pan African Federation, with equal rights for all of Africa's many peoples." He then cryptically adds that the only force capable of achieving this is "Africa's growing working class."

This grotesque parody of Trotsky's Permanent Revolution sits cheek by jowl with a confirmation of standard imperialist "African bloodbath" and Russian plot propaganda. It offers no guide to understanding the roots of the war in Chad, no strategy for proletarian revolutionaries in the region and no guidance to revolutionaries in France, Britain and America. Instead in true SO style it offers an abstract, above the combat, democratic solution to the problem with the delayed and distant promise that the growing African proletariat will solve it - perhaps when it has "grown" a little more, or "grown up" enough to have a Labour party to lead it?

## THE BALKANISATION OF AFRICA

Equally remarkable is the rampant Stalino-phobia (and Qaddafi-phobia). The present war in Chad is definitely not being carried out by Libya and Goukouni on Moscow's orders. Neither is Goukouni simply a power-mad warlord. The roots of the Chad conflict lie in French imperialism's balkanisation (arbitrary division into states) of north and central Africa. This balkanisation has persistently thwarted genuine national development and served to create a chain of states dependent on French imperialism. Chad, Niger, Cameroun, Ivory Coast, the Central African Republic, Upper Volta and a host of other states are all products of imperialism's former direct control of the area. They are all crucial today, as client semi-colonies of France, to maintaining imperialism's indirect control of the area.

The maintenance of their arbitrary borders and of their "legitimate" rulers (mostly bonapartist dictatorships) are vital in maintaining imperialist exploitation of the whole region. This explains why France has repeatedly used its troops in the Central African Empire (now Republic) and to support various regimes in Chad. France has military bases dotted around the area as well as some 8,000 troops. With Niger supplying France with 25% of its uranium and

the Central African Republic a lucrative source of diamonds, imperialism's interest in the area is obvious and crucial.

Chad itself, while being one of the world's poorest countries, in terms of its per capita income, does provide France with cotton. The cotton, grown in the south, is produced and marketed by French firms like Cotonchad and the Chad Textile Company. However, Chad's economic worth lies more in the future than in the present. It is thought to have important oil and mineral resources. The French oil company, Chevron, as well as some US oil companies, have announced "promising results" from their explorations. However, French and increasingly US imperialism's interests in Chad are primarily strategic. The US/French semi-colonies are all ruled by inherently unstable bonapartist regimes whose slender base of support is imperialist military aid and support for privileged military castes or geriatric semi-feudal classes.

## ONE MORE DOMINO

Qaddafi overthrew such a regime, and thanks to his country's oil wealth and limited Soviet support he is a beacon encouraging similar nationalist officers in many of imperialism's Arab and African semi-colonies.

Goukouni is feared and hated by imperialism as yet another Qaddafi, and as one more domino that could topple over the whole system of semi-colonies as it has been constituted since the abandonment of formal empire by France and Britain in the 1950s. A successful coup in Upper Volta by a pro-Libyan captain, the pro-Libyan utterances of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in Ghana, rumoured plots in Cameroun, all drove Reagan to push Mitterrand forward to "stop the rot".

AWAC surveillance planes accompanied by fighters were sent to monitor Chad. The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *Eisenhower* sailed off the coast of Libya. Thirty anti-aircraft missiles and three US instructors were sent to Chad. Reagan's press secretary, Larry Speakes, explained why all of this was necessary: "If Libya, or Libyan-supported forces were to gain control of Chad, close US allies such as Egypt and Sudan would be seriously concerned about their security. Other states in the region would also be deeply worried".

Mitterrand may have been slow in acting, but act he did. Thousands of French troops, squadrons of fighter planes and tons of military equipment were poured into Chad throughout late August. The French are now firmly dug in across a line in Central Chad, and Habre's regime has been temporarily saved. No wonder Reagan by mid-August could relax and describe Chad as "not our primary sphere of influence, it is that of France".

The present war in Chad (and the civil war that immediately preceded it) is a nationalist war against imperialism and its chosen puppet. Of course, neither Goukouni's nor Qaddafi's bourgeois nationalism prevents either of them striking deals with imperialism. Goukouni did a deal with the French in 1981, and Qaddafi is trying to do one now. Indeed, Qaddafi has high hopes that "socialist" Mitterrand can be made to oppose the USA and help Libya. Nor should their



Mitterrand

limited and self-seeking struggles against imperialism lead us to think that they are pro-working class in any way. Both are class enemies of the Arab and African proletariat and poor peasantry. That, however, is not decisive with regards to the present war, and the question of which, if any, side revolutionaries should militarily support.

When an oppressed nation, a semi-colony like Libya, or an oppressed people in a semi-colony, like the northern Muslims who form Goukouni's base, find themselves in armed struggle against imperialism's agent - and then against imperialism itself - then we must support them *militarily*. We are for a military victory of the Goukouni forces, and their Libyan backers, against Habre and the French. A victory for them over the French would plunge the whole semi-colonial system in the region into social and political crisis. This does not mean that we give any political support or endorsement to Qaddafi or Goukouni within the present conflict.

But such a crisis caused by their victory would create conditions whereby the proletariat could emerge as a decisive force. The proletariat must enshrine on its banner not only a decisive attack on imperialism - the expropriation of all its holdings, and an agrarian revolution against the remnants of feudalism who prop up the semi-colonial regimes, but also the nationalised and planned economy that alone can create the basis for a real workers' and peasants' government. In the balkanised states north and south of the Sahara, unity or federation to strengthen the resistance to imperialism is essential.

Revolutionaries in Britain, France and in the USA have to fight to mobilise the labour movement against Thatcher, Reagan and the loyal "socialist" servant of imperialism, Mitterrand.

Our demands must be:  
French troops, CIA spies, Zairean puppet forces out of Chad!  
For the defeat of French forces in Chad!  
Hands off Libya! ●

by Mark Hoskisson

# Vatican pact with Jaruzelski

**POLAND** - Behind the scenes of the Pope's July visit, the Catholic hierarchy and the Jaruzelski regime were completing a sordid deal. The Church was to scour the world's banks to raise 6 billion dollars to pump into Poland's private agricultural sector. In turn the Stalinists promised to guarantee the maintenance of private agriculture which is the traditional base of the Catholic Church in Poland. The funds are to be distributed by state planning agencies which will be open to Church supervision.

The Catholic hierarchy agreed to up the tempo of its drive to wind-up Solidarnosc and demobilise and divert the energies of the Polish working class. Not only did the Pope use his enormous audiences to preach passivity in the face of the Stalinist regime, "Do not succumb to evil, but triumph over evil through goodness" but he also proceeded to dump Walesa too. The Vatican paper *L'Osservatore Romano*, praised Walesa for meeting the Pope, "in a private way without demanding to count any longer in the present phase of the country". This was a sure sign of what the Vatican was up to. It was echoed by the

Wroclaw archbishop who said of Walesa, "he is still important, but not in the same way as before."

Since martial law, the Church has made clear that it wants no return to the militant days of Solidarnosc. Giemp has dismissed the Solidarnosc underground as, "struggling for the sake of struggle" and the Polish bishops have been calling for unions that take, "into consideration the good of the state". They want unions that will be vehicles for Catholic ideology amongst the workers, not organs of struggle against the bureaucracy. They want to be able to manipulate the working class for the Church's own ends in its dealings with the bureaucracy.

The deal with the Church made it possible for the regime to dismantle some aspects of martial law. However, the Stalinists still preserved for themselves extraordinary powers as well as over 60 political prisoners, the requirement of six months notice to quit jobs and up to three-year sentences for members of "secret unions or associations, or in those that have been dissolved." The regime has no intention of co-existing with any independent bodies other than those policed by the clergy or by Stalinist stooges.

The deals struck by the Church and the partial lifting of martial law have served to cause a serious crisis in the Polish working class in general and in the Solidarnosc underground in particular. While there is a distinct layer grouped around the Solidarnosc committees which exist in most plants, and while there is still a network of coordination with the underground leadership (TKK), the underground has had little success in winning the mass of workers to its initiatives. This was true of last November's general strike and seems to have been true of this August's "go-slow" call from the TKK. Some of this is no doubt due to direct clerical pressure. Wroclaw Solidarity, for example, wanted to organise an anti-government demonstration in July but were persuaded to call it off in the interests of the Pope's safety! Repression has doubtless

taken its toll too. But the very tactics and strategy that the underground and Walesa have pursued are ones that have been tried, tested and found wanting by the Polish workers before.

While Walesa has remained close to the Church hierarchy he has had to manoeuvre to keep some base in Gdansk and to prevent this most loyal of papal servants being outflanked by underground forces more critical of the Church. Hence his extraordinary zig-zags and capitulations since being released by the regime. At the beginning of the year he was echoing the calls of Giemp and the Vatican and opposing TKK's perspective of a general strike, "they have their programme, I have mine". Snubbed by the Stalinists and, increasingly, the Church, Walesa did reconcile himself to supporting TKK calls in the Spring. He even held a meeting with TKK and backed their call for an August go-slow. Walesa's role remained treacherous, however. Under pressure from the regime and, doubtless, Giemp's emissaries, he called off plans to address a meeting to win support for the go slow. When the deputy prime minister addressed Gdansk shipyard workers in late August, Walesa could only propose compromise by both sides and a joint wreath-laying ceremony to mark the anniversary of the August 1980 Gdansk agreements.

## WORKERS UNMOVED

Poland's bishops and Lech Walesa have issued a call for a return to the Gdansk agreements. But it was these agreements that recognised the authority of the Stalinist regime and demobilised the inter-factory committees (MKS) into a trade union to bargain with it. The Gdansk agreements left the regime intact to strike back with its armed might the moment it saw fit. No wonder then that large numbers of workers remain unmoved by appeals for ineffective action such as go-slows as a means of winning compromises from a regime that has shown quite clearly that it will make no compromises with independent working class organisation.

The TKK itself has no real alternative to either Walesa or the Church hierarchy. It remains committed to an ever more distant goal of a general strike but only with the aim of forcing the regime to compromise. It argued this Summer that, "The prospect of a general strike, in our view inevitable, does not cancel the programme of evolutionary change of the system; it only shows a way to break up the present dictatorship and to create conditions for democratic reforms." (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*).

## UNDERGROUND IN TURMOIL

It too has the same flawed view of compromise with the regime - while advancing more resolute tactics to attain that aim. In fact, the TKK seems ever less confident about its ability to deliver the blow of a general strike and increasingly reliant on passive protests, for example a public transport boycott, as a means of keeping its morale up. Pressured by the Church, hounded by the Stalinists and betrayed by Walesa, the underground suffered a further blow in late August with the capitulation - or arrest - of Hardek, one of its key figures.

While the underground is in turmoil there is no evidence that the regime has succeeded in completely crushing the working class. Deputy prime minister Rakowski was shouted down when he tried to address workers in the Lenin shipyards. In mid-August the FSO car plant became the first to strike since martial law. Demonstrations and rallies in Gdansk show that there is still a determined and active core of workers who want to fight the regime. The key task is to win these workers to a revolutionary organisation with a programme of the political-revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy. Such an organisation would be able to counterpose itself to the demoralising poison advanced by the Church and Walesa, challenge the reformist dreams of the underground leaders and organise workers to struggle for power. ●

by Dave Hughes

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THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY of Pinochet's coup, one of the most severe defeats suffered by the international working class in the 1970s should remind us of vital lessons which must not be forgotten as the Chilean military regime enters its mortal crisis. Whenever the working class fails to learn from the defeats of the past it is condemned to re-live them.

On November 4th 1970, Salvador Allende took up the Presidency of Chile. At the head of the Popular Unity (PU), he had achieved 36.3% of the popular vote as against his Radical Democrat-National Party (RD-NP) and Christian Democrat (CD) rivals, who gained 34.9% and 27.8% of the vote respectively. The disunity of the main bourgeois parties stemmed from the failure of Eduardo Frei's "reform" government (1964-70) and was a mark of Chile's deep crisis.

Popular Unity brought together the two main parties of Chilean working class politics, the Communist and Socialist parties, with three small bourgeois parties - the Radical Party, the Social Democrats and the API (Independent Popular Action). These were based mainly on the small industrialists, businessmen and professionals. The Radical Party had once been the major "liberal reform party" of the Chilean bourgeoisie but had been ousted from this role by the Christian Democrats. Closer to the SP and the CP a small petit-bourgeois party MAPU (Movement for Unified Popular Action) made up the coalition.

### POPULAR FRONT PROGRAMME

This was not Chile's first experience of a popular front. Allende himself had been minister of health in just such a government in 1938-41. Popular Unity's programme was, as Allende told the *New York Times* "not a communist programme, nor a socialist programme", but "a convergence of opinion." Popular Unity, he made clear, was not going to attack capitalism in Chile. How could it with three parties that openly defended capitalist property within its ranks?

The CP held to a nearly 40 year old commitment to the "revolution" by stages in which the present stage had to be conducted in alliance with the national bourgeoisie. Its aims were limited to breaking the power of the landed oligarchy, the monopolists and the economic stranglehold of the US corporations.

There was, of course, one drawback to this strategy. The decisive sections of the Chilean ruling class were precisely the oligarchs and monopolists. No distinct national bourgeoisie existed that was capable of independent action against the US. The impotence of the bourgeois parties which joined Popular Unity reflected just this. With Allende's support the CP attempted to coax the Christian Democrats into playing the progressive "national bourgeois" role. On no account were they to be frightened into hardened opposition. Thus Popular Unity's programme talked not of socialism but of "People's Power" and a "People's Government" and of the "profound changes that the national situation requires, based on the transfer of power from the old ruling groups to the workers, peasants and progressive middle sectors, urban and rural."

The programme outlined a series of reforms to answer the problems facing an ailing and stagnating Chilean capitalism; the unresolved land problem, with huge inefficient latifundia and a land-hungry peasantry and the massive exploitation of Chile's major source of wealth - copper - by US imperialism. The country's mines were largely controlled by two US corporations, Anaconda and Kennecott.

Their super profits, added to by selling Chilean copper to their US based plants at half the world market prices, ranged between 20% and 80% on their Chilean operations. Copper represented the decisive grip which US, and to a lesser extent, European imperialism, had on the Chilean economy.

Frei's feeble attempts to alleviate this had been a dismal failure. Chile's growth rate remained lower than most other Latin American countries, its national debt had risen by the end of Frei's term to the highest per capita in the world. The failure of land reform was leading to rural disturbances.

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# THE LESSONS OF

In this situation Popular Unity seemed to offer a programme of dynamic reforms - redistribution of the land, nationalisation of US copper and the use of an expanded state and "mixed sector" to promote economic growth and industrial development. Why then was the victory of Popular Unity greeted with such trepidation by the most important sections of the Chilean ruling class? Not because they feared the "Marxist" credentials of Allende. The defeated Christian Democrat Radomiro Tomic had the measure of Allende. "My best wishes for success go to the next president of Chile, whose long and proven democratic convictions, reflected in attitudes of constant respect for the constitution and the laws, are well known."

Their real fear was that a Popular Unity victory would raise expectations amongst the worker and peasant masses. A hard-line reactionary section of the ruling class wanted to stop Allende from actually taking office.

An attempted coup in October led to the murder of the Commander in Chief of the Army, Rene Schneider, who had refused to support it. The more far-sighted sections, in particular the majority of the Christian Democratic Party, attempted to tie Allende's hands in advance. The "Statute of Guarantees" which Allende agreed to, to ease his appointment as President by Congress, insisted there should be no changes in the size of the armed forces, no "interference" with the judiciary, schools, press, radio, etc, no "private" militias and generally strengthened the opposition dominated Congress against the executive. Allende had started as he meant to go on.

### WORKERS ON THE OFFENSIVE

The victory of Popular Unity was followed by a massive upsurge in working class struggle and confidence. It saw a dramatic expansion of trade union membership - the Central Unica de Trabajadores (CUT) reached 800,000 members by 1972 (25% of the economically active population). The Socialist Party and Communist Party both grew dramatically. On the land the victory of Popular Unity was accompanied by a veritable class war between the campesinos (rural workers) and the landowners. In the last full year of Frei's term there had been 148 land takeovers. In 1971 1,278 were registered by the government.



Allende and assorted generals

The government implemented a series of wage increases, averaging 35%. Social welfare measures were introduced, such as increased family allowances and free school milk. The decree for the nationalisation of the big US copper mines was passed unanimously through Congress with even the National Party voting for it. The predominantly US-owned banks were treated generously with the government buying up stock to bring them into the state sector. But already the limits of Popular Unity's programme were being exposed. The Agrarian Reform, taken over from Frei, was an extremely weak one, giving compensation to the latifundists while allowing them to keep 80 hectares of land of their choice plus buildings, machinery, animals etc. This arrangement allowed them to continue to dominate many rural areas. The reform was further hampered because the government lacked funds to pay the generous compensation. It only accelerated when the peasants and landless labourers began to take action themselves, organised often by the MIR, a previously guerillaist organisation which remained outside Popular Unity.

The reactions of the Socialist and Communist Party leaders to the campesinos pushing beyond their reformist programme, and thus threatening the alliance with the bourgeoisie, was to be repeated again and again with other sections of the labouring masses. On February 13th after meeting with the National Farm Owners Organisation Allende announced special legislation to punish those who instigated land seizures. Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Chilean CP declared: "We do not approve of land occupations because we have an obligation to the country, and because we are going to carry out agricultural development within the limits of the law."

In the urban areas the class struggle likewise forced the government's hand. In the face of employers' sabotage workers struck back. Throughout 1971 the government made use of Decree Law No.520, passed in 1932 and never repealed, which allowed the government to "intervene" in industries threatened with bankruptcy or social conflict. During 1971 seventy industrial enterprises were thus "intervened" in, a measure short of outright nationalisation. This took place in the textile, metallurgical, cement, fishing and domestic electrical enterprises. These together with the nationalised copper, nitrate, iron and coal concerns, the banks and the initial state sector, now made up the so-called "Social Production Sector" which accounted by 1972



The Coup. Santiago 11th September 1973

for some 20% of production. In April 1971 in the municipal election Popular Unity increased its percentage of the vote to 51%.

### BOURGEOIS COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

Alarmed at the gains won by the workers and peasants, the bourgeoisie started serious moves against the Popular Unity government by the summer of 1971. US imperialism had already been "softening up" the government by a series of measures designed to damage the economy. Loans, credits and investments from international agencies were either blocked, delayed or tied to stringent conditions. The big US copper companies attempted to put an embargo on Chilean copper shipments through the international courts. These measures combined with internal economic sabotage and an unfavourable world copper price, seriously weakened the economy. In 1970 there was a 91 million dollar balance of payments surplus. By 1971 it had become a 311 million dollar deficit. Inflation soared and 8.3% unemployment in Greater Santiago was the highest for 10 years.

In these circumstances the bourgeoisie began to use the legal and parliamentary apparatus to halt the workers' advances. The Comptroller of the Republic, who had the role of reviewing the constitutionality of decrees, began to declare various "interventions" illegal, starting in June 1971 he ordered the return of one of the largest textile manufacturers to its owners. Over the next year the Comptroller, a life appointee, together with the reactionary Judiciary, which

### LETTER

DEAR FRIENDS,

Your last issue's article on Chile ("Time runs out for Pinochet", p 5) contains some factual misinformation which might lead to a wrong assessment of developments in that country today.

Referring to the underground strength of the Communist Party in the trade unions and to their betrayals of the Chilean working class, it goes on to say, "The leadership of the Copper Workers' Union (CTC), Chile's largest union, has been at pains to try to involve the Christian Democracy in the organisation of the 'Day of Protest'. Indeed, so willing was its leader, Rodolfo Seguel, to moderate his union's tactics, that he called off May 11th as a day of strike action, changing it to a 'day of protest', after attending one of the US Embassy's social gatherings with trusted trade union leaders."

I might be mistaken as to the intentions of the writer, but within context the paragraph leads the reader to believe that Rodolfo Seguel is a Communist Party member as usual trying to control the workers' will to struggle; seeking agreements with the bourgeois Christian Democrat party; and attending US Embassy socials with "official" (the dictatorship's) union leaders etc.

Nobody can deny that from the thirties the Chilean Stalinists have only been taking the working class off the road to revolution in the same way as their counterparts throughout the world. They do have a strategy of alliance with the CD bourgeois party, and of respect for bourgeois laws and the "peaceful road to socialism". In spite of the catastrophe which this meant for the Chilean working class after the Popular Unity "experiment", they now seek the return to bourgeois democracy calling the Christian Democrats, the "democratic generals" (!) and on the democratic bourgeoisie to restore freedom in Chile... For this, they offer their "sense of responsibility" in terms of controlling the workers so that the transition from Pinochet to a "democratic" regime is achieved peacefully, without the oppressed going beyond the limits expected from them by bourgeois democrats and therefore by the CP itself.

However, Seguel's going to parties in the US Embassy is out of character - at least so far - with a CP trade union leader in Latin America, no matter how Stalinist. In fact, he is not a Communist Party member but a Christian Democrat himself. This "detail" is very important if we put Seguel's combativity today within the context of many other events:

a) As the main copper trade union leader, Seguel is the spearhead of a vast movement which embraces most Chilean trade unions (including CP controlled ones); lorry and taxi owners' unions (the same who struck against Allende in the so-called "bosses' general strike that accelerated his fall and the advent of fascism); the Chilean Catholic Church; the bourgeois

Allende had agreed to leave untouched, used every "constitutional" avenue to obstruct the Popular Unity programme. The opposition dominated Congress used its power to veto legislation and remove government ministers.

In December 1971 the Christian Democrats gave their backing to a predominantly middle-class housewives' "March of the pots and pans" protesting shortages and the high cost of living. The march was "protected" by the now active fascist youth of Patria Y Libertad resulting in widespread street clashes with Popular Unity supporters. By April 1972 the Popular Unity leadership was in full retreat. In this month they opened negotiations with the Christian Democrats despite ineffectual protests from the left of the Socialist Party.

The SP and CP leaders faced a stark choice. They could lead the workers and peasants' organisations against the bourgeois opposition, nationalising the land and factories with no compensation, breaking the power of the state bureaucracy and the judiciary, democratising the armed forces by promoting the election of all ranks and mobilising a workers' and peasants' militia to enforce these measures. The whole Popular Unity strategy dictated that they chose another road. The government attempted to broaden its alliance by bringing in more decisive sections of the bourgeoisie through concessions. The workers and peasants were exhorted to observe discipline, make sacrifices, join a "battle for production" to solve the

"democratic" parties; and reformist left parties. They have all joined in a unified command (Coordinating Committee) which has been leading the latest wave of protests against the Pinochet regime, while trying to stave off independent mobilisation of the working class.

b) Seguel and the other members of this Coordinating Committee have repeatedly asserted that they do not seek to put an end to the existing military regime, but only a change of person - i.e. to get rid of Pinochet, who being "too inflexible", does not "listen" to the workers and leads the country to a dangerous confrontation. They have added that they want a civilian-military government to replace him, not the end of the dictatorship itself.

c) After Seguel was later detained by the Pinochet police, and while he was in jail, the US state Department produced a public statement saying that they were alert in ensuring that Seguel's human rights were respected by the regime while in detention, that the State Department was following developments to make sure of this, etc. I do not need to remind you that while 40,000 Chileans were slaughtered and hundreds of thousands detained or tortured, the US State Department never raised its voice before in defence of the "human rights" of any of them...

d) General Gustavo Leigh, former Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Air Force, one of the generals who ousted Allende, and therefore with Pinochet one of the four initial members of the military Junta before being expelled from the government by Pinochet himself, visited the Protests Coordinating Committee "in order to offer it my full support". I do not need to remind you that General Leigh was the most ruthless, the most clever, and the most fascist of the four members of the Junta when they rose against Allende and the constitutional government of the UP. He was the one who in the first public appearance of the Junta on TV announced that they had "come to power to extirpate Marxism at its roots". He is equally responsible for the worst atrocities committed by the Chilean Air Force (much worse than those of the Army, the Police and the Navy) against Chilean militants and left supporters during the first years of the coup. Being the most coherent member of the Junta as to what its aims should be, he clashed with Pinochet within it because, unlike Pinochet, he clearly aimed at a corporatist, fascist state, hence his disagreements with and his eventual ousting by Pinochet and the other two members of the Junta. Now he has joined the movement that seeks to replace the dictatorship but, in his own words, "with an honourable way out for the Armed Forces". That is, without the masses taking them and therefore Leigh, to task for all the blood they spilled and the misery they brought about.

e) There is widespread talk of plans to replace Pinochet by a six-month period of rule by former president Alessandri. With the exception of president Frei (the Christian Democrat leader who has died) he is the last

# CHILE

economic crisis provoked by imperialism and the bourgeoisie. This line was pushed home at the Popular Unity meeting at Lo Curro.

A leading Stalinist Orlando Millas, was brought in as Minister of Finance to lead the "battle for production". But despite Popular Unity's efforts the negotiations with the Christian Democrats failed, although Millas proceeded to carry out policies designed to keep open this dialogue with Christian Democracy.

Yet the workers themselves were spontaneously groping towards an alternative course. At the end of 1971 Linares Province Campesino Council together with the Popular Unity and MIR regional committees called for the "immediate elimination of latifundia. Expropriation of entailed estates. Reduction from eighty to forty hectares of the limit of non-expropriable land. Expropriated land not to be compensated. Build campesino councils."

In Concepcion in July 1972 the Socialist Party regional committee held a "People's Assembly" which denounced the strategy of government submission to the demands of the bourgeoisie. The National Popular Unity parties, in the face of outrage from the right and Congress, quickly repudiated their regional committees' decisions.

Most importantly in June 1972 the first Cordones Industrial (Industrial Area Committee) was born. An industrial dispute over wages at the Perla canning plant in Cerrillos resulted in a workers' occupation and demands for the firm to be "intervened". The occupation was denounced by the Communist Minister of Labour, Mireya Baltra and the courts ordered the police to restore the plants to its owners. The workers of Cerrillos responded by setting up an area committee and blocking all roads around the industrial area of Maipu, forcing the government to concede their demands. The Cordones were to spread rapidly during the bosses strike in October.

## THE BOSSES' OFFENSIVE

In the summer and autumn of 1972 the bosses stepped up their offensive. August saw pitched battles in Santiago between High School students supporting the opposition and members of Popular Unity. Hoarding and speculation by distributors and shop owners caused widespread shortages. Inflation almost hit 100% in September 1972.

In October the opposition, now united in the "Democratic" Federation, declared the government of Allende to be "illegitimate". A bosses' strike was organised for October 9th, starting with the Truck Owners' Federation, who, amply financed with CIA funds, declared an indefinite general stoppage. Over half Chile's fuel, raw materials, foodstuffs etc depended on road transport, so an effective strike could have quickly strangled the economy. On the 10th the Democratic Federation brought 100,000 onto the streets of

bourgeois president before Allende. In view of the respect the aged Alessandri enjoys among the bourgeoisie as a whole, he would "smooth" a transition from military dictatorship to... a civilian-military regime (not to democracy, not even bourgeois). Hence, it is significant that:

f) Bernardo Leighton, one of the "progressive" Christian Democrats who does not reject agreements with the Communist Party and the left outright, went to see ex-president Alessandri, refusing to disclose the contents of their conversation.

g) Gustavo Leigh, the above-named fascist former member of the Junta, went to see the same president Alessandri, also refusing to disclose the motive of his visit.

h) General Roberto Viaux, who in 1969 led an army rebellion against president Frei demanding better pay for the military, and who therefore enjoys some sympathy within their quarters, also went to "visit" Alessandri. Motive of the visit: undisclosed.

i) Leaflets against Pinochet and for changes "at the top", and produced by younger officers of the Army, have been circulating in military barracks. Nobody has been detained for this, in spite of the powerful and efficient secret services of the Junta.

Why do I list all these significant events? Because they all seem to point at the fact that - in their desperation with the Chilean economic and social situation which Pinochet is inflexibly refusing to change with some sort of "democratic" compromise - reactionary sectors of the middle class, the bourgeoisie, old bourgeois politicians, and Christian Democrat trade union leaders, backed by the US, are now trying to get rid of Pinochet by "peaceful" means after he already did their dirty work and moreover failed. (Hence the US State Department's "concern" for Seguel's human rights, his being invited and socialising at their Embassy etc.) Left-reformist trade union leaders (Communist

Santiago, and on the 13th the retail trade associations joined the strike, and SOFOFA, the employers' association of medium sized and big industry, declared a lockout.

The government responded with appeals for "legality" and turned to the military, placing 13 provinces under military authority. In contrast the workers took matters into their own hands meeting the bosses' strike with a wave of occupations of closed factories, and commandeering transport.

The JAPs, committees of housewives which had sprung up in response to shortages and hoarding, expanded dramatically, requisitioning food supplies and forcing the re-opening of closed shops - fixing the prices for the goods sold. The Cordones Industriales spread through all the major industrial centres - five emerged in Santiago alone - linking industrial units with a directly elected workers' committee. They took on the tasks of mobilising the workers, organising defence, transport and materials and finished products and liaison with the neighbourhood committees - particularly in the militant "poblaciones" - shanty towns. By the end of October all sections of the bourgeoisie were clamouring for negotiations with the government.

In this situation the Popular Unity government managed to snatch defeat out of the jaws of victory. Having failed to bring wider sections of the bourgeoisie into the government it brought in the military. The presence of the military - General Carlos Prats as Interior Minister, Rear Admiral Ismael Huerta at Public Works, and Airforce Brigadier General Claudio Sepelveda as Minister of Mines - was meant to be the guarantee of the restoration of bourgeois order.

The Socialist and Communist Party leaderships had always peddled the illusion that the Chilean army, unlike those of the other Latin American states, was



"This property has been taken over by the campesino council"

and Socialist Party, etc) are indeed moving towards getting rid of the dictatorship at any cost as well. But their strategy is, as always, dependent on the bourgeoisie democrats and on the "peaceful way". With no powerful, and so far, influential revolutionary party in their midst, the Chilean toilers, after a decade of the worst suffering, are being "given" a loophole through which they are now "called" to protest peacefully without these bourgeois democrats keeping silent about "dictatorship", "human rights", "murder", etc, which they never denounced in the worst period of repression against the left. This loophole has opened as a result of the contradictions among the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. But once again, the Chilean working class is the main force in the actual mobilisations against the regime. Going for direct confrontation and combat, and against the advice of the Coordinating Committee, it is their blood which is being spilled in it (24 dead in the most recent protests). Lacking revolutionary leadership which would call them to do it for their own aims (the revolutionary end of the dictatorship and of the bourgeoisie, to install a workers' and peasants' government), they are being led by the trade union leaders of the main bourgeois party the CD, and by those who subordinate the working class to the interests of the "national" bourgeoisie, like the CP.

The bourgeoisie and the petit-bourgeoisie on the other hand, seem to be pushing different options in order to secure a peaceful transition to "democracy"; whether the more conservative right winger, Alessandri, representative of international monopolist interests; or the Christian Democrat Gabriel Valdes, representative of the "national", more "progressive" bourgeoisie. Sensitive to the latter's challenge, Pinochet put Valdes in jail in July. As with Seguel, the US government responded quickly, and the Christian Democrat was released.

"constitutional", "professional" and pledged to support a democratically elected government. Luis Corvalan had declared before the election of Popular Unity that the CP was opposed to proposals to arm the masses as this would be "equivalent to showing distrust in the army." The Socialist Party Minister of Agriculture justified their entry into government in the magazine *Chile Hoy* in the following terms: "The armed forces... enter the cabinet to preserve the institutional system which the hottest heads in the opposition wish to destroy. In this way they help assure the conditions for the program to advance."

Indeed the armed forces had a long and "distinguished" record of "preserving the institutional system" - but the system was capitalism. In its defence they had committed a whole series of massacres of workers struggling against the employing class. Like every other South American army their officer caste was drawn from, and closely integrated into, the ruling classes of Chile. It was trained by the USA, most of its officers passing through that "school for counter-revolution" the US Army School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone. Such was the "ally" that Popular Unity called on in November 1972.

If Allende and Corvalan insisted on dragging the Chilean working class into the jaws of counter revolution then their "left" critics failed to provide any real alternative leadership for the workers and peasants.

The left of the Socialist Party for all its declarations of "Marxism-Leninism" and in favour of "uninterrupted revolution" was fatally ambiguous on the nature of the army. The Party Secretary and leader of the left wing, declared in the weekly *Marcha* on November 17th that "The Socialist Party has never objected to the presence of uniformed men in the cabinet. That is the prerogative of the President."

In conclusion, I do not want to deny that, as reformists, the Chilean stalinists have always and will always deceive the Chilean workers in order to keep to the "peaceful way". But ascribing all manipulations and betrayals to them, without leaving any space for it to the national bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie to which they subordinate the working class, and even seeing them in compliance with US embassies, is quite a different matter. A Chilean trade union leader who attends this kind of social in the US Embassy would lose all support from his militant members, no matter how reformist or confused... All this shows that having a "Stalinophobic" analysis of reality - which is shared by many British "Trotskyist" groups in spite of its having nothing to do with Trotsky's or revolutionary Trotskyists' positions on Stalinism - may well lead us to distort assessment of historic events and of the present.

Yours in comradeship,  
S. Daher  
(from the trotskyist Communist League of Chile, in a personal capacity.) 17.7.83

### Workers Power Replies:

We agree with the comrade that the juxtaposition of the two paragraphs on the Chilean CP and the leadership of the Copper Workers' Union could be read as implying that Rodolfo Seguel was a member of the CP. This was not the intention of the article as, of course, he is a member of the Christian Democracy. But we reject the comrade's assertion that this was somehow the result of the 'Stalinophobic' approach to Stalinism on our part. The article did not, in fact, ascribe "all manipulations and betrayals" to the Chilean CP, as the comrade implies. It did however point out the importance for the Chilean working class to ensure that, "their leaders maintain complete political and tactical independence from the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois parties" in order to avoid a repetition of the disastrous "Popular Unity" experience.

We presume the comrade would not deny the decisive importance of the Chilean CP within the working class in Chile at the present time, nor its criminal policy, even after the experience of 1970-73, of wanting to tie the working class to the programme of the "democratic bourgeoisie"? Only recently, for example, Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Chilean CP, has been peddling the CP's longed for project of a Governmental alliance with the Christian Democracy in a government "representing all anti-fascist forces", "a new national peoples democratic government" (see his article in 'World Marxist Review' May 1983). In these circumstances we find it strange that the comrade chooses to take our article to task for its supposed 'Stalinophobia'. We would suggest that the major danger to Chilean revolutionaries at the present time is to downplay the past and present counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism in that country. ●

Thus he repeated in this case as in many others the acceptance by the "left" of the party the decisions of the right. The same problem of political leadership was present within the Cordones which, in the absence of an alternative strategy to that of the government, went into decline after November. With the Socialists often the most important force, the Cordones were relegated to giving "support" to Popular Unity and defending the gains of the government.

The MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) offered no political alternative either. Organisationally it counterposed its "own" largely front organisations, the Comandos Comunales, to the Cordones. Politically it flipped from boycotting the 1970 elections to giving "critical support" to the government. It too vacillated on the nature and role of the army. On the one hand it denounced "some bad officers", on the other hand it referred to the "true patriotic and democratic role" it had to play alongside the people. The "left" failed as miserably to tackle the crucial tasks facing the Chilean working class in the winter of 1972 - that of politically arming the Cordones around the fight to force the SP and CP leaderships to ditch the bourgeois parties and kick the military out of the government, and around a series of demands on the CP and SP that met the urgent needs of the workers and peasants.

These would have included the expropriation of the big farms and industries under workers' control, the cancellation of the foreign debt and expropriation of the imperialist interests, the formation of workers' militias for defence against the fascists, an urgent campaign amongst the rank and file sailors and soldiers against the coup-mongers and for full democratic rights amongst the ranks, with the aim of drawing them into the Cordones.

The struggle around such demands would not only have met the bourgeois offensive, but offered the possibility of breaking the rank and file of the Socialist and Communist Party from the fatal popular frontism of their leaders and rallying them to a revolutionary communist alternative.

Instead the government was able to proceed with its strategy of reassuring the bourgeoisie - a strategy which had as its price demobilising the working class. In January 1973 the notorious "Millas Plan" was put forward in which this "communist" minister proposed to return 123 occupied enterprises to their former owners. The plan was only blocked by a massive working class resistance led by the Cordones and sections of the socialist left. This convinced the bourgeoisie that whilst it had nothing to fear from Allende he had little control over the workers when it came to grabbing back their gains. It made them even more determined to get rid of Allende.

Having failed to gain a two thirds majority within the Congress in the March 1973 elections - a figure necessary to impeach Allende (Popular Unity's vote, in fact, increased in these elections) the bourgeoisie turned more and more to the army.

Under the Law of Arms Control of October 1972 passed by Allende, the army could act almost autonomously in raids searching for "arms". Of course these powers were increasingly used to intimidate the workers' organisations. In May the army raided the Socialist Party headquarters in the city of Rancagua. The raid was approved by the acting Commander in Chief Pinochet. In June there was an attempted coup by the Second Armoured Regiment, put down by troops loyal to General Prats. The army was increasingly divided between those officers favouring a coup and the dwindling number of "constitutionalists."



Butcher Pinochet

July offered perhaps the last chance for Allende to mobilise the workers against the impending coup. The month opened with a series of raids, by all three branches of the armed forces, against factories, union offices, campuses, etc, which left behind them a trail of dead and imprisoned. In early August a group of sailors and petty officers, supporters of PU, were arrested and tortured. They had opposed coup preparations and informed Popular Unity parties. The High Command accused the left of the Socialist Party, MAPU, and the MIR of incitement to mutiny.

Allende not only refused to support or release these sailors but denounced the "attempt by ultra-left sailors to organise cells in ships of the national fleet." Allende had dug his own grave and with it thousands of working class militants, by ensuring that the ranks of the armed forces saw they would receive no support if they disobeyed the coup orders from their officers.

On September 11th the coup came. Organised with US assistance, heroic attempts by the Chilean workers to defend their factories were quickly smashed. Hundreds were executed on the spot, thousands filled the concentration camps. Allende died in the Moneda Palace, seat of Chile's constitutional democracy. So ended the Chilean "experiment". The illusion of a democratic alliance with the bourgeoisie and of the "peaceful road to socialism" had once again delivered a working class into the hands of black reaction. ●

by Stuart King

## ADVERTISEMENT

Just translated into English: a Trotskyist balance-sheet of the Popular Unity experience in Chile, and of the reformists' and centrists' failure to achieve revolution.

CHILE: the historical failure of reformism. An account of the Popular Unity government.

By the Communist League of Chile

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Workers Power has been involved in organised discussions with the Communist League of Chile (CLC) since the Autumn of 1982. These discussions have revealed differences between the two organisations on Poland, the role of Stalinism in the class struggle, and the question of the fighting propaganda group and its role in party building.

However, the CLC appear to recognise the central importance of honest programmatic debate internationally, aimed at re-elaborating the Transitional Programme, and the fact that the continuity of Trotskyism was shattered after the Second World War. That is, they reject the idea that any of the big international ostensibly Trotskyist groups (Lambertists, IC, USFI, FIT etc) represent the continuity of Trotskyism.

In order to assess whether the differences that we have with the CLC reflect more fundamental differences over method, or whether or not there is in fact agreement over method, we are committed to pursuing a written exchange with the CLC on the disputed questions.

# TAMILS UNDER ATTACK

**SRI LANKA** — July's carnage on the streets of the capital Colombo was neither a new nor an unexpected event. Attacks on the 2.8 million minority Tamil population have been regularly aided and abetted by Sri Lanka's 30,000 strong police force and army — 98% of whom are drawn from the 11½ million strong Sinhalese majority population.

Anti-Tamil pogroms have occurred, with mounting savagery, in 1958, 1961, 1977 and 1981. In the latest pogroms, at least 300 Tamils were butchered in a few days. Homes, shops, factories belonging to Tamils in Colombo were looted and burned. Between 80,000 and 100,000 were left destitute and herded into the 17 refugee camps skirting the capital.

The most intense period of communal killing came after July 23rd, when 13 Sinhalese soldiers were killed in an ambush that was carried out by the Tamil Tigers — a guerrilla grouping operating in the North since 1977. This attack was itself a response to months of intensified repression by the security forces. Since June 3rd, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) estimate that over 2,000 Tamils have been killed.

The British press reports these and other examples of 'communal strife' as though they confirmed how 'backward' these countries are. In fact such antagonisms are an endlessly repeated pattern in Britain's ex-colonies — in Cyprus, Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, Malaya and, not least, in Ireland.

They are a legacy of British Imperialism's method of administering its colonies. With limited numbers of troops and colonial administrators quite unable to hold down so vast an empire, the British were masters at divide and rule. Wherever possible they based their colonial administration on minority peoples, systematically stoking up communal antagonisms. Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was no different.

In 1802, under cover of the Napoleonic wars, Britain took over from the Dutch. After the 1850s, when tea replaced coffee as the island's main export crop, the real power lay with the tea barons of Lipton's and Brooke Bond. Ceylon's economy was effectively controlled from London's Mincing Lane.

## CONTROL AND SUPER-PROFITS

It was the form of political control that the British sponsored to safeguard their super-profits that explains the ethnic rivalry today. Britain selected out the 'Ceylonese Tamils' (about half of all Tamils in Sri Lanka) as a privileged caste to administer the state bureaucracy. These Tamils are the descendants of the original Tamil population who came to the island from Tamil Nadu in India thousands of years ago. They form a majority in the North and Eastern provinces. The 'Indian Tamils', on the other hand, were brought over as conscript labour from India to provide an agricultural proletariat on the tea plantations of the South Highlands. Today, they are the most oppressed and super-exploited section of the Sri Lankan proletariat.

Whole families work for less than £2.00 per day. They survive on handouts of rice. Only about a quarter of these workers have the right to vote and, since 1965, some 300,000 of them have been forcibly 'repatriated' to India.

The British colonial administration, however, treated the Ceylon Tamils quite differently. They gave them privileges by way of education and employment. They developed out of these Tamils a pro-imperialist, English-educated elite which could be trusted to exercise political control over the mass of Sinhalese workers and peasants and the Tamil plantation workers. By 1948, whilst forming only 10% of the population, the Ceylon Tamils occupied some 60% of civil service posts, professional jobs and accounted for nearly 50% of the armed forces and of the total labour force.

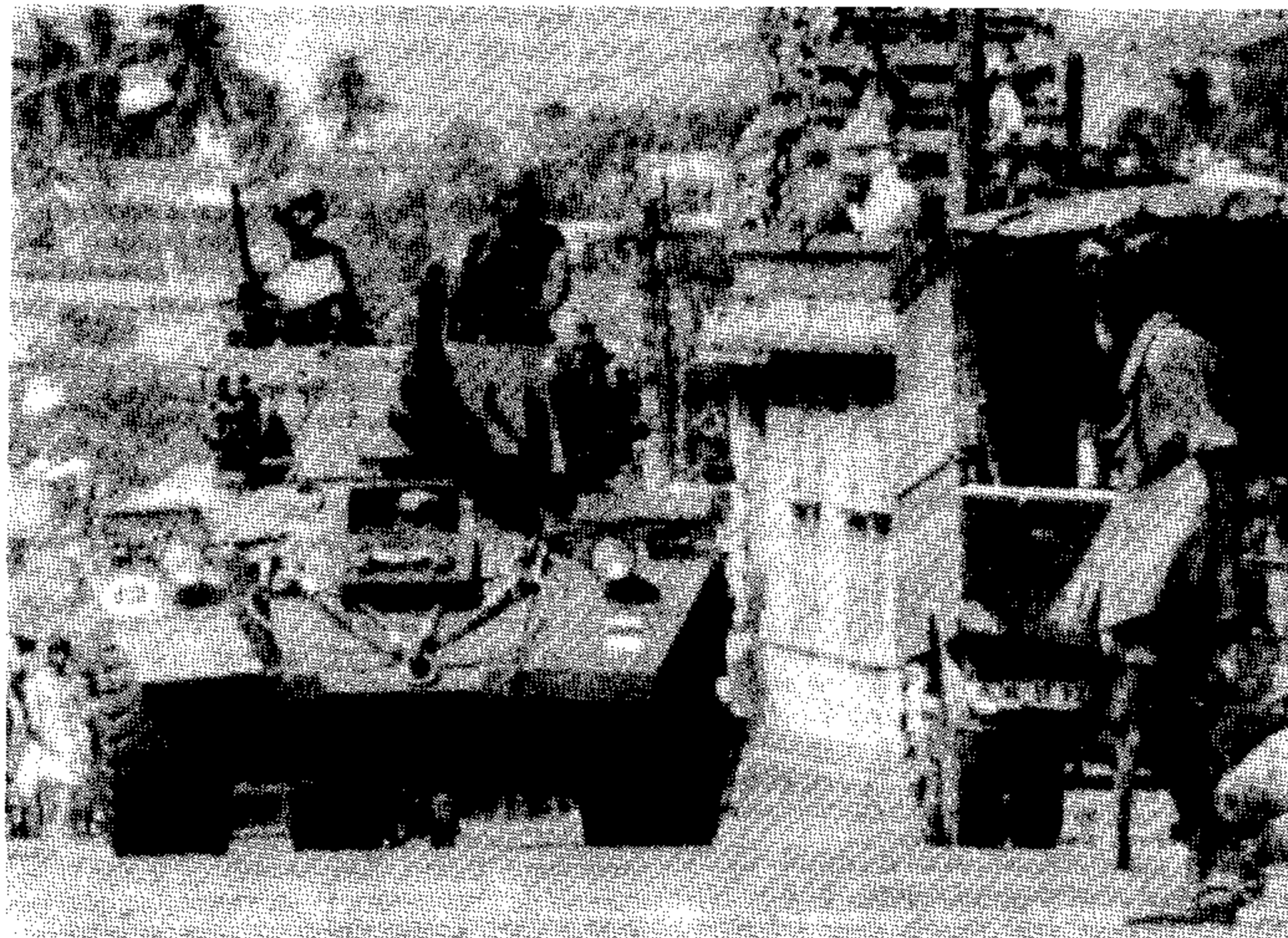
The contradictions lodged in this situation were bound to explode sooner or later once independence

## TURKEY

**THIS autumn, Turkey was to be given a democratic facelift. Three years on from the military coup, the Turkish junta is trying to keep in with its western backers, by holding elections.**

**The problem is, these elections are concurrent with trials of some 14,180 people for "political crimes". Two thousand members of the trade union confederation, DISK, have been on trial (63 three of whom are under the threat of the death penalty) simply for being active trade unionists. In the elections themselves, only parties whose leaders have been handpicked by the generals in the junta will be allowed to stand. No parties opposed to the junta, even on the mildest basis, are being allowed to stand.**

**Turkey remains under the repressive yoke of a western-backed military dictatorship. Workers should support activities organised by the Turkey Solidarity Committee, this September, to oppose that dictatorship.**  
**RALLY: Saturday September 10th, 2.30pm**  
**Stoke Newington Town Hall, London.**



had been granted. It was inevitable, given universal suffrage, that the demands of the Sinhalese majority, particularly the national bourgeoisie, would gain ground.

Since 1948, political power has been held by one or other party of the Sinhalese bourgeoisie. The 1947 elections gave power to the United National Party (UNP). This party is the most conservative, most slavishly pro-imperialist. It traditionally represents the big Sinhalese landowners and, today, the higher and middle level ranks of the state bureaucracy and the management of the state sector.

The alternative party of government for the Sinhalese bourgeoisie has been, and remains, the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) led by Mrs Bandaranaike. This party is based more in the traditionalist, religious sector of the Sinhalese bourgeoisie, partly in the large areas of rice cultivation and partly amongst the landowners of the central highlands. The Buddhist monks themselves are considerable landowners and this helps to explain the SLFP's virulent Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism which is part and parcel of its populist demagoguery. The pace of anti-Tamil 'reforms' went further and faster under SLFP governments in the 1960s and 1970s! Whether it was under the SLFP or the UNP the Tamils of Sri Lanka have been systematically victimised. The political, educational and language privileges of the Ceylon Tamils have all but gone. They are systematically discriminated against in education through a 'standardisation' scheme which demands higher levels of achievement before Tamils can qualify for higher education. In employment, Tamils now occupy less than 5% of the civil service posts and professional jobs and general unemployment is proportionately greater for them than for the Sinhalese.

Further, in the 1970's the government institutionalised Sinhala as the only state language and has promoted Sinhalese colonisation of the predominantly Tamil areas, particularly in the East, to break down Tamil national cohesiveness.

## DIVIDE AND RULE

The Sinhalese bourgeoisie has constantly used communal antagonisms, born of the imperialist domination, to offset class antagonisms and to obscure the independent class interests of the Sinhalese workers. There are some 4 million workers in Sri Lanka — the majority of them are Sinhalese and they are concentrated in the South West region in and around Colombo. Over half of this class are agricultural labourers working on the coconut and rice fields. About 25% work on the tea plantations. Of these workers the majority are Indian Tamils who produce the bulk of the super-profits in Sri Lanka. About 20% of the proletariat works in industrial enterprises, mainly small scale ones. Working class unity has been only sporadic but, nevertheless it has occurred, most dramatically in the general strike of 1947.

By and large, however, working class parties have been based amongst the Sinhalese workers. The main party of the left wing, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) now the Nawa Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) was formally a Trotskyist party in the early years after independence and undertook work amongst both Tamil communities. It also argued in a principled way for Tamil rights among the Sinhala workers where it had its main base. In reality, however, the LSSP was always an uneasy coalition of revolutionists and social democrats. After 1956 and the wave of Sinhala chauvinism generated by the SLFP, the LSSP capitulated to this chauvinism, eventually entering a Popular Front government with the SLFP in 1963/4. This government attacked Tamil rights and introduced austerity measures against the whole of the working class.

The failure of the left wing parties like the LSSP to overcome the communal divide has had two major consequences for today. It has left a chronic political and communal disunity in the Sri Lankan working class at the level of the trade unions. These are not only divided along white-collar/manual and private sector/public sector lines but, within these divisions each major party

and communal grouping has its own allied union. There are, consequently over two dozen union federations. Fighting for unity of the Sinhalese and Tamil workers, fighting for trade union unity, is an urgent task for any revolutionary organisation in Sri Lanka today.

The second consequence of the betrayals of the Tamils by the LSSP has been to allow the Tamil bourgeois nationalists to consolidate their hold over the Tamil masses. In the 1950's and 1960's the Ceylon Tamil parties (FP, TC) were small, with little parliamentary representation, more concerned to do a deal with the ruling party than to press Tamil grievances.

The Indian Tamils were no better served by the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), the union which dominates the plantation workers and is led by Thondamon, himself a large landowner, slavish follower of the UNP and a Cabinet minister in the present government!

## THE TAMIL TIGERS

Yet, because the left failed the Tamils, these bourgeois nationalists have seen their power grow stronger. The TULF (the alliance of the Tamil parties) was the main parliamentary opposition with 17 seats until Jayawardene banned it recently. The growing strength of petty-bourgeois nationalism is also to be seen in the formation and the growth of the Tamil Tigers, an openly separatist grouping which grows at the expense of the constitutionalist TULF which has hitherto sought devolved local powers for the Tamil bourgeois. Events this year have forced the TULF to adopt a separatist rhetoric.

J R Jayawardene has lowered unemployment by attracting foreign investment from Europe and Asia, promising conditions of exploitation and return on capital on the Hong Kong model. Economic growth improved a little as a result but only at great cost to the workers and poor peasants. Yet, even this improvement went alongside further rounds of indebtedness to the IMF which presently stands at over £1 billion. Currently, the IMF is negotiating more savage cuts in return for another 100 million dollars.

The UNP's response to these measures has been for President Jayawardene to pursue an ever more Bonapartist course. He has sought powers at the expense of a parliament which his party dominates anyway and has unleashed the army on the Northern Tamil areas. He has brought in draconian 'anti-terrorist' legislation. He has pushed through a referendum suspending elections for six

years. Since the end of July he has instituted heavy press censorship and banned the three main left-wing parties.

The world economic crisis has hit Sri Lanka hard and Jayawardene has to turn ever more desperately to scapegoat the Tamils in order to escape the wrath of the Sri Lankan masses. Thus, he was prepared to turn against the last elements of the power and privileges of the Ceylonese Tamils. Although they had suffered immeasurable cultural and political discrimination over the last decades, in and around Colombo they still owned 60% of wholesale trade outlets and 80% of retail trade. Jayawardene was happy to divert the grievances of the Sinhalese poor against the Tamil petty-bourgeoisie — a trick made possible because the latter held the debts of many Sinhalese workers. During the July pogroms Tamil pre-dominance in commerce has been largely wiped out. However, the Sinhalese workers' "benefits" from all this will be ephemeral, their Tamil creditors will be swiftly replaced by Sinhalese ones.

What are the tasks of revolutionaries in Sri Lanka when faced with the pogrom-government of Jayawardene? An acid test of revolutionary firmness is the defence of the Tamils against Sinhalese chauvinism. The Tamils have been welded into an oppressed nationality by the discriminatory acts of the government, the brutal assaults of the armed forces and the inflamed mobs. Whilst the goal of separation or partition of Sri Lanka, the creation of a Tamil Eelam state, is itself an undesirable and retrograde step for the masses of Sri Lanka it is the absolute duty of Trotskyists to defend the right of the Tamils to self-determination up to and including separation.

## CLASS INDEPENDENCE

The real answer to the plight of the Tamils and the Sinhalese proletariat does not lie in the division of the island. A tiny Tamil state and a rump Sinhalese one will be even more at the mercy of Anglo-American imperialism. The creation of ever more 'nation states' out of the intermixed communities in South Asia is a utopian and, indeed, reactionary project. Yet 'unity' based on repression, inequality and pogrom is far worse. The only real solution is for the proletariat to strike out along the road of class independence from the nationalist petty-bourgeoisie. In the first place the revolutionary Trotskyist vanguard has to take the lead in defending the democratic rights of the Tamils.

They must also fight for democratic slogans which affect the whole population. The corrupt electoral system is weighted towards the Sinhalese peasantry. It discriminates not only against the disenfranchised Tamil plantation workers but against the urban Sinhalese. The demand for universal, equal and direct suffrage still has to be defended in Sri Lanka, as does the demand to abolish the Presidency and its special powers.

To these democratic demands revolutionaries must weld an action programme of immediate and transitional demands against Jayawardene's austerity measures which hit all workers:

- \* Against the cuts in food subsidies! Against all cuts in social services and benefits, for the cancellation of all debts to the imperialist bankers, all payments to the former plantation owners!
- \* For workers' control of the nationalised estates and enterprises!
- \* For a sliding scale of wages to defend living standards against the inflation caused by repeated devaluations of the rupee!
- \* For a real programme of agrarian revolution, take the land away from the big landowners and the state bureaucrats, ensure its collective, cooperative or individual ownership by those who work on it!

Only the winning of the proletariat and its natural allies amongst the oppressed rural and urban petty-bourgeoisie to such a programme can point the way to working class power in Sri Lanka. Only this power can break out of the vicious circle of imperialist exploitation and a bourgeois nationalist demagoguery which is bold only against the oppressed and exploited. ●

by Keith Hassell



Tamil tea plantation workers.

# SWP runs from office

OF ALL THE centrist groups that mushroomed in the late Sixties and early Seventies the SWP probably gained the largest audience among working class militants. Its formula of calling for reliance on the shop floor workers, opposition to the trade union bureaucrats and organisation of militants into "rank and file" movements appealed to many militants who could see the weakness of their traditionally sectionalised organisations.

Recently the SWP leadership has been orchestrating and defending a spate of resignations of their members from union executives and shop steward positions. In the June issue of *Socialist Review*, John Deason and Andy Strouthous defended the decision of Ian France to resign from the USDAW national executive to which he had recently been elected. They claimed that Comrade France was right because, "the fact that he won was an absolute accident, to remain on the executive would have been completely dishonest." A split in the right wing vote had meant that 11,000 votes were sufficient for him to win. The comrade was obviously worried that he would become a 'prisoner' of the right wing executive, and therefore resigned. That is typical of SWP politics. *Socialist Worker* can carry articles by John Molyneux about how real workers' democracy will lead to soviets etc, but the 'Party' can't advise a comrade on what to do when he wins an election.

## RAVING LOONEY ?

We can only speculate on what the 11,000 USDAW members, who thought they had voted for a strong left wing candidate, now think. Perhaps they think they might as well have voted for a "Monster Raving Looney" candidate, or perhaps they think they did! Either way, no one has any reason in future for believing that an SWP election platform is worth even the paper it is printed on.

Other events show that this was no isolated aberration. The SWP appears to be consistently advising its members not to accept any responsibility for leadership in the present period. In the same article

Deason and Strouthous defended more resignations. For example, that of Des Bailey from the IRSF executive. Bailey was censured by his fellow executive members because he divulged some of their secrets to the members - just as you would expect a revolutionary to do. His response was to resign from the executive. Why? Surely this was a perfect situation in which to prove to the members just how undemocratic their leadership was, why the membership needed more Des Baileys. Why should anyone take seriously an SWP commitment to union democracy in the IRSF when, as soon as they get a slap on the wrist from a bunch of bureaucratic time servers, they run from the fight?

A couple of letters in *Socialist Worker* show that SWP members have been drawing the obvious conclusion from *Socialist Review*. M Cadger was a branch secretary in a civil service union. He got 3½ days facility time for this post. After nine months he came into contact with the SWP and, "decided to stop trying to leftise the sell-outs and to stop negotiating over staff cuts." So far so good - but his conclusion, presumably not unconnected with his new political allegiances, was to resign from his post.

## FIGHT

Why did the SWP not advise him to use his position to the best of his ability to fight for his members' interests? Why not, for example, use the 3½ days facility time to turn out a regular bulletin explaining the proposed sell-outs and staff cuts which comrade Cadger knew all about? Such a policy, of course, would have earned him the undying hatred of the union bureaucrats, but so what? Revolutionaries are not concerned to curry favour with such people, their purpose is to raise the political consciousness, organisation and fighting ability of the workers. Comrade Cadger could have done that, now he cannot, or rather hasn't as good a position from which to do it.

Yet we cannot say that any of these comrades acted with anything less than the best of intentions. Ian France didn't want to be dishonest, comrade Cadger explained in his letter to *SW* that he felt he could fight better when he was permanently alongside his fellow workers. Ken Browder, who wrote to *SW* to congratulate comrade Cadger, although he seems to side with management in wanting to get rid of union offices and telephones, which is patently stupid, insists

that the real task is to fight for workers' democracy via shop floor meetings.

What then has convinced these and, no doubt, others to reject their responsibility as leaders? The SWP's politics have.

The SWP has consistently given a one-sided explanation of why the trade union leaders sell out and betray their members. It is because they live in the same sort of world as the bosses, are not subject to direct pressures from their members but rather from management and government, they earn more money than their members and do not have to live either on the wages they negotiate or under the conditions to which they put their signatures. All these things are certainly true, they are an important part of the explanation of the corrupting logic of bureaucratic organisation. However, it is not the whole story, not the most fundamentally important part.

## BETRAY

The union leaders betray because they are committed to the capitalist system. Precisely because they are negotiators they have to accept a world in which there are two sides to industry, two sides between which they stand. The explanation of their secrecy and their opposition to rank and file initiative is, in the end, political. The same is true of even the best shop stewards who are convinced of the need to keep 'their' company profitable. It is easier for them to give in to management if they are kept at a distance from the shop floor, but when the chips are down, the workers of the shop floor themselves often accept management's arguments, "If we don't make a profit, I cannot pay your wages. If we do not sell cheaply enough, we will lose our jobs" etc etc.

## SEPARATION

For the SWP, however, it is the fact of separation from the shop floor which explains sell outs and betrayals such as occurred under the participation scheme at BL. In the July *Socialist Review*, for example, in a supposed "practical guide to rebuilding the movement", Roger Cox argued, "Getting into a position where you get facility time can be dangerous... All facility time does is to isolate any representative from their base. It doesn't matter how good the representative is." This is the nub of the argument. No matter what politics you have, if you get separated from the shop floor you are

lost. This is not only nonsense (does it apply, for example to Comrades Deason and Strouthous - or Cliff?) but dangerous nonsense. And Comrade Cox's argument gets worse as he warms to his subject. Because even politics cannot protect the shop steward from corruption by the easy living of facility time, steps have to be taken to ensure that stewards are penalised for carrying out their duties to their members! Thus, Cox argues, "Shop stewards' meetings shouldn't be conducted in worktime, unless the stewards are willing to lose the wages for the time. Stewards should be committed enough to either lose money or to meet after work, in their own time".

## CLAPTRAP

Where would this moralising claptrap actually get us? First it would mean that virtually no working woman, certainly very few working mothers, could ever become shop stewards. Second, it would mean that those with heavy financial burdens (i.e. most workers) wouldn't take on the job. Thirdly, those with family responsibilities at weekends and in the evenings, couldn't be shop stewards. In short the position of shop steward would be open to the already committed, single, probably male, "revolutionary". This is precisely the sort of isolated individual that management can pick off with ease with stories about infiltrators and moles and so on.

## REPORTED

All union business should be carried out, on full pay, in the firm's time. It should be reported to the membership directly by the stewards, both verbally and via regular stewards' committee bulletins. In this way the business of the union becomes and remains part of the life of the union's members and no artificial restrictions are imposed on who can stand to represent their workmates as a steward.

What led to the decline of the steward's organisation in, for example, BL during 'participation' was not primarily the 100% facility time given to convenors and deputy convenors but their politics. Robinson and Co. accepted the idea of working together with the Labour government and Michael Edwards to make BL 'viable' (i.e. profitable). That was why they sabotaged the fights at Speke and at Coventry. From those defeats flowed the demoralisation among many shop floor militants and the decline

of shop floor organisation. The other major factor was the introduction of Measured Day Working and the ending of the piece work system. The daily negotiating over bonus and piece rates was the foundation of the shop steward system of organisation, without it many stewards were unsure of their role or importance.

It is the task of revolutionaries in the present period to give a lead in arguing precisely what that role must be. Increasingly, stewards who want to hold their section together will have to do this by ensuring that everybody is aware of what is going on in the company, in the union, in the Labour Party and the world at large. In short, their role will be that of political guide, political leader as well as the most conscientious defender of conditions etc. Of course many existing stewards and branch officers will never adopt this role. That's why we'll have to fight to get new workers to stand openly on these terms and why we have to fight to pull stewards out of participation schemes and force them to use any time at their disposal to inform and organise the members.

There is no way we can avoid these problems by hiding our politics and keeping our heads down until an economic upswing. It is precisely in such difficult times that those who stay and openly fight can win the respect for the battles that lie ahead. Whatever the immediate odds, revolutionaries must fight to be elected as workers' representatives on a clear platform of how they would act if elected, what politics they stand for. Equally, they must argue with fellow militants that they too should not turn their backs on established forms of organisation but should fight to give them a new content.

The SWP's present trajectory is directly opposite to this, their argumentation will confirm many people's demoralised belief that "you can't do anything, the stewards are useless, the unions are bent". Militants and revolutionaries within and around the SWP should decisively reject their organisation's argumentation. There is a crisis of leadership within the unions at all levels, there is demoralisation and confusion among even the best militants. Revolutionaries should not be contributing to this sad state of affairs, they should be proposing ways of combating it. Abdication of leadership will never play a role in building a militant work-

by Steve McSweeney

# TILC splits - but will the lessons be drawn?

LAST MAY, at the annual *Lutte Ouvriere Fete*, a body calling itself the Secretariat of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee (TILC) announced a split. The British Workers Socialist League, the largest group in the TILC, had walked out of a TILC conference in April.

They had been supported in this by the Australian Socialist Fight (by proxy) and the American Proletarian Tasks Tendency. The statement claimed that these three groups were TILC and that they would carry on the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International.

It was not until June that there was a reply to the WSL from the dissidents whom the WSL claimed had wrecked the TILC. Eventually, in June, one of the principal protagonists of the saga, the American Revolutionary Workers League, issued a statement in their paper *Fighting Worker*. It declared: "The remaining TILC sections and the British supporters of the TILC must now resume the work of building TILC and rebuilding the Fourth International."

## TWO T.I.L.C.'s

There are, it now seems, two TILCs each out to reconstruct the Fourth International. However the RWL section of TILC, which includes the Italian Workers Revolutionary League (LOR), the Danish Trotskyist Workers League (TAF) and the British Workers International League (WIL), has yet to issue a statement on the split as TILC. Their silence, just as much as the WSL's public confession, is an indication of just how shoddy and apolitical the battle really was. Neither side has been able to come up with a political explanation for why the TILC has split.

For the WSL the cause of the split was quite simple. A document appended to their May statement by John Lister was a protracted attack on the RWL. It was misleadingly called *The Politics of the American RWL*. Its content was the usual factional fare served up and passed off for politics amongst Trotskyism's degenerate fragments. Just as Cannon once reduced the 1953 split in the FI to Pablo's "cult", so Lister traces the problems of TILC to the entry of the RWL "cult."

## CULT'S CRIMES

A series of crimes are laid at the door of the cult, chief amongst them being its failure to fight for a Labor Party in the US. For the WSL it is clear that this slogan has a reformist content. They called for articles to explain it, that would have "possibly looked at some of the struggles for policy and new leadership that were taking place in the British Labour Party; or even shown some of the progressive reforms (such as the NHS in Britain) which have been secured from even reactionary reformist governments."

The WSL were clearly pressing for an American version of their own adaptation to social democracy. They felt that the RWL "cult" would not oblige.

The cardinal sin of the RWL and the LOR, however, was their desire to intervene in the WSL: "Politically opposed to a number of the majority positions of the WSL they have sought to carry out their fight against these politics... through the call from outside for a faction within the WSL which will argue their politics."

And so we come back to Cannon versus Pablo. Never mind the political questions, so long as the RWL and LOR keep their nose out of the WSL then all will be well. The minute they support (let alone sponsor) a faction

opposed to the WSL, however, then comes split time in TILC. Lister, trained in the Healyite/IC tradition is a suitable attorney for this sordid method of factional struggle. It has nothing to do with authentic Trotskyism however.

In our opinion there is no evidence that the RWL/LOR axis have drawn any of the correct lessons from this mess.

They chose to fight the centrist WSL on a manoeuvrist/organisational basis, making the creation of international democratic centralism their key issue. The only factional platform of their international tendency was a five page document by the LOR which reduced TILC's crisis to "its failure to get transformed into a democratic-centralist organisation."

This document did not deal at all with the WSL's blatant and systematic opportunist political positions. It could not do so if it was, at the same time, to call for fusion with the WSL on an international basis - which is what democratic centralism means, after all.

The RWL supplemented this platform with their own 43 page document on the topic of democratic centralism. Indeed in this document they explicitly repudiated the need for a political fight, prior to a struggle for democratic centralism: "We could have pretended to draw up a long platform, full of pretty political profundities, and imagined ourselves to be engaged in a political struggle over it - in the absence of a fight for democratic centralism in the TILC. But this fight would be a sham, a farce, doomed to national Trotskyist containment and defeat." (emphasis in original)

So an organisational fight to fuse with the WSL was more important than a political fight to defeat their opportunism!

This topsy-turvy logic has little to do with internationalism. In fact it is a substitute for genuine internationalism in which democratic centralism is forged out of thoroughgoing programmatic and political agreement.

The reason why both sides of the split in TILC involve apolitical arguments to justify the split (of course we have not yet seen the RWL/LOR/TAF/WIL balance sheet of TILC so our judgement is necessarily provisional) is because they both agree on the original method of building TILC. Both sides claim to stand by that method as encapsulated in documents from the old WSL, such as *The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle*.

## CHARGES

Neither side can accept that they were wrong at the start. Both therefore resort to charges that the other is betraying TILC and its past. One side do this because they are a cult. The other side do it because they oppose democratic centralism.

Workers Power rejects that whole analysis. We recognise that the split in the TILC had a political basis. TILC, and its founding documents, were based on the ludicrous notion that an international tendency could be built on the basis of agreement purely on general principles. Major tactical questions were conveniently ignored in their documents. This was supposed to enable them to play the role of catalyst in regrouping the "World Trotskyist Movement". Because this so-called "movement" was supposedly "oscillating around the Trotskyist programme" (*Declaration of Intent*) it could be won back to that programme. After all that programme is merely a set of principles and not principally a guide to action. For TILC, therefore, the task was always to reconstruct the FI out of its existing degenerate fragments.

Programmatic clarity came low down. We said in 1980 that this was a recipe for future splits. We were right.

When the WSL adopted a social-pacifist, reactionary line on the Malvinas war, the whole rotten method of the TILC was exposed. General agreement on principles did nothing to stop the sections moving in opposite directions. From then on the TILC and the WSL were bound to split.

In our view some of the fragments that have emerged from that debacle had healthy revolutionary impulses. However the RWL, the WIL and the LOR seem unwilling to draw correct conclusions from their experience.

The British WIL have recently produced an issue of a newspaper. In it they do not mention the split in the TILC and offer no programmatic basis for the production of another paper and the creation of another organisation on the left. The RWL's paper remains studiously silent on the politics of the whole affair. Meanwhile the LOR are busily negotiating fusion with the Italian section of the USFI.

We will continue to seek a dialogue with these forces and encourage them to draw a balance sheet of their experience. Should they fail to do that and set sail for a democratic centralist tendency on the basis of the old WSL's useless documents, then they will meet with further shipwrecks.

As for the WSL itself there can be no doubt that it is heading for further crises. The shrivelled forces around Alan Thornett look set either to become prisoners in Matgama's castle, or to avoid that fate by fusing with the Socialist League and jumping down the "poisoned well" of the USFI. The old ICL clique knows full well where it is going. It has long since found its home in the left social democratic quagmire. ●

by Mark Hoskisson

# Workers Power KENT GAGS THE YOUTH

## INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

### BACK BRADFORD SIT-IN

**BRADFORD** — On August 5th, ninety workers at the Thornton View Geriatric Hospital, started a "work-in". Despite a shortage of geriatric facilities in the area, the Regional Health Authority (RHA) intends to close the unit in the autumn. Almost a year of petitions, meetings, leaflets and even a fast by the workers could not change their minds. The "work-in" is the latest attempt to stop the closure.

The dispute has been made official by NUPE and COHSE. The workers are organising a 24-hour picket to stop the management from running the unit down and transferring the patients. The "work-in" itself is being run by an occupation committee open to all the workers, and is backed up by a support committee and a relatives' committee. Support from within the labour movement is beginning to build up, thanks to the efforts of these bodies.

The management is hitting back with threats and intimidation. On August 23rd each employee received a letter warning that "Bradford Health Authority reserves the right to take such action as it may consider appropriate in the event of any trespass by you".

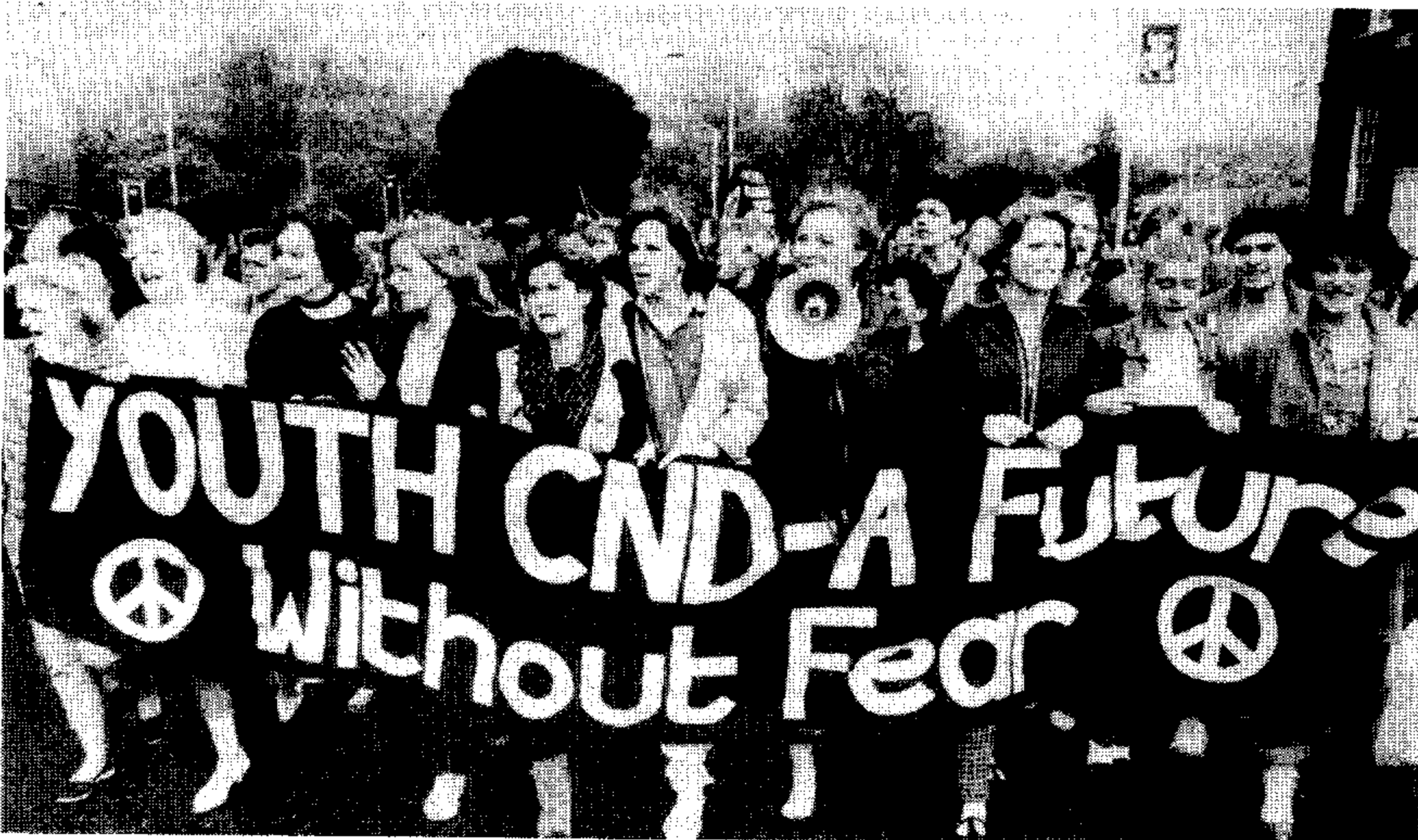
In the face of these threats the occupation committee's request to other trade unionists for supporting strike action becomes urgent. Against the

plans to break up the "work-in" that the RHA are preparing - plans seen in action in the wrecking of Hounslow Hospital and the forceful evacuation of patients at St Benedict's Hospital - it is also urgent that militant mass pickets are built. These should involve other trade unionists and unemployed workers.

The fight at Thornton View is a fight against the Tories' post-election offensive on the NHS. All over the country, closure plans are well advanced. A victory at Thornton View can spark NHS-wide resistance to these plans. Workers Power supporters in the NHS and our bulletins for health workers, *Red Pulse*, are building support for Thornton View's fight, and linking that up with other struggles against the cuts. This way, a militant united campaign can be built to fight the cuts and involve other industrial workers in defending the NHS and defeating the Tories' plans.

Rush messages of support and donations to:  
Betty Elle,  
c/o Resource Centre  
93 Little Horton Lane  
BRADFORD 5

The occupation committee HQ can be contacted at Bradford 882007 Ext 47. A demonstration in support of the Thornton View workers is being held on September 10th: Assemble 1.30 pm, Infirmary Fields, Lamb Lane, Bradford. Bring Union and LP banners!



G M Cookson

OVER THE LAST year large numbers of youth have flocked into YCND in search of a real fight with the Tories and decisive action to prevent the deployment of Cruise and other missiles. At the July YCND conference overwhelming support was given to a call for massive industrial action to stop Cruise and Trident and for a 'turn' towards the trade union and labour movement. Conference elected a leadership that backed these policies.

All this has proved too much for the crew who run CND. In the wake of the Tory election victory CND's national council has been discussing the need for more 'suitable' and 'realistic' policy alternatives to the call for 'unilateral disarmament'.

Evidence of the CND's headlong retreat from unilateralism and 'out of NATO' positions is the fact that the central slogan for the October 22nd CND demonstration will now be 'Freeze the Nuclear Arms Race'. E P Thompson and others support this 'nuclear freeze' position because they see it as a bridge to Liberal/SDP voters that they want to win. The Communist Party is also keen to add its ever more puny forces to forging an alliance with the Liberals and the SDP.

The decisions of the YCND threatened to get in the way of this stampede rightwards. Calls for industrial action, for withdrawal from NATO and the prospect of militant youth taking to the streets threaten to drive away the very 'middle ground' that the CND leaders imagine they can coax into an alliance. No surprise therefore that Joan Ruddock, Monsignor Bruce Kent and E P Thompson all decided to give their backing to a clamp down on the YCND and to a McCarthyite witch-hunt against political activists in its ranks.

CND National Council voted to end the limited autonomy of the YCND by abolishing the National Committee elected at its conference and replacing it with a Youth Committee directly under the control of the CND executive. All decisions taken at the conference were declared null and void!!!. At the same time they moved to put their officers in charge of Labour CND with powers to veto any decisions that Labour CND should take.

#### FRONT MAN

CND's clerical front man Bruce Kent explained that in future all such bodies will only have the function of toeing the line laid down by the CND leaders, as he put it, "What needs to be understood is that specialist sections are in no sense autonomous policy making bodies set up as an instrument for confrontation, but their function is simply to further the aims of CND."

Taking a leaf from British Leyland management's book, the CND leaders ran to the press shrieking about a red plot to infiltrate YCND and Labour CND. They added their voice to this summer's chorus of allegations against Socialist League 'moles'. Joan Ruddock claimed that membership cards had been badly checked at the conference, Oxford had committed the unpardonable act of recruiting about 130 members before the conference and - worst of all - the conference passed a resolution that conflicted with CND policy. Kent and Ruddock are trying to strangle a militant youth wing to ease their way into SDP/Liberal pastures and they hope a good anti-Trotskyist witch-hunt will win them new friends on the Labour right and more fullsome backing from the Communist Party.

Kent and Ruddock must be stopped. The immediate task is to

launch a counter-attack on CND from within YCND. YCND branches must demand of the elected YCND national committee that it maintain itself as the leadership of YCND in defiance of CND. They must demand that it organise an effective YCND defence campaign and call an emergency conference of YCND to rally together the maximum number of youth in opposition to CND's attacks and decide on the way forward for youth who oppose the war drive.

However, Revolution Youth and Class Fighter supporters on the YCND National Committee have already made it clear that they have no intention of mobilising youth in defiance of CND's attacks. All the signs are that they are abdicating their responsibility to lead a fight-back. Terrified at the prospect of finding themselves in isolation and outside the "mass movement" they are prepared to give up their elected positions and policies "for the sake of unity" with Kent, Ruddock and co. At present they are both relying on getting resolutions passed in sympathetic regional CND groups calling on the December CND conference to reinstate YCND as a specialist section of CND.

#### FIGHT BACK!

Branches and individuals in YCND who deplore the attacks on YCND should take it upon themselves, even against the capitulation of the YCND National Committee to fight for and organise an effective defence of YCND's right to elect its own officers and decide its own policies at conference. Workers Power will continue to argue for such proposals within the context of an overall fight for a revolutionary Marxist position on war within the YCND.

by C. Thomas

### VICTORY AT MICHELIN

Workers at Michelin's Stoke plant have successfully halted management's plans to introduce speed-up and four-shift working. Over 1,000 workers in the Lightweight Production Department (LPD) had been on strike for over a month in protest at a new shift system. Management's strategy was to isolate the LPD. They had already successfully enforced the new shift patterns in a smaller section of the plant earlier this year, and hoped to repeat these tactics. But they miscalculated the mood and strength of the LPD workers, and their support from the rest of the factory, their families and other workers in the area.

An initial lock-out failed to set other workers against the LPD section, and indeed, later in the dispute, significant sections - most crucially Michelin's own drivers - went on strike in support of the LPD.

Three weeks into the dispute, management offered a return to work on the basis of a stay of execution, but not a withdrawal of the new scheme. The strikers recognised the need for tougher

action to win the dispute, rather than compromise. 24-hour picketing successfully halted a substantial proportion of components coming in and of tyres leaving the factory.

This, combined with the prospect of blacking at the docks, led management to play their last card - BL style letters and threats of the sack. The strikers treated this with contempt. A mass meeting voted overwhelmingly to continue and five days later on August 5th, the bosses caved in, withdrawing the 4 shift proposals.

The substantial victory must be built on. Undoubtedly, Michelin will make another attempt to raise productivity in the plant and undermine union organisation. The behaviour of the TGWU officials early in the dispute shows that their leadership can't be relied on. It took 3 weeks for the TGWU to make the strike official and the initial advice of national officer John Miller had been that all workers should sign on and rely on public sympathy, rather than picketing the warehouse! It's the shop floor leadership which must be strengthened and prepared to resist new challenges.



John Smith 1/1

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: N. Greening's JSSC, c/o Len Blood, 26 St John Street, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

### DEMONSTRATE GREENING'S

**IDRISH MUST STAY!  
STOP ALL DEPORTATIONS NOW!**

National demonstration called by NALGO in defence of Muhammad Idrish, threatened with deportation. 8th October, Birmingham. March leaves Booth Street Playgrounds, Handsworth, Birmingham at 11.30 am, for rally in city centre. Coaches available from many areas. Bring TU and LP banners, and contingents from all anti-deportation campaigns.

Further details, model resolutions, etc from Barry Lovejoy, 30 Antrobus Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham 21, or local NALGO offices.

available from:  
Workers Power, BCM Box 7750,  
London, WC1N 3XX

WORKERS at Greening's wire factory in Warrington have been out on strike for over 20 weeks. In mid-August a mass meeting overwhelmingly rejected a management "final offer" on redundancy terms, and voted to stay out.

The strike began when management at the plant, a subsidiary of Johnson Firth Brown of Sheffield, tried to select 89 workers for redundancy. The bosses wanted to reduce holidays and impose more flexible working patterns.

In the face of the workers' determined resistance, the bosses sacked all the shop floor workers. Now they are threatening to close the plant.

Despite these threats, the strike is solid. It proves that workers are willing to fight against the bosses' attacks. But support is needed. Blacking of Greening's products, especially in the mines, where wedge wire screens are in use, must begin.

OUT NOW...

WHAT RED PULSE STANDS FOR

**AN ACTION PROGRAMME FOR HEALTH WORKERS**

WORKERS POWER Pamphlet for NHS workers 30p