

Workers power

SPECIAL
ELECTION
ISSUE

VOTE
LABOUR
AND...

ORGANISE TO

And if the Tories win...



FIGHT!

THE TORIES enter the 1979 election with the largest lead ever in the opinion polls and the shortest manifesto for years. Thatcher wants a 'low key' campaign. The reasons are obvious. Labour's years of wage curbs, cuts and unemployment have laid the basis of cynicism, apathy and demoralisation on which the Tories can sweep to power. The Tories hope to rally the lower middle class and the less class conscious workers to them by crude bribes; tax cuts, half-price council houses and anti-union, anti-immigrant law and order demagogy.

The Tories tax cuts (a policy stolen from them and pioneered by Healey) will, by introducing higher indirect taxes, produce a shifting of the tax burden even more heavily onto the shoulders of the working class. They can only be paid for by further cuts in the 'social wage' provided by the public and welfare services. The attack on direct-labour building, the 'everything must go' sales of council houses will chronically worsen the housing situation.

Yet the reason the stock exchange shot up at the prospect of a Tory victory was not blind malevolence. The Tories have a 'manifesto' that few of the electorate will ever see or hear of.

British capitalism faces a long term problem of tremendous seriousness. It is summed up crisply by the bosses' own house journal thus, 'The gap between the world's best technology and what is now installed in British factories can be bridged only by massive new investment. Second-rate machinery produces, unsurprisingly, second-rate goods: running it for longer hours may help Britain to compete with Spain or Ireland, but not with Western Germany or Japan.' (Economist, April 7th, 1979)

In 1964, when the problem of British capitalism seemed relatively mild (to achieve 'sustained growth' rather than 'stop-go') the Economist and the Financial Times both called for a Labour victory. State investment in the New Technical Revolution and Labour-TUC cooperation in planning wages so that they were kept below an expanding profit rate (incomes policy) seemed a better bet for ration-

alisation than the fossilised city-financier dominated Tories. As things got worse Labour tacked obediently in the bosses' wake. In 1969 they tried legislation to weaken the shop floor strength that was a permanent threat to long term plans for higher profits.

Rank and file pressure forced the bureaucrats into bucking at this one and an election put a new, revived Tory government, under Heath, into office to carry out the restructuring. The Selsdon Park Plan of 1970 envisaged 'lame duck' industries being sacrificed and a major onslaught on the unions. The 1971 Act, however, was a blunt instrument. It caught the bureaucrats as well as the rank and file and provoked the most intense political class struggle for forty years. In the end, however, it was the return to wage freezing that brought Heath down.

limits

The Labour Government performed the invaluable service of demobilising the militant movement built up between 1970 and 1974. It policed the working class through the worst capitalist crisis since the war. But, Labour parliamentarians, despite their utterly bourgeois politics, can only exist as a powerful national party because they rest on the mass economic organisations of the class via the trade union bureaucracy. The pressure on the bureaucrats from the masses places certain limits on what they will allow the Callaghan's and Healey's to do. In

1969 and 1979, Labour proved too weak an instrument for the sustained brutal re-vamping of profit rates, the slashing of real wages and the vicious attacks on union strength which British capitalism needs.

What the bosses are hoping the Tories can achieve is a massive restructuring of British capital that raises productivity and output levels whilst pushing down wages, thus restoring competitive profitability. Again The Economist hits the nail on the head 'It won't be shouted from the hustings but Britain needs a swing from wages to profits to help regenerate its industry... Britain's underlying growth rate is now so low that getting higher profits may need a cut - not just slower growth - in real wages.'

profits

The last ten years have seen an intensified worsening of the British economy: the rate of profit in all the important sectors of British industry has fallen dramatically. According to the Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin (December 1978), in 1960 the real return on capital, based on pre-tax profits, stood at 14.2%; by 1970 the figure was down to 8.7%, and by 1974 it had halved again to a low of just 4%. Productivity and output levels for British industry stood well below those of Britain's international competitors throughout this period.

The ideologists and leading politicians of Britain's ruling class are well aware that a drastic restructuring of industry is necessary to enable them to stand up to their sleek and ruthless competitors in the jungle of late twentieth century

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LABOUR has gone to the polls with the most conservative campaign for decades. 'The Tory Way is confrontation. The Labour Way is Cooperation. The Labour Way is the Better Way'. The implication of the slogans, under the insultingly patronising, 'play it safe with Uncle Jim' approach, is that Labour alone can tame the unions. The cynical candle poster, 'Remember last time the Tories said they had all the answers', is the only reflection of the working class movement that put Labour in power.

Callaghan tries to present the Tories as dangerous revolutionaries who want to, 'rip everything up by the roots.' No wonder that the opinion polls show a greater swing away from Labour amongst industrial workers and youth than among the middle class and middle aged.

Labour's manifesto is full of empty phrases, 'We pledge ourselves to make a reality of fair-deal collective bargaining.' Yet every trade unionist knows that, despite TUC and Labour Party Conference decisions, Labour is hell-bent on holding wages down. After five years of job, wage and social service cutting, the repetition of the pledge to, 'bring about a fundamental shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families,' will be met with anger and derision by those workers who have been, or are engaged in, bitter struggle with this Government. Meanwhile Rees can boast of having increased 'law and order' spending by £300 millions and to have added 8,400 police to the state forces.

Not a word of dissent has come from the pathetic Tribune 'Lefts'. Frank Allaun sums up their position ably, 'We have left, right and centre in the party with real differences. But they are tiny in comparison with our differences with the Tory Party'. (Labour Weekly)

Allaun pulls this old trick in order to cover up the fact that on wages, social services cuts, unemployment, Ireland, it is the differences between Callaghan and Thatcher that have been tiny.

Hundreds of thousands of workers in struggle this winter have faced a united front of Labour, Liberals and Tories, all eager to defeat them. In all of these struggles we have argued for a fight to win, whatever the impact on the survival of a Labour Government. Labour's policies are a poison weakening the power of the working class to resist the bosses. Militant resistance to this poison is the highest good. Labour's defeat as a result would have been a lesser evil than passively accepting more

doses of poison. A militant and mobilised working class can defend itself against the Tories.

Although the policies that the Tories are proposing are obviously more vicious than those currently being pursued by Callaghan, Labour cannot be regarded as a temporary protection against them.

We are in favour of voting for Labour because Labour in office can be put on the spot by Labour's followers.

A Tory Government will, inevitably re-arouse many of the illusions that the last five years have begun to crack and fracture. But, a Tory Government will not be a catastrophe. In either event the working class must mount a militant fight back. In this fight the Labour and TUC leaders will be a treacherous fifth column for the bosses in our ranks. They are an enemy that must be politically defeated and replaced by a new leadership, a new party, capable of leading the struggle for power.

As part of this process of overcoming these mis-leaders we seek to fight alongside the vast majority of our fellow workers who still believe Labour will, or can be made to, work for them.

To such workers we say let's put Labour to the test of action - force Labour to act to defend the immediate interests of the working class, for example,

to abandon all attempts to hold down wages.

- Stop unemployment by nationalising without compensation and under workers' control, all firms declaring redundancies and closures.
- Restore welfare and social spending and launch a programme of public hospital, nursery and housing construction under Trade Union control.
- Pull all British troops out of Ireland and get out of NATO now.
- Free abortion on demand.
- Repeal all the Immigration Acts and stop police protection of Fascists.

Tories

(Continued from Page 1)

capitalism. North Sea oil in itself is no solution. Its maximum contribution to state revenue and private profits will be around 1985. At the moment it is slipping through the bosses' fingers, being used to offset the balance of payments and prop up ailing industries.

monetarism

Sir Keith Joseph became an oppositionist to the Heath Government when it backtracked on the Seisdon programme in 1973 and stepped in to save Rolls Royce from collapse. Since then he has been converted, and has converted the Tories, to monetarism.

The monetarists believe that, by restricting the money supply and government-backed credit, weak and unproductive capital units can be destroyed. Employers, faced by a choice between profitability and bankruptcy will be forced to stand firm on the wages front. Joseph hopes in this way to cut British capitalism down to its most productive and competitive elements. Wage rises will also be directly tied to the profitability of the employer concerned. The dole queues will terrorise workers into submission and trim the unions' size and strength. However, the unions are already too strong and before 'economic realities' can get to work the unions, and particularly the militants, must be decisively weakened. Joseph has long realised that, 'Unless the present imbalance of union bargaining power is redressed it will be impossible to start the huge task of national recovery.'

The Tories thus promise confrontation with the strike committees and the pickets. They intend to repeal the 1976 Trade Union and Labour Relations Amendment Act which conferred immunity from civil action concerning breach of commercial contract in industrial disputes, thus rendering much normal trade union activity in disputes illegal. It would be replaced by new Tory regulations governing all aspects of picketing. The Tories want to outlaw the closed shop, unofficial strikes, strikes in crucial public sectors; they want to restrict social security payments to strikers and impose secret ballots before strike decisions are taken. Undoubtedly, any Tory legislation will contain many more undeclared anti-trade union provisions.

confrontation

The Tories as the direct party of the British bourgeoisie are thus preparing a big stick for a working class they feel is now sufficiently weakened, divided and demoralised by five years of Labour. They do, however, have a few carrots - for the skilled worker the promise of higher wages as a result of untrammelled market forces; for the business-union bureaucrats of the Duffy and Chapple stamp, help in turning (or keeping) their unions into prison camps via secret ballots etc. The Prior wing of the Tory party are already wining and dining these 'moderates' with the hope of avoiding a re-run of the early '70's. Their priorities will be to keep the 'big battalions' - the miners, power workers and engineers out of action until the weaker, but recently more militant unions in the public sector have been defeated. Divide and rule will be the Tory strategy, before they set up a decisive confrontation.

A strategy to resist the Tories must start from the need to overcome the weaknesses produced by the Labour years, and the fundamental weakness which allowed Labour to produce them. This means a strategy to politically defeat and oust the reformist bureaucrats and their parliamentary lackeys.

Labour's Record

Labour again

THE LABOUR PARTY was swept into power in 1974 on the crest of a wave of working class militancy. The working class was united in its resistance to Heath's attempts to attack the unions via the Industrial Relations Act, and living standards via statutory incomes policy. In an important sense the Labour victory represented the hopes and aspirations of the millions of workers who fought Heath. The 'Left wing' manifesto that Labour served up in 1974, promising 'a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families', well illustrated the pressure they were under from the working class.

However, once in office, the Labour government, absolutely committed to its reformist programme of propping up the crisis-ridden capitalist system, soon ditched its 'socialist' rhetoric. Instead its commitment to managing capitalism drove it to attack the living standards and organisations of the workers to an extent that Heath could never have achieved. Wages have been driven down, social expenditure slashed and workers' participation schemes introduced in a conscious attempt to shackle the shop-floor leaders who led the struggles of the early Seventies, firmly to the needs and interests of their bosses. Labour has indeed served the bosses and the bankers well!

STRIKES

Wilson and then Callaghan's hypocritical calls on us to 'tighten our belts' and 'give (yet) another year for Britain', have served to disorientate the rank and file militants whose struggles paved the way for Labour's victory. The answer given to Heath, determined strike action, did not greet the Labour government when they donned his clothes. This is reflected in a comparison of the strike figures for 1972, at the height of the struggles against the Heath government (23,909,000 days lost) with those of 1976 in the middle of Labour's term of office (3,284,000 days lost).

However, the confusion created by a Labour government pursuing policies identical to those of the Tories, has not caused total passivity. The recent strike wave is eloquent testimony to this. In January 1979, 2,585,000 days were lost through strikes (Dept. of Employment Gazette Feb '79.) almost as many as in the whole of 1976! It is this last period of militancy that has sent Labour scurrying to the polls with its 5% pay policy in tatters.

But, if workers are now on the move, a determined battle is needed to regain what has been lost in the last five years of Labour government. According to the *Economist* (April 7th 1979) between April 1976 and April 1977 Labour presided over a cut in real wages of 7%, a figure Healey would have liked to maintain but which rank and file militancy made impossible. If we look at the unemployment figures under Labour we can see the most damning evidence of Callaghan's determination to sacrifice the working class to the gods of the IMF and CBI. In



T & G pickets argue with a haulage driver. Picture: J Smith (IFL)

January 1974, the year Labour took office, there were 627,000 unemployed. This figure has risen dramatically throughout the last five years and stood, officially, at 1,455,000 in January of this year.

LABOUR'S FRIENDS IN CONGRESS HOUSE

Labour's assault on the working class has been achieved with the closest collaboration of the trade union bureaucracy. That bureaucracy has acted as a solid pillar of support for the Labour government.

In 1976, when the Seamen threatened strike action against Labour's pay code, the TUC, under the guidance of Len Murray, threatened to expel the NUS from its ranks. Again, in 1977, despite formal opposition to the 10% pay policy, the TUC refused to do anything at all to support the striking firefighters.

It is their support for Callaghan that has resulted in the collapse of the so-called 'Left' at union leadership level. The TUC is now well and truly in the hands of the Murrays and Jacksons of the world, while in the AUEW, it is the solid right-wingers like Duffy who are in control. This hard core right-wing leadership, carefully planted and brought to blossom by the policies of the Labour government, will provide the Tories with a hospitable base camp from which to further attack the unions.

Notetheless, the Labour government and their Congress House allies have failed to inflict a decisive defeat on the working class. When Callaghan rejected an election last October, he hopelessly underestimated the fighting potential of the working class, and overestimated the ability of the trade union bureaucrats to hold the line for him. Every major fight against Labour in the last period has had its origins in rank and file action. The action of the Ford workers, lorry drivers, public sector workers all started despite the wishes of their officials. It is precisely this strength that has prevented a defeat of 1926 proportions that would have resulted in an exodus from the unions and a collapse at every level of working class organisation. The continued potential strength of the unions is demonstrated by the massive increase in membership of the TUC (by 830,000) between 1976 and

well-oiled state machine to scab directly.

THE SNARE OF PARTICIPATION

A second, and no less important, weapon in Labour's arsenal has been the snare of participation schemes. The participation offensive has been aimed at undermining the shop floor leadership, making it jointly responsible for decision-making with management. The attacks on Leyland workers, carefully prepared by Michael Edwards and the Labour government, show the real purpose of this so-called, 'industrial democracy'.

The participation schemes in Leyland have crippled the workforce by integrating its shop-floor leadership into the management of the company. Having achieved this it became easier for the bosses and their allies like Derek Robinson, to sell the idea that workers must make sacrifices for 'their' company. What these sacrifices mean was clearly shown by the closure of the Triumph plant at Spoke, where hundreds of jobs were axed for the 'good' of BL. The shop stewards could offer no resistance since they had agreed to the job-cutting Edwardes Plan in the first place. It is little wonder that, with such a recent defeat in their minds, Leyland workers were unable to carry through a fight for their full wage claim. The Labour government knew this full well - their participation scheme was bearing fruit.

DIVIDING AND RULING

Labour's third weapon, less direct but equally effective, has been to play sections of workers off against each other. This has been most evident in its attempt to foster divisions between the manufacturing and service sectors of industry. Peter Shore summed



Derek Robinson - pointing the way to redundancy. Picture: J Sturrock (Report)

The government had the army in full training and on alert when the tanker drivers threatened to strike, and it used the army to drive scab ambulances during the public sector dispute. The army had already proved itself a dependable source of scab labour during the Glasgow dust workers' strike in 1975 and again in 1977 when they were used against the firefighters. In conjunction with this use of the army, Ennals encouraged the training of scab volunteer forces to operate hospitals in the event of an all-out strike or 'acute' emergency. Where it has been unable to scab by proxy, via the trade union bureaucracy, the Labour government has used a

this up by comparing the impending miners' claim with that of the Public Sector workers, 'The approach may have to be significantly different once you are in the trading sector.' (*Guardian* 22.2.79) In other words flexibility would be needed with the better organised productive sections of the workforce, hence the blind eye that was turned to the British Oxygen, Fords and other pay awards well outside the 5% limit. But the government has been more hard-nosed with its own employees in the service industries. The intransigence in the face of the Civil Service strike is the most recent example of this but it is also shown in

st the workers



Special Patrol Group in action at Grunwicks.

the miserable offer made to, and eventually accepted by, the hospital workers and council workers.

By fomenting this division the government has attempted, with only limited success, to balance their books for the capitalists and to place the blame for the low wages of service workers on the 'greed' of the strong sections who who smashed the 5% in the first place.

SABOTAGING RESISTANCE

The fight against the attacks from Labour highlights the weaknesses, as well as the strengths, of trade union organisation. At every stage the struggle has been sabotaged by the officials.

The Fords strike was of major importance because it provided the first serious challenge to the pay policy. But the trade union leaders moved in and dislocated the struggle. Rather than building support for the strike by bringing out British Oxygen, Leyland and Vauxhall's, Ron Todd and his colleagues kept the strike isolated, ran it without strike committees or mass meetings and eventually conceded many of management's demands, in particular penalties against unofficial strike action, the attendance allowance etc.

COMMITTEES

The strength of the lorry drivers, shown when the democratic strike committees were actually running the dispute against the Moss Evans leadership, led to real alarm in ruling class circles. 'Secondary picketing' brought down the frenzied wrath of the Fleet Street hacks on the heads of the strikers and the equally frenzied calls from the Tory front bench for a state of emergency. But, despite the initial strength of this strike it was weakened and isolated by the bureaucracy's sabotage of the tanker drivers' dispute (when Texaco drivers were left to fight alone) and by their seizure of control of the strike from the local committees, via the code of conduct for picketing. Although the wage demands were, in the main, won, the lorry drivers failed to secure the 35 hour week - an important loss in the fight against unemployment.

The isolated instances of all out strikes in the Public Sector spoke volumes about the ability to win the full claim if given determined leadership. Once again though the exclusion of the rank and file from control of, and involvement in, the dispute, the use of selective action and the subsequent splitting off of the ambulance drivers, the water workers, dustmen, nurses and hospital ancillary staff, from each other resulted in the leaders of the

unions involved being able to engineer a sell-out. The end result, a 9% increase with the promise of Hugh Clegg's comparability scheme was a far cry from the supposed aim of a £60 minimum wage.

FIGHTING FOR JOBS

The divisions and misleadership that have undermined resistance to Labour's attacks on wages have been matched, if not surpassed, in the fight against unemployment.



Low pay strikers shout down Fisher at Central Hall meeting. Picture: L Sparham (IFL)

Despite the massive growth of the dole queues the average length of the working week has remained exactly the same for the last seven years - a constant 46 hours. Nowhere are elementary demands such as a ban on overtime to be heard in the ranks of the trade union leadership. Instead they have grovelled before Labour's empty gestures against unemployment, the job creation schemes. These are mere face savers, they have done nothing to halt the rising tide of unemployment, particularly among school leavers. The answers that are being floated in the labour movement have offered no lead in the fight against unemployment.

The officials of Congress House and their 'Left' shadows in the workplaces, such as Robinson at BL, have sung out the praises of voluntary redundancy. The long term job loss that this involves, despite the short term gains in redundancy payments, has a debilitating effect on workers' living standards, as well as on trade union organisation.

Where open acceptance of job-cutting is impossible the 35 hour week has been wheeled out to become a part of almost every claim over the last year. The refusal to fight for this demand, at Fords, in the Public Sector and for the lorry drivers, shows that for the leaders this is only window dressing. Where the determination of workers has forced the leaders to

fight, as in the POEU, they have been quick to compromise, accepting a 37½ hour week and the need to boost productivity. In addition, union leaders and their camp followers in the Tribune Group and the Communist Party, have made unashamed appeals to national chauvinism. This is manifested in their reactionary demand for import controls.

At a time when steel workers all over Europe, particularly in France, Germany and Holland, have been or are engaged in a struggle for a shorter working

play directly into the hands of the right wing - indeed they are only a stone's throw away from the 'British jobs for British workers' calls of the fascist NF. Capitalism is a world system and its barbarism requires an international proletarian response. Instead of seeking a utopian and reactionary way of 'protecting' British industry, we should be fighting for real links with, for example, the European steel workers, in a joint struggle to cut the working week and to resist unemployment.

DIVIDED

The Labour government ends its term in office by handing over a working class which is seriously vulnerable to the inevitable continued attacks of the Tories. Despite the fighting ability displayed in the recent struggles the movement is more divided than it was it was when it sent Heath packing. The battles against the Industrial Relations Act, the solidarity with UCS and the support for the miners displayed an instinctive class unity. The Labour government, however, has been driven from office by a movement divided amongst itself. The current struggle at Leyland by the United Craft Organisation, led by Roy Fraser, shows that the lack of an alternative to Labour's wage cutting policies can accelerate and strengthen craftist divisions in the working class. Central to the UCO's claim is the call for separate bargaining rights, separate that is from the rest of the Leyland workforce. The Tories, with their 'rewards for skill' ploy will be able to play on

this division, Labour has ensured this. By driving women back into the home or by restricting them to the low paid sectors of the service industries, Labour has widened the division between men and women inside the working class.

Labour's attacks have not only been aimed at splitting up the working class. The attacks on wages and the right to work and the slashing of social service expenditure, have left workers materially worse off than when Heath was kicked out. £1900 million was cut from health spending by 1976, education was cut by £300 million. It was the working class who had to suffer from closed hospitals and deteriorating education facilities.

The Labour government has been like a vampire at the neck of the working class. To preserve itself in office it has attempted to suck the class dry so that we will be unable to resist the attacks of the bosses and the Tories. But, the working class still has tremendous reserves of strength, as Thatcher and Joseph will find out. However, to realise this potential requires a resolute revolutionary leadership, a genuine communist party. Armed with the revolutionary programme such a party could fight the divisions within the class. It could lead the fight to defend working class interests against the attacks of the bosses and their agents in the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy. Led by such a party the working class could rid itself of capitalist tyranny once and for all. WORKERS POWER will fight for that programme and strive to build that party inside the working class and its organisations.

by CHARLIE SHELL

The critical question of support

The election that the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV) was set up to organise around has finally materialised, almost a year after the founding of the SCLV. Initially *Workers Power* were involved in this campaign, but in the February issue of our paper we announced our resignation from the SCLV. We left because it was increasingly obvious that the SCLV had become a moribund and motley 'left' alliance which could only hinder a serious revolutionary intervention in any election campaign.

The confused aim of the SCLV, a Labour victory on the basis of a socialist vote, fails to address the problems of the class struggle posed during the election period. Instead, the main forces behind the SCLV, the supporters of the papers, *Workers Action* and *The Chartist*, have attempted, with catastrophic results, to straddle two horses. On the one hand the SCLV by its commitment to 'raze the capitalist system down to its foundations', hopes to set itself up as an alternative "revolutionary" current, to the *Militant*, inside the Labour Party. Chairperson of the SCLV, John O' Mahony, confirmed this in an interview in *International Communist* No. 9: "We can hope to enlist segments of the YS for a

perspective of struggle - not just proclaiming socialism but struggling for it. And then we could begin to challenge the hegemony of 'Militant'".

But this project of a revolutionary current inside the Labour Party, is confused by the SCLV's blatant courtship of definitively non-revolutionary currents inside the party. Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone as well as the fairweather supporters such as Ernie Roberts and Joan Manyard, who wear the SCLV hat are all avowed reformists, albeit 'left-wing'. Unity with these people is perfectly legitimate for revolutionaries provided it is on the basis of ACTION, however limited. But this is not at all the basis of the unity that has spawned the SCLV. Rather we are seeing the supporters of *Workers Action* give ever more uncritical support, effort and left cover, to the reformist talkers, for whom the SCLV is but a stepping stone to the balmy heights of the House of Commons.

This cover for the reformists has been central to the SCLV project from the outset. Its first broadsheet announced: "It is the activity of the left of the party, which wants to settle accounts with capitalism which is the best guarantee for a Labour victory."

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When Callaghan decided last October to carry on at the head of a minority government, he anticipated that the Tories would be unable to co-ordinate support from the rag-bag of minority parties. Misguidedly, he also thought that he could continue to count on support from the Official Unionist Party (OUP).

In spite of promises of extra seats in the Westminster Parliament, this tiny group, expertly orchestrated by Powell, outmanoeuvred Callaghan. After securing the extra seats, the OUP decided that nothing else could be wrung from this dying government and finished it off in the vote of confidence.

That a Social Democratic government should rely on support from the most reactionary group of MPs in Parliament, should come as a surprise to no-one. Northern Ireland has never been an issue of real controversy between Labour, Tory and Unionist Parliamentarians. There are only minor differences on the means of best maintaining British Imperialist control over the whole of Ireland.

Consensus

The political consensus between the Labour Government and the OUP resulted from three major developments over the last few years. Firstly, the 1974 Loyalist strike which destroyed the Sunningdale executive and effectively ended the 'Power Sharing' concept. Secondly, the decision to restore 'the primacy of the RUC' and lastly the appointment of the vicious pro-Army thug, Roy Mason, to oversee the "normalisation" strategy. The 1974 strike was living proof that the Northern Ireland state is irreformable. It exists solely to guarantee Protestant ascendancy. The strike dealt a savage blow to the parties taking part in

Roy Mason:

Power sharing. Only the Alliance Party has survived intact and even it admits that power sharing is dead.

Likewise the SDLP, who clung to the power sharing illusion the longest, has been forced lately to adopt an ever more 'hard', 'green nationalist' image to maintain their support from the non-unionist population.

Labour commitment to power sharing in its 1974 Manifesto ("There must be some form of Power Sharing" "There must be a genuine participation by both communities in the direction of affairs") remains a democratic illusion designed to deceive. The Labour Governments policy since the 1974 strike has been to restore the political features of the pre-1972 Stormont regime - institutionalised sectarianism guaranteeing Orange ascendancy.

The Labour Government wanted the OUP, the 'natural rulers' of this unnatural statelet, to assist them in this restoration. The Government embarked on a campaign to win the confidence of the OUP.

The Northern Ireland Office decided to criminalise the IRA through the Diplock, no-jury courts. Torture became normal practice to aid this task. Labours' Attorney General, Sam Silkin, was quite explicit when he said that the changes in police procedure announced by Rees "will succeed not through any change in the law but by securing evidence against those who previously thought themselves to be safe from the securing of that evidence The weakness is the lack of evidence rather (than) lack of offences."

The fact that the only evidence placed before the Diplock courts

against 'terrorist suspects' is, in the majority of cases, 'confessions', stands as a bloody testimony to Silkin's predictions.

Though restoring "the primacy of the RUC" was integral to Labour's overall strategy, it had another distinct advantage. By improving the size, armaments and intelligence-gathering potential of this force, Labour hoped to steal some of the thunder of Protestant paramilitary groups. In this they have had some short-term success. The Economist reported on February 10th, 1979: ". . . senior officers in Ulster feel a large part of their success has been due to the quiescence of the Protestant paramilitaries"

As a cover to this policy there has been the much-vaunted reforms of the sectarian RUC. These are a complete sham; the number of Catholics in the RUC is now lower than before 1968.

Fascination

These developments were accelerated in September 1976 when Roy Mason replaced Rees at the Northern Ireland Office (NIO). Mason had previously been the Army minister and had proved himself to be popular with the Army hierarchy. The generals knew that Mason could be relied on to back them under almost any circumstances. His appointment was a green light to the most blood thirsty elements at every level in the 'security forces'.

Mason has shown a special fascination with the "supermen" of the SAS. As Army minister, he made a special journey to visit his personal friend, Timothy Creasey, when he was Commander-in-Chief of the Muscat armed forces. In this war against a popular revolt Britain's

Labour's bloodhound

commitment to the barbaric Muscat and Oman monarchy was spearheaded by the SAS murderers.

Mason's first job as Northern Ireland Secretary was to appoint Creasey as GOC Northern Ireland and there-by step-up undercover, SAS-type activities. The general SAS terrorisation and intimidation of the non-unionist population were reflected at one end of the scale by the murder of the IRSP leader Seamus Costello, and at the other, the murder of John Boyle, a sixteen-year old Catholic. Two members of SAS are being brought to trial for the latter crime.

The British ruling class make no attempt to hide the fact that it supports such terror. The Economist commented again on February 10th: "For the past 18 months the SAS has operated in four-man covert squads throughout Ulster. They may or may not be under orders to shoot to kill, but on occasions this is what they have done. The case of young John Boyle illustrates the clash between normal civilian Justice and the unwritten rules of war."

Social Democracy has had its army lovers before such as Gustav Noske, a leader of the right in the German SPD. During the revolutionary crises after the war, Noske gleefully co-ordinated the murder of thousands of revolutionaries in Northern Germany including Luxembourg and Liebknecht. 'Someone has to be the Bloodhound' he was fond of saying, thus earning himself the undying hatred of working class militants.

That Mason performs this role in

Ireland protects him from similar hatred in Britain. This is a situation that it is in the interest of every British worker-militant to remedy. We must make the blood on Mason's hands visible.

To add insult to injury of the Catholic community, Mason brought over the Queen in 1977. It was a move also calculated to snub the SDLP. Labour's change from unofficially sponsoring the National Reformist SDLP to embracing the OUP was expressed in a recent speech of Mason when he characterised the OUP as 'moderates' unlike the 'extreme' SDLP and Paisleyite DUP!

Mason's relationship with the OUP was well illustrated by a short story in a recent 'Guardian Diary'. Apparently, an American journalist arrived in Belfast and tried to contact Mason for a statement on H-block. A NIO official told him that Mason was too busy, but if he cared to contact the OUP, it could give an account of NIO policy just as well!

Impasse

Despite his premature obituaries of the IRA and the increased repression, Mason's terror tactics have come to an impasse. The heroic resistance of the political hostages in the H-blocks has had a serious propaganda effect, especially in America where Mason hoped to attract investment capital to Northern Ireland. The RUC torturers, after counting on his unequivocal

Labour against women

LABOUR'S October 1974 manifesto contained a special section entitled, 'Status of Women'. It promised full implementation of the Equal Pay Act by the end of 1975, free family planning, a child benefit scheme, reforms to bring equal opportunity, extension of nursery provision and a better deal for single parents.

What is the record? We have the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act - but only a toothless and cowardly Equal Opportunities Commission. We have the Employment Protection Act guaranteeing us maternity rights - which are still amongst the worst in Europe - and protection against redundancy, none of which applies to the thousands of women working less than 15 hours, or in temporary jobs.

equal pay

The tribunal system which covers this legislation, including the earlier Equal Pay Act, is weighted against workers. A pamphlet produced by Birmingham Working Women's Charter Campaign in 1977 noted that out of 38 cases concerned with equal pay heard by the local tribunal in 1976, only 11 were won. Even where the tribunal members seemed 'fair', the inadequacy in the legislation allowed employers to continue to discriminate in pay and opportunities.

Although Labour's Act established the principle of equal pay for equal work, women's average earnings remain only 63% of men's. On equal opportunities, although the number of women at work has risen this is largely due to an increase in chronically

low-paid part-time working. In every economic downturn women are expelled from production much faster than men. In 1974-5 the rate of unemployment among women rose twice as fast as that of men. The real number of unemployed women remains hidden because many do not register.

The promised improvement in training opportunities for girls has vanished as proper apprenticeship schemes have contracted, replaced by inadequate job programmes to disguise youth unemployment.

What of the promises of better social services for women? Savage public expenditure cuts have closed hospitals, ended nursery expansion before it had hardly begun, prevented much needed expansion of ante- and post-natal care and the building of out-patient abortion clinics. Many jobs held largely by women in the health and education sectors have been axed or converted into insecure temporary or part-time posts. With hospital closures the burden of caring for the elderly and the sick increasingly falls upon women. Equal pay and opportunities are a hollow mockery when nursery and after-school provision is missing.

For Labour politicians solving capitalist crises within the framework of preserving capitalism necessitates these attacks on working women. Capitalism needs a reserve army of cheap labour which can be brought in and out of production as need dictates. Women must see their first job as being in the home. Capitalism cannot afford to give real equal pay, decent training facilities and nursery provision except in a situation of

chronic labour shortage - and afterwards, as in post war Britain, these rights are rapidly withdrawn.

Labour is committed to maintaining capitalism, so, while it maintains a verbal commitment to improving the status of women it has, at the same time, led the drive to pack us back into the home.

A war is being waged on the ideological front to accompany this drive. Juvenile delinquency is blamed on working mothers. The right to abortion is constantly threatened. Callaghan has joined in with speeches stressing Labour's commitment to strengthening the family. A nauseously hypocritical gloss has been given to cuts in the NHS and social services with talk of, 'community care'.

The Labour and union leaders

have always had an evasive attitude to measures which would increase women's ability to participate in social and political life and to play an equal part in the class struggle. Such measures as they have introduced have come only as the result of intense pressure from women trade unionists and activists.

The post war Labour government introduced the Welfare State but shut down virtually all the nurseries that the Churchill government had created to enable women to enter war production. Labour fully supported the despatch of millions of women back into the stultifying isolation of the home. What measures Labour has taken have been under pressure from working class women. The Equal Pay Act of 1970, often referred to as Barbara Castle's, was a response to the equal pay strikes - most notably that of the Ford sewing-machinists. In the early Seventies, under the Tories, women's militancy was reflected in their entry into the unions, at twice the rate of men, and in occupations to save jobs.

After Labour's return to office in 1974, a wave of strikes around the threshold payments indicated

that even unorganised or ill organised sections were willing to struggle against the real suffering that 'slumpflation' brought to working class women.

However, women workers still remain vulnerable to the treachery of the bureaucrats, as the defeats at Imperial Typewriters and at Grunwicks showed. The recent struggles in the public sector have shown leaders like Fisher only too willing to sell them out time and again. The weakness of the 'working women's movement' is that it has remained under the leadership or powerful influence of these bureaucrats.

On the other hand, the 'Women's Movement' has remained largely the province of intellectuals and white-collar workers, the ex-students. Its predominant tendencies, both 'radical' and 'socialist' feminist, have shown a considerable aversion to a central orientation towards working class women. In whole or in part they have rejected revolutionary Marxist politics in favour of a reborn feminism which links individual solutions and consciousness raising to a piecemeal reformism centring on voluntary provision of facilities not provided



Women on low pay demonstration on January 22nd, 1979. Picture: A Ward (Report)

support for so long became increasingly crude, careless and blatant in their work, most seriously demonstrated by the murder of Brian Maguire in police hands.

Mason's dilemma and fears were summed up again by The Economist of February 10th, 1979:

"Violence in the province has been reduced to the minimum possible under existing rules and, they (senior police and army officers) claim the Provisionals are still able to launch and sustain campaigns in Britain as well as to keep violence on the boil in Ulster".

"Army officers say that the Provos have not only become better organised militarily but have also learnt the value of propaganda. By stressing human rights and continually emphasising the H-block prisoners' campaign, they ensure that the police and army are constantly under an international searchlight. And their newer men have been so well tutored in interrogation techniques that in the seven days police are allowed to hold suspects under the Prevention of Terrorism Act they are giving less and less."

"In spite of their frustrations, few senior officers are calling for

Roy Mason.



Picture: Chris Davies (Report)

new measures such as indefinite detention or greater powers of search and entry. Instead, they simply say they cannot wipe out the IRA."

And The Economist has one final warning for Mason: "Beware the day Protestant paramilitaries draw their bloody conclusions."

The Labour Government has given up trying to reform the irreformable and is intent on restoring the essence, if not the exact form, of the old Stormont regime. Mason is at the NIO to ensure that no blood is spared in carrying out this task.

In the last year, Troops Out activists have attempted to forge an electoral bloc against Mason in Barnsley. They are supporting the candidacy of Brendan Gallacher — the father of Michael Gallacher.

We have always argued that the major focus of a campaign against Mason should be a drive to force the Labour movement, particularly the Yorkshire NUM and Barnsley CLP, to withdraw their sponsorship of Mason. UTOM has not taken up and vigorously pursued such a campaign. Similarly we do not give support to centrist or pacifist campaigners simply because they include 'Troops Out' in their platforms.

Gallacher, unlike the liberal pacifist Arrowsmith, who is standing against Callaghan in Cardiff, represents, with all its strengths and weaknesses, the republican minority in the artificial Northern Irish state. While we are critical of his platform and politics his campaign, in an important sense, brings into the British election the struggle of the Irish people against the hated, blood-soaked regime of Roy Mason. For that reason alone we urge workers to vote for Gallacher, against Mason, as an act of solidarity with the struggle for Irish independence.

By Ben Rees

by the NHS and social services. Even the once-powerful National Abortion Campaign has been unable to transcend the opposition to specific Anti-Abortion Bills and direct itself to winning the trade unions to a fight to force Labour to carry a Bill providing free abortion on demand.

The 'Women's Movement' has affected hundreds of thousands of women and alerted them to many aspects of their oppression in a way that the limited economic horizons of reformist trade unionism could never have done. But, today's women's movement is of necessity a transient phenomenon. In the past there have been bourgeois feminist movements and socialist and communist women's movements. The bankruptcy of bourgeois feminism once the vote for women had been won, was manifest. The defeat of communism at the hands of Fascist and Stalinist reaction wiped out the Marxist women's movement. The modern women's movement has arisen in the vacuum, borrowing eclectically from Marxism, feminism, libertarianism and assorted academic disciplines. Initially there was a fertile period in which much experience was rediscovered.

However, the situation now is increasingly one where ideological confusion and organisational chaos are being made into a virtue. The Women's Liberation Conference seems unlikely to meet this year. The Socialist Feminist Conference did duty for it but, partly as a result, further lost its 'socialist' colouration and ceased to be a conference in even the most minimal sense.

If the Tories win the first government with a women prime minister will launch massive attacks which will hit working class and lower middle class women hard. Social services will be slashed to pay for cuts in direct taxation. In direct taxation will rocket the food bill, Josephite measures will mean the loss of women's jobs on a tremendous scale. The anti-abortionists will return to the attack with no parliamentary obstacle. Against these attacks the

present, 'women's movement' will prove hopelessly inadequate.

In these circumstances a real fighting response will be needed. This will mean mobilising the industrial strength and mass base that only the working class movement can provide. It will necessitate winning the assistance of working class men militants as well as the organised women workers. It will mean a vigorous battle against the treacherous Labour and trade union leaders.

clarity

It means democratic and disciplined organisation to be effective. But, above all, it needs the clarity about the priorities and methods of the struggle which only the Marxist programme provides. A programme which indissolubly links women's liberation and socialism. Thus WORKERS POWER fights to win women in the working class and feminist movements to the task of building a mass working class women's movement committed to a communist action programme. At no stage do we make this programme a pre-condition for united action around immediate demands or struggles of a defensive or offensive nature. Given the tiny number of revolutionary Marxists, such an attitude would be self-defeating and sectarian. To working class women who are by no means Marxists we say take up the fight, force the unions to form special organisations for work amongst women, organisations which can help unionise the unorganised, train women for positions of leadership, fight prejudice and sexism amongst male workers. Before all else these organisations must be internally democratic, elect their own leaders and decide their own policies. If the bureaucrats refuse, as we are certain they will, then such a movement *must be built unofficially*. All of our work amongst women is dedicated to this end.

BY SUE THOMAS

question of support

Continued from Page 3

Which "Left" are they talking about—the Tribunites?

What activity do they mean—the faithful support given in the Commons to Callaghan's relentless attacks upon the working class? Or do they mean themselves? Obviously such vague references are designed to flatter and woo potential "left" supporters for the SCLV. But once won the reformists are given free rein to do what they want. We have pointed out in past issues of our paper the role of SCLV supporters Ted Knight and Ernie Roberts at the ANL second Carnival in diverting thousands of anti-fascists away from an NF march. In this instance both men were excused uncritically. More recently Ted Knight, a candidate for Hornsey in the general election, has put out election leaflets that don't mention, let alone criticise, Callaghan's attacks and betrayals. Instead we are subjected to hymns of praise on Labour's socialist credentials:

"The Labour Party was founded over seventy years ago by the Trade Unions as a political expression of the hopes of the working class. Since that time the party has campaigned fiercely against injustice." He goes on to urge:

"support for the Party that has consistently fought alongside the underprivileged." (From Ted Knight invites YOU to join the LABOUR PARTY—Hornsey Labour Party leaflet). So for Ted Knight 5 years of wage, welfare and job cutting represents a fierce fight against injustice! And yet, such is the unity of the SCLV, despite his flouting of their agreed position on the record of the Labour Government he is not criticised or in any way called to account

by the 'revolutionary' supporters of *Workers Action*.

This sort of cover is willingly offered by the SCLV to all sorts of reformists, merely at the cost of paper sponsorship, a few speeches and the occasional article in the SCLV's paper *Socialist Organiser*. What is it then that holds the SCLV together? For one thing its programme is suitably vague to be acceptable to a whole variety of supposed 'socialists'. While it calls for an end to wage curbs it says nothing about what action workers should take to fight them in the here and now. The same is true of its positions on unemployment, women, Ireland, racism etc. The programme is committed to 'socialism' but it is a dim and distant thing, not something that can be related to actual struggles of workers at the moment. The SCLV makes reference to "socialist policies" but are these simply pro-working class reforms, 'increase social spending', or would their adoption by a government make it a socialist government. The reformists in the SCLV would probably say yes to the latter.

Workers Action supporters would say no. The ambiguity hides the disagreement. So the reformists are not bound by a programme of action, but can hide behind evasive formulas.

The SCLV is an umbrella organisation united only in propaganda—it has not, and cannot have, any perspective for action. Its failure to decide between a revolutionary current inside the Labour Party, or a limited united front has in fact killed it, as an organisation. For *WORKERS POWER* unity with reformists is permissible on the basis of action. We will intervene in the election on the basis of our own propaganda, as we do in all areas of the class struggle. This will not stop us from supporting particular initiatives of the SCLV or from united fronts with reformist workers and their leaders. But we will not subordinate our own programme and propaganda to win short term friends in the lower echelons of the Labour Party.

Within an inch of oblivion?

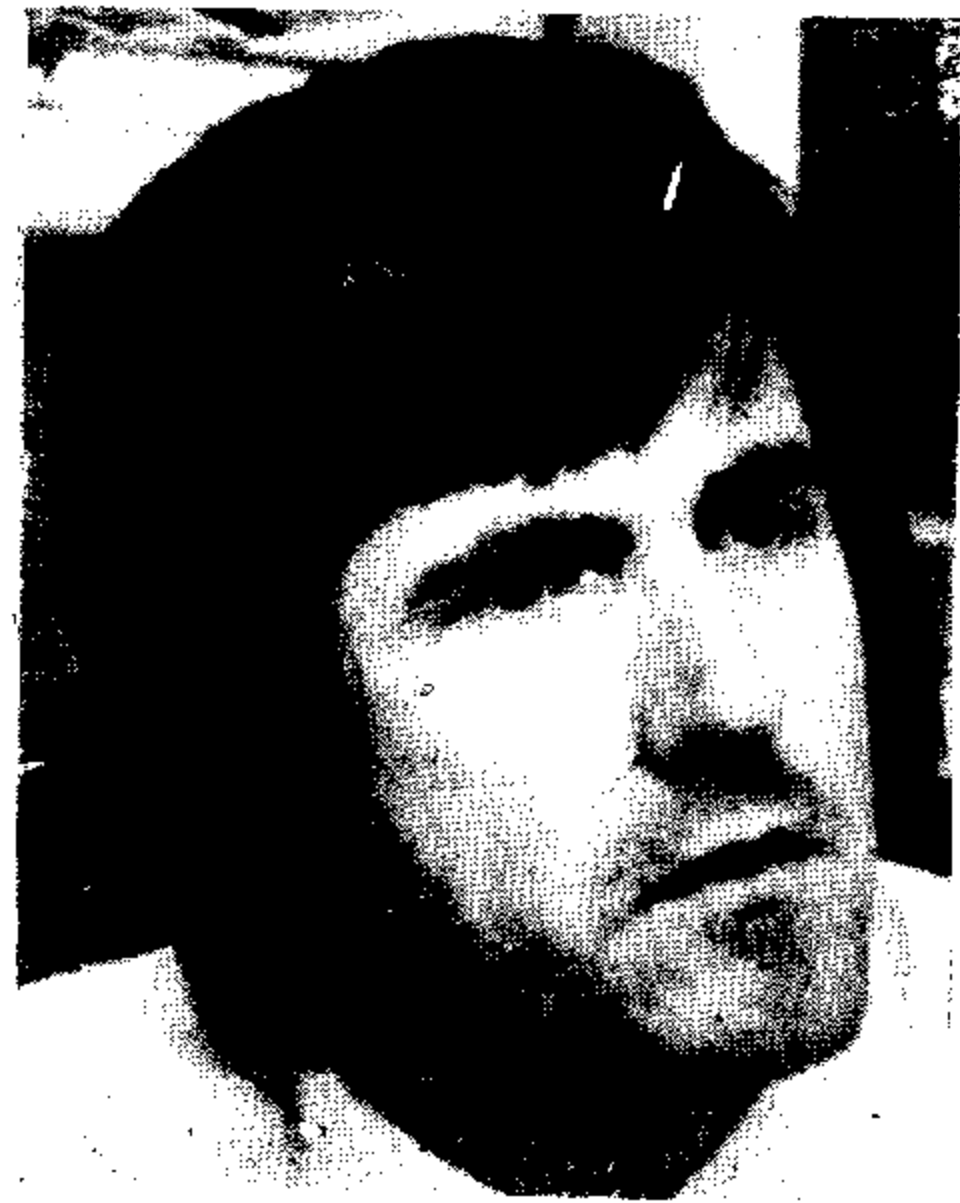
If you think you've been paying harshly for the bosses' crisis under Labour, don't fool yourself into thinking that the Tories couldn't be any worse. They could be. Quite a bit worse.

There may be only an inch between Tory and Labour, but it's in that inch that we survive.

Socialist Worker, September 9th, 1978

For the next three weeks I am a strong Labour supporter. I am very anxious that a Tory Government shouldn't be returned, and I shall be going round to meetings we are having telling everyone to vote Labour.

Paul Foot, Evening Standard, April 9th, 1979



What must be done

In the face of the impending attacks on workers organisations and living standards the Trade Unions must be put on a war footing. This can only be done as part and parcel of taking them out of the hands of the Trade Union bureaucrats.

To achieve this aim rank and file militants must be rallied into a movement which has a definite fighting policy on the key issues facing the class; which is committed to thoroughly transforming the unions into democratic fighting organs and which recognises the necessity of winning the mass of the membership to the struggle for socialism.

In the immediate period ahead the key elements of such a programme of action must be:

- * No sacrifice of workers living standards — No Incomes policy; No wage freeze; For a sliding scale of wages automatically protecting wages against inflation—For a 1% rise in take home pay for every 1% rise in the cost of living as calculated by workers themselves.
- * No Sacrifice of Workers Jobs — Cut the hours not the jobs; Open the Books to Workers Inspection; In the face of all threatened redundancies we must fight for work-sharing under Trade Union control with no loss of pay and nationalisation with no compensation for all firms declaring redundancies.
- * Stop the Cuts in Social and Welfare Spending. For the restoration of all cuts — for the automatic protection of welfare and social spending against the ravages of inflation. For a programme of public works—under Trade Union control—to improve the standards of housing, welfare and educational provision.
- * Prepare to face the legal onslaught of the bosses. No compliance with anti-trade union laws and courts; defend the picket lines and mass meetings with workers self-defence squads. In the face of new anti-union laws the unions must be prepared to reply with a General Strike to stop the laws reaching the statute book or to block their implementation.
- * No Deals with the Tories — for the complete independence of the unions from the state. This will mean a fight against the Trade Union leaders to ensure that all policy is decided by lay delegates, that all officials are subject to regular election and instant recall.
- * Oppose the bosses intervention in union affairs: No to the secret ballot—all decisions to be taken at mass meetings held in work time.

FOR A UNITED FACE AGAINST THE EMPLOYERS

* If women workers are not to be used against organised labour then the workers movement must organise to defend and extend women's rights and living standards

— FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK, EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

— OPEN THE UNIONS TO WOMEN WORKERS: For women's right to caucus in the unions, for union meetings in work time and on full pay. For Free Abortion and Contraception on demand.

* Prevent the racists dividing the workers. We must build a United Front of all workers organisations to smash the fascist threat—No Platform for Fascists, expel them from the unions—active support to black workers under attack. Opposition to all immigration controls and racist legislation.

* Support the low paid and unemployed workers—don't let them be turned against the Labour Movement. For the Trade Union registration and organisation of the unemployed—for a minimum wage of £70 per week for all.

* The Labour Movement must fight to prevent the splitting of the Scots, Welsh and English working class. For the immediate implementation of the Scotland Act. For a vigorous non-chauvinist campaign to argue that the interests of Scots and Welsh workers lies in united struggle for a workers republic—not with independence or devolution schemes.

* Support Ireland's right to self-determination: TROOPS OUT NOW! Abolish the PTA. Stop the torture, release all republican political prisoners.

Only with these policies can a united working class force back the employers attacks. But a victory on any front can only be temporary. Either the workers movement must push forward in these struggles fighting for *WORKERS CONTROL* over production, speeds and employment or the bosses will recoup their strength for new attacks. The successful outcome of that struggle can only be the establishment of political power for the working class over the exploiters—expressed via workers councils and a workers militia. The full state power of the working class, can alone force the expropriation of the bosses and the construction of a planned economy.

★ ★ ★

MARXISTS AND THE

In Germany, Russia, Italy, France the period of the Second International 1889-1914 saw the growth of mass parties under nominally marxist leadership. August 1914, the voting of war credits, the entry into war cabinets was clearly a rupture with the past of these parties. It led to a split of historic significance. In Britain, despite an early start in terms of trade unionism and the semi-revolutionary workers dominated Chartist Movement, the proletariat was very late in forming even a separate parliamentary Party.

Although Marx and Engels lived in Britain and had close working relations with labour leaders, marxism did not take root until the early 1880's.

The reasons for the 'backwardness' of the workers of the world's first capitalist country lay precisely in the world dominance this pioneer role gave British capitalism. Before the epoch of Imperialism British capitalists were wealthy from exploiting not only their own workers but also millions of colonial slaves. The top 10% of skilled workers, (the Labour Aristocracy), the best organised, and therefore the spontaneous leaders of the working class were able by trade union action to win wages as much as two and a half times bigger than those of the mass of workers. Their employers tied them to their major political party - the Liberals. This experience presented them with an endless vista of reforms, with the amelioration of life within the framework of capitalism. Reformism was born as Liberal-Labour politics - what Engels described as an informal "bourgeois labour party" hanging like a tail on the Liberals.

Imperialism

The onset of the general epoch of Imperialism in the 1880's brought an end to Britain's unchallenged world dominance and roused the masses of the working class to action. This mass pressure led to the formation of unions of unskilled workers in the late 1880's and 1890's. It led to the transformation of many of the old skilled unions. The entry into the labour movement of large numbers of unskilled workers undermined the old alliance between the leaders of the craft unions and the Liberal Party. It was these new unions that took the lead in pressing for a break with the Liberals. In these conditions the working class could no longer be tied to the bourgeois order by means of direct incorporation into the Liberal Party.

Despite the claims of the Fabians and despite Labour leaders' jibes that their party owes more to Methodism than to Marx, the conscious struggle for a working class party originated neither in the Wesleyan Chapels nor in the Webb's drawing room, but in the London house of a German political exile.

In May and June 1881 Engels wrote a series of articles in the Labour Standard urging the trade unions to take up the task of forming a working-men's party:

"At the side of, or above the unions of special trades there must spring up a general union, a political organisation of the working class."

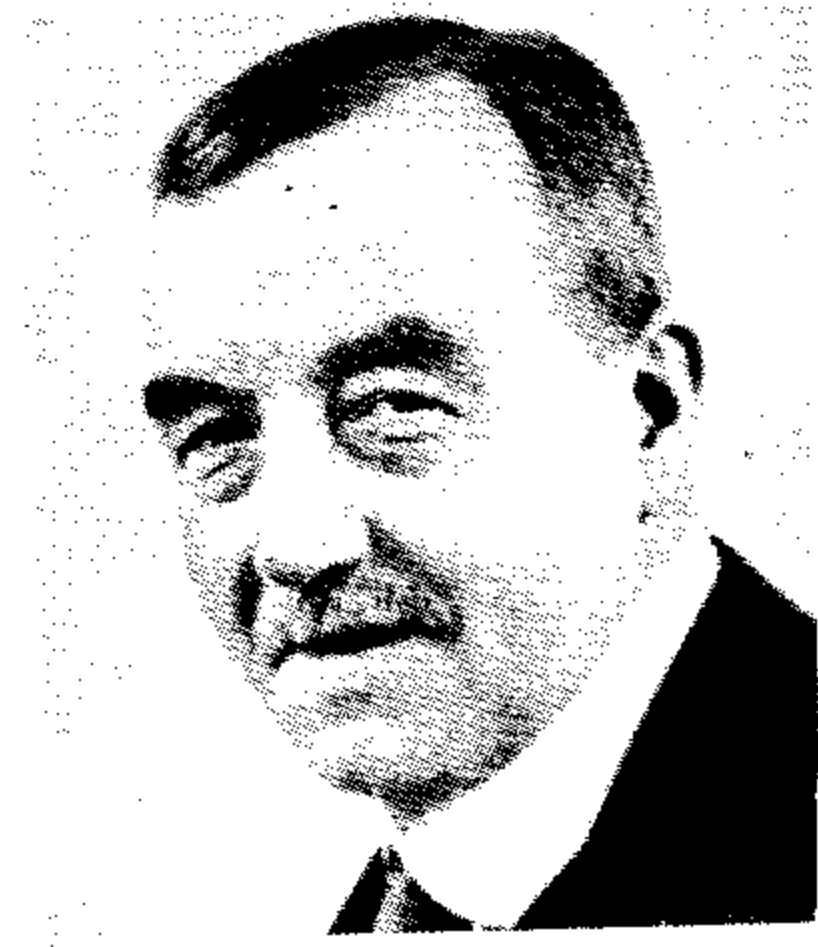
The strategy Engels urged on the younger generation of socialist and working class leaders was to fight to draw the trade unions into forming an independent workers party.

But not one of the three major groupings of would-be socialists either understood or agreed with Engels' tactics. The Fabians, the Webbs & Co., consciously rejected them. They rejected the class struggle outright, arguing that 'socialism' was merely an extension of social reform. Capitalism in their view was evolving in this direction. They thus saw any government as capable of carrying out 'socialist' reforms and therefore they set out to 'permeate' the Liberals, and the Tories.

They had a particular fondness for the Liberal-Imperialists like

the Chamberlains who espoused social reform as a means of incorporating the working class. They played an insignificant role in the foundation of the Labour Party, hardly surprising since they saw no need for a class party.

Tragically, the Social Democratic Federation of H.M. Hyndman played an almost equally insignificant part as an organisation. In Engels' words the SDF had "ossified Marxism into a dogma" and had become purely a sect. The SDF's members like Tom Mann, John Burns, Will Thorne had led the struggles that formed the new unions yet the SDF remained



Arthur Henderson

obstinately hostile to trade unionism and to direct industrial action. Hyndman considered strikes a waste of time.

The force which campaigned most actively for a break with the Liberals was the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Engels welcomed its formation in 1893 and advised non-sectarian marxists to enter it. However, these forces hardly existed outside the Eleanor Marx circle and the ILP (although committed to "secure the collective ownership of the means of production") swiftly developed in an opportunist direction adapting not merely its tactics but also its programme to the existing level of the British workers. Though advocating a separate workers party and espousing the 'final goal' of socialism it was wedded to a piecemeal parliamentary reformist road.

"That Socialism is revolutionary is not in dispute, but that it can only be won by a violent outbreak is in no sense true. Nor do I admit that reforms are made from any such sordid motive. There is a growing social conscience which counts for much in these reforms...I can imagine one reform after another being won until in the end Socialism itself causes no more excitement than did the extinction of landlordism in Ireland a year ago."

- Keir Hardie, 1904.

ILP-ers had a contempt for 'dry theory', a fixation with the minutiae of day to day reforms and a hazy emotional preaching of the distant socialist utopia. Ideologically this left a vacuum which was to be filled by Fabianism with its 'municipal schemes', its 'gas and water' socialism, and its compromises with the Liberals.

Militancy

The growth of militancy and anti-Liberal sentiment in the unions, the increasing influence of the socialists, pressurised the 1899 TUC to summon a conference of co-operative, socialistic, trade union and other working class organisations "to devise ways of securing increased numbers of labour members in parliament".

The trade union leaders and most of their members were still politically liberals but a tremendous opportunity existed to make this the first step on the road to a socialist labour party. But from the start the principled tactical compromise advocated by Engels, the fight for a marxist programme within this political extension of the trade unions, found no advocates. The SDF, via the London Trades Council proposed a resolution that workers elected to Parliament should form a distinct party "based on the recognition of the class war and having as its ultimate objective the socialisation of the means of produc-

tion, distribution and exchange". The ILP immediately opposed this, supporting instead a simple programme of demands "with which the main body of workers were already in agreement". Leading ILP'er Keir Hardie's resolution merely stated "this conference is in favour of establishing a distinct Labour Group in Parliament". The Labour Representation Committee, formed at this conference was made up of seven trade unionists and two members each from the ILP and the SDF plus one Fabian. It was formed one year before the launching of a systematic employers' offensive against the growing labour movement.

In July 1901 the Taff Vale case abolished at a stroke the immunities given by the trade union acts of 1871/6. Both Liberals and Tories colluded in this legal attack. The union bureaucracy found themselves on the receiving end of this. There was a stampede of unions to affiliate to the L.R.C.. At this crucial turning point in working class history the SDF walked out of the L.R.C. leaving the field to the ILP and the Fabians. Keir Hardie triumphantly wrote:

"The propaganda of class hatred is not one which can ever take root in this country. Mankind in the main is not moved by hatred but by love of what is right. If we could have socialism on the SDF lines nothing would be changed but for the worse."

What should revolutionary marxists have done in this situation? Affiliation would have given enormous advantages - it would have gained marxists the political ear of trade unionists, it would probably have allowed them to use the parliamentary tribune. It would have enabled them to struggle against the ILP and trade union opportunists, not only over principles but over their tactical application, in an arena where the rank and file could be mobilised against these leaders.

Democratic Demands

Marxists in Britain, to have stood a chance of winning the party to marxism, would have had to take up the issues that continental leaders like Luxemburg did. Democratic demands like the suffrage issue were crucial questions in England too. The power of the House of Lords, the prohibitive expense of standing for parliament, trade union rights, the non-enfranchisement of women, the oppression of Ireland were all issues that a vigorous marxist party could have won the masses on. As it was these issues were used by Liberals, feminists and nationalists to keep the Labour Party in humiliating dependence.

For example, to accept the first past the post electoral system rather than mobilise workers against it, meant inevitably standing candidates who would not be opposed by the Liberals. Refusing to take up these demands, the abstract propaganda of the marxists served only to strengthen reformism. Had these issues been linked up with economic demands, with the mass action of the expanding rank and file movements, marxism could have had a powerful influence in Britain before the first world war.

Dominated by an alliance of ILP parliamentary opportunists, led by MacDonald and Keir Hardie, and trade union bureaucrats, the Labour Party tailed the Liberal Government after 1906, invariably supporting them. On all the issues of struggle that dominated the years before 1914 - the fight for women's suffrage, the massive strike wave, the upheavals in Ireland, the Labour leaders took an at best abstentionist and at worst reactionary line.

On the suffragettes' agitation Mac Donald said: "The violent methods are wrong and in their nature reactionary and anti-social, quite irrespective of vote or no vote." Lansburg and Hardie got no support from the PLP for their work for womens' suffrage.

At the height of the great strike wave of 1911 Arthur Henderson, one of the trade union leaders of the PLP tabled a bill which proposed making strikes illegal unless 30 days advance notice was given.

After this record the 'betrayal' of August 1914, i.e. the entry of Henderson into the Cabinet in 1915 hardly came as a surprise to anyone. Paradoxically it was only during the war that the marxists of the British Socialist Party (successor to the SDF) achieved affiliation to the Labour Party. Hyndman, an extreme chauvinist had been expelled from the BSP.

The Labour Party began to take final shape during the war and immediately after it. A ferocious mouthpiece of chauvinism at first, it began to respond to the war-weariness and outright anti-war sentiments of the masses as the war came to a close. At the Leeds Convention of June 1917 leaders like Snowden and MacDonald made 'left' speeches hailing the Russian (February) Revolution and calling for 'councils of workmen and soldiers delegates...in every town, urban and rural district.' The vast expansion of the trade unions after the war, the revolution in Russia and the upheavals in Europe forced the trade union and parliamentary leaders to re-structure and re-adjust the Labour Party.

The period 1900 to 1918 sowed the seeds of modern labourism - its opposition to the class struggle and search for 'social peace', its unshakable belief in the neutrality of the state and 'constitutionalism' and its identification with the nation state through bourgeois democracy.

Upheaval

The war produced an elemental upheaval in the life of the working class which shook it out of the old ways and habits of the past. In 1910 Labour candidates received only half a million votes. By 1918 the total stood at nearly two and a quarter million (20.8% of the total). By 1924 this figure had risen to nearly five and a half million - one third of the total votes cast. This massive increase of working class support was a reflection of the growth of the unions and the increasingly militant struggles of this period. The Russian Revolution exercised an influence far beyond the small circles of communists as the 'Hands off Russia Campaign' showed. In 1921 the TUC and Labour Party were constrained to set up a national council

of action and threaten Lloyd George with a General Strike.

The response of the trade union leaders and the parliamentarians led by Arthur Henderson, Ramsay MacDonald and J.H. Thomas was to 'social-democratise' Labourism. This meant ideologically the adoption of a formal 'socialist' goal (clause IV) drafted by Sidney Webb in evasive and ambiguous Fabian terminology.

"To secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service."

Split

Henderson, in a pamphlet written to explain the changes in the party 'The Aims of Labour' enunciates the 'classical' split between this 'distant' goal and the measures which constitute "a first step, a series of national minima to protect the peoples standard of life". Henderson, under pressure from the rank and file shop stewards movement, has to include promises that "in the re-organisation of industry after the war, the Labour Party will claim for the workers an increasing share in the management and control of the factories and workshops"

going on to set as the goal 'the abolition of the system of wage slavery'.

However, if the leaders had to make rhetorical concessions to the workers in struggle they also made sure they built into the party political and organisational measures aimed against any revolutionary development of the masses. The 1918 programme and constitution were aimed by their drafters directly against 'Bolshevism'. Henderson's commentary appeals to the best traditions of English philistinism. Revolution is defined as a wanton resort to "barricades in the streets and blood in the gutters". This method is pronounced "alien to the British character" and rejected in favour of "ordered social change by constitutional methods". Labour is again and again referred to as a 'national democratic party, founded upon the organised working class' but not a "class party".

The first fifty years

Herbert Morrison (left) and George Lansbury (right).



LABOUR PARTY

The new structure was meant to reflect this project for a workers party kept strictly within the limits of bourgeois society. The provision for individual membership organised in constituency parties was essential to a modern electoral machine. This weakened the affiliated socialist groups (ILP, BSC etc) who had hitherto been the only vehicles for individual membership.

The Trade Union bloc vote was maintained with which the TU leaders could easily swamp the wishes of the constituency parties or the affiliated bodies. Yet the parliamentary party remained master in its own house—in the Commons. It was committed only to "give effect as far as may be practicable to the principles from time to time approved by the party conference".

Iron grip

This latter body was an almost toothless body. In the Labour Party real power lay in the hands of the parliamentarians with the TU leaders exercising a long stop control via the purse-strings of the union contributions. Labour thus received its peculiar structure. Its mass character was achieved largely via trade union affiliation (in 1928 it had only 214,970 individual as opposed to three and a quarter million affiliated unionists. A solid bloc of MPs and TU bureaucrats held the party in an iron grip. Only the breaking of the trade union leaders control over the unions could ultimately alter this situation.

What was the attitude of communists to such a party? Lenin and the Third International were to take up Engels' arguments again in the advice they gave to the various groupings which were to form the British Communist Party in 1920.

Lenin had to argue both against the opportunism of the British Socialist Party, which was affiliated to the Labour Party, and the "anti-parliamentarianism" of the Socialist Labour Party, the Shop Stewards Movement and Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers Socialist Federation. In arguing for Communist Party affiliation to the Labour Party Lenin was absolutely clear as to the bourgeois nature of that party. At the Second Congress of the Communist International Lenin took William McLaine, a BSP member, to task for describing the Labour Party as "the political expression of the trade union movement". In contrast Lenin argued

"The Labour Party is not a political workers party but a thoroughly bourgeois party, because although it consists of workers it is led by reactionaries, and the worst reactionaries at that who lead

it in the spirit of the bourgeoisie. . . " This analysis of the Labour Party as a bourgeois party with a working class base was fundamental in determining communists attitudes towards it. Likewise Lenin's understanding of the particular period of growth and development that the Labour Party was experiencing.

Lenin saw the Labour Party as on the verge of taking governmental office. As a bourgeois party it would inevitably fail to fulfill even the expressed and immediate needs of the workers. Hence the necessity for communists not to turn their back on the Labour Party but to attempt to vigorously exploit the contradictions at the heart of the young party between its leaders and the aspirations of the mass of its supporters.

In these circumstances Lenin outlined a tactical compromise that the small forces of British Communists had to make if they were to win a hearing amongst the workers flocking into the Labour Party.

"If I as a Communist come out and call upon the workers to vote for the Hendersons against Lloyd George, they will certainly listen to me. And I shall be able to explain in a popular manner why the soviets are better than parliament and the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill, but I shall also be able to explain that I wanted to support Henderson with my vote in the same way as a rope supports the hanged - that the establishment of a Henderson Government will prove that I am right and will accelerate the political death of the Hendersons and the Snowden's as was the case with their friends in Russia and Germany." (Left Wing Communism 1920)

Confidence

Lenin advocated communists standing in a few constituencies where a split vote would not let the Liberals in and elsewhere "distribute leaflets advocating communism" and "urge the electors to vote for the Labour candidate against the bourgeoisie."

Lenin and the Comintern (C.I.) were clear that the communists vote should in no way be presented as a vote of confidence in the Hendersons as a 'lesser evil' than the Lloyd Georges or Churchills. The Comintern later elaborated the procedure of putting demands on the Labour leaders. These demands were not 'the communist programme', or that thoroughly passive and ambiguous formulation 'socialist policies' but important immediate demands which would be clear to thousand of workers met vital needs and which a government which claimed to represent them ought to carry out. Communists would fight alongside reformist workers to force Labour in office to carry out these measures. The C.I. explained it thus,

"- we call on you to organise joint demonstrations for the old demands of the Labour Party and to establish joint committees which will force the Labour Government to fight for, 1. Full Maintenance for unemployed workers at trade union rates; 2. Nationalisation of mines and railways with workers control over production; 3. Full freedom for Ireland, India and Egypt. Revocation of the policy of armaments. Credit for Soviet Russia. Scraping of the shameful Treaty of Versailles."

In sum these attempt to mobilise Labour supporters to demand a break with the bourgeoisie and action for the workers. Exposure of the cowardly class collaborators is thus not a literary exercise but performed in action. In this way the forces mobilised in a united front manner can be rallied to the real 'alternative leadership' of the communists.

This is not a hoax or trick since the Communist Party does not cease to warn of the likely, even inevitable, vacillation and betrayal of the reformist leaders at the same time openly agitating and propagandising for its own distinct Programme of Action.



ILP Council, 1899.

Left to Right, front row: J. Bruce Glasier, J. Keir Hardie (Chairman), H. Russell Smart, P. Snowden; Behind: J. Ramsay MacDonald, J. Burgess, J. Parker, J. Penny (Secretary), F. Littlewood (Treasurer).

In the situation where communists remained a tiny minority Lenin advocated a further method for relating revolutionary politics to the masses.

The tactical method advanced by Lenin was affiliation to the Labour Party by the CP. In the "conditions for joining the Comintern" the CI expressed its view that Communist groups should affiliate to the Labour party as long as

"this party permits organisations affiliated to it to enjoy the present freedom of criticism and freedom of propagandist agitation and organisational activity for the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . as long as that party preserves its character as a federation of all trade union organisation of the working class". Certain compromises should be made to allow the communists "the opportunity of influencing the broadest masses of the workers, of exposing the opportunist leaders from a platform that is higher and more visible to the masses, and of accelerating the transition of political power from the direct agents of the bourgeoisie to the 'labour lieutenants' of the capitalist class in order that the masses may be more quickly weaned from their best illusions on this score."

It was only under these conditions of complete freedom of propaganda and organisation that Lenin argued for affiliation.

Resolutely opposed by the Labour Party leadership and the Trade Union bureaucrats the requests for affiliation were defeated at Labour Party conferences throughout the 1920's. (The best result was secured in 1923 when 3 million votes were cast against accepting CP affiliation and 200,000 cast for). On proposals from the national executive CP members were declared ineligible as Labour candidates at the 1924 conference (before this date several Communist candidates received backing from Labour constituency parties, most notably Saklatvala Communist MP for Battersea). Banned as individual members of the Labour Party in 1925, CP members were declared ineligible as delegates to all national and local conferences and meetings, even if elected by Trade Unions, in 1926.

Revolt

These measures did provoke a serious revolt among local Labour Parties. Over 100 ILP and CP influenced constituency associations refused to implement the 1925 decision. The tactic of the Communist Party in this situation was to attempt to weld an alliance together of the CP, left reformist and centrists under the banner of the "National Left Wing Movement". About 50 Labour Parties associated themselves with the movement. The attempt to build such an alliance against the Labour leaders was absolutely correct. What was wrong however was for the CP itself (as part of its right turn from 1925 to 1928) to disavow the need for transcending the Labour Party and Labourism. The National Left Wing Movement committed itself not to

supercede the Labour Party, "but to 're-mould it nearer to the heart's desire' of the rank and file". The National Left Wing Movement met with systematic repression from the Party leaders, CLPs were suspended and disaffiliated by the National Executive. By 1928 this repression, and the sharp turn of the Communist Party to its "third period" line of characterising the Labour Party as "social fascists", had effectively eliminated this opposition.

The mould of the Labour Party firmly set during the 1920s. The minority Labour Government of 1924 proved to be a wretched fiasco. The cabinet was stuffed with ex-Liberal and Tory peers and politicians. Prime Minister MacDonald had two choices—to present to parliament the Labour manifesto of immediate demands, be defeated and face another election, or be 'realistic' and attempt to implement reforms the Liberals approved of. He chose the latter course and its consequences were a string of anti-working class measures.

Strikes

A railway strike was in progress and the Government assured the House of Commons that it "had no sympathy with this unofficial strike". In the big docks strike it firmly intervened against the dockers and Bevin, their leader was able to use the Labour Government as an excuse for giving in. "We were put in the position of having to listen to the appeal of our own people" he said. Philip Snowden, Chancellor of the Exchequer, indignantly recalled in his memoirs the strikes which "caused the Government great anxiety and diverted its attention in a large measure from the work of preparing its legislation, measures in which it should have been fully occupied." After 1924 the ILP acted increasingly as a 'left' pressure group within the party—dominated by the Clydeside MP's, Maxton, Kirkwood etc. Quite consistently Labour's role in the General Strike was minimal—its leaders being no more willing to "challenge the constitution" than were the apparently 'left' dominated IUC. For them both the betrayal of the strike was an infinitely preferable solution.

In the mid-twenties Trotsky tried to advise the British Communists as to what tactics to apply. He was aware of the contradiction between the thoroughly bourgeois leaders of the Labour Party and the way the rank and file trade unionists wished to use it to defend and extend their immediate interests. He further realised that the central arena for combatting the MacDonaldites was the unions.

"The British bourgeoisie takes unerring stock of the fact that the chief danger threatens it from the quarter of the trade unions and that only under the pressure from these organisations can the Labour Party, having replaced its leadership, turn itself into a revolutionary force." (Trotsky 'Where is Britain Going')

This meant no confusion of communist politics with the "socialist rhetoric of the 'lefts'" - in the

unions men like Swales, Hicks and Purcell and in the Labour Party, figures like Lansbury, Kirkwood etc. Trotsky noted that whilst in the "economic" organisation a "left" leadership was possible until a decisive industrial confrontation led to a political crisis, in the Labour Party a left leadership was not possible,

"A party can not confine itself to isolated left campaigns but is compelled to have an overall system of policy. The lefts have no such system nor by their very essence can they. But the rights do. . . with them stands bourgeois society as a whole which slips them ready made solutions (. . .) The weakness of the lefts arises from their disorder and their disorder from their ideological formlessness."

The full vindication of Trotsky's assessment of the relative strength of the left and right within the Labour Party came in 1931.

The betrayal of 1931 did not imply any changes in the programme of Labour. The worst world economic slump in capitalism's history faced a minority Labour government with carrying out the logic of balancing capitalism's books. This necessitated 'cuts' of an unparalleled savagery (10% in the pitiful dole). MacDonald, Snowden and J.H. Thomas were willing, even eager, to carry out the measures demanded by the City and New York bankers. In this they had a majority of the Labour Cabinet including Webb and Herbert Morrison. The trade union bureaucrats—right wingers to a man—could not, however face their enraged members with this sell out.

Deserted

MacDonald lost patience with the haggling, deserted with Snowden and Thomas and formed a 'National Government' with the Tories and Liberals. Thus the only serious split in Labour Party history was engineered consciously and confidently by the Right.

Moreover the Labour Party remained firmly in the hands of leaders who had no significant political differences with MacDonald. The 'new boys', Morrison, Clynes, plus the old leaders, Bevin and Henderson were prepared to break in no way with the political and organisational methods developed under MacDonald and Snowden. This was shown in the conflict between this leadership and the ILP.

This is the first part of a series of articles by Stuart King which will examine Marxist tactics towards the Labour Party.



A fascist replacement for the Shah?

by
Mark Hoskisson

The fall of the Pahlavi monarchy at the hands of the Iranian masses has sent shockwaves throughout the Near and Middle East. Sadat of Egypt has been touting himself as a potential policeman for imperialism in the area while Arab monarchs of the Gulf have been building up their armies to strike down any attempted repetitions of the mobilisations that brought down the Shah. At the same time the imperialist powers of the West have shown an eagerness to fill the gap left by the collapse of their strong arm in the region. It is within this international context of political crisis that the importance and potentialities of the present economic and political turmoil in Turkey must be viewed.

On the crest of the post war boom period Turkey enjoyed an annual growth rate in industrial output of 7%. Unemployment was soaked up by this growth and by an annual rate of emigration (to West Germany in particular) averaging 50,000 between 1961-74.

But with the recession of the 70s internal industrial growth slumped to 2%, while emigration slowed down as jobs in the West became harder to find. Now, as the foreign investments dry up and the weight of the massive 16 Billion dollar foreign debt is felt on the weak Turkish currency (the Lira) the severity and depth of the present crisis can be clearly seen. Inflation is running at 70% and at the same time industry is only running at 35% of its full capacity. This has put 3 millions Turks (20% of the working population) out of work. It is against this chronic economic instability that Turkey's current political crisis has to be seen. The Republican People's Party (RPP) led by Premier Ecevit is in Government at the moment.

Elected on a wave of working class militancy this populist bourgeois party, not tied organically to the working class or the trade unions which can in no way be regarded as a social-democratic party, has staggered on in power by soliciting the tainted support of defectors from the right wing parties in the Turkish parliament. Its continued survival, is daily less certain.

The Ecevit government has acted faithfully, if sometimes ineptly, in the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie and their imperialist paymasters. Its latest measures consist of an austerity plan, based centrally around slashing jobs and workers wages, and increasing public spending in the private sector.

fascism

But a more threatening spectre is hovering behind the crumbling Ecevit government. The crisis in Turkey has given birth to a classic fascist movement of menacing proportions.

The Nationalist Action Party (NAP) led by the army veteran Colonel Alparslan Turkes is a model fascist party. It has built a mass movement (one million votes at the last election) amongst the demoralised petit bourgeoisie, from right wing students, and from the swelling ranks of Turkey's lumpen proletariat.

Out of this movement the NAP has assembled its own paramilitary terror squads—the "grey wolves". The NAP has exploited the religious and national divisions that exist in Turkey between the Sunni Moslem majority and the Alevi (Shi'ite) minority, primarily Kurds from the Eastern regions.

The "grey wolves" terror squads were responsible for 1200 murders in 1978. Their terror campaign, aimed primarily at the working class and its most vulnerable section (the Alevis), culminated in the horrendous massacre of 100 people on December 26th 1978 in the eastern town of Kahraman Maras. This occurred at the funeral of two leftist teachers, murdered a couple of days before by a fascist bomb attack. A funeral march of 10,000 was attacked by the "grey wolves" shouting: "Communists and Alevis cannot be allowed to say prayers for the dead." According to eyewitnesses the mutilation that followed defied description.

The NAP campaigns in classic fascist style, for the "regeneration" of the Turkish race. To the ideologists of the NAP this means a struggle to reunite the "inner Turks" in a "Greater Turkey", with all other Turkic peoples. The party has its own myths of the Tartar origins of the Turkish 'master-race' and a venomous demagoguery against alien Zionist, Arab and Christian cultures.

The NAP has also succeeded in infiltrating the army, the police and the government bureaucracy. Alparslan Turkes gave the support of his "grey wolves" to the pre-Ecevit right wing government of Demirel. In return Turkes was made Vice-Premier, from which post he was able to ensure NAP placements in the Turkish armed forces. The NAP now controls a significant proportion of the arms, and the state machine in Turkey.

In the face of this threat Ecevit is in reality opening the door to the forces of fascism and reaction. He has declared martial law in 13 of Turkey's provinces, while consulting with the fascist leaders on "means of ending the violence."

The fact is the fascists have been clamouring for martial law over the last several months, because they know that it can only be directed against the working class and oppressed nationalities. In most places it is NAP army men who are overseeing the imposition of martial law! No wonder Demirel, ex-premier, chief of the right wing Justice Party, has demanded: "The

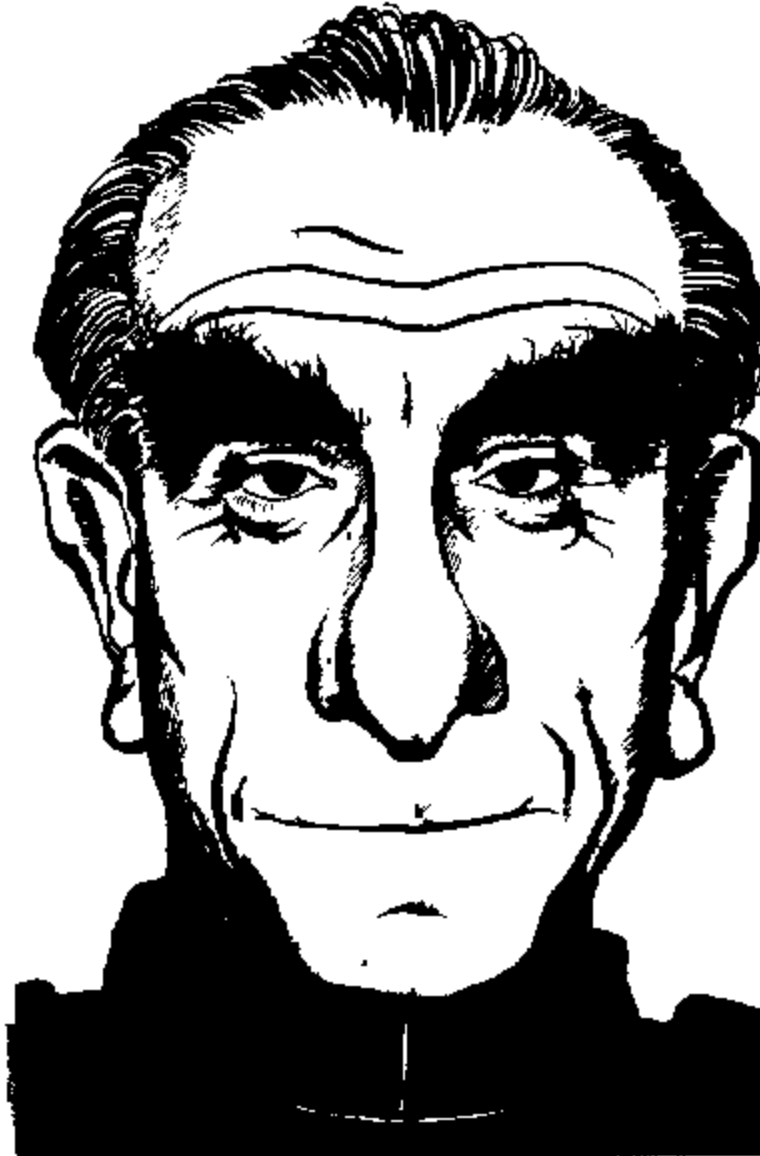
Government must not interfere in the application of martial law."

Ecevit is handing the working class to the fascist butchers on a plate, pretending that he is doing it to 'save' democracy.

imperialism

The recent political summit of western leaders in Guadeloupe decided that with the fall of the Shah, Turkey was a possible candidate for the policeman of the middle east. Immediately after Guadeloupe American Secretary of State, Warren Christopher went to Turkey to begin talks on a new military agreement. Ecevit has re-opened US and NATO bases in the country (now totalling two dozen) and has maintained 450,000 men at arms, the second largest army in NATO. This push to strengthen Turkey's firepower coincides with an attempt to help the flagging Turkish economy. The IMF, lurking omnipotently in the background, has overseen the re-scheduling of debt repayments and the lending of 400 million dollars by a consortium of 7 foreign banks. But this aid from the imperialists is not without its price—imperialism is not known for its altruism. The IMF, before they will venture a major loan, are demanding a 30% devaluation in the Lira, as well as the austerity measures that Ecevit has already taken. Further they are demanding that Turkey become open to: "foreign direct investment, developing tourism and generally allowing a greater alliance on and exposure to normal market forces." (Financial Times 26.2.79). Ecevit is holding back on devaluation although he has shown himself more than willing to attack workers jobs and wages. If he cannot produce the goods, however, the IMF and Jimmy Carter will be quite happy to see him replaced by Demirel and Turkes—who, by smashing the working class and its organisations, could ensure the fulfillment of imperialism's rapacious demands.

The only force in Turkey capable of halting this potentially tragic development is the Turkish working class itself. Two million Turks are now organised into trade unions, which have two separate confederations; the left wing confederation is the DISK, and the right wing one, Turk-Is. May day celebrations have recently seen half a million workers on the streets of Istanbul, while on January 5th of this year one million workers joined a protest against fascist terror called by DISK. Both confederations were involved in a successful general strike involving 300,000 workers in 1976 to prevent 'State Security Courts' being set up. More recently 80,000 metal workers struck for 8 months in a determined attempt to smash their employers' federation.



Turkes: fascist butcher waiting in the wings.

But that political lead is the missing factor in Turkish politics at the moment. There is a small and largely ineffective social democratic party called the Turkish Workers Party (TIP). Its lack of mass support means that it cannot pursue the 'normal' reformist path of its western counterparts and it has been largely irrelevant to the mass protests organised by the trade unions. The Turkish Communist Party (TKP) outlawed under the penal code brought in under martial law, has as its strategy to beat fascism the formation of a "National Democratic Front" and "popular defence committees". Its conception of fighting fascism is that of the popular front—unity of all progressive forces, regardless of class, in the fight against the anti democratic fascists. The lessons of Spain in the 1930s and of Allende's Chile more recently have not been learnt by the Stalinist TKP, which remains wedded to a class collaborationist strategy which, just as in Spain and Chile, will result in the butchering of the working class. The working class in Turkey must be taught that it can not rely on any section of the bourgeoisie, however progressive their garb happens to be, in the life and death fight against fascism.

The numerous Maoist groups that abound in Turkey can offer no real alternative to the bankrupt strategy of the TKP. Their politics are determined by a frenzied obsession with "Soviet Imperialism". This has led to the

bizarre situation where they end up as Turkish patriots alongside the fascists against the TKP. But the groups outside the pro Moscow/Peking axis are equally confused. The KOZ (Turkish Section of the USFI) and a group called the 'Revolutionary Youth' are both prey to Guevarist conceptions of struggle. The RY on the one hand call for 'people's revolution', yet on the other supported the RPP at the last election. Throughout 1978 and since the RY have refused to challenge the RPP, concentrating instead on building 'People's' anti fascist committees, significantly, not based on the trade unions! The KOZ tails the guerilla politics of the RY. They too turn their backs on organising the working class for its defence and call instead for "defence groups and call on the workers to mobilise along the lines of these examples." (Surekli Devrim—KOZ paper—October 1978). The working class will supposedly have to learn to defend itself from the heroic example of small groups of guerillas! Again, this guerrillaism of the KOZ was combined with support, then silence, for the RPP in the last election. Both of these tendencies ignore the crucial question of organising the mass of workers for the struggle for power, replacing this task with heroics learnt from the Guevarists of Latin America.

party

Clearly only a Turkish Trotskyist Party can offer the working class a lead against the attacks it is suffering from imperialism, via Ecevit's austerity measures, and from the NAP terror squads. Such a Trotskyist party would fight for:

- * An end to martial law—no restrictions on the democratic rights of the workers.
- * For a united front of the trade unions and workers parties to fight the fascist menace—while recognising that the struggle against fascism can only be successfully waged as a struggle for workers power.
- * Build workers and peasants self defence squads to defend the working class and oppressed nationalities against the attacks of the 'grey wolves' and the state.
- * Fight for the right of the Kurdish nationals to self determination.
- * Fight Ecevit's austerity programme—no sacrifice of workers jobs or wages.
- * Begin the struggle for a workers and peasants government that could boot out imperialism and expropriate the Turkish capitalists.

The fight for these demands points to the urgent task facing all Turkish revolutionaries, a task that they must immediately address themselves to—the building of a Revolutionary Communist Party capable of leading the working class in a struggle against fascism and for state power.

China's courtship with the United States, its pro-imperialist invasion of Vietnam mark a sharp new turn on the part of the Chinese bureaucracy. In the face of economic stagnation, and increasing mass resentment the Chinese Stalinists are attempting to develop a new strategy to maintain their rule.

Since the death of Mao, the downfall of the 'Gang of Four' and the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping, Chinese economic policy has changed dramatically. Reporting to the Chinese State Council in July '78, Wu Jiaomu, Deng's ally and a leading economist, admitted that the Chinese economy had been stagnating for twenty years. What growth there had been both in industry and agriculture was only the result of increases in the working population. In his speech, Wu blamed this stagnation on the evil doings of the Gang of Four. What Wu was actually pointing to was a series of disastrous policies since the mid-fifties when Mao initiated the Great Leap Forward and wholesale communalisation of agriculture—his attempt to emulate Stalin's industrialisation of the Soviet Union in the '30s with even scantier resources.

Wu went on to outline the new policy, summed up in the title of his speech, "Observe Economic Laws and Speed Up the Four Modernisations". On the domestic front this means allowing greater freedom for market forces and the development of modern methods in agriculture, industry, national defence and technology.

The new policy, which is presented as a panacea for China's chronic economic ills is behind the opening up of China to foreign investment and the changes in foreign policy since the 'Cultural Revolution'. This has coincided with a new awareness of China's potential as a market on the part of Western capitalists. As D.Regan head of the Wall Street brokers Merrill Lynch said, 'Any nation of over 950 million individuals growing at the rate of 18

million a year is a tremendous market.' China is also seen as a new source of increasingly expensive raw materials, especially energy resources such as oil and coal.

Until recently the Chinese bureaucracy had made it a rule not to acquire debts to capitalist countries even when trading with them. Since 1978 this has been changed and China not only now accepts credits but actively solicits them. Joint investment with multinationals on a profit-sharing basis is increasingly common and some firms have even been granted long term partial ownership of plants they construct in China. An example of this is the joint venture giving 49% and a share in future production to US oil companies in exchange for cash and the expertise needed to develop off-shore oil wells.

Astronomic sums have been mentioned in connection with these deals. The International Herald Tribune (12.12.78) spoke of 100 billion dollars of US investment in China by 1985. China's main requirements are industrial technology, computers, mining technology, heavy industrial plant and arms. Lacking sufficient foreign

Deng goes west.



exchange to buy them, China has had to arrange loans and deposit facilities through Japanese, British and American banking consortiums and is expected soon to join the IMF and the World Bank.

In the field of foreign policy China's drive for modernisation has necessitated an ever-increasing emphasis on peaceful relations with the major imperialist powers, most particularly America. China needs not just co-existence but the continued stability and prosperity of the imperialist system. The political stability of the bureaucracy depends on it. This was well illustrated by Deng in his interview with Time Magazine (5.2.79) "The true hotbed of war is the Soviet Union, not the US. If we want to place curbs on the polar bear, the only realistic thing is for us to unite." He went on "We believe the biggest common point between China and the US is that we both hope to prolong as long as possible peace, security and stability." It is this common interest which led to China's support for Pinochet and the

CHINESE LEADERS WOO IMPERIALIST ALLIES

Shah of Iran and the invasion Vietnam, which leads the bureaucrats of China to offer themselves as allies in Imperialism's time of need.

In terms of domestic policy, the Chinese bureaucracy has attempted to placate widespread dissatisfaction by increasing wages, introducing incentive bonus schemes and allowing greater scope for the private marketing of peasant produce. There have also been some attempts to level out the disparity of earnings between urban industrial workers and peasants. It was announced at the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee that the price paid to the peasants for grain will be increased while the price charged to workers would be frozen. However, as yet there has been no indication of how the state is going to pay for these improvements.

Such abrupt changes of policy could not be introduced without generating opposition within the ruling bureaucracy. In an attempt to strengthen his hand Deng resorted to Mao's tactic of mobilising the masses to intimidate his opponents.

Deng has attempted to play on mass resentment of shortages and of bureaucratic and arbitrary government. But the appearance of posters in Peking denouncing the invasion of Vietnam, mass demonstrations of peasants and young students and workers sent to the countryside shows the depth of mass hostility to the Chinese bureaucracy. That hostility cannot simply be turned on and off by one or other side in a bureaucratic factional squabble.

The recent clampdown on the "democracy movement", the

arrest of anti-bureaucratic campaigners, has to be understood in this light. If the bureaucracy are to maintain their rule and follow through their new strategy then tight control over the workers, peasants and intellectuals is absolutely necessary. An alliance with Imperialism abroad, a clampdown on the masses at home—that is the strategic goal of Deng Xiaoping's "Four Modernisations".

The developing integration of China into the world market and the search for investment funds will inevitably force the bureaucrats to attempt to further decrease the living standards of the masses. Doubtless the Chinese bureaucrats will do so while also increasing the living standards of themselves and key privileged groups in Chinese society. By trying at the same time to buy popularity for the regime through talk of improved standards and greater freedom, the bureaucrats are digging their own grave. Neither the Deng faction nor any other wing of the bureaucracy can answer the pressing problems of the Chinese workers and peasants. At the same time limiting opposition to the bureaucracy to the question of democratic rights cannot provide a way forward for the Chinese workers and peasants. Only a consistently revolutionary party, based on a programme of overthrowing the bureaucracy altogether and replacing their rule by the rule of the working class in alliance with the poor peasants and fighting to extend the revolution internationally can do that.

by Din Wong

Middle East

Middle East peace boosts US military role

The latest 'peace' treaty engineered by Carter in direct response to the overthrow of the Shah in Iran, represents yet another attempt by US Imperialism to drive a wedge into the Middle East. The extreme nationalist anti-imperialist nature of Islamic consciousness in Iran has led the US to question the stability of its major ally Saudi Arabia and to push for new solutions and spheres of influence—hence the building of Egypt as a new imperialist lackey.

The 'treaty' effectively legalises continued Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip under the guise of Palestinian 'autonomy' while returning Israeli occupied Sinai to Egypt in exchange for Egyptian recognition of the Zionist state and full diplomatic and economic relations between Israel and Egypt. UN troops will remain conveniently stationed in the Sinai while Egypt has been forced to put the treaty of non-aggression towards Israel before any obligations it formerly had towards its Arab allies.

For Sadat, at the head of an unstable crisis-ridden regime, selling himself to imperialism and hoping to gain its protection was the only way out. Meanwhile Israel, emerging as a clear

victor, is forging ahead with building new settlements in the West Bank.

The US motive behind this charade was not to conclude a peace but to ensure a military presence in the Middle East. Israel's military aid from the US is to be speeded up and for losing its two air bases in the Sinai will receive \$1B to build new ones. Carter has raised America's war budget to \$135B, is pouring arms into North Yemen and is forming a new fifth fleet to operate from Diego Garcia island in the Indian Ocean to police the area. In addition Egypt is demanding huge quantities of arms and aid and offering to become Imperialism's new policeman in the Middle East following the collapse of the Shah's regime.

In response to this build up of imperialist force the rejectionist states have mustered up little or

no opposition. The meeting of the Arab League in Baghdad maintained its fragile unity by doing nothing more than gently chastising Egypt, withdrawing their Ambassadors from Cairo, cutting diplomatic relations and withdrawing economic aid.

The rejectionist states in direct line of fire from Egypt and Israel—were obliged to give vent to the usual war-like rhetoric while they waited to find a way out of confrontation. They were not disappointed—while Libya made preparations for war at a conveniently safe distance from Egypt and Israel, and sent in troops to Uganda to bolster up the reactionary bonaparte Amin—Saudi Arabia, economically wedded to the US, refused to endorse any economic sanctions against the US, thus effectively paralysing any action.

The rejectionist states have thus saved face once again at the

expense of the Palestinian struggle. And the fact that Arafat, leader of the PLO, should hail the Baghdad summit as a 'triumph' is testimony to the political bankruptcy of the programme of the PLO. For the Palestinians, sold out once again by their 'allies', the new situation has brought self-determination no nearer. The demonstrations throughout the West Bank by Palestinians provoking armed Israeli repression in response to the treaty, proves that the Palestinians will not be prepared to sit quietly by while their fate is decided for them. A new Palestinian leadership has to be built that will take up the fight for Palestinian self-determination against imperialism within a workers secular state of Palestine to bull-doze the rotten bloc that forms the rejectionist front.

Jill Daniels



Demonstrators hang effigy of Sadat in Baghdad

With eyes on cabinet seats NO CHANGE FOR P C I LEADERS

The Fifteenth Congress of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) held this year, took place at a particularly important time for the Party leadership. It came two months after they had broken off their formal agreement to keep the Christian Democratic government of Andreotti in power.

The Party Congress had to take stock of a policy that, in its own terms, had failed miserably. The leadership around Enrico Berlinguer had to respond to mounting discontent with Party policy both inside the PCI and amongst its electoral base.

The Congress of the pioneers of 'Eurocommunism' was watched closely by Stalinist parties throughout Europe. The Spanish CP of Carrillo fared badly in the recent Spanish elections despite Carrillo's promise of greater popularity for the party in exchange for supporting the Spanish monarch. The French party too has experienced electoral decline and inner conflict in the

Enrico Berlinguer



aftermath of espousing 'Eurocommunism'.

The breaking of the CP-Andreotti pact in January came at a time when it was abundantly clear that the PCI leaders had failed to make the gains they had expected from the pact. In exchange for a ten-month deal to guarantee the PCI's loyalty to a bourgeois government under Andreotti, Berlinguer had hoped to win for his party a greater share in running the capitalist state. The PCI demanded full consultation on all important government decisions as a preliminary to their, 'long term' aim of proportionate representation for the PCI in the Italian Cabinet.

Berlinguer's 'historic compromise' sustained Andreotti in power and guaranteed his anti-working class austerity package, but brought no significant gains for the Communist Party. It did bring mounting hostility from within the ranks of the party, evidenced by the first drop in party membership since the war. Membership over 1978 showed a decline of 30,000 and last year's recruitment was 41% lower than in 1976. The ranks of the Federation of Young Italian Communists shrank from 143,000 to 128,000. In the pre-Congress discussion many party activists expressed their conviction that the Andreotti pact would mean a drop in the PCI's electoral support — in last year's local elections the Party lost 6% of its vote, hence the fears that the Party will fall short of the 34% poll that they secured in the last general election. No wonder,

then, that the arch class-collaborator Berlinguer was forced to declare, 'We have reached the conclusion that staying with the majority that supports this government has become impossible.'

The alliance had been justified by Berlinguer in terms of the depth of the capitalist crisis in Italy. Accordingly, he claimed, the PCI, 'must take on the burden of all the heavy problems to resolve the country's crisis if it is to be a national governing force.'

There was nothing new in this for the PCI leaders. Interviewed prior to the last election in 1976, Berlinguer had this to say, 'Even with the PCI in government not everything will be solved quickly and easily. The job will still be enormous. But I have no doubts there would be a new atmosphere. And this would be of no small account, not only for the working people, but also for our businessmen. What is business complaining about these days? The lack of clear-cut decisions and secure prospects.'

Again, in the same interview, he reassures the bourgeoisie that, 'In Italian society the system must remain the one set down by the constitution, representative democracy based on Parliament, with the alternation of parties in power.' (Corriere del Serra, 20.6.76)

The latest deal with Andreotti was only one expression of the counter-revolutionary, nature of Euro-communist parties, and of the lengths to which they will go to

prop up capitalism. But Eurocommunism is not the new start, the 'fresh idea' that Berlinguer, Carrillo and Ellenstein would have us believe. It has its roots in the fundamental Stalinist doctrine of, 'Socialism in One Country', the 'theory' that liquidated the Communist International into a series of national parties in search of their own, 'national roads to Socialism' and a means of meeting the diplomatic requirements of the Russian bureaucracy.

The programme of an 'Italian Road to Socialism' through a historic compromise alliance between the working class and the bourgeoisie is simply a reformulation of the old Stalinist Popular Front world view that sees the bourgeoisie not as the class enemy of the working class but as a class divided between 'allies' and 'enemies' of the progressive (and workers') movement. That programme bore its bloody fruit in the defeat of the Spanish workers and, more recently, the military overthrow of Allende's Popular Unity Government.

For the PCI leaders, however, Allende's defeat was caused by Popular Unity not being broadly based enough, not having secured the support of the Chilean bourgeoisie and generals.

What has changed for the Eurocommunists is not a strange new conversion to class collaboration. Rather they have discovered that on their Italian road to seats in the Cabinet they have been forced evermore to distance themselves from the USSR in search of respectability. In this way they hope to reassure the Italian bourgeoisie and military.

The Stalinists of France, Italy and Spain hold out the hope that defence of Czech and Soviet dissidents holds the key to cementing their 'historic compromise'. It is

this, not their alliance with Andreotti, that angers their Stalinist forbears in Moscow.

The PCI Congress duly overwhelmingly endorsed the Berlinguer leadership's continued attachment to the policies of the historic compromise. But that decision cannot hide the considerable alienation amongst the PCI rank and file (particularly the youth) from the compromise and alliance. In the view of one Rome party worker, 'The summit of the Party had gone too far and did not realise that the base had been left behind. You felt the urge to say to your leadership — come down from your pear tree and return among the people' (Time, Feb. 19th 1979) There have been reports of criticism of the CP-Andreotti pact throughout the party during the pre-Congress discussion.

Throughout Europe the Euro-communist leaders have failed to secure their promised advances in electoral strength and government positions. This will definitely open up divisions in the ranks of their parties. Revolutionary Trotskyists must be ready to take advantage of this crisis. A PCI functionary was right to declare in the aftermath of an increase in Italian unemployment from 1.5 million to 1.7 million during 1978, 'Thousands of these out of work young people blame Berlinguer because they cannot get a job, and then they become radicalised by the experience, adding to the ranks of the left wing extremists.' (Time Feb. 12th 1979)

Our task is to seize the opportunities open to us to break the hold of counter-revolutionary Stalinist parties — whatever face they present to the working class.

by ANDY SMITH

An unprecedented and spontaneous wave of mass demonstrations against the Pay As You Earn tax burden in the Republic of Ireland last month has left the trade union leadership smarting and shame-faced.

The powerful and parasitic bureaucracy of the Irish trade union movement had played with tax dissatisfaction for over two years as a safe issue on which to complain publicly while nevertheless imposing and policing wage restraint in the class. It was an issue of contention with the Government which didn't threaten to spark off action against the bosses. Indeed the employers' organisations "sympathised" with the plight of the heavily taxed wage-earner.

The economic expansion of the '60s depended on bringing international capital into the 26 Counties with costly financial inducements and complete freedom from profits tax on exportable manufactures. (Latest figures show grants of up to £21,000 being paid to create one job!). The need to modernise economic infra-structures, training and education fuelled a huge increase in state expenditure.

The development of agriculture was heavily financed by state grants. When in 1978 a measure of income tax was imposed on larger farmers their contribution brought in only a tenth of what they received in grants. Meanwhile, Corporation Profits Tax on native companies was bringing in only an average 5% of company profits despite being pegged at 45%. It is now to be cut to 10% notionally from 1981! The result is that the workers paid for growing state expenditure and borrowing through deductions

from their pay packets. PAYE accounts for 87% of all direct taxation! Indirect taxes (VAT) meanwhile are the third highest in the EEC.

Thus "tax the farmers" and "everybody pay their fair share" became wide-spread slogans. As a concession to the Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), in the hope of holding down wage demands, the Fianna Fail Government in January announced a 2% sales levy on all farmers. But the failure to exempt the tens of thousands of small-holders from this regressive tax was quickly used by the powerful large-farmer lobby to mobilise the farmer bloc against the Government with a threat of a strike in food production. When the Government backed down on the levy, the president of the ICTU, Harold O' Sullivan, condemned the farmers' action as a "political strike", adding that "the trade union movement is opposed to political strikes (!) but we are prepared to learn".

Within days, the federation of craft unions called for a one-day strike for tax reform, Dublin Airport workers threatened a strike and demonstration against the PAYE system and in the mining town of Navan a local Councillor called out a large demonstration of workers. The craftsmen's strike call was supported narrowly by the Dublin Trades Council Executive for March 20th—a working day. In order to pre-empt it the leaders of the 150,000-member ITGWU called for Sunday protest marches on 12th March. The huge turnout of 50,000 workers in a city of less than a million on that day was no comfort to the union bureaucrats. It encouraged the Dublin Trades

IRISH TAX STRIKES A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Council membership to ratify the call for a mass stoppage on the afternoon of the 20th despite the open attacks of the Congress and Labour Party leaders.

treachery

The treachery of the ICTU leaders was not lost on the rank and file. One placard carried on the demonstration read: "Congress leaders lick the Government's Arse". Even though several major unions refused to endorse the planned strike and left it to "each individual" to decide, more than 150,000 workers left work and choked the streets of Dublin in the afternoon, many of them taking the whole day off. Simultaneously 30,000 workers stage a militant demonstration in Cork and workers came out in thousands in provincial centres all over the country. The figures for the demonstrations total well over half the entire membership of the trade union movement which organises 52% of all employees.

Immediately afterwards the Congress leadership moved to take control of the protests. They are using the tax protest as a bargaining counter in the joint effort of the Congress leaders and Government to set a ceiling on wage increases in the coming year.

While the Labour Party leaders and Congress were attacking the mass action petty-bourgeois socialists such as "Sinn Fein the Workers Party" were backing the tax-protest uncritically. But leaflets from the Irish Worker's Group warned that the vagueness of the tax demands played into the hands of the trade union leadership, offered an excuse for social spending cuts and ignored the wage struggle which alone could answer the problem of falling living standards. Over the past seven years real national wealth has increased by one-third but the value of wages has fallen by 10% to 15%.

With inflation reaching a new level of 11% (officially) the strike wave begun in 1976 continues unabated. The combination of bus-workers and postal and telephone workers' strikes has driven the Government and bourgeoisie to hysterical attacks on the unions. But the ICTU leaders have not been found wanting in their compliance with the bosses. They have suspended one of the militant unions—the AGEMOU—and are threatening the same action against the Post Office Workers Union. In both cases the formal reason is defiance of the "National Wage Agreement" which expires for most workers within two months.

Last December the Congress delegates rejected proposed talks on a new Wage Agreement. But after three months secret talks and demoralised by the refusal of major unions to put in wage claims, the recalled Congress in March was persuaded to back "Social Contract" talks with the bourgeois Fianna Fail Government.

diversion

In this context the tax protest, provided it can be kept under control and non-specific in its demands, plays into the hands of the Congress brokers. The recent demonstrations, however, have begun to expose the treachery of the trade union leadership on a class-wide basis. But unless militants can be won to sharpen the tax demands (particularly in defence of the lower paid and against the super-tax on married women) and to extend the campaign to the issues of wages, unemployment and social services, the tax-protests will remain a dangerously double-edged sword and a potential diversion into petty-bourgeois illusions of forcing capitalists to "pay their "fair share" under capitalism.

Matt Docherty

ALL OUT TO STOP THE NF

The annual St. George's Day parade of the fascist National Front takes place in Leicester on April 21st. This march is a crucial part of the NF's election campaign, "a very, very heavy racist campaign" according to Martin Webster. In fact, asserting their right to march is more important to the fascists at the moment than a breakthrough at the polls. It will further boost their confidence in their concerted attempts to attack and intimidate the black communities.

For these reasons it is vital that maximum forces are mobilised on the 21st to implement the slogan of No Platform for Fascists. In building for this mobilisation Workers Power rejects the opportunist option of "sneaking" off in small groups to launch kamikaze assaults on the NF that was a feature of the SWP's tactics at Winchester. But we also reject the passive, "keep your distance" protests of the ANL. Workers Power will fight to mobilise the organisations of the labour movement and black communities to prevent the fascist march by mass direct action. It is the need to confront this political problem, of winning the working class to a 'No Platform' position that the small 'heavy squad' approach ignores.

But it is also absolutely crucial to break workers from the crippling influence of the all class alliance, pacifist ANL. The ANL claimed Winchester was a victory because, although the

NF marched unopposed, they did not march past Relf's prison. This is nonsense. Any fascist march taking place through any area, be it predominantly black or completely white is a setback for the working class and the black communities.

For Workers Power therefore the tasks of the day are clear. We will be fighting in the trade unions and anti-fascist bodies where we have influence, for a huge counter mobilisation on the 21st with the express aim of stopping the NF march from taking place. And we will not substitute this task with pleas for the state to introduce bans against the fascists. As Winchester and Ilford showed such bans will be used against the left and to the advantage of the fascists who will collude with the police and fix up a march outside the proscribed area.

NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS IMPOSED BY MASS ACTION

NO CALLS ON THE STATE TO BAN THE FASCISTS

STOP THE NATIONAL FRONT'S ST. GEORGE'S DAY MARCH
Assemble 12 noon, Saturday April 21st, Victoria Park, Leicester.

The IMG stands on its head to build the ANL

The debate currently raging in the pages of Socialist Challenge under the heading "How effective is the ANL?" is in response to letters from Southampton comrades and the Leicester Polytechnic Student Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (LPCARF) criticising yet another ANL sell-out. The reply from the IMG anti racist organiser Rich Palser shows the IMG running for cover behind the usual distortions. Nevertheless, the debate is to be welcomed and the Leicester branch of WPers hopes your invitation to further contributions to this debate will extend to ourselves. (Socialist Challenge [SC] No. 88 22nd March 1979)

At Lewisham in August 1977 the political victory consisted in revolutionaries and local blacks marching side by side to physically drive the fascists off the streets. The aftermath of Lewisham saw the founding of the Anti-Nazi League - what has been its record?

On May 1st last year, just one day after the ANL had attracted 80 000 to its Carnival 1, 1500 fascists marched unopposed for the first time since the 1930s into the East End of London. Despite being forewarned of the NF march the ANL made no attempt to mobilise against them.

On September 24th, again having been warned in advance of the NF's intention to march to their new HQ just a stone's throw from Brick Lane, the ANL refused to divert Carnival 2 into a counter-mobilisation against the fascists and in defence of Brick Lane. Instead, the ANL marched its 100 000 supporters in the opposite direction not only leaving those few hundred anti-fascists who did go to Brick Lane at the mercy of the Special Patrol Group, but, more sickeningly still, leaving the local black community un-defended against the fascists who ran amok later in the day.

This treachery was further compounded by ANL and SWP leader Paul Holborow who deliberately lied to the assembled multitude in Hyde Park by announcing from the platform: "At this moment thousands of anti-fascists are defending Brick Lane" (Workers Power No. 2, November 1978).

The events at Winchester are yet further testimony to the bankruptcy of the ANL's strategy. At every major test the ANL has failed to mobilise against the fascists, turning instead to stitch-ups with the

police (as at Winchester) and requiring no more from its supporters than, by their presence, pressuring the state into invoking the Public Order Act. Thus the ANL welcomed the state ban at Ilford; thus Paul Holborow hailed the imposition of the Public Order Act at Winchester as a "political victory".

In the face of all this one might have expected the IMG to be shamed into some criticism of the ANL. Not so. After May 1st SC bowled over by the presence of of 80 000 at a rock concert, glossed over the fascist march in its rush to "Build the Anti-Nazi League" and, in the process, acquiesced uncritically in ANL Press Officer Peter Hain's miserable excuse that it was impossible to organise opposition to the fascists because Carnival 1 "had just exhausted everyone" (SC No. 45 11/5/78). Around September 24th SC dismissed as "rumours" the information sent to them (by Workers Power amongst others) that the fascists intended to march and in a bid to go ahead with Carnival 2 at any cost, argued that "any attempt to divide the march and disrupt the ANL Carnival at Hyde Park would be totally counter-productive" (SC No. 64, 21/9/78).

Not content with covering up its own refusal to respond to calls from defence from the Bengalis of Brick Lane the IMG went so far as to criticise the black community for not defending itself and argued that the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee "helped to demoralise the anti-fascists who did turn up to defend Brick Lane" (Article by Mick Gosling: 'Were we right to go to Brixton? Yes! Yes! Yes!' SC No 65, 28/9/78).

The article by Mick Gosling and Rich Palser's reply in SC No. 88 betray the same opportunist method, and it is instructive to compare what they say with what the IMG argued shortly after Lewisham when the ANL did not exist.

In an article entitled "The Lessons of Lewisham" (SC No 11, 1/9/77), a polemic against Dave Cook of the Communist Party, Tariq Ali characterises the fascist march in Lewisham as "a deliberate provocation to black people in



Picture: Workers Power.

Socialist Challenge on Winchester: "Confronting the Fascists would only confuse the political point we wanted to make"

WE REPRINT HERE AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE LEICESTER BRANCH OF WORKERS POWER.
IT WAS SENT TO THE EDITOR OF 'SOCIALIST CHALLENGE ON THE 4th OF APRIL, 1979.

the area" and from this argues quite correctly that "The anti-fascist vanguard had to mobilise forces to stop the fascists in order to give strength and encouragement to black people in Lewisham." Somewhat surprising, then, that after describing the NF's decision to march into the East End on the same day as Carnival 2 as "an open provocation to the local community", the IMG should use this as grounds for marching with the Carnival away from Brick Lane.

Mick Gosling is prepared to admit that "A time will come when these layers (working class youth - WP) will have to be mobilised in force apart from Carnivals against the Nazis" and Palser concurs that "in the last analysis, it will prove necessary to suppress the fascists". (SC's emphasis) but, they argue, to have mobilised against the NF at Brick Lane "would have been to fall for the NF provocation" and at Winchester "Confronting the fascists would only confuse the political point we wanted to make."

The decision not to divert Carnival 2 was correct, says Gosling, because "an unthought out response to Sunday's NF provocation could have done serious damage to the ANL, and thus actually impede the building of a mass movement against racism in this country. And such a mass movement is the indispensable basis for self-defence activities in places like Brick Lane."

Tariq Ali takes up precisely these points in his polemic against Cook: "Dave Cook nonetheless believes that a 'physical confrontation' on this particular occasion was wrong. He is not opposed to it on principle, which is good. He writes that confronting the fascists 'will be necessary', which is even

better. But at a later stage, after more people have been involved. Here he is completely wrong. For more people will not be involved unless we confront the fascists today. If lots more people did become involved there would hardly be any need for physical confrontation: if there had been 50 000 trade unionists in Lewisham on 13 August it is unlikely that the police would have baton-charged them to clear the way for the fascist. In any case the need for a confrontation would be reduced because the fascists would not have been able to march one single step forward. That must remain the central strategic task of the anti-fascist movement".

The International Marxist Group's line in the Anti-Nazi League stands condemned out of its own mouth! At the time of Lewisham the IMG was forthright in arguing for the implementation of No Platform for Fascists. Now the IMG cuts its political cloth to suit the ANL scare-crow.

Since its inception the Anti-Nazi League has had a demobilising effect on the anti-racist movement. Workers Power has consistently argued that the ANL is incapable of mounting an effective fight against racism and fascism, that it cannot be transformed. As an alliance based on pacifist and often chauvinist lines, subordinating its activities to what is acceptable to liberal public opinion, the ANL is a roadblock for the anti-racist movement and an obstruction to the building of a genuine workers' united front against fascism.

The record of the IMG over the last 12 months is a disgrace for an organisation claiming to stand in the tradition of Trotsky. No less

now than in the 1930s the growth of fascism requires a working class response. You have bent over backwards to build the ANL and in so doing have not only showed utter contempt for those who are under attack from the fascists now but have liquidated your own party and programme and quite cynically ditched the independent interests of workers in order to hold together the rotten bloc of the ANL.

The massive diversion of the ANL has resulted in a situation where the fascists have grown in confidence; fascist attacks are on the increase and the NF know that when they march they will encounter only token resistance. As revolutionaries we in Workers Power demand that you fight for those positions (crucially No Platform for Fascists) to which you formally adhere, recognising that this entails a complete break, politically and organisationally, from the Anti-Nazi League. Failure to make such a break can only lead to the further growth of fascism and potentially tragic defeats for the working class.

In conclusion, it is now well known that the NF's St George's Day march is to take place in Leicester on April 21st. In the article by Tariq Ali referred to above he throws down this challenge to the CP: "The fascist march in Tameside near Manchester on 8th October (1977 -Ed) must be resisted. It can be done not by marching away from it, but by organising the broadest possible counter-mobilisation to prevent it taking place. Will the CP throw its full weight behind such an attempt or not?" To the members of the International Marxist Group and their fellow travellers in the ANL, the Socialist Workers Party, we address the same question in relation to the NF march in Leicester on the 21st.

The debate on the ANL

Workers Power

Iran

Break with the

Mullahs!

Break with the

Bourgeoisie!

The alliance of forces that overthrew the Shah in Iran is in disarray. Khomeini and the Mullahs are set on firmly establishing a repressive and reactionary rule from the mosques. The Mullah supervised referendum - where the names of those who voted against an Islamic republic were noted down by the scrutineers - has strengthened his hand.

The bourgeoisie are anxious to save and consolidate their property and wealth. Their most able representatives are to be found in the forces of the National Front, in the feeble Premiership of Bazargan.

Arraigned against the Mullahs and the bourgeoisie are those forces who took the overthrow of the Shah as a signal to extend and develop their democratic rights, to organise to improve their living conditions.

The polarisation in Iran's society grows more acute daily. Ahmad Ali Izadi, Minister of agriculture, has committed his government to taking back land seized by the peasants from the old regime. There are already reports of armed peasants organising to defend their hard fought gains.

The minority nationalities of Iran have organised to extend their democratic rights. After prolonged fighting with the regime's troops the Kurds have secured limited promises of provision for self rule. The Turkoman minority have waged a 2 day armed battle with Khomeini's militiamen in Gonbad-e-Kavus.

Despite armed intimidation and harassment women in Tehran have foiled plans by Khomeini to immediately enforce the wearing of the chador in public offices. Most vitally however the past

weeks have seen increased evidence of working class organisation in conflict with the regime. 3.5 millions Iranians are jobless at present. Factories deserted by their pro-Shah owners now lie idle. Serious shortages are reported and inflation is running at between 40 and 60%. In the factories workers are establishing new trade union organisations. There have been major demonstrations of the unemployed - the Bekaran - in Iran's cities. The unemployed have occupied the Ministry of Justice vestibule in Tehran. Construction workers have demonstrated throughout Iran.

REPRESSION

The organisation of the unemployed has met with repression by the regime. In Isfahan at least one person was killed when Khomeini's 'revolutionary guards' fired on a demonstration of the Bakaran. But the demonstrations have also forced certain concessions out of a reluctant regime. Bazargan's government is now giving £60 a month loans to those unemployed that are over 21 - insisting that repayments commence 3 months after employment is resumed. The new Minister of Labour - Darioush Farouhar - has already made it clear that he fears a wave of migration into the towns to receive the loans.

With no prospect of solving the mounting problem of the jobless the Iranian bourgeoisie is not prepared to dole out loans indefinitely with no prospect of repayment. Like the French bourgeoisie in 1848, who abolished the National Workshops forced out of them by the French workers, so the Iranian bourgeoisie are looking for the chance to

renege on this inadequate provision.

In the face of this new resistance - expressed well by a worker representative who walked out of negotiations in the Tehran Ministry of Labour saying, "Only the pictures on the walls have changed." Khomeini is moving to strengthen his hand. The 'Leftist' Fedayeen have been denounced as "traitors to Islam and the Revolution." The radicalised Muslim guerillas, the Mojahaddin-e-Khalq, have been replaced by the Mojahaddin-Englabi-Islami. These new armed squads, pioneered by Khomeini's economic adviser Banisadr, and more directly controlled by the Mosque, are now firmly established. They will be used against the workers and against those struggling to defend and extend democratic rights.

The divisions opening up are visible to all. Even the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh) - previously infatuated with Khomeini - realises it. But the solution they put forward is a dangerous snare for the Iranian working class. Speaking in the French CP paper 'L'Humanite' The general secretary of Tudeh - Kianouri - has called for a popular front of all those forces to the left of Khomeini, "...now it's a question of choosing a new direction, rifts are emerging."

That call, albeit in a different form will be taken up by the Maoist Fedayeen with their programme of an alliance of progressive forces against Imperialism and reaction.

The bourgeois of Iran do have their own fears of a strengthening of the grip of Khomeini and the Mullahs. There is a very real danger that the workers' organisations under the leadership of the Fedayeen and Tudeh will be incorporated by the bourgeoisie into their struggle to strengthen

Paris Steel Demo

A contingent of German steelworkers expresses their solidarity with their French comrades on the massive steelworkers march in Paris on March 23rd. The demonstration, of over 1,000,000 workers, represented the highpoint of the struggle by French steelworkers against the massive redundancies being imposed by the French Government to 'rationalise' the industry. In common with other European steelworkers, French workers have suffered massive redundancies - over 30,000 jobs have been lost in the last 5 years with a further 20,000 threatened with the axe by 1980. The militant action of the steel workers - including a national steel strike, regional general strikes, barricading of main roads and the occupation of government buildings and TV stations - has already forced the Government to make concessions on redundancies. In contrast steel trade union leaders in Britain, in response to the closure of yet another steel plant, at Bilston, announced that they, "deeply regretted the circumstances that led to the situation facing Bilston Works." In all the countries affected by the crisis in the steel industry, union leaders have focused opposition to redundancy on the reactionary demand for import controls. The solidarity of the German steel workers in Paris shows the real way forward.



the hand of the Bazargan government against Khomeini.

KEY POINTS

In the battles ahead Iranian Trotskyists will have to stress a number of key positions. In the face of Khomeini's offensive and inevitable attacks on workers' living standards and organisations by the Iranian bourgeoisie these should be:

- *for the complete independence of the organisations of the working class - BREAK WITH THE BOURGEOISIE, BREAK WITH THE MULLAHS.

- *for a UNITED FRONT OF WORKERS' PARTIES centred on: legality for all workers' parties, trade unions etc. An armed workers defence militia.

- *For a sovereign Constituent assembly. Defend the democratic right of women and the national and religious minorities.

The centralisation of factory and strike committees, the organisations of the unemployed into city-wide workers' councils.

These limited demands should be accompanied by calls on the Tudeh and Fedayeen to break with the bourgeoisie and the Mullahs and join the struggle for a Workers and Peasants Government. In no case should Trotskyists obscure their strategic goal of working class power based on soviets or their total opposition to the Khomeini-Bazargan government. It is to the task of overthrowing this Government that Trotskyists must win the organised workers, peasants, soldiers and oppressed nationalities.

By Dave Hughes

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