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FIGHT THE CONCORDAT!

Last January 28th, over 1.5 million public sector workers struck. A demonstration the same day mobilised over 80,000 in central London demanding that their leaders call an all-out stoppage in support of their wage claim.

The 'day of action' expressed the pent-up anger of millions of the low paid at Callaghan's wage-slashing policies. It was the high point of a growing revolt, as over the past month, ever-wider layers have been drawn into action, often pre-empting their leaders' attempts to contain the situation, as in the case of the ambulance drivers.

Surprise

Undoubtedly, this upsurge took Callaghan by surprise. When he postponed the election last October, he took a calculated risk. He assumed that his TUC allies, who had consistently supported his wage-cutting policies, would continue to enforce government pay policy. After all, they had supported the first three rounds of the Social Contract - despite escalating unemployment.

His faith in the TUC was not misplaced. When the first serious challenge to the 5% norm came, with the firemen's strike last year, the TUC did their utmost to 'isolate' the strike and demoralise the men back to work.

What Callaghan left out of his calculations was the rank and file. Having suffered a substantial drop in wages during three years of the Social Contract, they were no longer willing to stomach more pro-capitalist policies. The militancy and determination of, first the lorry drivers - then the ambulance drivers, cleaners & hospital workers - forced their vacillating leaders into calling actions which exploded the 5% norm.

Hysteria

Callaghan's reaction to the upsurge was to launch an anti-union hysteria, shrilly denouncing the strikers as 'irresponsible' and branding the action of pickets as 'terrorists'. He was backed up by other members of the cabinet who threatened everything from a six-month wage freeze to introducing a 'state of emergency'.

The extent to which Callaghan - and his TUC allies - have moved to the right can be seen in the Concordat recently arranged between them. This agreement, hastily cobbled together in response to the mass pay revolt, is designed to assure employers that a future Labour government will be able to carry out its austerity measures by relying on the TUC to curb rank-and-file democracy and break strikes.

The proposals it contains are almost identical to those which appeared earlier in Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife', or the Tories' more savage Industrial Relations Act.

Concordat

While the document does not put forward any precise pay norms - to avoid embarrassment to the TUC before its own members - it does propose that there should be an annual 'economic assessment' when both sides of industry sit down and work out a pay ceiling.

In order to force workers to abide by these norms, the document tables major inroads into the democratic rights of trade unionists. It talks, for example, of strike action as a 'disruptive' action, and the need to avoid strikes altogether during negotiations.

It raises the need for 'secret ballots' to break the solidarity of workers and open them up to the anti-union propaganda of the TV and press. It goes on to talk of the need to end 'secondary picketing' (ie. solidarity action) in a way distinctively reminiscent of the Industrial Relations Act. Labour will, in other words, do all the Tories want - without legislation.

Election

The 'Concordat' was obviously hastily put together as a platform continued on page 8

Unity?

For many months, disparate forces marched together under the label 'Khomeini's people' because they were all united in a desire to overthrow the hated Pahlavi dictatorship.

But the defeat of the Shah and the appointment by the Ayatollah of a Provisional Government - headed by Dr. Barzagan - has by no means however solved the problems that mobilised millions on the streets or decided the outcome of the revolution.

Workers, who had been on strike for months, set up elected committes demanding workers' control in industry. Paaanda, in certain cases, seized the land. Universities were turned into popular bases of opposition to the Shah. Towns throughout Iran saw the creation of 'neighbourhood committees' which helped mobilise mass demonstrations like that on Feb 8th when over one million poured into the streets of Tehran against the Bakhtiar government.

The unrest spread into the army which had been the main bulwark of the Shah. Rank and file soldiers and airmen - like those of the Doshon Teppah air base - began to identify with the peoples' demands, distribute arms and set up committees demanding the right to free speech, to participate in politics & to elect their own officers.

Constituent Assembly

Now that the Shah has been overthrown, however, there exists no concensus as to the development of the revolution or the type of society to emerge out of it. On the contrary, it is clear that growing divisions have arisen among the once united forces on clear class lines.

The tasks of the Barzagan government - appointed from above by the Ayatollah - were summed up with unusual bluntness by the New York Times (Feb 8th): 'Barzagan's mission is to preserve the continued hegemony of the nationalist bourgeoisie: in Iran and protect it against the revolutionary forces unleashed by years of strike, strikes and militancy.'

The New York Times is dead on target. The Barzagan government has grouped around it support from the Iranian bourgeoisie - remnants of the old, discredited National Front - which has become increasingly frightened of the power and independent action of the masses. It has been this fear which has prompted it to refuse to 'legalise' parties of the left and to postpone the elections to a Constituent Assembly in which the masses would be free to choose their own government.

continued on page 10
By Sabina Roberts

Labour & Abortion

Last November, over 500 trade union delegates attended a conference on the issue of abortion rights. The conference, called by NAC and LABORCO, was sponsored by the trade unions and attended by delegates representing a much wider spectrum of the labour movement, transport workers & the public sector.

The fact that the conference was so well attended is indicative of

**ALL OUT MARCH 31st**

Nowhere in the world are women giving up the absolute right to control their fertility, the absolute right to decide whether they want children and, if so, under what conditions.

Millions of women incur mutilation and death because their right to contraception and abortion under safe conditions are denied by civil law & by the church. Women suffer from injuries from clandestine abortions; they are sometimes imprisoned, and always humiliated, because they demand their right.

The laws 'liberalising' abortions that have been passed in such countries as the United States, France, Italy or Great Britain impose severe limits on the right to choose, including time limits & the denial of abortion to unmarried and immigrant women, as well as the 'conscience clause' that 'legitimizes' doctors' refusal to perform abortions.

Under these laws, women must often give up the right to determine when and how they have been raped, that they are prone to 'mental instability' or that they run 'grave risks' to their health in order to get an abortion. And in most cases the final decision rests with the medical profession.

Women do not confront these problems only as individuals. Throughout the world, women are struggling for the right to control their own fertility and to make decisions as to when and if they want children.

The struggle for the right to safe legal abortion has been led by the women's liberation movement. But this struggle concerns all movements and individuals who are fighting for democratic rights & social justice.

Women's right to control their bodies, to contraception and abortion, and to refuse forced sterilisation, have become intertwined with a whole range of questions that have called forth debates and confrontations around the world. The forces opposed to women's rights to choose are becoming more powerful.

They include governments, churches, the medical profession, politicians and the anti-abortion movement groups that force women to suffer and die in the name of morality. The result of the struggle to control the debate on abortion is a pattern of violence that impacts on all battles for elementary human rights.

**WOMEN DEMAND:**
- The right to control our own bodies
- The right to contraception
- The right to abortion
- The right to refuse forced sterilisation.

In the post-war years, Joe Hansen played an important theoretical role, contributing to the major new questions facing the Fourth International at that time, such as the nature of the Eastern European states and the unfoldings of the Cuban revolution. His writings on these issues - particularly on the need for a correction in the line of thought - were influential during an entire generation.

By the early 1960s, he played a very important part in trying to restore the unity of the Fourth International which had suffered from a harmful ten year split. His editorship of *Intercontinental Press* (set up soon after the re-unification on in 1963) was a model of revolutionary journalism.

**JASON HANSEN**

**JASON HANSEN (1910-1979)**

Tony Roberts

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**Probable Joe Hansen's** most important contribution was made during the last decade of his life, when he led a successful fight within the Fourth International to reverse the erroneous "corrective" line adopted by the majority in the late 1960s. Considering his life, it is his greatest achievement, and his writings on this issue are a model to young revolutionaries on how to conduct a debate with scrupulous accuracy, non-factionalism and in a precise and lucid manner.

In the last few years of his life, Joe was devoted to the support of a frame-up campaign conducted by the denizens of the Clapham High Street sect, the WP, which accused him of being a CIA agent or 'accomplice of the CPU'. Joe had no need to defend himself against Healy's Stalinist slanders, which were prompted no doubt, by the growing of the Fourth International and the disintegration of his own sectorianist forces. His record is spotless. It is one which, through his loyalty to the movement of revolutionary socialism for over 40 years, and his maturity of judgement and deep sincerity, is an example to us all.

At a meeting in New York last month, all Joe's important political writings. Such writings will stand as an object lesson to thousands on how to approach and analyse the great events of the class struggle from a revolutionary viewpoint.

The way to honour Joe Hansen is not just to mourn him. It is to continue the task to which he dedicated his life; building the Fourth International.

**Publishing Fund**

Sponsors of the Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund include: Robert Alexander, Tariq Ali, Robin Blackburn, Hugo Blanco, Pierre Brue, Ken Coates, Tamara Deutcher, Bernadette McAlliskey, Louise Sinclair, Mary Alice Winters, Ernie Tate, Evelyn Reed, Nahuel Moreno.

All contributions to the fund - which will be used by March 31st - should be sent to: Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund, 32 Lambeth Towers, Kennington Rd, London, SE 11.
The ANL was launched just over a year ago. It was launched at a time of almost unparalleled hysteria against the black community.

For months, the Tory press had indulged in the familiar "gambling with lives" against illegal immigrants. Leading Tories, following Powell, had called for tighter immigration quotas, Margaret Thatcher herself, in her "hawkish" role, was soon talking of the dangers of white people being swamped by black immigrants, calling for "passe sa laws" and encouraging voluntary repatriation.

Sherering behind this racist upsurge, the NF stepped up its activities. No doubt flashed by earlier electoral success. It continued its anti-immigration campaign and launched deliberately provocative marches through high immigrant areas.

Step Forward

The launching of the ANL was a major step towards stemming this racist tide. Within a few months, it was able to dominate discussions around its meetings, carnivals and mobilisations to defend black people (as at Brick Lane).

It was no doubt the very success of the ANL combined with a reaction against the factorisation of the right wing press which began to worry sections of the ruling class. Papers which had originally been sympathetic to the anti-black image (like the Times) began to denounce it: as an "ultra- left ploy!"

What the mass actions of the ANL showed was the tremendous potential for drawing thousands of young people into the fight against racism. Such actions vividly exposed the cowardice of the Labour leaders who, instead of organising a real opposition to the racist backlash, were spinelessly bending before it.

Limited

While the mass actions of the ANL have undoubtedly helped to stem this racist tide, however, the potential they held within them has not yet been realised.

Since its inception, the ANL (dominated by the SWP) has focused almost all its propaganda, activity and mobilisations around the NF.

As ANL press secretary Peter Haines put it (no doubt speaking for most of the steering crew): "I see it (the ANL) as an emergency operation. The Front has been making ground electrically, in the schools, in the working class generally. It is an emergency job of propaganda and activity to stop just that!"

Undoubtedly, combating the NF influence is an integral part of any anti-racist campaign. There is equally no doubt, however, that to confine the campaign to a struggle against the NF - a relatively small ultra-right group - is to seriously misjudge what is the real menace facing black people today.

Under their provisions, the police are empowered to arrest suspected illegal immigrants without a warrant and to deport 'troublemakers' without right of appeal. Such practices are used by the police not only, as blacks are only too aware, to intimidate & terrorise the immigrant communities from Southall to Bradford.

Logical Conclusion

The importance of these Acts cannot be overstressed. Once it is accepted that blacks can be denied entry on the grounds of colour, and denied democratic rights in Britain on the same grounds, then racism is becoming legal and official. All the Race Relations Acts in the world cannot change that.

It is the climate of racism created by such acts which suggest that blacks are somehow to blame for high unemployment or poor housing, which the police and the courts enforce.

All the NF has done, after all, is to push the 'Legion' implicit in such acts. The conclusion is clear: that blacks should not only be denied entry but should be forcibly expelled.

It is no wonder that Labour leaders find it quite impossible to argue against the immigration policies of the NF. The only way one can then, by implementing racist laws themselves, implicitly accept that blacks are 'problematic'.

Diversion

The concentration of the ANL on the NF 'threat' is, in this sense, a serious error. Concentrating exclusively on a small, ultra-right group has meant downplaying the issue of legalised racism which is the main thrust of the ruling class today.

This is the reason why certain forces, who hold racist views, were able in the initial stages to support the ANL.

The Federation of Conservative students for example (which split from the ANL in September) was only too happy to join in the anti-Nazi 'rhetoric'. It was only too happy to do so because it allowed them to hide their racist position on immigration behind a smoke-screen of liberal dogma.

Some of the very offices people have stood on ANL platforms denouncing the NF for racism (i.e. Sid Ridleworth) have been those who have called for tighter immigration curbs against black people, who have called for setting back on de-colonisation and for introducing new laws for blacks in this country.

Splits?

It has been argued, of course, that to raise the issue of racist immigration laws is the ANL's only way to deal with the NF. It would only lead to quarrels and internal dissension. This is partially true. It has already led to the split of the Federation of Conservative Students when the Thatcher pro posals on immigration came in for criticism earlier this year.

Raising the issue of immigration may have alienated these forces but it would have alienated thousands of young people who supported the ANL, the young 'punk' youth of Britain who responded so magnificently to its appeals?

Moreover, such a stance would not have alienated it from the Labour movement. The NF had sought support. In 1976, the Labour Party conference passed a resolution demanding an immediate calling for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act. Taking up this issue would have allowed the ANL to gain the support of Labour activists in a joint campaign to implement the democratic decision of the Labour Party and to challenge the policies of the Labour leaders (instead of letting them off the hook).

Such an orientation would have meant a fight to win the Labour movement to the anti-racist position. The ANL would have sharply focused on the right of its leaders to implement racist laws. It is, after all, open to everybody in the Labour movement to challenge the policies of the Labour leaders. This can be stopped if we are not even the Labour movement to put its own house in order.

Perspective

Despite the confused orientation of the ANL. It has won thousands of young people into anti-racist action. What now remains to be done is to give this orientation a sharp focus by increasingly centering the campaign around the need to repeal racist immigration laws.
**Editorial:**

**The L.S.A. and the Fourth International**

At its conference late last year, one of the central areas of discussion was the relation of the L.S.A. to the Fourth International. This was not an academic debate. Since the L.S.A. has always had an internationalist perspective, particularly identifying with both the programme & traditions of the FI.

The L.S.A. has always rejected the "insularity" prevalent among wide layers of the British left who see the task of building a mass revolutionary party in national terms. In identifying with the FI, however, the L.S.A. had many differences with the IMC (its British section) which seemed to reflect a different method & approach to the building of such a party. These differences extended from an orientation to the Labour Party to an evaluation of the Women's Liberation Movement.

**Agreement**

Over the past period, however, the L.S.A. has considered that the differences between the two organisations were decreasing. There seemed to be growing agreement on the nature of the Transitional Programme and its tactical application in Britain. This seemed to be reflected in a common recognition, for example:

- the need to build a class struggle left-wing in the labour movement, around democratic and international demands, as a central task;
- the need to see the struggle for women's liberation as a key aspect of the fight for a new social order;
- the need to elaborate a programme for youth and set up a youth organisation capable of drawing thousands of rebel youth into anti-capitalist struggle;
- the need to combat racism by supporting Black Power & fighting, within the broader labour movement, against racist Immigration Acts;
- the need to defend the right of the Irish, Scottish and Welsh people to self-determination (by building, particularly in the case of Ireland, a mass Troops Out Movement).

There has also been a common approach to newer issues thrown up by the class struggle, such as Ecology (particularly on the nuclear power question) and the struggle for Gay rights.

**Democracy**

The L.S.A. believes that the growing political agreement has been paralleled by agreement around the nature of the revolutionary party. The IMC's attempt to create an internal democratic atmosphere - combined with unity in action in the class struggle - is a correct understanding of 'democratic centralism' and corresponds with what the L.S.A. has always tried to practice.

The L.S.A. considers that the tradition of the IMC is trying to establish is an object lesson to the left on the application of Leninist party building. Allowing for common programmatic agreement, tactical differences should be comradely debated out without the need for splits or expulsions which have helped cause the present 'fragmentation' of the left.

It is only by fighting for a true concept of democratic centralism that this fragmentation can begin to be overcome and the foundations laid for the building of a mass revolutionary party.

**Differences**

This is not to say, of course, that tactical differences do not still exist. The L.S.A., while supporting the IMC's non-sectarian attitude to regroupment of the left, would not necessarily agree that the tactic of 'Socialist Unity' is the best way of accomplishing this task.

Moreover, such a move could be seen as cutting across a serious orientation towards the Labour Party which will increasingly become the focal point for opposition to Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies in the period ahead.

The reason, the L.S.A. is convinced that the programmatic agreement between the two groups - and the coming together on many tactical issues - means that remaining differences could be debated out in a comradely fashion within a common organisation.

**Potential**

The L.S.A. believes that the possibilities opening up for Trotskyism in Britain - and internationally - are greater than ever before. The widespread defeatism & nationalism which has, more recently, been given a central thrust by the deepening struggles in the labour movement which have drawn thousands into conflict with their reformist leaders.

Moreover, the struggle of the L.S.A. in Britain, and the success at the left of the reformist and Stalinist organisations is clearly posed. Overcoming the fragmentation on the left - by regrouping those forces who share a common programme - is the vital step in this direction. It is for this reason that the L.S.A. has written to the IMC for discussions on the possibility of fusing the two organisations.

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What attitudes should relatively small groups of revolutionary socialists take towards reformist and bureaucratically-run mass workers parties, such as the British Labour Party? Lenin has been one of the major questions facing socialists this century. The SWP, for instance, believe that it is completely wrong to offer support to Labour. They view Labour and Tory as being essentially the same in practice. The SWP run in elections against the Labour Party and pose as a clear alternative to the right.

This current line stands in sharp contrast to positions socialists have taken on this question various times in the past. It also stands completely opposed to the ideas of Lenin. Lenin's attitude towards parties such as Labour, and the question of participating in elections, was clearly set out in his classic "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder." We believe these ideas continue to provide a clear compass for revolutionaries today.

Lenin's ideas are outlined in the following article by Ian Angus. This article was originally part of a series published last year in the Canadian Socialist paper 'Labour Challenge'. Many of the British supporters of the Russian Revolution took a sectarian attitude to the British Labour Party and elections. Angus points out that it was only the intervention of the Third International, particularly Lenin, which brought unity to the warring factions and won the majority away from their ultra-radical and sectarian politics.

The British CP made zig-zags and took many wrong positions because of its political immaturity. Again, largely due to Lenin, the party corrected its course and, as a result, increased its size and influence. They were beginning to provide a real challenge to the status quo policies of the Labour leaders. Unfortunately the party was unable to benefit for long from the clarification Lenin helped achieve. The bureaucratisation of the Soviet state, culminating in the consolidation of the Stalinist ruling clique after Lenin's death, led to the degeneration of the world communist movement. The various parties became pawns in Stalin's foreign policy deals. As a result the CPGB, for instance, helped the Labour Party, and top trade union leaders betray the 1920 General Strike.

The Communists who opposed any support to the Labour Party were quite aware that Lenin disagreed with them. The Communist International, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, was profoundly different from what it became under Stalin's control. Where Stalin insisted that the Communist parties repeat his instructions without question, Lenin and Trotsky wanted to bring in an international of international thinking revolutionaries. These men and women were not to be dictated to - if they were wrong, they would have to be convinced.

As William Paul said at the founding conference of the CPGB: "There is no one in this audience to whom I yield in admiration for Lenin, but as we said yesterday, Lenin is no pope or god... On local circumstances, where we are on the spot, we are the people to decide..."

Local Communist leaders were the people on the spot - but that did not mean that their decisions would be corrected. Many of them were inexperienced; others had been misled by involvement in sectarian or opportunistic parties... The British CP had gathered the most dedicated militants into a new International. Now they faced the far more difficult task of educating these militants in the art of revolutionary politics.

What was at stake was not just a difference over affiliation to the Labour Party, but a much more important question: What kind of party would the Communist Party be?

J.T. Murphy, a former leader of the Socialist Labour Party, explored the question in his account of his experiences at the Second Congress of the International held in Moscow from July 23 to August 7, 1920:

"My experience in Russia... had shown me the real meaning of the term of British Communist... Instead of thinking that a Socialist Party was merely a propaganda organisation for the dissemination
of Socialist views, I now saw that a real Socialist Party would consist of revolutionaries who would regard the party as a means whereby they would lead the working class in the fight for political power. From that point of view, it could be seen that much of the discussion on the Labour Party was taking place in the wrong context entirely. The central question was not what opinion Communists held on the Labour Party, but how the group that sought only to make propaganda for socialism could ignore the question, but a group that was possibly sought to win mass support had to put it at the top of the agenda.

**Left-Wing Communism**

Lenin sought to win the British (and the rest of the International) to this point of view in his pamphlet "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder," first published in June 1920. It is pronounced against sectarian and ultra-left policies that were coming to the fore in many countries, most notably in Germany and Britain. The section on Britain, focusing on the Labour Party, remains a landmark in the Marxist approach to parties of this type.

The key point in the pamphlet lasted and even again - was later summed up in the slogan of the Third Congress of the International: "To the Masses."

"If you want to help the 'masses' and win the sympathy and support of the 'masses,' you must not fear difficulties, you must not fear the pickpockets, chicanery, insincerity, brutality, the attacks on the 'leaders'... but absolutely must work where the 'masses' are to be found. You must be convinced that you are overcoming the greatest obstacles in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently in those institutions, societies and associations - even the most unrevolutionary - in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found."

The aim of the International, Lenin wrote, should learn from the history of the Bolshevik Party, which won the allegiance of the Russian working class precisely because it learned "how to work legally in the most reactionary institutions and organizations - trade unions, cooperative societies, and similar organizations."

"For the whole task of the Communist is to be able to convince the masses to work among them, and not to fence themselves off from them by artificial and childish Left slogans."

Lenin urged British Socialists to lead the Labour Party in order to expose it.

The Communists are convinced that Parliament and the Labour Party are mere institutions that only hinder the fight for socialism - but the vast majority of workers don't agree, Lenin wrote. And the workers will not give up their fight in these institutions just because the Communists propagate against them: Communism is as urgent without a change in the views of the majority of the working class, as not to oppose each other the political experience of the masses, and never by propaganda alone.

The Communists know that the Labour Party, in power, will inevitably betray the fight for complete revolution which could result. The Labour Party, then, is to hasten the day when the workers will be ready to act, through their own experiences:

"If we are the party of the revolutionary class, and not a revolutionary group, we've got to win the masses, to follow us (and unless we do, we stand the risk of losing the support); secondly, we must help the majority of the working class to convince themselves by their own experience. If we do that, the Hambro's and Snowden's are absolutely unsalvageable. Thirdly, we must bring before the moment when, on the basis of the disappointment of the majority of the workers with the Hambro's, it will be possible with serious chances of success to overthrow the government of the Hambro's at once...

**Tactical Propositions**

In "Left-Wing Communism" Lenin made concrete proposals for British Communist tactics toward the Labour Party. The British party, he said, should promote an electoral alliance with the Labour Party - an agreement not to oppose each other's candidates, with each party having full freedom to put forward its own programme.

If the Labour Party agreed, then the Communists would gain a wider hearing among workers sympathetic to Labour but unable to hasten the day when the Labour Party leaders demonstrated their political treachery in office.

If the Labour leaders rejected an alliance, then too the Communists would gain, by demonstrating to the masses in practice that the Labour leaders prefer their close relations with the capitalists to unity with the workers.

If Labour refused an electoral alliance, Lenin suggested, the Communists should run candidates on the Labour Party ticket in constituencies where their candidacy would not cause defeat of a Labour candidate.

Lenin argued that, by winning a hearing from workers who supported the Labour Party, they would gain the opportunity to explain to these workers what Communists think is wrong with the Labour Party and its programme. The revolutionaries would, in effect, be saying to the British working class: "You believe that the Labour Party can satisfy your needs - we disagree, and here's why. Let's work together, and let's struggle, and then we'll see which one is right."

The Communist Party ought, Lenin continued, to establish an International with CPGB Leader Paul Connelly, on the "international manifesto in every constituency... urging the working class to vote for the Labour Party in order to prove that the Hambro's, Thomasses, Macdonalds, et al., do not solve the manifold problems confronting society through the parliamentary machine."

"In a word, the Communist Party in Britain ought to assist the Labour Party to demonstrate its own utility."
In April last year, a demonstration of over 3,000 mobilised in central London against the siting of a nuclear re-processing plant at Windscale.

The demonstration was organized by Friends of the Earth – shows the mounting concern over the spread of nuclear installations worldwide, which has already seen mass opposition develop in countries from Australia to France.

Such concern is no accident. Windscale symbolizes the fears for a future geared to a 'plutonium economy', fast-breeder reactors and all the attendant radiation hazards.

Dangers

Radio-biologists & ecologists who opposed Windscale at the Public Inquiry and who signed a letter on November 29th, pointed out the lethal dangers contained in such fast-breeder reactor accidents. Spectre of a nuclear accident at Windscale in Idaho in 1961, when the top of a reactor blew killing three US GIs, there have been a further 2,000 recorded accidents through a failure of the cooling system, partial 'meltdowns' and radiation leaks.

These accidents were not just limited. One scientist recalled the US Atomic Energy Commission Report as early as 1965 which predicted that in a really serious explosion, over 50,000 people would be affected by radiation sickness. 4, 000 would be killed and 10,000 would suffer from a increasing incendence of cancer would develop over the next 10 years, leading to another 4, 000 deaths.

The Atomic Energy Commission was talking of explosions of 1,000 megawatts capacity. Windscale is proposed as 1,300 megawatts.

Waste

It is not just danger from major accidents which makes these re-processing plants a potential time bomb. Scientists at the Inquiry gathered evidence that normal working would dramatically increase cancer risks among employees. As Dr Alice Stewart reported, a 26% increase in cancer had been detected among workers at the Hanford Atomic Energy Works in Washington State.

More important still, the disposal of atomic waste creates even bigger problems. It has been estimated that the annual output of a re-processing plant like Windscale is 1,000 times the radioactivity of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. While Justice Parker accepted that Windscale would mean more 'plutonium in the atmosphere, more material for burial at Drigg's, more dumping in the deep ocean, and more storage of highly active waste'. he thought such problems could be solved.

Some scientists have pointed out however, some form of this waste remain radioactive for up to a half a million years. Creating a repository to manage this material creates a huge risk since what would happen if natural accidents 'disturb' the nuclear graves?

Motive

The obvious question is - why should capitalist governments be so intent on introducing an energy source which poses such serious risk to human life & the environment? The answer, of course, is simple - profit.

Having squandered many of the earth's fossil fuels - such as coal, natural gas and oil - they are now desperately seeking alternative fuel sources. Other energy forms such as solar & wind power, geothermal & tidal power, which offer the prospect of a safe & clean environment, are ignored by them because they offer no immediate return.

What this shows most clearly is the increasingly irrational and destructive nature of capitalism which - in its search for profit - is literally willing to build controlled A-bombs in our midst.

Democracy

To push ahead with their programme, they are forced to 'fash up', as far as possible, the attendant risks. The scheme is already associated with nuclear plants are kept under lock and key and when they are raised - as at the Windscale public inquiry - ignored. The scientists and ecologists who gave evidence there noted the clear bias of Justice Parker in collecting material & declared support for a policy of civil disobedience.

Such contempt for democracy will dramatically increase if a nuclear energy programme goes ahead. The NCCL has already pointed out that to 'protect' the plutonium a massive police surveillance will be needed not only on the plant itself but also on those involved in shipping and transporting it.

Preventative measures would also be needed to keep information about it secret. These would include greater press censorship to supplement 'D' notices and increasing use of the Official Secrets Act. The use of these laws already applies to workers employed in nuclear power plants who are thereby denied all protection under the Health & Safety Act and who can be prosecuted for strike action.

Campaign

It is for these reasons that the opposition growing up to Windscale (like that internationally) is anti-capitalist and should be supported by socialists. Such a campaign is reacting to the irrational nature of a system which, having squandered the earth's resources, is now unleashing a destructive timesharp in their thirst for profit.

It is quite clear that alternatives to nuclear energy are, with today's technology, quite feasible. By bandying existing resources & re-examining the substitution of alternative energy sources, a safe and clean environment can be assured.

It is clear, however, that this can only be achieved by targeting the present irrational system and creating a planned, rational economy. A place where places have need to profit to a select few.

A system in which co-operation replaces competition; in which industry, agriculture and schools are given priority rather than nuclear death-traps like Windscale.

The Windscale last action campaign against the spread of nuclear energy plants is a key issue today. Such a campaign should finally into the labour movement to win its leaders to oppose all forms of nuclear energy.

Teachers

BUILDING THE S.T.A.

Interview with DAVE PICTON, co-editor of Socialist Teacher, who ran as the united left candidate for Treasurer of the N.U.T. this year.

Q. There are 45,000 teachers unemployed at present. What action do you think should be taken to remedy the situation?

A. The key question relating to the employment of teachers is class size, and teachers would be particularly ready to respond to action for retention of their jobs and if for action against oversize classes because they know all pupils would benefit from a much smaller class size. The union leaders should be forced to instruct members to refuse to teach classes larger than those laid down, which in itself, would require employing an additional 55,000 teachers, and to make it clear to the employers that to do otherwise would give full support including strike pay - to any members suspended for so doing.

Q. NUT leaders have recently put in a wage claim for 36.5%. What should be the attitude of the left?

A. To restore teachers' salaries to the same level that they were in 1979. Fighting against the NUT leaders claim - require an average increase of about 35%, The NUT leaders pin their faith in being treated as a 'special case', however, as we were at the time of Houghton. What they refuse to recognise is that the Houghton award was a response to several years of militancy among teachers on wages, and that they themselves, have done their best to destroy that militancy over the years by exploiting the autonomy of the local branches.

There is no doubt that the NUT claim, which is far in excess of government's 5% norm, will be supported by wide layers in the union and that the leaders will be under some pressure to take action in its support. The recent actions by other public sector workers will undoubtedly act as a stimulant to many teachers who have seen their wages eroded over the last few years.

The task of the left in the union will be to make that pressure as great as possible and to try and win the widest support against any back-down. Failing that, fighting all the way, and for a cost of living clause inlaid into any settlement could help to offset inflation and ensure that wages are not eroded as occurred after the Houghton award.

Q. How important do you think the recent debate on racism in the union has been and what has been the reaction of the NUT leaders?

A. The STA, in particular, has played a major role in raising many issues concerning the role of women in education, and in society generally. The fight on abortion and the rights of black people have been a major issue which has been hotly debated at the last few conferences. The leadership of the union, I think, central.

I think the STA should focus its activity around these concrete issues in the coming year and, I believe that the union is changing a way that will allow a strong response from teachers to demands that are formulated in a clear, coherent way.

Mobilising support on these issues should begin to lay the basis for a clear anti-imperialist strategy in the union to oppose the present leaders of the NUT and TUC.
CRISIS IN THE N.H.S.

The Failure of Labour's Policies

Over the past two months we have experienced the usual barrage of propaganda against workers involved in industrial action. Taking the brunt of this assault have been the hospital workers, who like many employed in the service industries, are most visibly placed for such attacks.

David Ennsall, Secretary for the Social Services, fired the first shot:

"I appeal to those who are taking individual action to suspend it...They can no longer take it out on the patients. There is no doubt some people have already taken that route."

Now that the dispute has been settled, it is timely to ask ourselves, what was the pattern of Tory pressure on the NHS and how successful were the unions in lobbying in the interests of working people?

Government Cuts

As chance would have it we don't have to look very far for the answers. Just two days after Ennsall's statement, the Director of the National Health Service published the annual report of the NHS.

The report showed that the whole area of converted shops, with their windows boarded up and their cieling leaking, were being used as doctors' surgeries, but covering a period of time gone by the Tories press have had felt the need to expose their shortcomings at all time other than during industrial action.

Private Practice Thrives

Ballymoney (by: Terry Viney)

The NHS is not necessarily the shortage of public money, but the way so much of this money is used by government for the benefit of private health care companies - leading to health insurance schemes, and private medical practice.

For example, one of the biggest drug firms in the world, Glaxo with annual profits around £150m-£200m, last year sent the government £45 million to build a new factory in Scotland. Roche are among the private companies that are providing health insurance schemes.

Money also flows freely to private health insurance schemes such as the BMA and Private Practice Plan. The function of such organizations is to enable some individuals to jump the long queues for hospital treatment.

Private Sector Benefits

However, one of the key problems

The Labour government has a once again shown its concern for gay rights by delaying the reform of anti-gay laws in Northern Ireland. The Homosexuals Draft Order, a measure to bring the laws of Ulster into line with that of England and Wales, was an attempt to answer the same question from the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association to the European Commission of Human Rights.

However, the prospect of having too few friends in the House of Commons, led to the collapse of the order for Gallagher, and the measure has been shelved in order to keep the government in office. In an effort to get the back door open, the Northern Ireland Penal Unionists, a gay law reform group which was dropped like a hot potato, been shelved in order to keep the government in office. In an effort to get the back door open, the Northern Ireland Penal Unionists, a gay law reform group which was dropped like a hot potato.

As all forms of homosexual activity in Northern Ireland are still illegal, any measure to liberalise the law would be an important step forward for the gay community in Ulster. However, it would also represent a significant victory in response to the recent attacks on the gay rights movement in Britain. - From the attacks on Maureen Colquhoun MP; the Gay News prosecution, to the present intimidation of Frank Kelly.

However, bringing Ulster law into line with that of England and Wales is not enough by itself, since legislation on the mainland represents at best a liberal tolerance of homosexuality, providing you are over 18 and do it in private. In Scotland, as in Northern Ireland, all sexual acts between men are outlawed. Although there is only recently been taken by the UK government to the European Court of Human Rights over the archaic Scottish laws, Strasbourg alone cannot solve the problem. But anti-gay attacks will continue, and more often than not with the complicity of the Labour government. The tasks ahead must be to build specific campaigns within the Labour Party, the trade unions, as well as outside the Labour movement in defence of gay rights.

Dru Benson

GAYS UNDER ATTACK

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The Real Problems

Fantastic fortunes are being made by many of our health workers. The NHS is illing - unable to meet people's essential needs - the drug firms, the insurance companies, the advertising agencies and private consultants are all thriving. These are the kind of issues which do not find their way into the front-page headlines of the Daily Mail or the Daily Express. But they do help to explain more clearly why the industrial action taken by the hospital workers last month has been only one of a series of disputes at our hospitals. Waiting lists have grown because our health has never been taken too seriously by successive governments. If we are to protect the interests of private companies like Roche rather than provide a fully viable NHS, Need for Mass Campaigns

The record of this government over the last three years justifies the unwillingness and the inability of the Labour leaders to support our NHS and our health service. It is therefore essential to build a mass campaign challenging the leadership of the Labour Party to improve the NHS. Such a campaign should be organized around the demand: No to Hospital Cuts, No to Corporate Profit, No to cuts within such a campaign would be the further demands for: The Nationalization of the Drug Companies, and The Abolition of Private Medicine. Only by raising such issues in the Labour movement can we work with people dissatisfied with a deteriorating health service, face up to the limitations of their own Labour government and see the need for socialist policies.
For months, NUPE leader Alan Fletcher - and many other T&G CU members in the T&GCU and GMWU - tried to keep the lid on the mounting protest. Now it appears that the workers are fed up with low pay and crumbling social services.

Under mass pressure from their members and the T&GCU, they have refused to leave their factory to work and are fighting to get a few concessions from I.W. Callaghan, whose policies they generally accept.

The right only were both willing to join in the chorus of condemnation from government figures to the T&GCU press, against rank-and-file workers taking unofficial action, as in the case of ambulance drivers.

Angr

The fruits of this strategy were revealed in the recent deal establishing a 9% increase with a promise of 1% more to be published later in the year. Falling short of the original claim, it was sold to members as a hard-won victory. But that the government had "scraped the barrel dry" and that further action could lead to redundancies and further cuts in the public sector was obvious.

The initial reaction by many NUPE & GMWU workers - who had been involved in all-out action - was one of confusion and anger. The London Divisional Council of the GMWU castigated shop stewards representing 150,000 workers, rejected the deal outright. Around the country, there were protest actions in which ancillary workers walked out in disgust, as in Salford or Manchester.

The union leaders, astutely calculated, however, that many workers, seeing the selective strikes as ineffectual and beginning to feel the financial 'pinch' - would be drawn towards a settlement that would isolate the more militant into the more advantageous alternative, or to drive back to work. This is precisely what happened.

Lessons

The acceptance of the deal does not, in this sense, reflect lack of militancy among NUPE or GMWU members who forced their leaders to accept the action which broke the back of the government's 5% norm. It reflects the fact that they could see no alternative for winning their claims.

The key question for militants in the public sector is to learn the lessons from the strike, to ensure such set-backs don't happen again. The first weakness, as many were, was the union leaders' tacit acceptance of government action to derogate their obligations, to impose the 15% pay cut for wage freeze policies. Only an all-out stoppage would have had an impact.

The second weakness was the union leaders determination to present the claim as a 'special case', thereby dividing the struggles of the low-paid and weakening their position that was in the hands of a united and co-ordinated action by all public sector workers in a common front.

Weakness

Many militants are, of course, unaware of these arguments and called for an all-out strike. What needs to be more clearly stressed, however, is the reason why union leaders were unwilling to call such action.

Despite the militant speeches of Business Secretary Peter Shore, the T&GCU has largely essentially supported the policies of the present Labour government. Whether, for example, it desired the Concordat, whose thrust is to support wage limits by curtailing rank and file democracy. Accepting the need to curb pay, they were therefore forced into a position where they had to curb rather than champion the demands of their own members.

At no stage did they seek to challenge the head-on Callaghan line, or even to speak of defending the social services - cannot be won by the existing leaders who accept the anti-working-class policies of the present Labour government. The real lesson of the present strike is not to fight for clear alternative policies to those of Basnett and Fisher which will provide a real challenge to the discontinue militancy of millions of workers.

CAN (Campaign for Action in NUPE) was set up by militants to fight for such alternative policies and to demand greater democracy.

Richard Munro

Recall the Labour Party

Such policies - allied with opposition to any attacks on the democratic rights of the unions - could begin to unite thousands of trade unionists and Labour activists around a common programme. The focal point of this struggle should be the recall of the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

After all, what mandate does the TUC or Callaghan have for cutting wages and boosting unemployment? Both the TUC and the Labour Party, at their last conferences, decisively threw out the 5% norm, even if a Labour government (by a 2 to 1 majority). What mandate do either have to come to an agreement to curb pay, to close down the social services, to destroy democracy and to strike break? Did not the Labour movement throw out similar policies, by a massive majority, during the Wilson and Heath governments?

The task of recalling the Labour Party conference is to begin to expose the democratic nature of Callaghan's policies and to demand an elaborate an alternative to the one on which to fight the coming election. Those leftwing Labour MPs who have declared their support for the NUPE wages offers, have a special responsibility in this fight which should be started now. All talk about a leftwing manifesto which does not base itself on the real struggles opening up, and which does not confront Callaghan head-on, is merely...empty talk.

Bellotti

Fighting for such a programme, allied with other demands in favour of Labour's allies, would do much to offset any attacks on the rank and file, disillusions with the Labour government's policies, to think of disaffiliating from Labour or abstaining in the coming election.

Such a trend would be disastrous. We must not leave the task of confronting Conservative Party leaders to the Tories, who would only be returned to office on a clear union-bashing programme. The task of defeating Callaghan is the task of the Labour movement itself.

This is why campaigning for the return of a Labour government is a key issue for all socialists. Current conditions make it essential to identify with - or have any illusions in - the Labour leaders. On the contrary, such a campaign has to be coupled with a fight for the removal of its present leader- ship and programme in favour of a leadership and programme best suited to the needs of working people.

A.D. Scott
On March 16th, Chinese officials announced they were ending their 60-day airlift of Vietnamese civilians. Why did they end it then, in the first place? What repercussions will this have? Below, Mike Strange answers these questions.

On February 28th, Chinese armed forces swept into North Vietnam. The official reason for the invasion was to end China's 'rogue regime' in Vietnam. The invasion is likely to pull out the Vietnamese from theirkeit and re-establish Chinese control over Vietnam.

This is a sick joke. The real reason is the quest for dominance led by Chinese Stalinist Teng Hsiao-ping during his recent visit to Washington. A Chinese delegation to Vietnam is the only chance to strengthen ties with US capital. He made no secret of the fact that Vietnam needed to be 'punished' for its part in the coup overthrow of the bloody Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea.

Reaction
Talk of 'punishing' the Vietnamese is not a new issue with China's new-found allies in Washington. Of course, the Carter regime has had nothing to do with China's response to 'the situation' in Vietnam. The immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia and Chinese troops from Vietnam, both links the two.

But Washington's attempt to strike a pose of benevolent 'neutralism' is met with deadly force by the Vietnamese. The regime of Teng Hsiao-ping adopted a strong stance against the US and its allies. This is a calculated move by China to strengthen its position in the region.

Background
Washington's unofficial approval of the Chinese invasion is not accidental. Partly, of course, it stems from the pleasure at seeing growing discord among the workers' states. More important, however, it fits into the long-term anti-Vietnamese campaign US imperialism has been conducting for some time now.

Ever since it was forced out of Indochina in 1975, US imperialism has sought to economically strangle the Vietnamese revolution. It refused to accept Vietnam's status as a socialist state. $4.75 billion dollars claim to repair the damage from nearly ten years of barbaric bombing and turned down any kind of 'diploomatic' relations.

This campaign intensified last year in full co-operation with the Vietnamese revolutionaries who swept away the last remnants of capitalism from Vietnam. The revolutionaries who captured the whole country under a single planned economy. They obviously feared that this revolutionary impetus could set the masses in neighbouring Thailand and Kampuchea in motion.

Military Backing
Economic 'sanitation' was paralleled by attempts to strengthen the brutal right-wing regime in Thailand. The New York Times (Feb. 8th) reported the Prime Minister Kriangsak Chomanan as saying that 'the US has agreed to speed deliveries of tactical weapons, which is a guarantee of the Thai ammrration to the Thailander in response to the continued fighting in Indochina'.

Kriangsak was also reported as saying, in the same article, that 'the US has reassured us and given us confidence that if the situation around us escalates, the US will not stand idly by'.

The US has freed the bloody Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea that was also seen as a vital counter-balance against the 'spread of the Vietnamese revolution'. As the Far Eastern Economic Review (Nov. 8th) put it, the Australian government believed that 'it is essential to preserve Kampuchea as an independent buffer between pro-communist Vietnam and Communist Vietnam'.

It was for this reason that every major imperialist power lined up behind the bloody Pol Pot regime in the civil war in Kampuchea last month. It is also for this reason that the Thais are not pinning their hopes on a military solution to their problems. The Thais are not pinning their hopes on a military solution to their problems. They are relying on a buffer of capitalist forces to ensure their safety.

China
It is only against this background of an imperialist-inspired campaign against the Vietnamese revolution that the Chinese invasion can be understood. Ever since Chairman Mao's 'clinked' champagne glasses with Nixon in February, Peking has increasingly viewed the Vietnamese revolution as a destabilising factor on its borders and an obstacle to improved economic and diplomatic ties with Washington.

With the escalation of imperialism's anti-Vietnamese campaign last year, Peking was only too anxious to identify with its friends and jump on the bandwagon.

This explains their hostility to the pro-independence of the capitalists in South Vietnam, under the fact that many of Vietnamese are Chinese and would like to see a communist revolution here. The Vietnamese are also anxious to keep the Thais out of the revolution in South-East Asia.

Iranian Trotskyists

In the deepening revolutionary situation since the Shah's recent self-immolation, the following demands have been raised by the Iranian Hezb-e-Kargareh-e-Bahal (Socialist Workers' Party - Iranian Section of the Fourth International).

* For the development, extension and co-ordination of the democratic committees of the tolling masses in the factories and offices, in the armed forces and in the neighbourhoods.
* The committees should be run completely democratically, elected by the tollers and the soldiers, and unite with the workers and viewpoints given equal rights.
* The objective is the formation of international councils of workers' committees, workers', soldiers', delegates to fight for the needs, interests, and rights of the masses. To demand the opening of the factories, offices and factories through the workers' committees.
* The book of the经验 of the capitalists and committees and public. Immediate expropriation of the properties of the Shah and the royal family of Iran. The Trotskyist expropriation of the banks, oil industry and other key branches of the economy.
* The book of the experience of the workers and peasants. Land, cheap credit, adequate machines and fertilisers, guaranteed in markets for the peasants. Access to adequate irrigation.
* Against the attacks of the capitalists in the attempt to build the new army, the rank-and-file soldiers' committees should elect all officers, and give them the right to self-determination for the oppressed nationalities, including the Kurds, Azeri, and others.
* Against the imposition of a constitution of a constitution above all. For immediate convocation of a freely elected and democratic assembly to decide these and other questions facing the masses.
* No capitulation without an end to war and the protection of the right to self-determination for the oppressed nationalities, including the Kurds, Azeri, and others.
* Against the attacks of the government and the Islamic Revolutionary Council, who are supposed to be the 'guardians of the revolution', to 'protect' the interest of the workers, soldiers and tollers, and in the attempt to build an armed force under the control of the soldiers and tollers committee.

Socialist Feminist Conference

On March 24/25 at City University, the 1979 Socialist Feminist annual conference will take place.

The first day will be devoted to the activities of socialist feminists in various countries and to discussions on the role of women in the struggle against imperialism. The second day will, drawing on the political ideas emerging on Saturday, be devoted to a more general discussion on the relationship between socialist feminism and the movement for women's liberation.

Socialist Feminist Conference By Michael Strange

Hands Off!

Defenders of the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutionaries must demand that Peking unconditionally and immediately withdraw its troops from Vietnam and end all forms of interference in the life of the Vietnamese masses. At the same time, we must campaign for the support of the Vietnamese revolutionaries in their struggle against imperialism.
Who is behind the 'Shankill Butchers'?

Last month, Gerald McLeave - along with other members of what has become known as the 'Shankill Butchers' - was jailed after being convicted on kidnapping, assault and gun charges. The victims of the sectarian attacks of this loyalist gang were innocent Catholics. The gang was driven by Moore - a social democrat of the gang - they were taken to Protestant areas, tortured and finally butchered to death with an ax by having their throats cut.

UDR

All the brutal aspects of these murders were brought to light at the trial. What did not receive such prominence was the fact that Gerald McLeave, leader of the gang, was a member of the British army-controlled UDR (Ulster Defence Regiment).

The UDR was formed in 1970 as a replacement for the B-Specials. Like the B-Specials it has gained a widespread reputation for its violent anti-Catholic bigotry. Unlike the B-Specials, however, it is part of - and under the control of - the British army.

Involvement by British-controlled UDR individuals in such sectarian violence is not as rare as the months' Irish Times put it: "Scores of UDR members and ex-members have appeared in court on serious charges as the army has been found guilty of sectarian killings".

Law and Order

The fact that such individuals are members (or ex-members) of the UDR can give lie to the claim of the British government that the army in Northern Ireland is there as a "neutral force" restoring law and order.

The only order the army is there to restore is one based upon the bigotry and privileges of the Orange State which has discriminated against the Catholic minority for over 300 years. They have not restored this "order" by a systematic campaign of harassment, torture and victimisation of the Catholic community.

If figures such as McLeave decide to take the law into their own hands - organised murder for the assassination of individual Catholics - it is not an accident. They are merely the victims of a logical and savage conclusion the role the British army is being called on to play.

Responsibility

The fact that it is the British army which, whilst it is the suppressor of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland places a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of British soldiers. What we do - or not do - to champion the right of the Irish people to self-determination is up to us.

Building a mass campaign calling for the withdrawal of British troops would have a major impact. It would give renewed confidence to the oppressed minority (who have been through a demoralising period), undermine the morale of the British army and isolate the loyalist murder squads by removing their main support.

Such a campaign should set itself the task of withdrawing the troops (as did the mass anti-Vietnam war movement in the U.S.), or of bringing it down.

Failure

It is a major condemnation of the British left that, ten years after the entry of troops onto the streets of Derry or Belfast, there still exists no mass campaign calling for their immediate withdrawal.

The failure of the left to unite in building such a movement is not only an example of their failure to give concrete aid to an oppressed nation fighting for its rights, it is also a failure to understand that this struggle has a direct effect upon the British class struggle too.

It should not have to be pointed out that the repressive laws used against the minority are passed and enacted by Westminster. They are, therefore, a direct threat to the civil liberties of the British people, as Roy Jenkins's 1976 Anti-Terrorism Act proves.

A campaign in defence of the right of the Irish people to determine their destiny would also strike a blow for the defence of democratic rights in Britain too.

UTOM

One of the major causes for the lack of a mass-action oriented campaign has undoubtedly been the sectarian in-fighting of the left.

Movement after movement has been started-up - the ISC (Irish Solidarity Campaign), AIL (Alien Interment League), TOM (Troops Out Movement) - only to disintegrate through internal wranglings over slogans and tactical issues.

One of the most important recent developments has been the launching of UTOM (United Troops Out Movement) which has been able to launch a series of well-organised actions. The LSA wholeheartedly supports UTOM and believes its main priority should be towards building a mass-action campaign around the slogan "Troops Out of Ireland Now".

We would welcome our voice to that of UTOM in calling on all forces of the left, supporting its platform, to identify with the campaign.

Michael Hawley

March 79

Iran

The Powder Keg

Bakke

The main aim of the government has been to rush to establish stable capitalist rule by calling on the masses to give up their arms, and their self-elected committees in the army and industry and return merrily to work. They fear the dynamic of a situation in the masses, increasingly self-confident, could continue the democratisation of Iranian society in a clear anti-capitalist direction.

A key target of their attacks have been workers in the militia, other industries who (as the Tehran daily Kayhan reported on Feb 19th) "are not listening to the Ayatollah Khomeini" and over whom "leftist groups have an astonishing amount of influence". Correctly insisting the Ayatollah's government was elected by no one, they have refused to abandon their elected committees and demands for legalising workers' control and opening the books of companies to public scrutiny. A major reason such committees has been a major aim in restoring stable capitalist rule and is the reason the anti-left elements from the Barzagian government have become ever more shrill.

On Feb 20th, Sadegh Ghot- zadeh, a principal advisor to the Ayatollah, was reported in the New York Times as denouncing "those rebellious elements who are trying to form workers' committees and threatening demonstrations if opposed".

Alternative

The attacks on industrial workers has gone hand in hand with a more general attempt to restore 'order' by curbing the initiative of the masses. Calling on people to return to work, or to defer during the winter the oil workers' strikes from the Shah mobilisations, the government has ordered Iran's 450,000 soldi- ers to return to barracks, and has begun to impose the discipline of their former pro-Shah officers.

Such moves have clearly brought the government into increasing conflict with rank-and-file soldiers who have set up democratic civic bodies to deal with their own concerns, such as health, education and the right to speak, to participate in political activity, and to "elect commanders we trust, not appointments from above".

What the government fears from these committees - a commitment, in industry, to workers control over the plant - is that, representing the democratis- tic interests of the masses, they would become an alternative power structure to their unelected rule. Organised on a regional & national basis, such a movement could lead to elections to a genuinely Constituent Assembly in which a Workers and Peasants' government could be elected.

Prestige

The government's repressive moves have, of course, won the approval of anxious officials both in London & Washington, and Ayatollah Khomeini, who was earlier revered by US officials & the mass media for refusing to come to a deal with the Shah, has seen his main force for shoring up the crumbling capitalist state and curbing any encroachments on pri- vate property.

There can be no doubt that the Ayatollah is well-placed to carry out this task. The fact that today, however, he is forced to oppose - and is not achieving the suppression of the Iranian people will increasingly undermine his prestige. Growing crews have already begun to open up not only in the opposition developing to the Barzagian govern- ment among soldiers in the army and workers in the industrial secto- res. The fact that the Ayatollah has begun to curb the rights of women and the oppressed nationalists - in particular the Kurds - has drawn wider layers into anti-government action. On March 8th, for ex- ample, thousands of women in Tehran by women protesting the role reserved for them under the Ayatollah's Islamic Republic.

Opportunity

Such a situation will open up maj- or opportunities in the period ahead for revolutionary socialists & their organisations in the Socialist Workers Party, Iranian section of the Fourth International. By championing the rights of the workers & their allies among the peasants, soldiers, women & oppressed national minorities - they have a real chance of winning thousands to see that the solution to their problems lies in breaking with capitalism & fighting for a socialist republic.

It is not championing the sup- porting the demands raised but of helping to build the popular organs of power that are be- ing set up in the factories, army and neighbourhoods and trying to link them on a national basis. Such organs, representing the real interests of the mass of Iranians, could be- gin to pioneer the call for a Workers & Peasants' government and a democratically-elected Constituent Assembly.

by Tim Robinson

March 8th

Political prisoners released from Savak jails.