

# Workers Power

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## NO SURRENDER TO THE PICKET BUSTERS

The employers, and their most class conscious representatives, have served notice of their intention to launch an all out attack on trade union rights and organisation.

Their lying Press is set on whipping up a frenzy of hatred against trade union militants and call for new restrictions on trade union activity. They will stop at nothing to do this. The rabid Daily Mail, for example, has carried a major story on the 'case' of a driver supposedly under police protection after an attack by pickets. Investigation has since shown that the driver in question is not under police protection and there is no evidence that his attackers have any connection with trade unionism whatsoever.

The hired hacks of the bourgeoisie daily whip up a crescendo of demands for the curbing of trade union power. The poisonous Sun guaranteed 'one thousand dead pensioners a week' as a result of the lorry drivers' dispute. The degenerate Paul Johnson, touting his credentials as an erstwhile supporter of Labour, plays the tune for the editorial offices of the Telegraph and Evening Standard. In the Sunday Telegraph he raged against laws which, 'invest the unions with the kind of legal privileges once enjoyed by medieval churchmen' and urged the Telegraph's faithful to prepare for, 'the coming battle between the Left and our independent legal system.'

The Judges have taken their cue too. Mr Justice Ackner was the first to move with his anti-picket ruling in favour of the United Biscuit Company. The 1974 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act made it legal to break commercial contracts in pursuance of a trades dispute. The Labour Government was forced to carry this through after the wave of militancy which drove Heath from office. Ackner declared that a 'totally unlimited construction' of that would have meant that Parliament, 'was writing a recipe for anarchy.' The 'anarchy' so feared by Ackner is, of course, the impact of effective picketing in the lorry drivers' dispute.

Ackner administered his 'justice' in solidarity with his class. Other judges have followed his lead. Denning, a seasoned legal warrior of the ruling class has joined the clamour for curbs on trade union legal immunity.

In Parliament, Thatcher has extended the hand of unity to Callaghan if he would be prepared to join her in a drive to break the power of the unions. Steel, for the Liberals and Heath playing Elder Statesman, have issued the call for a grand anti-union national coalition.

The employers, their Press and their courts have taken up their battle stations in the face of the massive rise in working class militancy. The effective picketing by the drivers - called 'secondary' in the press and on the judges' benches - the mass mobilisation and action of the

A. Wiard (Report)



### Picket busters in action

public sector workers threaten their strategy. They know that a whole series of workers are now set to take on Labour's pay code. Hence their clamour and stridency.

Ministers in the Labour Government have made it very clear where their loyalties lie. Scottish Secretary Bruce Millan has attacked the public sector workers as 'Gadarene swine'. Roy Mason has hit out at what he terms, 'the lemmings of trade unionism' by which he means the marvellous response of thousands of workers in the struggle to break the pay limits. Rogers, the Transport Minister, has openly threatened a new wage freeze if the present round of wage demands are not beaten back by Labour.

Pride of place in the ranks of this anti-working class Labour Government must go to Callaghan himself. He has publicly called for the busting of picket lines and stated categorically that, given half a chance he would bust them himself. Until that time, however,

he is looking to the trade union leaders to restrain and demobilise the struggle. Should they fail he will use the army against effective picketing and working class organisation.

Callaghan has delivered a simple ultimatum to the union leaders. Come up with a new Social Contract which will hold down wages and hold back militancy or face an election which Labour will lose. There is no shortage of union leaders who will rush to try to deliver a new pact, they are already discussing a new, 'flexible' bargaining ceiling.

The working class faces the united ranks of the employers, the Press and the Labour Government. Callaghan has staked his government on forcing back the present round of wage demands. Now he has licensed the Leyland management to take on the manual workers at Leyland by deliberately withholding promised parity payments.

The workers' movement must be prepared to face this onslaught. Appeals for 'special treatment' or for fairplay

## Iran: key task to break the Army

The continued savage repression since the Shah's flight has written in the blood of hundreds of courageous Iranians the truth that the military bonapartist tyranny still exists, it merely has a new and pathetic 'bonaparte'. The Bakhtiar regime balances precariously on the temporary impasse between the rabid reactionaries of the High Command and the mass movement on the streets, the bazaar merchants, the students and the striking workers, who have made Iran 'ungovernable'. Bakhtiar may well be, as the American Magazine Newsweek puts it 'philosophically - a Swedish style Social Democrat' but he is tied, not to a mass reformist workers organisation in a stable metropolitan capitalism, but to the Iranian High Command, in the middle of a revolution. The Paris daily 'Le Monde' is nearer the mark when it points out that Bakhtiar is a great admirer of General de Gaulle, and regards himself as a 'man of decision'. Clearly he would like to play the role of a 'democratic' bonaparte.

The slogans of the demonstrators however go to the heart of the matter 'Bakhtiar - lackey without power'. Bakhtiar is in the last instance a pawn of the generals. He issues orders for the soliders to guard Teheran airport and they close it. He issues orders for 'no shooting' and 30 are gunned down as the Imperial Guard runs amok. The Generals would like to smash the whole opposition, to slaughter all its leaders and

activists. They would, in such an event, no doubt happily add Bakhtiar's head to the pile. But the Shah and his uneasy American masters urge caution. They fear that in any attempted solution the military machine might disintegrate. Nevertheless they will let them off the leash if Bakhtiar fails to blunt the masses' offensive. Bakhtiar's role is to pacify the generals on the one hand and come to an understanding with the religious leaders on the other - hence his attempted flight to Paris to talk to Khomeini.

Khomeini, as leader of the Opposition is subject to massive pressure from the varied forces making up the anti-Shah coalition. Over the past month his refuge in Paris has been the scene of many deputations urging compromise. The National Front sent Danus Farouhar to Paris in mid January. At the same time Khomeini received a five man delegation from the Teheran Chamber of Commerce and Industry which complained of the industrial and commercial ruin facing them if the strike continues. Khomeini nevertheless refused all compromise before his return to Teheran, though there was vacillation amongst his advisors over Bakhtiar's projected visit. Khomeini has throughout the struggle called on the army to desert the regime. Initially he appealed to the generals to 'rally to the cause of the nation' (Le Monde 31.10.76). In the few days since his return, Khomeini has made it clear that he is not committed to breaking up the army and the power of the Generals. In fact there are serious signs of an attempted deal with them against Bakhtiar.

The mobilisation of all the oppressed classes and strata in Iran, though directed against the Shah and mystified in religious ideology presents an enormous threat to private property whether sacred or profane. For the masses most immediate vital needs will not be met by a regime however 'Islamic', which is based on its preservation. On the other hand it is in the direct interest of the masses that the discipline and cohesion of the army disintegrates completely from the ranks upwards. Not one stone of the fortress of repression must be left standing upon another. But why has this fortress remained fundamentally intact despite all the massacres?

The Iranian army is massive - between three and four hundred thousand men. The military command pursues the policy of keeping the army constantly on the move by means of massive helicopter fleets. Soldiers are thus protected from 'contamination' by being stationed for long among civilians. In addition Turkish-speaking soldiers from Azerbaijan will be used for repression in Teheran - Shirazi soldiers in Mashad etc. In addition there are elite sections - highly privileged and indoctrinated like the 10,000 strong Imperial Guard whose Haridan Brigade was paraded for journalists at the Lairzan Barracks in late January. But even this hardened corps is not immune to the effects of what they are doing. In December three enlisted men burst into the officers mess and sprayed them with machine gun fire.

The Iranian army remains the sole solid 'social base' of the

(continued on page 4)

# STALINIST FEUD IN INDO-CHINA

Bill Rogers

After close on two years of military conflict between the Stalinist bureaucracies of Cambodia and Vietnam, a Vietnamese backed administration is now installed in Phnom Penh. The hated and repressive Pol Pot regime has proved incapable of mounting sustained resistance except in its border area guerilla encampments.

There is no doubt that the new regime in Campuchea, which offers to return the right of the Campuchean peasants to own their cooking pots, to cut the working week by half, to allow a return to the towns, and to reintroduce payment for work performed is likely to have considerable immediate appeal to the Campuchean masses. There is no doubt either that the new regime owes its power directly to Vietnamese military support. Against this Pol Pot and Ieng Sary can rely on the age old hatred of Vietnamese domination, plus the long term ill effects of Campuchea's subordination to the Vietnamese bureaucrats' interests.

The war was the direct outcome of the conflict of interest between two Stalinist bureaucracies set on their own national programmes for the building of "socialism in one country".

The fate of the Laotian regime—where Vietnamese 'advisors' are installed at all levels of government—underlines the fact that the Vietnamese Stalinists aspire to the creation of an Indo-Chinese federation under Vietnamese tutelage.

While a Soviet federation of Indo-China would clearly be in the interests of the impoverished masses of the area, the record of the Vietnamese Stalinists gives the lie to any claims that their actions are prompted by internationalism and socialism.

In 1954 at the Geneva Conference, and again in January 1973 with the Paris peace agreement, the Vietnamese made their own separate national peace with imperialism regardless of the effect of that peace on the struggle to free Cambodia from the yoke of Imperialism. For eight months after the 1973 peace agreement the American Airforce continued its bombardment of Cambodia. The Vietnamese left Cambodian liberation forces unaided in their continuing struggle with US imperialism.

## Chauvinism

In their turn the Cambodian Stalinists have certainly whipped up anti-Vietnamese chauvinism in an attempt to legitimise their repressive regime in the eyes of the Cambodian peasantry. The Pol Pot regime used 4 allegedly attempts by 'pro-Vietnamese' elements to topple his regime as the pretext for extensive purges in the state apparatus and ranks of the Khmer Rouge. From April 1977 young Campuchean peasant soldiers were launched on a bloody offensive into the Vietnamese provinces of Ha Tien and Tay-Ninh.

The savagery of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime, its destruction of industry and enforced depopulation of the towns, the famine and hunger that accompanied the regime's attempt to drive the entire population into closely guarded villages, explains why up to 200,000 Campuchean sought refuge in Vietnam and why sections of the Khmer Rouge leadership—including Heng Samrin, So Phim and Pen Sovan of the new regime—sought refuge in Vietnam too. It was from amongst these refugees and defecting Stalinists that the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation was hastily assembled and launched on December 3rd 1978 in the face of escalating military conflict between the Vietnamese and Campuchean forces.

The Chinese bureaucracy, bent on forging its alliance with American Imperialism, whilst hysterically condemning the Vietnamese as Russian stooges, has used the opportunity afforded by the collapse of the Pol Pot regime to distance itself from the patronage of Pol Pot which stems from the 'Gang of Four' era. Instead it has placed its hopes once again in the jaded playboy figure of Prince Sihanouk. Ironically he is also the object of courtship from the newly installed regime in Phom Penh. Set on seizing every opportunity to step up its anti-soviet crusade the Carter administration has publicly wept crocodile tears for the passing away of 'democratic Campuchea'. Last year's "number one violator of Human Rights" the Pol Pot Stalinists, have issued calls for American intervention in its UN disguise.

The events in Indo-China have to be assessed in the light not of the improvements that the Campuchean masses might expect to receive in their daily life under the new Vietnamese backed regime of Heng Samrin and co. The Stalinist bureaucracies in Cambodia and Vietnam have both ruthlessly prevented the creation of organs of mass control and power, councils of workers and poor peasants—they both stood as an obstacle to genuine Internationalist Alliance and Co-operation between the

masses of Indo-China. The bureaucracy of Vietnam, no less than the Pol Pot regime, has carved out its own national strategy at the expense of the masses of Indo-China and under a cloud of chauvinism. That is why the essential elements of a programme for the Indo-Chinese workers and peasants remain the smashing of the state apparatus of these bureaucratic dictatorships and their replacement by organs of power, soviets, directly in the hands of the workers and poor peasants. We must, of course, defend both Campuchea and Vietnam against any new imperialist intervention. The masses of Campuchea stand to gain neither from the Vietnamese-backed government nor from that of the Pol Pot and Ieng Sary Stalinists. We must argue for the withdrawal of all Vietnamese troops from Campuchea, against all national oppression of Campuchea and for the masses of Campuchea and Vietnam to organise to settle their own accounts with their Stalinist bureaucracies as a prerequisite to advance towards a genuine Soviet Federation of Indo-China.

## Cheer—leader

A diametrically opposite position is advanced by the IMG and the paper Socialist Challenge. In the Socialist Challenge of 11th January 1979, Tariq Ali committed the IMG to the role of mildly critical cheer-leaders for the Vietnamese bureaucracy. The blame for the conflict was placed firmly on the shoulders of the Pol Pot regime. It was the Pol Pot regime that had taken the theory of "Socialism in One Country" to "its most barbaric logic". Ali, true to the USFI's majority line, holds that the Vietnamese CP is not Stalinist and that "Socialism in One Country" is not the basis of the programme of the Vietnamese bureaucracy.

In the face of the Pol Pot regime, we are told, the Vietnamese exercised exemplary patience and restraint,

**"For 5 years the Vietnamese had held back, hoping that negotiations and patience would do the trick"**



Heng Samrin reviews troops

but the destabilising effect of the Pol Pot regime eventually prompted Vietnamese intervention

**"The most important reason (For the intervention—WP) is the continuing destabilising impact of Cambodia on Indo-China as a whole"**.

In this way Tariq Ali lines up the IMG behind the Vietnamese in this blood feud between Stalinists.

The IMG do express some reservations as to the political health of the Vietnamese regime. According to Tariq Ali the But what is the prescription of Socialist Challenge to institutionalise the legitimacy of the Stalinist regimes?

The IMG and the majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International have consistently refused to call for a political revolution of Vietnamese workers and peasants against the Vietnamese bureaucracy. In the aftermath of Pol Pot's downfall they recommend the Stalinists to allow 'democratic rights' within their regime. It is free elections, access to the press, a plurality of parties initiated from above that will finally legitimise the regime in the eyes of the IMG. It is not a programme of Soviets to replace the bureaucratic state with workers democracy, but bourgeois democratic rights within the regime that makes up Socialist Challenge's programme for the masses of Indo-China.

**"central dilemma of the revolutionary regimes in Indo-China was the establishment of organs of power which institutionalised their legitimacy"**.

The task of revolutionary Marxists is to advance the programme for the emancipation of the workers and peasants of Indo-China, not to line themselves up with one or another feuding Stalinist clique. That elementary principle evades the 'Trotskyist' Tariq Ali and the editorial board of Socialist Challenge.

## WP & the SCLV

Since its founding conference, Workers Power has given the SCLV critical support. Our supporters have worked in the SCLV groups while voicing our criticisms of the perspective and practice of the SCLV.

In Workers Power journal number 6 we maintained that the SCLV was, 'a principled alternative to the reformist mish-mash of Socialist Unity and the SWP'. We were wrong. The SCLV could have laid the basis for a principled alternative only as a fighting united front committed to action, to putting its left supporters to the test, or as an explicitly revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party. The SCLV is neither.

At its founding conference we fought to commit the SCLV to a fighting programme of action focused around the demand for no holding back on the working class struggle to keep in office the anti-working class government of Callaghan. Our attempt was blocked by unprincipled manoeuvre, by a refusal to even discuss our proposals, orchestrated by the supporters of Workers Action.

The founding conference and programme laid down no commitment to joint struggle from the reformists and 'revolutionaries'. Declarations of principle abounded; the SCLV declared, 'No more wage curbs! No more strike-breaking from Labour!'

However, nowhere did the SCLV advance any means for fighting for these demands. Nowhere were the left reformists, whose patronage was cherished by the SCLV, committed to action — non-implementation of the cuts, no voting for anti-working class measures, no confidence vote for the anti-working class Callaghan government., all these were rejected by the SCLV on Workers Action supporters' suggestion. The 'Lefts' were given all the benefits of a bloc, immunity from criticism in the 'revolutionaries' press, new troops for canvassing, a platform in Socialist Organiser, at no price of commitment to specific action against the Callaghan government.

The SCLV, built on such a recipe, could be no more than a bloc for common propaganda that could make no break from left reformism.

A study of Socialist Organiser shows the politics on which that bloc is based. "Ours will be a campaign in the best traditions of Labour militancy" declared the first editorial of Socialist Organiser. In the second editorial we were told that the only way to win the votes of the disenchanted to Labour was to force Labour to be seen as championing the struggle of the oppressed. A campaign to stem the tide of working class cynicism in Labour, not a campaign to stop Callaghan's policies now — that is the SCLV's recipe for a campaign.

There are two major criticisms we would make of this recipe.

Firstly the bloc will fall apart at all the key tests of action. This was proved at Brick Lane last September. As the ANL led its revellers away from the fascists it was Ernie Ro Roberts (SCLV sponsor) who presided at Hyde Park, it was Ted Knight (for whom the SCLV organised a mass canvas in December) who welcomed the marchers into Brockwell Park while the SCLV banner was carried to Brick Lane.

Secondly, at a time when the Labour Government has committed itself to an offensive on workers' living standards and organisations, the focus of a campaign to fight back must be the struggle in the factories and workplaces to stop Callaghan in his tracks, even if that means the defeat of the Labour Government.

To focus a campaign on securing votes for Labour is to divert revolutionaries and militants away from the key tasks of the day. As Labour sets itself on a collision course with the working class we cannot give an open-ended commitment to a Labour vote, even less can we make it the cornerstone of a united front struggle against Callaghan.

The SCLV is not a principled alternative to the reformist mish-mash of the Socialist Unity and the SWP. It is built on the model of shoddy manoeuvre, pioneered by the IMG; of using the left reformist leaders as draw cards whilst the 'revolutionaries' build their own circles out of the campaign and politically accommodate in the process. It represents a further stage in the right wing turn of Workers Action.

The SCLV, and the record of Workers Action in it, show that the leaders of Workers Action are set on that course.

We will support initiatives of the SCLV which we consider advance the struggle against Callaghan, we shall attempt to initiate joint struggle when we consider it necessary and possible. But we can no longer count ourselves supporters of the SCLV.

Towards the end of 1978 the tiniest flicker of a row seemed to be starting inside the Labour Party. The leading lights of the 'Left' such as Skinner and Kinnock had come up with a manifesto for Labour at the next election. Angered by the sweeping "socialist" measures proposed by this document such as import controls, reflation of the economy and worker participation in industry, Cabinet ministers in alliance with right wing union leaders had come up with an alternative called 'Into the Eighties'. This centred on the need to combat inflation—predictably by holding down workers' wages. The scene looked set for a fearful battle—opening shots were even fired at an NEC visit to Downing Street, where Callaghan told the NEC to forget the manifesto. Tribune parried this with the plucky reply that they: "may not take a very generous view of those leaders who can barely conceal their contempt for the movement" (27.10.1978)

But suddenly the promised drama fizzled out. Callaghan and his cronies became engrossed in other matters, while the 'left' packed up their manifesto and went into the wings to wait for another chance to do battle. It wasn't the Christmas festivities that put paid to the conflict; it was the onset of the lorry drivers strike and the moves towards action by the public sector workers. The attention of the press, the bosses and the 'public' switched from the manifesto machinations of the Labour left to the struggles that were shaping up between capital and labour.

This situation illustrates that the crucial terrain of class struggle at the moment is not in the Labour Party, but on the picket lines, the haulage depots, the railways and the hospitals. But, it would be foolhardy empiricism to suggest that because the struggle is on the economic front the 'lefts' in Parliament, indeed the whole question of the Labour Party and reformism have slipped from the political scene. The possibility of an attempt by the 'lefts' to line up with workers in struggle, the very illusions of workers in the Labour Party are all factors that necessitate a clear understanding of an orientation to the major reformist party by revolutionaries.

As an expression of the aspirations of the labour aristocracy, the Party has always been led by class collaborators. Unlike the German Social Democratic Party the Labour Party has never had even the whiff of a Marxist tradition. The right wing therefore has always been strong and ideologically unified through its unswerving loyalty to capitalism.

But being based on the trade unions the Labour Party was forced to adopt a social democratic mantle, a mantle cherished by the confused, dithering and largely christian/pacifist left wing of the party. This left wing was an eclectic amalgam marked by a total lack of cohesion. As such it could never seriously challenge the hold that the tightly knit right exerted over the party. Trotsky pointed out that: "The left wingers have no such system (of generalised politics—MH) their very nature prevents this. . . The weakness of the left wingers inside the Labour Party comes from their lack of cohesion and this arises from their ideological shapelessness." (On Britain p.164)

He goes on to point out that this "ideological shapelessness" makes the lefts "incapable of organisationally assuming the leadership." (On Britain p.163). In case people think that the fifty years that have passed since Trotsky wrote these words have seen an ideological cohesion emerging in

## As Callaghan throws down the gauntlet to workers

the Labour left they have only to flick through the pages of the Left's mouthpiece 'Tribune'. Only two months ago Stan Newens, in a review of a pamphlet called 'In Defence of Democratic Socialism' glorified the open minded undogmatic and pragmatic way in which Labour looked at issues (1.12.1978). And two weeks before that in the same journal reviewing the same pamphlet Hugh Jenkins praised the "lack of a dogmatic backbone" (17.11.1978) amongst the Labour left.

But as well as their ideological confusion it is important to recognise another aspect of the 'lefts' that renders them incapable of fighting unflinchingly in the interests of the working class. The material base of the lefts is exactly the same as the rest of the Labour Party. The lefts are not an unsullied expression of the feelings of the masses (although under pressure they can reflect the discontent of the masses.) The Left has remained weak and powerless in the Labour Party except in periods of rupture between the Party leadership and the Trade Union leaders. In these situations the 'left' has developed a power base for itself as brokers of the Trade Union bureaucrats within the Labour Party

After the conference defeats of the 5% and the apparent break between the TUC and the Government the whole thrust of Tribune's strategy has been to reach a rapprochement with their beloved trade union leaders. Article after article has praised the patience and goodwill of the TUC and begged the Government to recognise it. After the sanctions defeat Richard Clements wrote a major article headlined "Now drop the Five Per Cent and get agreement with the Trade Unions". He went on: (the defeat of the sanctions—MH) "... could mend the damaging rift which has grown up between the Government and the TUC. . . If the Government can listen to the House of Commons and change policy it is about time that it listened to its own friends (the TUC) as well." (Tribune 22.12.1978)

In other words get back to the social contract that has been responsible for four years of wage cutting and savage cuts in social expenditure and massive unemployment.

Tribune does admit that the 5% will have to go. Like the union leaders they realise that it is impossible to sell to the rank and file. But their strategy for defeating the 5% isn't based on supporting workers who are actively struggling against it. Nor is it for left MPs to vote against the Government in Parliament. No, true to cowardly form Tribune argued: "We hope that a Cabinet revolt will now be led against the strife which he (Callaghan—MH) is creating in the Labour movement at this moment." (6.10.1978). Turning its back on the direct action of workers Tribune calls on the very Cabinet responsible for using troops to enforce the pay code (in N. Ireland last month) to spearhead the fight against pay policy!

### Trooped

With the TUC and Labour Party conferences behind them the lefts such as Skinner, Benn, Kinnock, Flannery and the rest of them, should be waging a relentless battle against Callaghan's incomes policy. Such a battle should not be confined to the verbal terrain but should also consist of the lefts actually voting against such policies in Parliament. Yet, when it came to the crunch over the sanctions vote Skinner and his cohorts didn't even have the guts to abstain but trooped loyally into the Government's lobbies. Five lefts maintained their cover by abstaining but as soon as it came to a vote of confidence in the wage cutting government they caved in. Tribune welcomed this wretched refusal to



L. Spatham (IFL)

Left's find their voice

## NO FIGHT FROM LABOUR'S LEFT

consistently stand against this anti working class Government with praise: "When the vote of confidence came—the five quite rightly came back into the fold and voted to keep the Labour Government in power." (22.12.1978).

So, having caved in on the most crucial issue facing the working class what are the progressive tendencies that the CP waxes so enthusiastically about? Perhaps they are referring to Eric Heffer's heroic and uncompromising stand on the question of blood sports, or to Tribune's ceaseless chauvinist tirade against foreign imports, such as Doug Hoyle's remark; "I believe we should. . . show them (the Japanese—MH) the door before it is too late." (Tribune 6.10.1978).

The Labour left are quick to champion every peripheral issue that might help them keep a left gloss, but at the first test of action on burning issues facing the working class such as the 5% they collapse into the meekest supporters of such arch reactionaries as Callaghan. As Trotsky so aptly put it in the 1920s: "It should be thoroughly understood that leftism of this kind remains left only so long as it has no practical obligations." (On Britain p.165).

Clearly these left fakers represent a severe danger inside the workers' movement. They can, under mass pressure, move to the head of struggles with the aim of containing and strangling them. They cannot, therefore, be simply ignored or abused out of existence. Communists need to have a clear tactical orientation to these lefts aimed at breaking workers from their crippling influence

One slogan that has in the past been used by Trotskyists and is used by the Workers Socialist League (WSL) is 'make the Lefts fight'. This slogan the WSL argue, is aimed at shattering the illusions

that the masses have in the Lefts by exposing them when they do not fight!

As Socialist Press has put it: "In demanding that 'left' MPs take up a fight for the removal of Callaghan and promising them support should they do so, trade unionists and Labour activists can force such positions out into the open, and see in practice the utter spinelessness of their present supposedly 'socialist' leaders". (15th November 1978)

The demand on the Lefts is to form a principled alternative to Callaghan - for who else in this schema could replace him? . . . "Callaghan and his gang of supporters must be driven out and a principled socialist leadership in conflict with the existing right-wing leaders constructed in the Labour Party". (SP 3rd May '78)

### Schema

There are a number of things seriously wrong with this seemingly logical schema. First of all it assumes that the main block in front of workers moving into struggle at the moment is the left in Parliament. The WSL artificially distinguish the left from the right in the Labour and assume that workers only have illusions in the left.

However it is still true that workers see the whole of the Labour Party as their party, the agent of their reforms. That explains why Labour retains, even after its four years of wage cutting, the electoral loyalty of the overwhelming majority of workers.

That is why a central slogan for the period we are in is "No hold-

ing back to preserve a wage cutting government". This applies both to workers struggling over wage claims and to the Lefts in Parliament, who should be forced not to hold back when it comes to a vote of confidence in the government.

A further error in the WSL's scheme is the notion of stages that it implies. In an article called "Make the Lefts Fight" (SP 13/3/78) Trotsky is quoted at length on the question of the stages that workers have to go through before they come to see the need for a new revolutionary leadership. These concrete stages of class struggle that Trotsky was referring to are transmuted by the WSL into timeless and abstract and inevitable stages in the working class' linear development towards the revolutionary party. What we are left with isn't a revolutionary slogan or tactic but an algebraic formula artificially grafted on to every issue and every struggle.

What the comrades of the WSL are obviously striving to come to terms with is the tactic of the united front. But the essence of the united front tactic is that it relates to actual struggles that workers are engaged in. The WSL's formulaic notions leave out this crucial aspect of the united front so all they are left calling for is that the Lefts should kick out the right wing leadership and, implicit in this demand, then take over leadership themselves. Once in leadership the Lefts will expose themselves and this will be the last stage of the process, whereupon workers will turn to the revolutionary party. The confusion here is that the purpose of the united front tactic is not at all that the lefts should assume leadership. Trotsky pointed this out:

"It would be the most profound error to think . . . that the task of the united front consists in securing the victory of Purcell, Lansbury, Wheatley and Kirkwood (Lefts—MH) over Snowden Webb and MacDonald. Such an aim would contain an inner contradiction. The left wing muddlers are not capable of power" (On Britain p 163).

He goes on to point out that they would, if they got power, hand it back to the right and act as political Pontious Pilate, thus maintaining their left image. The real task of the united front, therefore, is to drag these people into the arena of class struggle and direct action where the left gloss can get tarnished. In this way the lefts will be tested in action and their influence over workers can begin to be broken. But to the WSL formulas and 'stages' take precedence over carefully applied revolutionary tactics.

As communists we recognise the danger posed by the existence of a layer of left talkers. We also recognise the need to relate to this layer using the tactic of the united front but this means testing the lefts in the course of actual struggles. Will Skinner organise a fight to implement conference decisions, will he support those fighting the 5% by voting against the government. This will be tested by dragging him out of the Parliament he loves so well, demanding that eating peanuts during the sanctions debate (which he did) is no substitute for voting against the Government's wages policy (which he did not). The slogans of the WSL don't come near to doing this.

Mark Hoskisson

Imperialist Regime. Its strength—between three and four hundred thousand represents 3% of the employed population. The average soldier is paid considerably more than the masses of urban and rural poor, though less than a skilled worker. As far as possible they are isolated from society, serving hundreds of miles from their area of recruitment. They are themselves riddled with agents and informers of Military Intelligence. The disaffection of the troops used to slaughter demonstrators has reached fever pitch at various points. Units have joined demonstrators or refused to fire but the prevalence of incidents where soldiers have shot themselves or the events at the Lavizan Barracks outside Teheran in December where three enlisted men burst into the officers' mess and sprayed its inmates with machine gun fire, indicate the still isolated nature of these outbursts. Army morale is uncertain but not broken.

The Officer Corps is an elite even more divorced from society. Some military schools take pupils at 7 years of age. There has been little contact between the Officer Corps and the Opposition either civil or religious. The high command consists of ferocious loyalists to the bonapartist regime. Although two of the most blood-thirsty reactionaries General Gholam Ali Oveissi, ex-administrator of martial law in Teheran and General Khosrodad, chief of the 'air cavalry' have been removed or posted to distant garrisons, the outlook of the High Command is well summed up by a spokesman for the pro-Shah politicians, "At the moment the commanders don't know whether to chop (Khomeini) up for dog meat or to use him for target practice." (Guardian 22.1.1979).

Most of the Generals and the Officer Corps know that they have little to expect except popular vengeance once the weapons of repression slip from their grasp. They have no perspective expect to attempt to drown the movement in seas of blood. The masses of rank and file soldiers, on the other hand, can be won over; the isolated mutinies reveal this. But to produce a massive breakdown of morale such that the soldiers break ranks and join the masses, pass arms to the workers, peasants, students, arrest their officers etc requires decisive organised action on the part of the masses.

There can be no doubt of the heroism and willingness to sacrifice of the masses in the streets. The crucial question is leadership, strategic goals and specific tactics. The bourgeois oppositionists in the National Front fear the collapse of the Army more than they fear a military dictatorship. The highly socially conservative goals of the religious opposition offer little to the sons of peasants and workers in the army. Neither does Khomeini wish to launch an insurrection. He hopes that mass demonstrations plus the creation of a shadow provisional government will be enough to win over a key section of either the high command or the Islamic nationalist colonels. Nor is Maoist guerrillism appropriate to these tasks. Strategically it rejects the goal of proletarian revolution and thus subjects the working class to an alliance with the 'national bourgeoisie' and the 'progressive alliance'. It elevates guerilla struggle itself to a strategy and thus has not built its base in the factories and workplaces and does not base itself on the self-organisation and self-activity of the working class. Workers' councils, a workers' militia the turning of the general strike into an insurrection, require a party with a completely different perspective.

M. EVANS

The Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has said that he regards the mass demonstrations in December and January as a referendum in his favour and as a mandate to name the members of a provisional council made up of 'Moslem believers', a new premier and a provisional government. This government would prepare elections, Khomeini, in an interview with a Beirut newspaper, has indicated that he does not accept the idea of a one party system (Economist 13.1.1979). Further he proclaims that "an Islamic government is not backward looking. We approve of civilisation but not that which goes against the interests and dignity of our people." Does this make Khomeini a democrat? Far from it.

The Shia hierarchy, of whom he is the spokesman, have as their ideal a Moslem theocracy. Over the last fifty years the Mullahs have lost control over education and the law which have been secularised. They have lost the 'waqf' lands which financed the mosques, and they have lost all influence over government policy—most notably the power to enforce Islamic precepts with regard to women and family law. Empty of progressive content as most of the Shah's 'reforms' were, the restoration of the hierarchy's power in all these areas would clearly be a reactionary act. The complete separation of Mosque and State is a measure in the direct interest of workers, poor peasants, students and intellectuals, women and the national and religious minorities.

At the level of state power Khomeini wants to build in a veto, or the power to nominate candidates, for the Shia clergy at all levels. In an interview with Le Monde (10.1.1979) he makes this clear, "We will charge a committee to proceed with consultations to form an Assembly. The people have already pronounced their will to have an Islamic government. But if a referendum is necessary on the legal basis for it, we will not refuse this. The Committee would consist of believers. It could include ulemas either with full or with observer status. We will propose a candidate for the presidency of the Republic. He would have to be elected by the people. Once elected we would support him. The laws of an Islamic government would be the

By nightfall on the day of the Shah's departure not one statue of him, or his father was left standing in Teheran.



## No democracy for workers in Khomeini's proposed State

# BEWARE OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

laws of Islam." Asked what the attitude of such a government would be to non-believers, Khomeini replied, "We would try to show the way to salvation to these people. If they do not want this they will be free in their daily life providing they do not foment plots harmful to the people and the country."

Khomeini's closest political ally in secular politics is the politician Mehdi Bazargan head of the Iran Liberation Movement which stands outside the National Front and is opposed to the inclusion of social-democrats in any future government. Bazargan's party is avowedly Islamic. Thus the goals and political allies of the religious opposition are far from consistent democracy. Indeed an Islamic Republic designed according to their wishes would be a plebiscite bonapartism, albeit with a populist and anti-imperialist colouration.

The structure of the Mullah-led opposition is powerful and dangerous. Its main social base, the bazaar merchants of Teheran, dispose of an efficient organisation headed by five leaders each of which has a network of sub-leaders. These can mobilise gangs of 'luti'—unemployed youth, bazaar porters and labourers. Each major leader is reported as being able to mobilize 5,000 'luti' within half an hour. This 'Militia' can be a serious threat to the working class.

The religious opposition itself is also increasingly well organised. Teheran is subdivided into nine districts each headed by a ulema, controlling the base organisations officered by Mullahs. The nine ulemas form a council in daily touch with Khomeini. According to the ulema Moussadeh, the Shi'ite hierarchy aims to form such councils in every town. Moreover, "These will be permanent councils which will occupy themselves as much with political life as with religious, since in Islam the two are tied up together." (Nouvel Observateur 15:21.1.1979).

Despite Khomeini's declared support for the oil strikers and despite the undoubted fact that most Iranian workers have massive illusions in the Ayatollah, the forces he heads—the Bazaar and the Shi'ite clergy are and can be only temporary—military allies of the Iranian working class in the fight against the Shah and the Generals. The hostility of the religious activists to the class interests of the workers is already manifest in the Mullah provoked attacks on demonstrators who carry red flags and in their strident anti-communism. Le Nouvel Observateur (No.740) reports the following, "The left milieu is beginning to get alarmed. A few days ago, at the Behcheste Zahra cemetery near Teheran in the middle of a crowd listening attentively to the mullahs a worker stood up to speak on the problems facing the proletariat. He was shouted down with cries of 'Death to the Shah! Death to Communism!'"

The task of revolutionaries, of Trotskyists, in Iran is to raise the alarm in the working class, difficult as this task will be. To warn worker-militants, to win them away from the Ayatollah and the Mullahs and to resolute opposition to an obscurantist Islamic 'Republic'. The masses, including the workers, follow the Mullahs because they have illusions in the democracy



Workers' illusions in Khomeini must be dispelled.

# NO TO AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

and national freedom that they believe this republic could bring and because Khomeini appears to want to smash the Shah's SAVAK tyranny. The religious leaders and their National Front hangers on must be exposed by mobilising workers around real democratic demands centring on the call for a constituent assembly unfettered by vetoes and elected by universal suffrage. To fight for this, class organisations of the

Rebellious troops celebrate the Shah's flight.



proletariat free from Mullah must be formed, factor committees, workers councils, trade unions and the militia necessary to protect these. Above all a revolutionary political party is the need, one which can spearhead these organs of struggle and workers' democracy. A party pledged to fight for democratic rights: against an Islamic Republic and for a Workers and Peasants State in Iran.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USEC), and their record of opportunism with regard to the Iranian revolution, will prove a fatal guide to its followers in Iran.

The position they have argued is identical to that of the Mensheviks in pre-revolutionary Russia who argued, against Lenin and the Bolsheviks, that the workers movement should focus on the struggle for bourgeois democratic demands aiming later to utilise the freedoms afforded by bourgeois democracy to build a workers party in preparation for the next stage of the historical process—the struggle for socialism.

In September Tariq Ali outlined the 'key tasks' of the fight to overthrow the Shah as —“the establishment of a republic, restoration of trade unions and political parties, free elections on the basis of universal adult franchise to elect a Constituent Assembly in order to draft a constitution, total nationalisation of all the oil and multinational companies.”

Ali calls for a bourgeois, not a workers republic. All the measures cited are bourgeois-democratic and the Constituent Assembly is to finalise the bourgeois revolution, to give it constitutional form.

The excuses advanced for the

## THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

Muslim clergy by Socialist Challenge were introduced with an analogy from a bourgeois revolution—“Charles the first too was overthrown by a movement which spoke with a religious voice.” The most Socialist Challenge can muster is a sly wink in the direction of “something more” than a bourgeois revolution taking place in Iran—“such a dynamic will pave the way for more lasting a fundamental changes.”

Is this just a quirk of the editorial offices of Socialist Challenge? Not at all. In an interview with Iranian Trotskyists on 12th October 1978 we find as the sole statement of aims “Iranian revolutionaries must call for the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy; its replacement by a republic, and the establishment of a constituent assembly freely elected through universal suffrage.” In an editorial statement on Iran (Socialist Challenge 9.11.1978) which was made after the eruption of the massive anti-Shah strike wave the IMG dropped a few gentle hints that a bourgeois revolution was not all that was at stake “Even the most far-reaching bourgeois democracy is unlikely to satisfy the needs of

the masses. . . there is the possibility of the masses developing their own organisations of workers power—not simply to get rid of their present ruler, but to seize their own destiny once and for all.”



But, these wiseacres continue “The only thing we can predict with scientific accuracy is that ‘everything is possible’”. Such ‘scientific accuracy’ bears as much resemblance to ‘scientific socialism’ as Old Moore’s Almanac does to Trotsky’s ‘Permanent Revolution’.

The Iranian workers took our ‘scientists’ by such surprise as to force them in the direction of calling for soviets and workers power. But one week later Socialist Challenge was equivocating again. While soviets may be “the most favourable development” the “vital part of our armoury” for the IMG remained the “overthrow of the monarchy, immediate elections, convocation of a Constituent Assembly, freed-

om to form political parties and trade unions.” (SC 16.11.78)

Socialism, proletarian revolution soviets are for the IMG a possible ‘favourable development’. Revolutionaries should no doubt produce propaganda about them. But the centre-piece of the IMG/USFI’s agitation is “a number of interrelated democratic slogans” centering on the Constituent Assembly. (SC 14.12.1978)

What these ‘Trotskyists’ fail to understand is that soviets and the proletarian revolution are not gifts of the historical process in the absence of which revolutionaries make do with bourgeois democracy. They are the strategic goal to which revolutionaries gear all their tactics.

Nowhere in the IMG/USFI’s material do we even find a clear statement that to be successful in its bourgeois-democratic and anti-imperialist tasks the Iranian Revolution must become a proletarian revolution. All the experience of the major revolutionary upheavals from the first world war underlines the fact that ‘democracy’ is not a consolation prize for a failed revolution. The outcome is almost certainly bloody repression and military

dictatorship. A situation like Weimar Germany or Portugal at present is the most ‘favourable’ alternative to such repression and, without a renewed and successful proletarian struggle for power, it will prove but a preparation for it.

With a rosy assurance that ‘at least’ the Iranian revolution will guarantee democracy the IMG/USFI has started to count its electoral chickens before they have even hatched. They can ignore, or reduce to ‘asides’, the tasks of centralising the workers strike committees into soviets, of calling for an armed workers militia, for the preparation of an insurrection to smash the Generals control of the army, for absolute working class independence from the Mullahs and opposition to their plans for an Islamic Republic. Trusting to the Constituent Assembly to institutionalise democratic rights they see the key task as “to take full advantage of them in terms of developing a socialist press, trade unions and preparing a powerful electoral intervention” in the manner of FOCEP in Peru. (Socialist Challenge 18.11979).

As the Mensheviks before them the Socialist Challenge editors have their eyes fixed on an electoral intervention after the successful bourgeois revolution not on a programme for the struggle for workers power.

# Opportunists and sectarians on Iran

By Dave Stocking

The International Spartacist Tendency’s position on Iran is living proof that a sectarian response to opportunism leads to errors as bad if not worse than those of the USFI. Starting from a need to contradict the SWP(US) and the Iranian Student milieu the Spartacists raised the slogans “Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!” Positively delighted by the outrage of Iranians—moslem and ‘socialist’ a fact witnessed by their insulting epithet ‘Mullah lovers’, and the chorlines of delight about Iranians ‘driven to absolute frenzy by our slogans’ the Spartacists started on the slippery slope to complete abstention from the struggle against the Shah, worse to an endorsement of their own ruling class’s propaganda.

The Spartacists make a series of charges against the Mullah led opposition as a result of which they characterise the movement as one of ‘clerical reaction’. A number of these charges amount to uncritical retailing of the chauvinist rubbish which filled the American press throughout the Autumn. The Mullahs they claim wish to restore Iran to the 7th century AD, to the period of “the expansion of Islam by fire and the sword.” They wish to introduce savage Islamic law punishments; stoning, public hanging and whipping etc. They wish to enforce the wearing of the veil and the removal of the rights given to women by the Shah. To this list they add Khomeini’s appetite to slaughter the working class militants on the pattern of the Indonesian mullahs in 1965, they cite his ‘hatred of western civilization’ quoting as a fact that

the ‘Islamic Republic’ will be simply a brutal military dictatorship.

The Spartacists do not restrict their venom to the mullahs. They see the masses participating in this movement as total dupes, with an appetite for genocide. “But you have to look at the slogans of the movement, restore the clerical lands, restore the veil, ban everything that sort of represents Western Progress, expel the foreign workers. In terms of the indigenous national minorities it could only be intensely genocidal in appetite.” (Workers Vanguard 5.1.79). Khomeini may well harbour some or all of these desires. Certainly some mullahs undoubtedly do. Reservations do have to be made however even here. Shi’ia Islam explicitly allows re-interpretation by the ulemas of the canonical teachings of Islam. Khomeini—although he opposed the Shah’s reforms on muslim divorce in 1967 has recently told a visiting delegation of women that he would not bring back polygamy; “One wife is enough” he remarked. (Time 5.2.79). Also among his disciples in Paris were a number of unveiled women, and despite the recrudescence of veil-wearing (in itself an act of defiance against the Shah’s regulation outlawing it) it is plainly untrue that the movement is explicitly for the return of women to the seclusion of the home and their submission to barbaric punishments. Such a movement could hardly draw into street protests and confrontation with the troops vast numbers of women veiled and unveiled.

As for the national and religious

minorities as we have warned an Islamic Republic is likely to prove a severe threat to their rights and liberties but it is wrong to say the movement at present is consciously aimed at them. Large contingents of jews and Azerbaijanis took part in the demonstrations in January and were loudly cheered by the crowd. Afghan workers homes have been guarded against pogromists whipped up by Bakhtiar’s campaign against ‘communist immigrants’ and the call for foreign workers to get out was raised by Arab speaking workers in the oil fields against the highly paid English and American overseers and ‘experts’. Other charges are similarly gross distortions worthy of the capitalist yellow press. Khomeini the Spartacists tell us “wishes to restore feudal privileges, to restore the church lands to this parasitical caste.” (WV 5.1.79). Khomeini has uttered no statement about undoing the land reform and his peasant supporters would be more than surprised to hear it.



Why do the Spartacists have to retail this collection of half-truths and unsubstantiated claims? The answer is simple, they wish to abstain from support from the mass struggle against the Shah. When they say ‘Down with the Shah!’ they in fact include a proviso—only if it is the workers led by communists who do it. They oppose absolutely any military co-operation with the

non-proletarian oppositionists. This position would mean abstention from the demonstrations, from the confrontations with the troops (called ‘suicidal’ in WV 15.12.78). In the event of an uprising and barricade fighting between the army and the people it would again mean abstention. To justify this absurd and reactionary position the Spartacists have gone all the way to white-washing the Shah himself. “What we need is a party that can transcend this kind of national chauvinism and counterpose a proletarian class axis to the current instability. In the absence of that one could more easily justify giving support to the Shah, as the Soviet Union clearly is doing, than to these Mulim clerical reactionaries, because if they are able to consolidate power all the evidence is it could only be worse than Indonesia for the working class, for the peasants for the national minorities and the women.” (Workers Vanguard 5.1.79) (our emphasis WP).

Let us assume that the Spartacists do not wish to become ‘State Department Socialists’, Then how do they end up with these absurd and shameful positions? Basically they leave Imperialism out of account. For them a direct military intervention is the sole condition under which the opposition could be given military support. The Shah, installed by a CIA engineered coup and supported by thousands of CIA, and military advisors is an agent of American and British Imperialism.

The American ‘advisors’ enjoy extra-territorial status in Iran. American capital exploits Iran drawing super profits from its oil, from its industry and from agriculture. Iran is in Lenin’s terms a semi-colony. The masses, despite all their illusions, are struggling against this Imperialism. If the USFI draw from this the conclusion that working class can simply tail the mullahs. If they refuse to pose the central need for working class independence and leadership then the Spartacists turn this on its head. The mullahs are simply reactionary—identical to reactionary petit bourgeois movements in Imperialist countries like the Poijjadists in France.



Whilst we in no way hide that the positive goals of the mullahs are not and cannot be those of the working class we do argue that Trotskyists must participate in the actions against the Shah and the Generals. Whilst arguing for proletarian independence in strategic goals (workers and peasants republic) for consistent democratic demands (including secularisation), for proletarian tactics (mass strike, workers militia, winning over the rank and file of the army, for the armed insurrection, the workers must be willing to ‘strike together’ with the mullahs, bazaaris, students, peasants etc, ie to form a de facto anti-imperialist military united front. In Trotsky’s words “We do not solidarize ourselves for a moment with the illusions of the masses; but we must utilise whatever is progressive about these illusions to the utmost, otherwise we are not revolutionaries but contemptible pedants.” (Trotsky on Spain)

THE INTERNATIONAL SPARTACIST TENDENCY

# Labour's Orange card

by  
**JAMES TANDY**

The Labour Government, working ever closer with the official Unionists, has given a new impetus to the army and security forces in Northern Ireland to refine and develop their apparatus of repression. Alongside this new drive to break the resistance of the anti-Unionist population the army's favourite, Roy Mason, has set out to lure new capital to the North in a bid to prop up the artificial sectarian six county state.

Before Roy Mason replaced Rees there were growing signs of a movement of capital from Northern Ireland. The Provos encouraged all rumours of impending withdrawal to show that they were winning. So too did the Unionists anxious to force an even greater British commitment to their sectarian statelet.

In the 18 months before November 1976 there were major job losses—800 at Rolls Royce, 850 at STC, 1700 at International Electronics, 2,000 at the Ministry of Defence. The Labour Government and the Northern Ireland office were profoundly alarmed at the prospect of a serious flight of capital from their province.

These fears were spelt out in a report of the Northern Irish Economic Council under the chairmanship of full time civil servant Quigley. Direct subsidies and incentives to foreign capital, indeed "to put up most or if necessary all the capital needed to carry most of the risks for the period" was the recipe for Quigley. As an alternative to stagnation and decay in the artificial Northern Irish state Northern Irish workers should also reconcile themselves to lower wage rates than "the rest of" the UK.

In August 1977 Mason announced a package to boost the Northern Irish economy by £1,000m over the next five years. The major part of the package was an increase in grants to new private industry to 40%-50% on all new plant and building. Labour's campaign to lure new capital to the province was a vital component of its drive to restabilise the hold of Britain over the six counties.

What Mason and the Northern Ireland Office needed for inclusion in the glossy publicity material produced to convince capitalists to invest in Northern Ireland was a success story. This was to be founded Mason hoped, in the DLMC sports car factory to be built, with a government hand out of £54.75 million, near Twinbook a part of the main Catholic ghetto in West Belfast.

The recipient of Labour's aid was to be John Zachary De Lorean, who had failed to raise capital in America to produce a new luxury sports car. Even the desperate authorities in impoverished Puerto Rico were not satisfied that De Lorean could offer sufficient guarantees to merit their backing. But not so Roy Mason's Northern Ireland Office... De Lorean's scheme and

request was accepted within 10 days! Even if everything goes to schedule (which it will not) cars will not be being produced in any quantities until 1980. By then Mason and his administrators hope to have won enough new investment from the publicity of the De Lorean venture that it matters little whether the De Lorean project, and even less the livelihood of the De Lorean workers, bites the dust or not.

Labour's full-blooded commitment to the Northern state, these new economic policies, do not mean any lessening of its drive to break up the IRA, the principle defense force of the anti-unionist population in the six counties. Alongside the drive to inject the sagging economy of the North with new capital has gone the elaboration of new methods and techniques to break the resistance of the catholic minority.

The policies of the Labour Government explain why Mason was so willing to smash the 1977 Loyalist Strike. All the efforts of Mason's globe-trotting whizz-kids, with their "kill-ratio" statistics showing that Northern Ireland is safer than New York or Tokyo etc, would have looked pretty sick if a bunch of 'ungovernable thugs' and 'fundamentalist loonies' were seen as running NI. Mason gave the strikers most of what they wanted. In reality the public defeat of the stoppage marked a growing accord between the Labour government and the Official Unionists at Westminster who, under Powell's effective leadership are working for the full integration of NI into Britain.

It remained vital to co-opt the Unionist population more fully into running and policing their statelet. It is in this context that we can understand the new 'low profile' approach of the British Army in the North. The perfect man to oversee this approach for Imperialism in Ireland was Lieutenant General Timothy May Creasey CB, OBE, Order of Oman 2nd Class.

## normal

When the reorganisation is complete the operational strength of the army, a very different figure from the number of army personnel, will be below 3,000, apart from a cavalry unit. The method is described by Kitson thus: "A more economic method of deploying troops, and one which will still enable the development of information process (sic) to take place, is to take a chance in one area, whilst another one is pacified, and then move troops from the pacified area to the other

one as soon as it is certain that the first area will not revert to the insurgents. The key to this business lies in the ability of the police and locally raised forces (in NI this means the UDR-JT) to hold the pacified area for the government when the soldiers move elsewhere."

Army postings to NI will become "normal" by extending them to 2 year stays, probably with the troops families. This overcomes a problem identified by Kitson: "The tactical commander will always be at a disadvantage compared with his opponent who may have been operating in the District for months or even years before he arrives. Inevitably the tactical commanders change whenever units are moved in or out of an area and the problem therefore is one of finding a way of leaving them in an area for long enough. But this is not easy to achieve because there are seldom enough troops to cover the whole country in sufficient strength so some redeployment is usually inevitable in connection with the overall plan of campaign. Furthermore, breaks in continuity occur whenever a unit arrives in or departs from the theatre of operations, and unit tours in theatres of counter-insurgency operations are usually limited to a year and often to a period of a few months." (the norm in NI has been for 4 month "emergency tours.")

## Kitson

According to Kitson: "however great the restrictions imposed on the use of force by soldiers, every effort should be made to retain the respect and awe of the civilian community for the ultimate in terms of force which they might use. If an impression can be built up that although the troops have used little force so far, they might at any moment use a great deal more the people will be wary and relatively fewer men will be needed." (Our emphasis).

The efforts to "awe" the non-Unionist population have led to a good dozen deaths this year. They have led to the increased intimidation of anti-Unionist areas. In Crossmaglen, for example, the army barracks was deliberately sited next to a GAA ground (Gaelic Athletic Association) and army vehicles have deliberately set out to alienate the people by driving heavy vehicles over games fields, by vandalising the GAA clubhouse, by disrupting, with lights and noise, those games and social events that manage to get underway.

Northern Ireland has never been a "normal" bourgeois state in the way that the UK has been. There has been internment in every decade of the state's existence, and a "State of Emergency" has been permanent. Every attempt to launch an assault on the state has, in the past, been defeated by the mobilisation of the existing, or specially created, indigenous military and semi-military units.

The B-Specials were created in the 20s, largely by putting the old UVF into a new uniform. It was only after they had been defeated by the heroic resistance of the Bogside in 1969 that the chief of the RUC had to ask for the British army to be committed in an attempt to "restore order". The first soldiers committed in this way did not need to be "sent in" to NI, they were already there. NI has always had army barracks situated in it. The past victories of the RUC and B-Specials had been made possible by troops being on hand to provide training,

officers and back-up facilities.

The advantage of relying on indigenous forces, from the British point of view, (providing they can do the job properly) is not just their cost-effectiveness, but their familiarity with the areas in which they operate.

The new direction of the RUC, which was initiated in 1973 has been overseen by an English chief constable, Kenneth Newman. He is in many ways the perfect man for the job, and a perfect foil for Creasey. He began his career in Palestine, but made his reputation for his low-key handling of the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in 1969. According to the "State Research Bulletin No 4" "he is known to see Northern Ireland as providing a testing ground for methods of riot and crowd control and of anti-terrorist techniques that may be of use in Britain."

## RUC

The regular RUC numbers and those of the RUC Reserve have been increased, and their armaments improved, but the main "response" force is now the Special Patrol Groups. These are specially created elite formations, and number over 300 men in 11 sections. They are equipped with all the usual riot-control items, and also Walther pistols, pump-action shotguns, Sterling sub-machine guns and American M1 carbines. They have armoured Personnel carriers; "bullet resistant" armoured land rovers and in South Armagh, Shortland armoured cars. In short, they are a military unit. They retain regular RUC uniforms however, and are used as the spearhead in anti-riot operations but are indistinguishable from their regular colleagues.

The UDR has also been enormously strengthened. It now has 8,000 men, 2,500 of whom are full time. In all but the most "troublesome" areas the UDR is replacing the British army as the "first response force". They are also equipped with APCs and Shortlands armoured cars. Despite this, the UDR is subject to British army direction, and all the key command posts are held by regular army officers on secondment.

In October 1977 Enoch Powell wrote an article in "Police" which reiterated the position he has consistently argued since the early days of the NI war;

"The role of the army in aid of the power... is not to replace the police. It is not to supplement the police. It is not to deploy armaments which the police do not possess. It is to act as what it is, a killing machine, (to be used JT) when authority in the state judges that order can no longer be maintained or restored by any other means. The army is then brought in to present the immediate threat, and if necessary to perform the act of killing, albeit it minimal, controlled and selective killing. Having performed this role it is instantly withdrawn, and the police and civil powers resume their functions."

It is precisely the policy options advocated by Powell that lay the basis of Labour's "strategy" to maintain British domination of the six counties.

It has been left to Mason, Creasey and Newman to implement these proposals. Even if slimmed down, the army "buttress" will remain formidable. There is to be a cavalry unit, based at Omagh, which will be equipped with armoured cars, but more importantly it will provide helicopter surveillance. And though it is projected that the operational strength of the army is to drop to 3,000 and that these will be more concentrated in "troublesome" areas several existing barracks will remain open with a skeleton staff, no doubt in order to facilitate a rapid concentration of large numbers of extra troops if this became necessary.

The Labour Government has no strategy beyond grovelling before Imperialist capital and, piece by piece reassembling the sectarian supremacist state. There will probably now be an initiative to return to greater independence in local government—a move which will give the Unionists more power and influence, and more opportunities for dispensing patronage.

It should come as no surprise, given the policy of Labour, that Unionist votes at Westminster have been of crucial importance to maintaining Callaghan in office. Nor that Labour will pay for that support by increasing Unionist representation.

Against the initiatives of Rees and the army we must organise now, in the workers movement, to break Labour's commitment to the sectarian statelet, for the immediate withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland, for the right of the entire Irish people to decide the future of the 6 Counties.

Labour's lure for capital



# Unity talk no substitute for united action

On Thursday, December 21st, between 20 and 30 thousand trade unionist marched through the streets of Paris in a one day strike called by the CGT against the Government's economic policies and the "Barre Plan". French workers in 1979 face a series of attacks that have a familiar ring for British workers — official unemployment reaching highest ever figures since the war, massive redundancies threatened in 'ailing' sectors of industry, cuts planned in the public sector and social services and moves to 'repatriate' unwanted immigrant workers.

The first phase of the "Barre Plan", officially known as the "Economic Stabilisation Policy" was introduced by the French Prime Minister, Raymond Barre in September 1976, in the face of rising inflation, declining growth rates and increasing balance of payment deficits. As in Britain, the working class was to shoulder the burden of capitalist recession. The public sector was to face severe cutbacks — wage rises were to be limited in 1977 to 6.5% in a period where official figures put inflation at 10%, while private sector workers were to be limited to increases not exceeding the official rate. There was to be a "re-allocation of resources to productive investment and exports, away from private consumption" — while government support to 'ailing' industries like steel, ship-building and textiles would be phased out — allowing them to bear the full brunt of international competition.

The result of these measures was to dramatically increase unemployment — which rose from just over a million in April '77 (itself a post-war record) to 1.3 million in 1978. The real figure, given official statistics exclude unemployed women and school leavers, is over 1.5 million. At the same time the economy failed to revive, the Gross Domestic Product growing by only 3% in 1977 compared to 5.2% in the previous year. The increase in unemployment itself provoked a crisis in the financing of social security payments, and led to demands by the government for cuts in the 90% social security payments for workers made redundant and to further attacks on previous gains made by the French working class.

In April 1978 more "economic stabilisation" measures were introduced by Barre including the free-

ing of all industrial prices from State controls and State subsidies to industry were cut. At the same time Barre aimed a blow at the statutory minimum wage (the SMIC), announcing that "the promotion of increases in the minimum wage should be through negotiation between employers and employees rather than through increases in the SMIC." This was a clear challenge to the French trade unions and the Union of the Left which had been agitating for a raise in the SMIC from F1800 to F2400.

These measures were accompanied by measures against unwanted immigrant workers who were offered F10 000 to return home. When this "encouragement" failed miserably the French assembly approved the idea of yearly renewable permits for immigrants.

## RESPONSE OF THE WORKERS MOVEMENT

As in Britain, the French workers movement is hamstrung in its fight against this onslaught by a bankrupt reformist leadership. While Barre was launching his attack, the Socialist and Communist Parties and their respective union confederations, the CFDT (French Democratic Federation of Labour) and the CGT (General Confederation of Labour) were too concerned with winning the planned General Election in March '78 to mount more than a token protest. Indeed for a whole period previous to the elections the workers were held back with the promise that a Union of the Left Government would deal with these issues when it came to power; a strategy that effectively demobilised opposition to Barre's policies. Adopting the bureaucrats well tried method of allowing a safety valve for the workers indignation, a series of one day strikes were called against the plan in various sectors of industry.

As the election drew closer the division within the Union of the Left, between the SP and the CP, found its reflection in the increasing division between the trade union confederations. The disputes in the Union of the Left had their origins in the poor showing of the CP in the September/October 1974 bye-elections. It became clear to the CP that the Socialist Party was making substantial gains in electoral support while the CFDT had been grow-



Mike Sheridan (IFL)

Marseilles workers demonstrate against unemployment

ing dramatically in affiliated membership, (the CGT was meanwhile stagnating). By 1977, when the time came to update the "common programme" which had been drawn up in 1972, the PCF came forward with a more "militant" stance on wages and nationalisations.

The CP demanded a minimum wage of F2400 compared to the SP's F2200 figure, while wanting to add to the list of companies that the Union of the Left Government would nationalise — oil, steel Peugeot-Citroen as well as the subsidiaries of all the companies on the list. While the differences, in terms of the massive sectors of private French industry left out, were small (all firms of course were to be generously compensated by the CP/SP Government) — and were to become smaller when the CP obligingly dropped its demand to nationalise Peugeot-Citroen — nevertheless the CP launched a series of sharp polemics against the SP's opposition to these changes.

Clearly the CP has two objectives. Firstly, to recapture its image as the most vigilant, left wing party in the alliance, in this way bolstering its position among trade union militants. Secondly to head off any possible deals between the SP and the President of the Republic. The CP was very conscious of Giscard's desire to break up the Union by wooing the veteran bourgeois politician and leader of the SP — Mitterand — into a centre left coalition.

Their sharp polemic with the SP was necessary, therefore, both to increase their hold over militant sections of the class and to make themselves indispensable to the SP in administering the austerity programme both parties recognised would be necessary once in power. For this they were willing to risk the resulting apparent electoral disunity of the left.

The failure of the Union of the Left to gain governmental power in the March elections was to have dramatic effects in the CP and the working class. The bankruptcy of the policy of waiting for the Union of the Left Government was brought home to workers in the aftermath of defeat. The CP was racked with recrimination over the failure to inform, let alone convince, its membership of its strategy preceding the elections. The election defeat was followed by an unbroken chain of strikes for higher wages and against redundancies — in the health service, Renault, the SNCF (French Railways), Terrin in the Marseilles docks, Moulinex, the arsenals and in the education system. Both the CFDT

and the CGT fell over themselves to keep these struggles fragmented and headed them off. The CFDT, already re-assessing its position on the eve of the election has since squarely adopted what is called in France the 'policy of climbing stairs' — to the Presidential or ministerial offices for negotiations. Adopting a 'non-political' stance familiar to British trade unionists, the CFDT now pursues 'negotiable' demands, ones that are "appropriate in view of the economic crisis".

This 'realism' of accepting that workers must pay for the French crisis has resulted not only in a rejection of general and sectional protest strikes called by the CGT, but in Edmond Maire, the General Secretary of the CFDT declaring his willingness to accept a cut in the social security payments from 90% to 70%. The PCF and the CGT, while producing more fighting talk, have been just as quick to scramble up the Elysee Palace stairs to assure the Government of their willingness to be reasonable. They have been party to as many sellout agreements as the CFDT.

## THE FRENCH LEFT

In this situation the response of the French left has been woefully inadequate. The Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) and the League Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR — French section of the USEFI), two of the largest groups on the French Left have continuously submerged their programmes into pleas for 'unity' and denunciations of the PCF's 'sectarianism'. The OCI demonstrated its grovelling subservience to its idea of a 'workers government', a CP/SP coalition in power, by refusing to stand candidates against them, even in the first round of the French elections.

It has now gone on to vehemently denounce the 'sectarianism' of the CP, even to the point of declaring the CGT day of action against the Barre Plan a sectarian diversion not worthy of support. The French section of the USFI (under increasing pressure from the USEC to fuse with the OCI in the name of 'unity') limps along behind. Rejecting the "sectarian policy" of the PCF, the LCR declared: "Today the main obstacle to the development and coordination of struggles is the division in the ranks of the workers that is maintained by the leaderships of the CP and SP..." (Central Committee Statement of the LCR, October 8th, 1978)

No revolutionary should underestimate the necessity of united action by French workers both SP and CP, but to blame the lack

of a fighting strategy on the lack of unity, or on the 'sectarianism' of the CP, is to seriously mislead workers as to the central weaknesses of their reformist leaders. There is no lack of 'unity' in the leadership of the British working class — both TUC leaders and the Labour Government are totally united on the necessity for 'responsible' wagecutting negotiations. It is the class collaborationist policy of the SP/CP leadership which is the "main obstacle" facing the French working class.

In a situation where the CP is putting on a left face to sections of French workers, to make central the demand for unity begs the question, "unity on what basis?" Unity with the SP/CFDT leaders would mean compromise and retreat.

Central to the united action of French workers is an action programme of demands which answer the attacks being made on them and provides a way forward — for nationalisation without compensation of companies declaring redundancies, under workers control; for the sliding scale of wages and hours; for a massive programme of public works under workers control, for an adequate minimum wage protected against inflation; against all immigration controls; such demands would be central to that programme. Every move the PCF makes to mobilise workers against the employers attacks must be supported, but at the same time its inadequacies must be subjected to the most ruthless criticism and measured against the real needs of the class through a fight to extend such actions.

At the same time the divisions in the French trade union movement must be squarely faced up to. Central to the building of a fighting opposition to the bosses' onslaught must be the transformation of the unions into fighting organs of the working class — French workers must fight for the closed shop; for one union confederation, industrial unions; for factory committees and mount a massive campaign to pull the majority of French workers into trade unions. Central to this strategy of democratising the unions and kicking out the bureaucrats is the building of an active opposition movement in the trade unions around these demands, being lead by revolutionaries. Only a French Trotskyist party armed with this perspective can offer the leadership necessary to smash the Giscard/Barre Government and pose a strategy for the seizure of state power by the French working class.

W. Ford  
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# workers power

## ALL OUT NOW!

by Steve McSweeney

The 80,000 strong demonstration of public service workers in London on January 22nd. shows the massive scale on which the Government's pay policy could be fought. The uproar that drowned the speeches of the union leaders showed that many militants know who is preventing that action. But, although the crescendo of demands for all-out strike action drove Fisher and company from the platform, their attempts to limit action and fragment the movement will not be foiled as easily.

The response to the call for a day of action among NUPE members was reckoned at 90% on strike with a majority of the rest working by union agreement. The continuation of the strike after the 22nd. included ambulance crews, refuse collectors, incinerator workers, road maintenance gangs, school caretakers and airport workers. The decision to carry on the strike, taken by groups of workers in such a wide spread of industries and areas, underlines even more than the uproar in Central Hall, the depth of militancy and the determination to win throughout the public service industries.

The real question now facing the 1½ million workers in these industries is how to coordinate local actions and build them into an all-out national strike.

There can be no doubt that their leaders are desperately trying to work out a formula to end the strikes on the basis of a proposed 'comparability study'. The supposed advantage of this would be to guarantee that wages would not fall behind in the future by tying them to the wages of workers in manufacturing industry. However, the real point of this measure would be to take away the basis of independent action by workers in the public sector - if necessary by the inclusion of a 'no-strike' clause in any agreement. The Tories and the Press have both been pointing out the 'advantages' of such an arrangement. At present only the militancy of the rank and file of the unions affected is preventing the signing of such a deal.

### pressure

At the same time, union leaders are under increasing pressure from both the TUC leaders and the Government to step back from a policy which threatens to bring down the Labour Government. As talks begin to try to concoct a new version of the anti-working class Social Contract, based on a projected agreement between Government, TUC and CBI on 'what the country can afford', a pilot deal of the same kind for the public sector is obviously attractive to Callaghan and Healey.

Without a rapid transformation

into a concerted attack by all public sector workers, this pressure, plus the hysteria of the Press, could be used to browbeat workers into submission.

The union leaders themselves will not endorse such action until they are forced to recognise that the rank and file will do it despite them. As long as the strike action remains isolated and left to the initiative of local branches, the leaders can maintain their pretence of 'planning' a long term strategy to win the £60 minimum. To break out of this requires a determined lead from workers in crucial sectors, for example, the water workers, and, at the same time, other groups of workers not at present involved being drawn into action.

### low pay

The 'Fight Low Pay' slogan is dangerously ambiguous. It can become another version of the special case argument by which so many workers have been isolated in the past. This is how the union leaders use it. Alan Fisher of NUPE uses it to oppose wage increases won by other groups of workers by claiming that free collective bargaining only leads to the result that, 'those who need least get most and those who need most get least'. Thus, he shifts the blame for his members' appallingly low wages onto those unions which have fought and away from his own inactivity and betrayals. His members now need the support of other workers desperately. A lead in the right direction was given by Manchester bus workers when they struck on January 22nd. to coincide with the day of action. This must be followed up by calls on, for example, London Transport workers to bring forward their April claim, thereby adding tremendous weight to the fight against the Government's pay policy.

Similarly the rail unions, busy dissipating their members' energies in inter-union disputes over a job-cutting productivity deal, should be called on to bring forward their annual claim.

Public sector workers must learn the lessons of the lorry drivers' dispute. Faced as they were by the combined attack of the Government and the Press and with their own leaders trying to limit the effect-

## learn from drivers - build action committees

iveness of the strike, the drivers' greatest strength lay in their own strike committees. Such 'unofficial' committees of action, based on the strikers themselves, must be built in all localities as a matter of urgency. They must draw together all sections in dispute from the hospitals, the schools and the municipal workers.

Because their dispute is seen as crucial to the future of the Labour Government, because it is so internally divided and widespread, such action committees have to do more than just co-ordinate strikes and picketing. The Government bases its argument on its own imposed 'cost limits' and says that if more were spent on wages then services would have to suffer. The 'special case' argument does nothing to counter this attempt to turn other workers, who have seen their services cut to ribbons, against the public service workers. The argument has to be challenged head on by raising demands which relate to, rather

NUPE women demonstrate on 22nd



A. Wiard (Report)

than clash with, the needs of the whole class. The restoration of the cuts, for example, puts the blame for deteriorating services where it belongs, with the Labour Government.

The fight against low pay in the service industries cannot be separated from the question of Government policy as a whole. It is in the interest of the whole class and the task of local committees of action has to be to involve other sections of the class in that fight. Demands for other unions to bring forward their own claims or to take sympathy action have to be made not only on leaderships but by direct approaches at local level. Above all the division between 'service' and 'manufacturing' industry in the public sector has to be overcome. Arthur Scargill, for example, argued in support of 'secondary' picketing - he

## NUT, 'cross picket line'

by Ron Haycock

As the action of the Council workers spreads, the Trade Union leaderships are moving in to carve up the solidarity and unity of the rank and file. There is no better example of this than that contained in the NUT's Circular 25/79, which explicitly instructs NUT members to cross NUPE/GMWU/T&GWU picket lines. This instruction is the result of an 'agreement' made between the General Secretary of NUT, Fred Jarvis and NUPE Secretary, Alan Fisher. It says in point 6 "If any local pickets should attempt to stop Union members entering their place of work, the pickets should be told of the . . . statement made by NUPE Officials and should proceed to enter their school."

This instruction comes at a time when the NUT has already formulated its salary claim of 35% on the basis of being a 'special case'. Such an argument, together with their attempts at strike-breaking only serve to divide workers in the public sector. Against this, workers should form action committees

and his members should be pressed to translate that into action by using their greater economic power in support of the less powerful service workers

The ability of all unions to defend the living standards and jobs of their members is threatened by the attack on the public service workers. Not only because of the importance of the services they provide but also because of the nature of the tactics being

used against them. The use of troops at Westminster Hospital and the attacks on effective picketing are as much a threat to other workers as to those on strike at present.

### women

The Press hysteria can have a crippling effect on the struggle if it is successful in mobilising 'the public' against the strikes. Yellow rags like the Daily Mail are trying to whip up women in particular against the public sector workers. Women are, of course, particularly hard hit by the closure of hospitals, clinics and schools etc. If the Press presentation of this is not countered it could make then fodder for the 'get them back to work' brigade. Women, particularly women trade unionists, must play a full part in the struggle

to ensure full effectiveness of the action and to weld all public sector workers into a solid alliance against the Labour Government.

Some areas have already taken important steps towards this. One important instance is at Newham where the GMWU/NUPE/T&GWU have shut down all the schools. The Labour controlled authority are doing everything possible to break this strike. On Thursday and Friday they declared a 'holiday' to be taken off the next half-term holiday. They have also been trying—unsuccessfully as yet—to persuade Heads to open the schools.

Local teachers have formed an Action group to build solidarity in the public sector and to smash both the Unions 'scab' instruction to its members and the Union's 'special case' argument. The group has already formed important links with the Strike Committee.

However, public sector workers must build fighting action committees of all unions to smash the Labour Government's policy of wage cutting.

and get across the message that it is Callaghan and his Tory backers who are closing the hospitals and cynically playing with lives in order to force through a wage cut for already desperately poor workers. They must draw attention to the fact that it is women who are particularly hard hit by the cuts. Because women make up a large part of the workforce in the public sector, it is women who bear the brunt of redundancies. At the same time deteriorating services force thousands back into the home to care for the young, the sick and the elderly.

### second class

The masses of women involved in the strikes and the increase in the proportion of women in the trade unions, indicate their willingness to take up the struggle. The problem is that the unions still treat their women members as second class citizens and refuse to make the provisions and take up the struggles that alone will consolidate women as active militants. In order to achieve united action not only between unions but within them, special measures must be taken to involve women fully in all meetings and action. Meetings must be held in worktime, or, if this is impossible, creches should be organised by the unions so that women can attend. The campaign for better pay has to be used to increase unionisation and strengthen organisation among women workers. This will not only add to the effectiveness of the present struggles but also lay the basis for improving conditions and pay and resisting redundancies in the future. A victory for the public sector workers will smash the 5% limit irretrievably. It will also strengthen greatly the unions and make possible a renewed struggle to stop the cuts. They must win. It is in the direct interest of all other sections of workers to help them.