

Workers Power

30p/10p strikers Monthly paper of the Workers Power group

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TERROR AGAINST THE TAMILS

plus NHS cuts & Liverpool crumbles

FIGHT THE WITCH HUNT



THE VENOMOUS OUTBURSTS from Paisley and the Unionists of the DUP and the OUP to the Anglo/Irish Agreement were of course expected. So too were the paramilitary UDA's threats to kill Dublin civil servants who dared to cross the border. One hundred thousand loyalists marched in Belfast to condemn 'treacherous Thatcher' and it now seems certain that all 15 Unionist MPs will resign their Westminster seats to force a mini-referendum in the Six Counties to make clear Protestant opposition to the accord.

On the face of it, the unionist reaction is hard to understand. After all, the Agreement is designed to help stabilise Unionist rule. Thatcher's main aim is to increase the operational co-operation between the RUC/UDR and the Garda in the South directed against the IRA. Such co-operation is recognised as essential if the British are to have any hope of 'winning the war' against the IRA. The ink was hardly dry before the chiefs of the RUC and Garda met to begin this work.

PARTITION

Moreover, the agreement on Dublin's side actually recognises for the first time the legitimacy of partition and the right of the unionists to veto any developments towards a united Ireland. The document goes out of the way to make clear that no political power or control has been ceded to the Twenty-Six Counties, just a process of institutionalised consultation. So at the end of the day all that's new is the formal setting-up of an inter-governmental apparatus to discuss all these matters. (In reality, this apparatus has already existed for more than a year.)

We must look elsewhere for an explanation of the Unionist's angry response. In acting in the Unionists' interests, but over their heads, Thatcher has signalled a

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definitive shift in attitude to loyalism, and the latter's place in Thatcher's overall policy towards Ireland. She has broken with what is neanderthal and primitive in Ulster Unionism.

Thatcher's game plan is a strategic one. She aims to boost Fitzgerald's status in the South and repair the image of the constitutional nationalist Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) in the North by showing to the nationalists that they can deliver the reforms, not Sinn Fein. The agreement also commits Dublin to giving Britain as much say in the South's affairs as Dublin has in those of the Six Counties. This is of a piece with the aim of Thatcher to pull Ireland even more firmly into NATO.

Most importantly for the future of Unionism, Thatcher has, by this accord, openly lost patience with the Unionists' stubborn rejection of any form of power-sharing with the SDLP, even those arrangements heavily weighted in favour of the Unionists. In that sense, Thatcher is trying to bounce the Unionists into accepting limited devolution and power-sharing. She is saying 'if you do not wish to have Dublin interference in the North then you can remedy the situation by accepting devolution'.

The accord is quite explicit that any matter which becomes the prerogative of a devolved government will automatically be taken out of the Dublin-London

KINNOCK'S MOVE AGAINST the Liverpool Labour Party is intended to pave the way for a further onslaught on the left throughout the labour movement. The left have been given a clear ultimatum. Either they can shut up and toe Kinnock's line between now and the election or they can resist him and, in so doing, share the fate of Mulhearn and Hatton.

Hand in hand the parliamentary and trade union leaders are preparing to purge the labour movement in order to make it presentable to the bosses and the middle classes in the next election. They do so confident that they have the full backing of their self-ordained "cuddly" left, that is the emerging alliance of new rightists.

ANTAGONISE

Neil Kinnock has now topped his Bournemouth attack on Militant with a declaration of intent to drive them out of the Party, 'The British public knows very well that I am deeply antagonistic towards Militant. I want nothing to do with it. I want them out of the Labour Party.' Having ensured that the bureaucratic weight of the Party and unions had been used to crush any chance of resistance to Thatcher in Liverpool, the NEC moved swiftly to suspend the District Labour Party. It has initiated proceedings to bring Neil Kinnock the head of Derek Hatton. It wants to block any chance of Mulhearn ousting front bench spokesman Kilroy-Silk as candidate for Knowsley South and to establish a Liverpool leadership that is acceptable to the NEC.

This purge was set in motion long ago. To the parliamentary Labour leaders Militant are a threat to their electoral credibility. In the search for the electoral "middle ground" Labour must

sphere. It is this attempt to face down the Unionists' opposition to power-sharing which lies behind Unionist reaction.

Can they face Thatcher down? It is certainly true that the near-dormant UDA (and the UFF, its military wing) have been recruiting hand over fist in the last few weeks. It is equally true that the DUP and the OUP withdrawal from committees and councils in the Six Counties will be a problem for Westminster.

Yet, on the other hand, once the constitutional protests have been exhausted and most of the Unionist MPs are safely returned, and the UFF have made a few 'reprisal' killings, can the Loyalists repeat their success of May 1974 when the Ulster Workers Council strike wrecked the power-sharing Sunningdale Agreement? The answer is almost certainly, no. For one thing, ten years of recession has eaten into the strength and confidence of loyalist workers. The shop stewards network of

distance itself from the slightest whiff of militancy or class struggle.

Labour's electoral soothsayers are increasingly worried that Labour has no hope of securing sufficient votes to form a majority government on its present form and policies. They take this to mean two things. First Labour should junk its detailed policy commitments and concentrate simply on presenting an image of itself as a responsible, authoritative yet caring alternative to Thatcher. That is the recommendation of top adviser Bish.

Secondly, it should cap its renunciation of "Scargillism" with a purge of Militant, which the right wing press and the SDP in particular point to in order to scare the quaking middle class electorate away from the Labour Party. In doing so Kinnock can show himself to be a man of authority and Labour can free itself from any policy embarrassments.

Lurking behind all this, unspoken but not unthought of, is the looming prospect of a coalition government in the event of a hung parliament. Of course no Labour leader can come out openly and espouse the cause of an anti-Thatcher coalition with the SDP-Liberal Alliance. Neither can the Alliance itself make an unambiguous coalition offer to one or other of the major parties.

But with Labour's electoral

support seemingly stuck in the mid 30% band, all the Red Wedge concerts in the world can't guarantee Neil Kinnock the key to number 10 as head of a majority Labour Government. A hung parliament would confront the Labour leaders with the choice of an overt or covert coalition. Either Kinnock would rule on policies the Alliance could accept or directly share power with them.

At present the open advocates of coalition are confined to the editorial board of *Marxism Today* and Labour intellectual circles around Colin Crouch and Barry Hindess. But Labour's purge of the left is itself a precondition of rendering the Party an acceptable coalition partner with the Alliance.

It is also meant to guarantee that if Labour did win a majority, Kinnock's government would be an anti-working class Labour government. Every militant needs to be reminded of what such a government looks like. The Callaghan-Healey government was a classic of the type - wages were cut under the Social Contract; troops were used to break strikes by firemen and ambulancemen; low paid workers were denounced as "swine" by Labour ministers when they took selective action to improve their wages; Healey

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the UWC is not the same force as a result, nor is the newly emerging 'Ulster Club' the same kind of power. Secondly, all the signs this time round are that the army will support the government. Thirdly, there will be all party support in Westminster for such a resistance to loyalism - again something which was absent in 1974.

Whether the Unionists attempt to take this road, however, is another matter. Thatcher and King will seek to placate them. They will aim to show through the operation of the Conference - that on balance the significant concessions are all coming from Dublin not London.

Socialists in Britain however, have to realise that being attacked by Paisley is not a sign in itself that Thatcher has taken a progressive step. The Labour Party's usual bi-partisan welcome for the agreement is a further betrayal of the antiunionist population. Kinnock et al failed to use the occasion to publicly proclaim

Labour's Conference policies on Ireland; against strip searches, plastic bullets and for a united Ireland. Instead they tried to prove to the bosses that they were super-patriots as far as Ireland is concerned.

The agreement is an immediate blow against Sinn Fein and the IRA. It further legitimises partition. Socialists must resist any attempts to repress Sinn Fein further as a result. We must continue to insist that Britain has no right to strike deals with anyone over the Six Counties. It has no right to be there at all. □

- Troops Out Now
- Self-Determination for the Irish People as a Whole

BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND!
Demonstrate 2 Feb

details from Coordinating Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland, c/o Peace through democracy, PO Box 51, London SE5 8JJ

MILITANT'S LIVERPOOL DEBACLE

AFTER TWO YEARS of leading the campaign against Tory cuts in jobs and services in Liverpool, the Militant-led City Council has finally caved in. They have gone down the road paved by Blunkett and Livingstone.

On Friday 22nd November the Liverpool District Labour Party voted 694 to 12 in favour of accepting a financial package which would balance the City Council's books and deal a blow to the working class in Liverpool and beyond.

The "rescue package" which is "based on capitalisation and new loans" (Militant Editorial Statement) represents a total departure from the City Council's stand. Capitalization will mean cutting the housing programme involving large scale job cuts, especially amongst building workers. The package also includes an initial cut of £3 million, a loan of £30 million from a Swiss bank and a further loan of £3 million from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA). The massive interest payments on these loans coupled with the moneylenders condition that Liverpool keeps a balanced budget and remains within the law will mean further cuts and attacks on workers living standards in the near future.

Yet this climbdown by the City Council, which clearly represents a major defeat, was met with glee by Kinnock and his cronies in the Labour and trade union leadership.

LESSONS

Whilst all left-wingers and rank and file activists in the labour movement must fight all attempts at a witch hunt of Militant, it is equally vital that the lessons are learned from Liverpool.

This means examining the Militant-led councils strategy which led to the debacle. Derek Hatton and Liverpool Council claim that they had no alternative. The City had no money left to pay its workforce, and mass lay-offs were on the cards.

The question that needs to be answered is how could this happen in a struggle which had seen tens of thousands of workers on the streets behind a leadership that really wanted to take the Tories on and whose message, reflected in the polls, was the support of a majority in the community?

Militant are fond of referring to themselves as the 'Marxist wing of the Labour Party'. But their conduct of the local government fight has had more in common with the traditions of 'municipal socialism' of left labourism rather than that of revolutionary communism.

ACTION COUNCILS

Real 'Marxists' would never have stood on the left reformist platform in the elections of 1983 which promised an expansion of jobs and services but hid from the local workers their view that these were only attainable through confrontation and strikes with the City and central government.

Real 'Marxists' would not have concentrated political power and accountability in the Liverpool District Labour Party so as to preserve it as a Militant stronghold. Instead they would have built real action councils on the estates and in the major workplaces. By embracing the working class community who know what their needs are, these bodies would have determined and controlled the council's programme of public works. This would have made it possible to mobilise the mass of workers for a fight with the Tories for services they themselves had decided on and which they themselves would control. It would be the workers and not the occupants of the Council Chamber



Tony Mulhearn, Derek Hatton and John Hamilton

by Liverpool's workers. Yet even this meant being beholden to the banks in order to maintain credit worthiness. It meant keeping a monopoly of information in the hands of a few top councillors, chopping and changing the story of the council's resources every-time 'the crunch' drew near. It meant 'marxists' playing with the local workforce and community, treating them as a stage-army and keeping them a good arms length from the real centre of political decision-making.

Eventually, the inevitable happened. The patience and goodwill of the union rank and file was exhausted and the Tories, standing firm, took the honours. It's only within this failure of strategy that the succession of disastrous tactics of the Council make sense.

For example, the failure of Militant to open up a new front against the Tories at a time when the miners and the dockers were striking, amounted to the squandering of the best opportunity. who would yield real power locally.

Unlike the Militant 'real Marxists' would have counted on the hostility and hatred of the banks and their withdrawal of loan facilities and immediately funded a public works programme, saving urgently needed cash by refusing to pay debt interest charges to the banks.

Instead of this approach the 'Marxist wing of the Labour Party' had the perspective of 'taking Liverpool to the brink' to force Jenkin to negotiate a 'reasonable settlement'. In the best possible case this settlement would not have raised rates or rents but it would have barely scratched the surface of the problems faced

Militant paraded its deal with the government then as a victory. But the reality was different. A 17% rate increase was inflicted on Liverpool households. Furthermore, the deal stored up difficulties for Liverpool in this financial year. The Tories were let off the hook. Liverpool wasn't.

This tendency to defer confrontation, to buy time, was evident again in the 7% rate increase in July, in the redundancy saga in September and, indeed, even in the recent package.

In September the key workers voted to strike. Militant bowed before the Tory ballot laws rather than argue that the 47% of workers who voted to strike should stay out indefinitely and persuade the waverers - and those who weren't even consult-d in the

ballot - to join them.

This retreat was bound to have a demoralising effect. But instead of marshalling their forces - through mass meetings in work-time, preparation for strike action, etc - the Council leaders got bogged down in rounds of discussions whose aim was to find a 'solution' based on compromise.

Indeed the search for compromise characterises the whole approach of the Council. When Blunkett asked, "will you do it Derek?" at the Labour Party Conference, he must have been confident of the outcome.

Militant is compromised by its loyalty to the Labour Party and the Parliamentary road. When these so-called 'Trotskyists' stand as Councillors, they do so on a reformist, albeit militant reformist, programme. They share the electoralism and legalism of the Labour Party. They argue for loyalty to 'Conference Policies' when the unaccountable trade union block vote can swing those policies to the electoral whim of Kinnock. Their calls for unity can only mean unity behind Kinnock's rotten policy unless they challenge it, rather than drop their challenge. Their desire to remain the "marxist wing of the Labour Party" at all costs blinds them to the fact that by their actions they have retarded a vital struggle so necessary against the Tories.

In Liverpool, the rank and file of the trade unions must organise to combat the Tory attacks. This will include the defence of the Militant Councillors against surcharge. But this must be done on the basis of class struggle to achieve victory, not compromise. ■

by Julian Scholefield



Witch Finders General - Kinnock and Whitty

FIGHT THE WITCH HUNT

► continued from front page

slashed the public services. These are but a few examples. But they well illustrate the type of majority Labour government that Kinnock's purge is intended to clear the path for.

The purge would not have been possible without a major re-alignment of one-time left talkers in the Labour Party and the trade unions. It has the full backing of the Labour Coordinating Committee which has beavered away to create a platform for an anti-Militant Labour "left" in Liverpool.

On the very weekend of the enquiry the LCC had deliberately organised its annual conference in Liverpool in order to beef up the opposition to Mulhearn and Hatton. "Lefts" like Meacher, Blunkett and Audrey Wise all raised their hands in favour of suspending the District Labour Party and an enquiry that would result in expulsions should anyone be proved to be members of Militant.

PIVOTAL

Leading trade union officials have also been pivotal in engineering the purge. NUPE's Tom Sawyer has been a consistent fighter for this witch hunt. NUPE's annual conference called for the expulsion of Militant. It was Sawyer who moved the crucial amendment at the NEC that set the machinery of the purge in motion.

The combined weight of the NUPE, GMBATU and TGWU bureaucracies used to dampen any chance of a fight from Liverpool's council workforce. It was Jack Dromey, a TGWU "left" and LCC supporter, who persuaded the council's TGWU members that the council should cave in - a set a balanced budget.

These trade union leaders see no prospect for their personal advance outside the return of a Labour government. They accept the need to rid the Labour Party of Militant in order to strengthen up its electoral appeal as against the Alliance.

But there is another factor which has driven the trade union bureaucracy to campaign zealously for a purge. In their own way the Militant have been strengthening their base in the unions over the last years. In unions like the CPSA they do have an organised presence. To this extent Militant have not only fallen foul of the Parliamentarians fear of an electoral drubbing, they have also run up against the barons who claim proprietorial rights in the trade unions.

In order to clinch the case for the purge Whitty and Kinnock are out to criminalise Militant. General Secretary Whitty has said

Unite to fight Kinnock

KINNOCK AND WHITTY must be stopped. It is vital that we build a united fightback against the witch hunters in the Labour Party and in the trade unions. The executive must be bombarded with resolutions denouncing the enquiry into Liverpool, denouncing the suspension of the District Labour Party and demanding a halt to the expulsion of Militant supporters and other class fighters who have opposed Kinnock and Hattersley.

But matters cannot be left there. All trade union and Labour Party branches must also prepare to resist the NEC attack. All constituencies and wards must commit themselves now to refuse to recognise any stooge body set up by the NEC to run Liverpool.

The witch hunt is not simply a 'clean up' of personnel. It is a signal to any section of the labour movement which fights the Tories to shut up or get out. Kinnock has posed a direct challenge to the left - it must be met with a counterattack. Condemning expulsions is necessary but not enough on its own. We

must demand the right of all socialists and the right of Black Sections to organise within the Labour Party.

We should turn the challenge back on Kinnock and the NEC: if you continue to attack the left, the fighting councils and indeed the working class in general you will face an almighty battle within the Party. We will defy your rulings, organise rank and file members in the constituencies and trade unions in a united front against you. We will refuse to cooperate with any stooge Labour Party bodies and their candidates, which you set up to replace disaffiliated or suspended constituencies.

Unfortunately the centrists in Socialist Action, Socialist Organiser and Labour Left Coordination are scared of such a fight. The LLC model resolution begins with the statement that if the forthcoming local and the next general election are to be won then the party must remain united. Note "remain united"! There can only possibly be unity in the Party with a leader like Kinnock if the

left have already given up any fight for working class interests. And this is precisely what these timid lefts have done. Socialist Action argue that to challenge Kinnock's leadership would be "ultra left"! In other words, please don't expel us Neil and then we can unite behind your leadership to win the next elections.

These fake Trotskyists are scared of a fight, preferring to allow Kinnock to pursue his anti-working class policies unhindered in the Party in return for the privilege of being allowed to stay in the cosy security of the Labour Party.

Socialist Organiser whilst condemning the NEC enquiry proceeded to hand ammunition to the right by arguing that there probably should have been an investigation into Liverpool DLP 2 years ago! (A labour movement enquiry of course).

Indeed Militant themselves are fighting the purge on purely constitutional grounds. They have narrowly focused their own defence campaign on recruitment. They refuse to generalise the issues

and the resistance. The planned purge is a threat to all militants. The left must build a real fight in the Party and unions, not dodging the arguments about defiance of the NEC.

There must be a meeting in each town of all labour movement activists prepared to resist the witch hunt. They must organise to take this fight into the wards and branches which the witch hunters control. Representative delegate committees must be formed to coordinate that work and build support.

As well as local joint action there must be a national delegate conference of all labour movement bodies prepared to fight the witch hunt. That conference must organise to stop the witch hunt and to stop the rightward shift in the official labour movement. Kinnock has seized the initiative against the Left. There is no time to lose if he is to be met with united and determined resistance. ■

by Helen Ward (Vauxhall CLP)

that uncovered malpractices will be reported to the police. The ex-Labour Lord Mayor from the days when the Liverpool Labour Party was run by a right wing catholic mafia, the ex-Police Chief Superintendent and the ex-housing director could all be guaranteed to complain of malpractices to the enquiry.

This is all a smokescreen for the right's political purge. Labour councils and leaders have often been shown to be harbouring corruption and nepotism, but it hasn't led to the closure of the North East or South Wales parties for example.

Should any complaints of corruption or malpractice be known to the Liverpool workers they should be put to a workers' enquiry that should take the necessary steps to openly investigate the complaints and act on the findings. We should have no truck with the findings of a kangaroo court that included Militant's chief prosecutors, Tom Sawyer and Audrey Wise, that met in secret and decided whose opinions it was prepared to canvass and who it would ignore.

The object of the witch hunt is not simply to silence the supporters of Militant. While the right was rubbing its hands with glee as it got down to the job of purging Liverpool Hattersley was setting the pace with a witch-hunt in his own parliamentary patch.

Two members have been expelled for daring to challenge Hattersley's rule in the Birmingham inner city. Black councillor and black section organiser Amir Khan was given the boot for bringing the Party into "disrepute" by reporting fake applications and membership returns to TV's **Ban-dung File**. Kevin Scally, a Labour Committee on Ireland activist, has suffered the same fate.

LOOMING

With the prospect of an election looming closer all those who won't bow the knee to Kinnock and Hattersley can expect to come under the threat of expulsion.

The same will go for the trade unions. Alastair Graham is now calling on CPSA members to 'overcome their revulsion and kick them out of office in Newcastle and in every city, town and village where they seek to abuse the union.'

That call will doubtless be repeated in other unions. Already GMBATU is re-organising its branch structure in Liverpool so as to eliminate Militant's influence. TGWU leader Ron Todd vigorously opposed moves on his Executive to oppose the purge. The bureaucrats will use every trick in the book to silence opposition to their refusal to fight and their bid to turn every union conference into a unanimous electoral rally for Kinnock's Labour Party.

The fight to defend Militant must therefore be a fight against those who want the Labour movement to stop fighting Thatcher, give up any pretence of supporting workers in struggle and hope in the process to woo the electoral favours of the middle class away from the SDP. It must be a fight against all those who have given soft left cover for the right. During this fight it will be possible to sharpen the conflict between those who want to wage the class struggle and those who are besotted with purely electoral concerns.

Kinnock has dispatched a sub-committee to discover a definition of "democratic socialism" which can ward off all known revolutionary spirits from the Labour Party. Now is the time for all those who defend the right of all socialists to be in the Labour Party to stand up and be counted.

In every ward, constituency and trade union branch a revolt against Kinnock's rule must be mounted. Not only must we raise the banner of opposition to the purge. We must rally all those elements in the Party who are prepared to fight Thatcher now under the slogan - no holding back on the class struggle to get an anti-working class Kinnock government elected.■

NUM LEADERS COLLAPSE ON PAY

THE NCB'S ATTEMPT to rub the NUM's nose in the dirt is continuing apace. In order to avoid expanding production, the NCB has deliberately turned down the opportunity of selling coal to Denmark. Opening up this new market (the Danish government is looking for an alternative to South African coal) might mean keeping pits open and MacGregor wants none of that!

With 17,000 miners having taken redundancy since the end of the strike, the NCB is hoping to reach its target of 70,000 before too long. Nobody should believe that the reprieve given to Darfield Main indicates a U-turn on the part of the Board. Its plan - part of an EEC plan to halve coal production in member countries - is being carried through relentlessly. Darfield Main may be open, but Bold, St Johns and a host of others face the chop.

NCB CONDITIONS

The main line of attack on the NUM, however, is now centred on the pay front. In a bid to maintain the flagging momentum of the scab UDM, the NCB is withholding a pay offer from the NUM. It has said that it is not prepared to give the NUM the £5.50 plus 50p a shift that it has already awarded the UDM until the NUM gives a written undertaking to abide by certain conditions. Even then it is refusing to make an offer increasing national grade rates. In line with the CBI's 'Nowt for nowt' slogan it is making all increases conditional on increased productivity.

The aim of the board is transparent. By giving the scabs a backdated boost to their wage packets it hopes to encourage loyalists to leave the NUM. This bribery of the members is of a piece with the board's offers of cars and pensions to the scab leaders, like Jack Jones, who have opted to stay in the NUM. It shows that smashing the NUM was and is a central part of the NCB's strategy.

The NUM's leadership's response to this onslaught has been appalling. The Yorkshire area under Jack Taylor led the way. His area was the first to argue for sending the NCB a written undertaking to abide by its conditions.

LEGAL BATTLES

A letter was circulated recommending that branches support Taylor's line. Confusion, demoralisation and desperation to get some money led many branches to accept Taylor's line. Even in the militant Doncaster area only 4 branches voted against Taylor.

At first Taylor was unable to get his way on the National Executive A 10-9 vote in late November went against giving the NCB a surrender note.

However, instead of building on this and launching a campaign in the coalfields to rally morale, offer a way forward and prepare for action, Scargill and his supporters opted for a legalistic fight. They chose to prove that the board is in breach of the 1946 National Conciliation Scheme by taking individual cases to an industrial tribunal to demand pay parity.

While legalistic methods like this cannot be ruled out they are no substitute for organising the mass of the rank and file to fight. For a start the 'impartial' people (like lawyers!) who staff the tribunals are only ever likely to rule in favour of the NUM if they feel and fear mass pressure. The increasing reliance on tribunals and the courts to fight the scabs

and the NCB is a dead end. It will not rebuild the fighting strength of the union.

Eloquent proof of this came at the very next Executive meeting. The 10-9 vote was overturned by a 12-6 vote in favour of giving the NCB written undertakings. The executive has accepted that pay will be tied to incentives. The Area Incentive Scheme will be supplemented by attendance bonuses. Divisions between pits and areas will be supplemented by divisions within pits and areas.

The NCB stands a better chance now than ever before of doing to the NUM what BSC did to the steelworkers. And the executive's decision on the pay offer, a decision in total breach of the policy on incentives agreed at the last delegate conference, will help the board in this project.

A fightback must be mounted. Voting against the offer were the peripheral coalfields, Durham, Kent, Scotland, etc, who will gain least by incentive payments. In some of those areas Euro-Communist elements, like Bolton and McGahey in Scotland, predominate. Their position on pay does not reflect their willingness to fight. It does reflect the fact that they could not sell such a deal to their members. These members must begin to organise quickly to stop the retreat. They must link up with each other and with the militants in the Yorkshire and Midland's coalfields.

A national fight on pay and closures is unlikely. But there is still much that can be done. In every pit rank & file news-

letters, like **The Armthorpe Tannoy**, must be launched to supplement the **Rank and File Miner**. Every closure must be met by action that is spread within and across areas. In particular Kent, as a militant area, could begin building a fighting alliance of the areas around resistance to closure of Betteshanger. The recent election in South Wales of Des Dufield, a Scargill supporter, by a sizeable majority over the Kinnockite (and Euro supported)



Kinnock can now afford to laugh at Scargill's fighting talk

Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

AS WE GO to press the December 10th deadline at Mirror Newspapers is fast approaching. By that date Robert Maxwell is demanding that the print union SOGAT negotiate a deal that could cut 2,000 of the union's 3,500 jobs at the Mirror.

The situation at the Mirror is only one part of the rapidly escalating management offensive in Fleet Street. The last month also revealed that Rupert Murdoch is well advanced with his plans to shift all his printing to a plant on the Isle of Dogs that will be manned by EETPU scabs, already being bussed in daily from as far away as Southampton.

Maxwell, being a loyal Labour Party member prefers to work with the established print unions - providing only that they are all willing to accept the same conditions as the scabs. His 'ratchet' tactics are clear to see. In the case of SOGAT he began by announcing that all jobs were called into question by the need to compete with the likes of Eddie Shah and that the unions would have to accept this before negotiations could even begin. He then issued dismissal notices to all SOGAT members when the union refused to negotiate under such conditions.

The response of SOGAT summed up the weaknesses of the print unions. They balloted for

MAXWELL'S OFFENSIVE

a strike to force Maxwell to withdraw (and not just suspend) the notices so that negotiations could begin. When the strike proved solid and Maxwell could only produce 30,000 copies with scabs and management crossing picket lines, he 'gave in' and agreed to lift his threats until December 10th. In effect the union had only won an extension of three days on Maxwell's original deadline.

Since the strike the negotiations have been carried on in complete secrecy. There have been no report back meetings to keep the members informed and, therefore, prepared. This has led to widespread rumours about which departments are to be chopped and reinforced the feeling that massive job losses are now inevitable throughout Fleet Street. When the results of negotiations are made known they will in all probability be presented as a complete package. The sections under immediate threat will be set against those who can keep their jobs, under new conditions. Meanwhile the EETPU has

made it clear that it is willing to undermine any fightback by accepting whatever conditions SOGAT rejects. Yet, for all his careful preparation of his tactics, Maxwell is not in a strong position. From the end of the year he intends to shift all his printing operations to London, closing the Thomson Withy Grove plant in Manchester. The London operation, therefore, is central to his plans. He has to secure his deal quickly if the transition is to be successful.

Against a background of falling circulation and rising competition, the unions in Fleet Street can still go on the offensive. But this will need united action by all the unions involved. The potential for this was clearly shown during the SOGAT strike at the Mirror when the NGA machine minders struck in support. The mobilisation of the rank and file printers, those whose jobs are on the line, is the key to a successful fightback.

The new technology is rapidly making a nonsense of the craft divisions within the workforce and points urgently to the need for the formation of a single industrial union within the printing industry. The first step to such a union should be the formation of joint union committees to co-ordinate action against Maxwell's proposed package of cuts. The building of such unity in action has to be demanded of the leaders of all the unions involved. But if they will not take the lead, then rank and file militants must shoulder the responsibility by forming such committees unofficially.■



Unity is needed

Andrew Ward (Report)

by Steve McSweeney

NHS: BEHIND TORY LIES

NORMAN FOWLER NEVER tires of telling us that the NHS is bigger and better than it ever was. "800,000 extra patients treated in 1984 compared to 1978 and 25 extra hospitals built". Conveniently he forgets to mention the number of hospitals closed since then or the shorter stays these extra patients have had in hospitals. He also forgets that change in population patterns - we now have more old people than in 1978 - inevitably means an increase in patient numbers.

In matters of health it is always advisable to take a second opinion. A recent OECD diagnosis of British healthcare is far less rosy. Britain's expenditure on health is the 5th lowest of the 24 OECD countries (richest capitalist nations). Only Portugal, New Zealand, Greece and Turkey spend less! Britain spends around one third of what America spends per person and around one half of France. And it shows.

In a recent survey on queues for operations, the majority of health areas reported over 50% of patients had to wait more than a year for routine general surgery. In some areas as many as 72% had to wait for over a year. In desperation and in pain, many who cannot really afford it were driven to seek these operations privately.

Fowler's claims of improvements in the NHS must, of course, be taken with a big pinch of bicarbonate of soda! What is true is

that the NHS is being swamped by the increasing demand for care. This is not only due to the increasing number of the old, but to the general impoverishment of the working class. Bad housing, poorer food, inadequate clothing, harder work, financial worries, isolation, all of these breed physical and mental problems. These problems have become endemic. The Low Pay Unit reported that low income families are now no better off than they were in the early 1950's.

Labour party spokespersons like to tell us that Thatcher hates the NHS simply because she is a spiteful and vindictive person. In fact what Thatcher has been doing has been very good for the capitalists.

The less the capitalists have to spend on the health of their workers, the more money they have left in their pockets. In the last 3 years Thatcher has improved profitability in Britain by 40%. This is far better than that achieved in other countries.

Alas for Thatcher, even this large improvement in profits has not been enough to restore the British economy to health. The economy continues to stagnate, and the more it stagnates the more desperate Thatcher and her class are becoming.

Two and a half years ago Fowler gave the 245 district health authorities embracing 2300 hospitals, clinics, etc, until September 1986 to invite tenders for all domestic services. By March this year only 190 contracts had been awarded. A recent confidential draft leaked from the DHSS called for the need to speed up the pace of privatisation. Another draft shown to regional health

chairmen proposes measures to make it harder for in-house tenders to succeed in competition with the private sector.

The success of privatisation has been a mixed one for Fowler. A mid-year Commons Social Services Committee reported only a £9.4 million saving in a budget of £848 million for catering, laundry and cleaning during 1983-84, as a result of private tendering. But real savings have been made as a result of the fear created by privatisation amongst the NHS workforce. To prevent management contracting out, workers in hospitals have been willing to accept lower pay and worse conditions.

The inability of Fowler to achieve the predicted massive savings as yet, has placed severe strains on the NHS budget. As a result there has been an accelerated increase in closures.

But even these deperate measures are not enough to balance the books. Hospital administrators are increasingly forced to prostitute their hospitals by increasing the number of pay beds, by offering some of their facilities to the private sector, and by increased sales of blood and organs. The rich are not only living off the sweat of our brows, our vital organs are being used to keep them alive!

Kinnock has promised to increase NHS spending by 3% in

real terms compared to the alleged 1% increase of the Tories. This is equivalent to Kinnock's pledge to reduce unemployment by 1 million not abolish it. A miserable 2% increase above the Tories will have only a small effect on the problems of the NHS.

he was found guilty on such a small technicality that he only had to pay the court costs.

Then I received a letter that a complaint had been lodged against me by the chairman of the local health authority, the person who had threatened me with dismissal on the day of the demo.

The personnel department tried to stitch up a deal, saying if I accepted a telling off in writing they would leave it at that. If not I would be disciplined. I refused! A few days later I got a letter saying there was a disciplinary hearing against me. We went to that hearing, explained that the personnel department had tried to make a deal and therefore prejudged the case, and walked out. I received a written warning. I appealed against the warning. My hearing was put off and off and is now in January. But I still have no chance because the person who made the allegation is chairman of the health authority. That is one harassment I have had.

WP. How has the appeals procedure changed and is it being used to cut down on staff?

Up to 1983 you got a fair hearing. In the last 2 years things

have changed. Now it does not matter what you say. They have also scrapped most of the disciplinary procedures. The word of management is now enough to get you disciplined or dismissed.

As far as I am concerned, if they need to get rid of staff from that area, this is one way of getting them out.

WP. You mentioned they are beginning to use the same tactics they used against the miners - that is to dismiss workers for outside offences unrelated to their work.

Recently a member of security was given a final warning and transferred to casualty because he was fined for having a bent MOT. He had worked for the hospital for 5 years. A little while later he was dismissed altogether when personnel somehow, and we think illegally, got hold of his previous criminal record. Scotland Yard promised to investigate how they got hold of it, but I have not heard anything from them.

We are very worried about this. About six out of ten staff here have had minor offences like traffic offences, no T.V. licences and the like. This means management can transfer us because of these offences and dismiss us if we refuse. ■

currently provided in order to be competitive and this means that there are inevitable reductions in both numbers of staff and numbers of hours.

The in-house tender will mean a reduction of fulltime staff from 70 to about 40. The night jobs have been halved. There will be no redundancies as such; reduced hours will be offered to the full-timers and no temporary contracts will be renewed. This will mean a cut in the pay of the already very low-paid domestics.

Privatisation may not have been a particular success for Thatcher's profiteer friends who need the contracts. But it has been a winner as far as making cuts is concerned. Moreover it has drawn the staff and the unions into joint efforts with management. Now making staff 'work hard' for 'their' contract is a weapon for the management and

Nevertheless this promise has been enough for the union leaders to caution workers against strike action and to wait for the next Labour Government. As we approach the next elections, the union leaders will become more and more anti-strike saying that nothing must be done to rock the boat and upset Labour's chances at the polls.

We must reject this do-nothing approach. We must organise for strike action. Kinnock who in opposition attacks every strike and struggle and consistently sides with the bosses, will do the same, only more so, in office. He will do more damage to the NHS than the last 'cash limits' Labour Government of 1974-79 did. Workers must not hold back and wait for Kinnock, they must rally their forces, and as the recent NUPE

London Conference did, prepare for action against the cuts and privatisation. And in the battle with the Tories we must put forward demands that defend the NHS and serve the interests of the whole working class:

- No Cuts - restore spending in the NHS to its pre-1976 levels in real terms and protect it against inflation with automatic budget increases.
- For a fully integrated NHS - no privatisation, abolish private practice. Nationalise the profiteering drug companies, with no compensation and under workers' control.
- For a massive programme of hospital/clinic building as part of a programme of public works carried out under workers control.



ORGANISING RESISTANCE

THE NUPE LEADERSHIP has failed to lead any fightback against privatization and the cuts. Instead they have tried to pacify workers with 'hang on until the next Labour government'.

Fortunately, the NUPE shop stewards in London are becoming increasingly fed up with the Kinnock loving, Militant bashing national leadership of Bickerstaffe and Tom Sawyer. At the November 5th London Divisional Conference delegates voted overwhelmingly for a national NUPE conference in March to organise a centralised fightback against the attacks on the NHS.

Many delegates pointed out that the national leadership's failure to lead opposition to the attacks had reduced many local fights - Barking, Adenbrookes, Cambridge - to guerilla skirmishes. There was a recognition that a successful fightback had to be centralised and co-ordinated. That was the intention in calling for

the national March conference.

If that conference is to take place and pose a real challenge to the NUPE leadership, it must have the rank and file behind it. Delegates must go back to their members and argue for another national strike. This difficult task depends on convincing workers, politically, that a future Labour Government is not a solution to the mounting attacks on the NHS in the here and now.

In addition, NUPE must invite as many delegates from the other health unions as possible to the conference. If NUPE decides on any course of action, it must argue for this action with the other unions. It must seek to build a fighting alliance of NHS unions based on and controlled by the rank and file - the branches, stewards' committees, etc. What it must not do, as it did in 1982, is water down its proposals to suit the other unions, or create the cumbersome bureaucratic 'alliance' that sabotaged the fight. ■

an excuse to dodge action for the union bureaucrats. It is seen as a victory simply if the in-house tender wins, despite the redundancies or reduced hours and pay that go with this. This attitude has been fostered by the union national leaderships. They completely ducked out of a national fight.

The contracting experience has brought to light just how deep the cuts have gone. In 1980 there were approximately 800 domestics at the Leicester Royal Infirmary. By the 1st September 1985 there were just 310!

But there is still more money to be saved. Nurses are the next in the firing line. Privatisation has meant that in the Leicester Royal Infirmary, nurses will be expected to take extra duties that were formerly domestic duties. We are meant to be getting extra nurses for these duties but

management will not discuss it. The allocation of the extra nurses will not be on the basis of work to be done but on money being available.

Leicester health workers are wondering how far management will go. Recently in Hartlepool the Health Authority seriously considered getting sponsorship by local businesses to cover the running costs of their General Hospital. They had considered commercial sponsorship of nurses uniforms but rejected this as too demeaning. Imagine waking up from a heart and lung operation to see a nurse with a Benson & Hedges T-shirt on!

The final insult came in Leicester when management saw fit to allow a private health care scheme to put adverts in our pay packets! We must urgently begin organising in every hospital to stop the attacks on the NHS - in Leicester and everywhere else. ■

LONDON

St. Thomas' is one of London's largest and most prestigious hospitals, and was one of the most militant hospitals during the 1982 strike. WP recently spoke to Ray Harrison, a leading militant and COHSE shop steward at St. Thomas'.

WP. There have been increasing disciplining of staff and victimisation of shop stewards. Have you yourself been victimised?

Yes. Six months ago I was threatened with dismissal while on a small demo against a visit from Fowler. A short while later, when I was on the megaphone challenging Fowler, I was assaulted by a senior member of staff. I knew if I hit him back I would be dismissed on the spot. The next day when we came back I reported this to the police. They came round saying we know all about this Mr Harrison, he is a troublemaker. I protested saying that I was the one assaulted. They told me to take out a summons. I did. We went to court where

LEICESTER

THE BATTLE AGAINST privatisation made front page news in the local rag, the Leicester Mercury. 'Staff win wards cleaning battle' (4/12/85). At both the Glenfield Community and Glenfield General Hospitals the in-house tender has won the contract keeping out the notorious privateers, Crothalls.

The staff have been praised by management for working so hard for this contract. They must be delighted. They will save £47,000 over the next year. This will be done by reducing hours (and pay!) Supposedly there will be no redundancies. But anyone who cannot afford to accept the reduction will be out. The staff

certainly will be 'working hard'. The management at the Leicester General Hospital must be even more jubilant. They will save £363,000 over the next year. The cost here, unless fought by the staff, will be 43 jobs.

The only major hospital left is the Leicester Royal Infirmary. There has been much publicity made of the fact that in September of this year, there were 53 unfilled domestic vacancies that could not be filled. No one wants work was the place! What they did not say was that in fact since May 1985 only temporary contracts have been offered. So when it comes to tendering, job losses are not so much of a problem as contracts will simply not be renewed. However, management pointed out in this document that "it must be remembered that we need to make significant changes to the way domestic services are

THE MONARCHY - NOT ABOVE POLITICS

CHARLES AND DIANA'S television interview with Alistair Burnett in October marked a turning point in media presentation of the monarchy. After months of training by Richard Attenborough (that's the actor, not the nature lover) Diana was entrusted to answer a few simple questions. Word perfect and exactly on cue she droned: "I see my main role as a wife and mother".

Safely over the first hurdle "Noddy and Big Ears" have become the new stars of TV news reports. Scarcely a day now passes without them looming onto our screens courtesy of the "objective journalism" of the BBC and ITN.

CONSTITUTIONAL

At the same time however the question of Royalty has been preying on the minds of the politicians more than usual. At the SDP conference David Owen suggested that if the Alliance was to hold the balance of power after the next election then the Queen might just as well choose him as Prime Minister - even if Kinnoch stood at the head of the largest party. Labour's 'constitutional experts' have blustered about there being "no precedent for this". The servile Labour leaders were swift to attack Owen for insulting the Queen by dragging her into politics. But they cannot deny that the Queen would be well within her rights to do this - that is to organise a coalition from Buckingham Palace.

This 'constitutional debate' is in fact not new. In 1974 when the Tories were trying to hold onto power through a coalition with the liberals, Elizabeth stood waiting in the wings for four days after Heath's election defeat before he gave it up as a bad job. Likewise the National Government of 1931 was formed under the aegis of the King.

This power of the monarchy to become the organising centre for political deals within British "democracy" is even more useful to the ruling class than its power to momentarily enchant the unorganised and the downtrodden with regular shows of tinsel and glitter. It deserves close scrutiny.

PREROGATIVE

The powers of the Queen, known as the Royal Prerogative are as follows:

- the power to dissolve parliament or refuse to dissolve it
- the power to appoint or dismiss a prime minister
- the power to veto any act of parliament
- the power to declare war, mobilise the army etc.
- the power to distribute honours including peerages in the House of Lords.

In addition the Queen is Lord Admiral of Britain and Commander in Chief of the armed forces. Every soldier swears an oath of loyalty to the Queen, not to parliament.

Of course, we are told in school, such powers would never be used. Yet they were used throughout the 19th century, and they remain intact "in case of need".

Writing of his resignation as Tory Prime Minister in 1963, Harold Macmillan said: "I was determined at all costs to preserve the prerogative which had been so useful in the past and which might be so valuable in the future".

Fifteen years later the "prerogative" did come in useful when the Governor of Australia (appointed by the Queen and with the same powers) resolved a political crisis there, by simply sacking Gough Whitlam, the Labour prime minister, and replacing him with Tory Malcolm Fraser.

Despite this, the myth remains in the minds of many people that the British monarchy is a neutral body, standing above party politics and class conflict. Let us examine the reality.

The Queen is in fact a well informed, active participant in the business of state. Every day after she has finished reading the *Sporting Life* from cover to cover (a fact!) she spends 3 hours reading state papers.

These include all cabinet minutes which even many MPs don't get to see, and secret documents relating to defence, security services, etc. In addition she is briefed in a weekly meeting with the Prime Minister. During the last Labour Government Prince Charles even sat in on Cabinet meetings.

CAPITALISTS

As for being above "class", the Queen is undoubtedly one of the biggest capitalists in the country. In addition to Civil List payments totalling hundreds of thousands a year, the Queen and Charles receive massive amounts of money from the land they own. Charles "earns" so much from the Duchy of Cornwall that, after giving half of it voluntarily to the Treasury he still takes home £800,000 a year. Of course some of this is farmed out to charity, but like all good capitalists Charles "puts his money to work" in stocks, shares and securities. Just how much, and where, is of course a closely guarded secret. But the Queen, for example, is estimated to have a personal wealth (not counting the Crown Estate, the jewels, etc) of about £100 million.

In addition the Royal family is tied to the upper echelons of the capitalist class through bonds of Public School, University, Sandhurst, the gentlemen's clubs - not to mention freemasonry (the Duke of Gloucester is the top man in British freemasonry).

Charles' recent speech about Britain being a fourth rate nation, his hypocritical pity for the homeless and the inner city deprivation is accompanied by a plea for the entrepreneurial business methods of the USA. In placing the blame squarely with the working class Charles does a loyal service to the industrialists and financiers.

The so-called 'neutrality' from political and class conflict is a sham. But there is a very important reason for this sham. George Orwell once wrote: "In a dictatorship the power and the glory belong to the same person. In England the real power belongs to the unprepossessing men in bowler hats; the creature who rides in a gilded coach behind soldiers in steel breastplates is really a waxwork. It is at any rate possible that while this division of function exists a Hitler or Stalin cannot come to power."

This is also the view of many a modern Labour politician. It misses the point completely.

Every military dictator in history has seized power claiming to represent "the good of all" rather than any one of the warring factions or parties. "The politicians have made a mess of it. We need a strong man to stop the squabbling." Such wisdom brought the Hitlers and the Mussolinis to power, and today backs



up the rule of General Evren in Turkey or Pinochet in Chile. In every case they are able to rely on the "neutral" army, police and courts to crush democracy. They can do this precisely because capitalist "democracy", a sop to the working class that the ruling class is only willing to grant so long as it can afford it, always leaves the state machine out of direct control of parliament.

In Britain the monarchy is not just waxworks. It "legally" and constitutionally retains all the powers that could suspend the activities of the "bowler hatted gentlemen". And the monarch stands at the head of an army which after its ceremonial duties retires to barracks to polish not only its breastplates but rifles, tanks and rocket launchers.

STABILITY

The monarch likewise stands as head of the Commonwealth. Here she presides over a sham of 'equal partnership' between British imperialism and its former colonies. In reality the Commonwealth institutionalises Britain's semi-colonial domination of these countries. The Queen, as leader of the Commonwealth, gives this domination a caring, maternal gloss.

If the next general election resulted in a "hung parliament" the Queen could well be used to resolve things in favour of the Alliance. She could similarly prevent a dissolution and a new general election if "stability" required this.

In cases of more acute need - strikes and mass working class struggles - the British ruling class would not in the first place need a Hitler. It already has Charles; Colonel in Chief of the Royal

Regiment of Wales, Cheshire Regiment, Parachute Regiment, the Gordon Highlanders and a trained Navy Officer: or perhaps an Andrew, full time RAF pilot who lists his recreations as "shooting"; or even an Edward, currently embarking on a career as an officer in the Royal Marine Commandos.

Whilst, as yet, they do not need such measures, it is as well to know the potential threat the monarchy poses.

Whilst the Royal Prerogative is ultimately the real danger the monarchy poses to the working class, it could not maintain its potential power without the constant parading of the royal Family on the press and TV. Diana's role has been vital for the upgraded image we are shown.

On the one hand she represents self-perpetuating links between the ruling class and the Royal family. Even the reactionary novelist Anthony Burgess was moved to write of her: "There is a fine stratum of useless elegant retainers surrounding the royal family. Out of this climbs into the bosom of the family a personage like Princess Diana - she bakes no bread, paints no pictures, reads no books above the level of Frederick Forsyth, contributes nothing to the world's work; she merely proclaims the decorative function of her class."

GLAMOUR

On the other hand, and more importantly, Diana is presented to the readers of *The Sun*, *The Mirror* and *Woman's Own* as the 'ordinary' woman for whom romance brought every girl's dream of becoming a Princess. In addition to the glamour, she proudly stands as mainly a 'wife and mother', exuding ignorance and the

notion that intelligence does not matter so long as you get your man. This nauseating image of family life is used daily to shape the ideas of women in particular.

The working class wife and mother is supposed to view her own drudgery at home as her rightful place ordained by the mutterings of Princess Di. The constant attempts to get working class families to 'identify' with the monarchy is part of the con which presents them as above politics. If successful this greatly increases the potential power of a figure like Charles to intervene in a political crisis if it becomes necessary.



Whilst the demand for abolishing the monarchy has no special mobilising potential in Britain today it should be inscribed on the banner of all who call themselves socialists.

ABOLISH

In opposition Labour should boycott all 'royal' occasions and wash its hands completely of the filth of knighthoods, honours, etc. In power it should immediately abolish the monarchy along with the House of Lords.

In the middle ages Kings and Queens claimed they ruled on behalf of God. The God on whose behalf the British monarchy now reigns is capitalism. Workers justifiably sick of the sight of these trinket-laden parasites must beware. Behind the glitter lie the guns; as capitalism's twilight years draw-in their royal highnesses are well prepared by law, tradition and class to exchange one for the other. ■

by Paul Mason



PEACE TALKS FAIL

FOR THE PAST six months in Sri Lanka political attention has been fixed on the fate of discussions between the various Tamil guerilla groups and the United National Party (UNP) government. Also involved in these talks was Rajiv Ghandi's government in India. Neither the 'ceasefire' that accompanied the discussions, nor the discussions themselves were a success from the Tamil's point of view.

Scores of Tamil civilians in the North and Eastern Provinces have continued to be butchered by the army and police, made up exclusively of members of the majority Sinhalese community. Since the horrendous pogroms of 1983 when well over 1000 Tamils were slaughtered, another 2000 have been killed by the state forces or armed Sinhalese thugs. This state orchestrated terror has led to 100,000 Tamil refugees fleeing to the state of Tamil Nadu across the narrow Palk Strait in South-West India. A further 50,000 Tamils have fled to Europe.

Although the bloodletting has continued, the last year has seen significant developments. The Tamil guerillas' successful actions earlier in the year, the desperate plight of the Sri Lankan economy and the subsequent political crisis within President Jayawardene's UNP government have all contributed to these developments.

NEW CAMPAIGN

The All Party Conference reconciliation talks collapsed at the end of 1984 - when the UNP withdrew modest concessions to the Tamils at the behest of the reactionary Buddhist clergy. After that the Tamil guerillas mounted a new campaign against police stations, army personnel, banks and hotels. Despite savage reprisals, Jayawardene's forces were unable to gain the upper hand.

By the spring of this year the government was coming under great pressure to do more than seek to impose a military solution on the Tamil question. The inability to contain the Tamil guerillas was not the UNP's only problem. The tourist industry has been decimated. The tea trade - the backbone of the country's economy - took a severe blow when the price of tea plummeted from 60 rupees a kilo (c£1.59) to 31 rupees in a couple of months.

In addition the fragile economic base was creaking under a growing defence budget which is expected to be in excess of 14 billion rupees this year, some 15% of GDP. Jayawardene allowed the budget to get out of control as he bought arms, tanks and helicopters from China, Pakistan and the US. He was desperate to try and impose a 'final solution' on the resistance of the Tamils which has made two of the country's nine provinces ungovernable. His repression failed to stamp out resistance.

FOREIGN AID

By the summer of this year the Finance Minister, Ronnie de Mel was forced to concede:

"We cannot continue like this for ever. Our earnings from tourism have already declined. Foreign investments will decrease. Foreign aid will become more difficult to obtain. Production of exports will decline".

With a Foreign Aid Group meeting, convened by the World Bank, scheduled for the 20th June to determine Sri Lanka's aid package until the end of the decade, the political pressure mounted on the UNP to talk to the guerillas. It was hoped that some sort of deal would, once again, create a 'favourable investment climate', and

help restore the tourist industry.

As a result of this pressure a four-phase cease-fire plan was agreed preparatory to talks. This was signed on June 18th. Between July 8-13 talks were held in the Indian city of Thimpu. They were inconclusive and new talks were resumed in Delhi last August.

In truth the discussions have led to no meaningful movement on the part of Jayawardene. The guerillas have pursued the aims of achieving elected provincial councils in the North and East, where Tamils pre-dominate, together with a regional government with federal powers linking up the two provinces. They have also demanded total control of the police and judiciary in these areas and control over land settlements. The latter is extremely important to the Tamils since the government has been promoting Sinhalese settlement in Tamil areas to break up their communities.

MASSES DIVIDED

Jayawardene's proposals have not satisfied the various Tamil groups. In essence, the UNP has very little room to manoeuvre. As the chief party of the Sinhalese semi-colonial bourgeoisie it has - ever since independence in 1948 - fostered and encouraged the repeated outbreaks of Sinhalese chauvinism.

In this way it has tried to cover up its own bankruptcy in the face of imperialism, and the poverty and oppression that such imperialist domination brings with it.

In Sri Lanka, splitting the working class along communal lines has prevented a unified mass resistance to the pro-imperialist policies of successive UNP and SLFP governments. Hence, any real concessions to the Tamils would spark off a massive wave of chauvinist resistance which the opposition parties would have no hesitation in demagogically exploiting to oust the UNP.

The political settlement then is less aimed at satisfying the grievances of the Tamils than at calming the international money lenders and governments. The Tamils are being used as pawns, not only by the UNP, but also by Rajiv Ghandi. Ghandi is

not interested in justice for the Tamils any more than Jayawardene is. His treatment of the Sikhs and other communal groupings in his own country are proof enough of this. Two other considerations are motivating Ghandi's intervention. The first is his desire to move India further away from the USSR and back to a more solidly pro-US position. He hopes to eventually displace Pakistan as the White House's favourite satellite in the region.

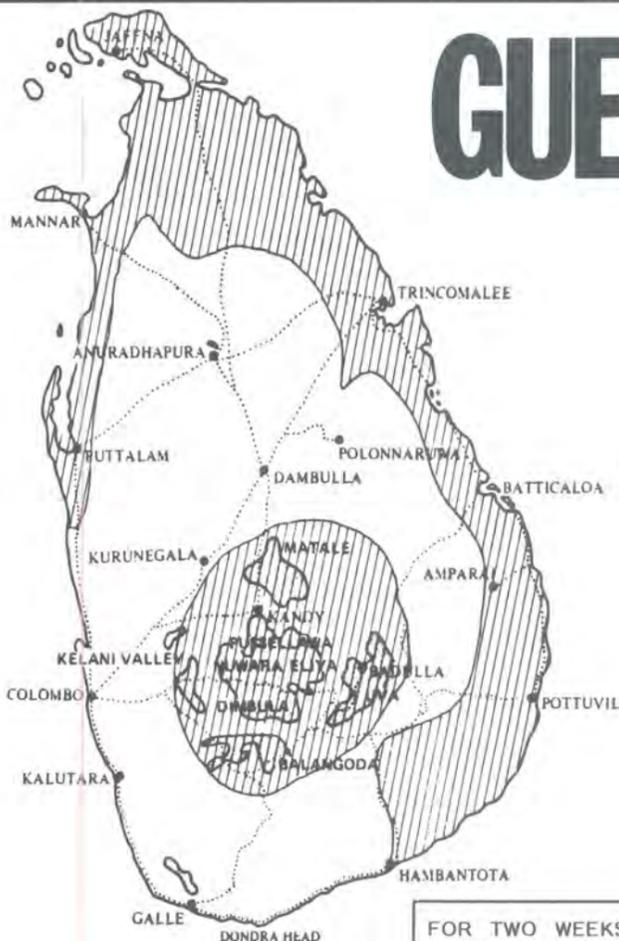
INDIAN SOLIDARITY

Reagan has insisted that Rajiv help Jayawardene bring the Tamil guerillas to heel. He obliged by insisting on the ceasefire to the Tamil groups. He demanded their presence in Thimpu and Delhi. He deported two leaders (Balasingham and Chandrasenan) in August when they voiced doubts over the talks. He threatened them with the destruction of all their camps and aid in Tamil Nadu if they were not 'flexible'.

The only restraining factor on Ghandi is the mass, open support for the beleaguered Tamils in Sri Lanka, among the 50 million Tamil Nadus in India. Thus he has to satisfy the solidarity movement more than the guerillas. The September 24th hartel (General Protest Strike) in Tamil Nadu was only one of the more spectacular signs of Ghandi's problem.

STATEMENT

For the moment the result of this parallelogram of forces is a political stalemate. Jayawardene's actions during September and October, after the failure of the August talks, indicates what lies ahead. Then the military offensive was stepped up against the Tamil population resulting in the destruction of a major guerilla camp and leading to a renewed flight of refugees from the North. Only an agreement on the composition of a Ceasefire Monitoring Committee on October 10th between the UNP, Ghandi and the six main groups stabilised the situation. This stability cannot last for long.



- MAIN ROADS
- TEA AREAS
- TOWNS
- MAIN TAMIL AREAS

GUER

FOR TWO WEEKS during the veteran Sri Lankan skyist Edmund Samarakody in London. He was invited to represent the Workers Party (RWP) in discussions with the Movement for Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI) and other groups at a conference. Later, together with representatives of the Ghandi group, discussions were held with the Liberation Tigers.

During his fortnight in London, comrade Samarakody was a very successful public speaker, organised by Workers Party (RWP) on the Tamil question. He was invited to attend meetings at the invitation of the Information Centre in London, the Eelam Solidarity Centre and the Liberation Tigers.

UNP leader Jayawardene



TERR

A HISTORY OF OPPRESSION

THE INTER-COMMUNAL strife in Sri Lanka is a legacy of British imperialism's method of administering its colonies. With limited numbers of troops and colonial administrators quite unable to hold down so vast an empire the British were masters at divide and rule. Wherever possible they based their colonial administration on minority peoples, systematically stoking up communal antagonisms. Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was such an example.

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

It was the form of political control that the British sponsored to safeguard their super-profits that explains the ethnic rivalry today. Britain selected out the 'Ceylonese Tamils' (about half of all Tamils in Sri Lanka) as a privileged caste to administer the state bureaucracy. These Tamils

are the descendants of the original Tamil population who came to the island from Tamil Nadu in India thousands of years ago. They form the majority in the North and Eastern provinces. The 'Indian Tamils' on the other hand, were brought over as conscript labour from India to provide an agricultural proletariat on the tea plantations of the south Highlands. Today, they are the most oppressed and super-exploited section of the Sri Lankan proletariat.

CHAUVINISM

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

The alternative party of government for the Sinhalese bour-

geoisie has been, and remains, the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) led by Mrs Bandaranaike. This party is based more in the traditionalist, religious sector of the Sinhalese bourgeoisie, partly in the large areas of rice cultivation and partly amongst the landowners of the central highlands. The Buddhist monks themselves are considerable landowners of the central highlands and this helps to explain the SLFP's virulent Sinhalese chauvinism which is part and parcel of its popular demagoguery. The pace of anti-Tamil 'reforms' went further and faster under SLFP governments in the 1960s and 1970s!

Whether it was under the SLFP or the UNP the Tamils of Sri Lanka have been systematically victimised. The political, educational and language privileges of the Ceylon Tamils have all but gone. They are systematically discriminated against in education through a 'standardisation' scheme which demands higher levels of achievement before Tamils can qualify for higher education. In employment, Tamils now occupy less than 5% of the civil service posts and professional jobs and general unemployment is proportionately greater for them than for the Sinhalese.

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



LTTE guerillas - is the armed struggle

STAGEISM; A FLAWED STRATEGY

ORGANISED AGAINST Jayawardene are the organisations of the Tamils, many of which have taken up the armed struggle. How should revolutionaries assess the role of the guerilla organisations in the present struggle? What has the last twelve months revealed about their petit-bourgeois nationalism?

It is true that Ghandi has exerted pressure on the guerillas but it is also true that they have conceded to that pressure.

There could be no doubt that Rajiv's aim was to crush the revolutionary potential of the liberation struggle. Of course, there are circumstances when entering negotiations with the enemy may be unavoidable, in a situation of weakness or as a result of military exhaustion, for example. But this should not be presented to one's own supporters as anything other than the need for a negotiated, temporary truce to buy time. In fact all the groups in the discussions actively sowed illusions in the role and aspira-

tions of Rajiv Ghandi. The spokesperson for the Eelam People Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) was typical in this regard: We went to Thimpu and we have come to Delhi because we want peace, honour and dignity. We are not against India's efforts. Our faith in the Indian government has not diminished".

What does seem to have diminished is their faith in the mass mobilisation of the Tamil working class and poor peasantry.

The most important of the guerilla groups, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) emerged in 1977.

They emerged and grew as genuine defence organisations of the Tamil villages and are sustained by them. At a military level they have been capable of heroic and daring attacks on the state forces, but they have never been strong enough to prevent pogroms or reprisals. A more fundamental weakness - one inherent in guerillaism pursued as a political strategy - has been the failure to set the mass of the Tamil working class in motion behind the goal of national liberation.

As revolutionary communists we give unconditional support to the fight of the Tamil people for self-determination, up to and including separation - the right to secede and form their state of Tamil Eelam.

The Sri Lankan bourgeoisie may denounce the separation and ban the TULF from Parliament because of it, but it is a problem they created. They could have solved the Tamil 'problem' at a much lower level decades ago, when the demands of the Tamils did not go much beyond language and educational rights and against job discrimination.

Under the yoke of oppression, enforced and cemented by pog-

roms and even colonisation of Tamil areas, the Tamils have now come to see separation as the only answer. Not to support this right is to capitulate to Sinhalese chauvinism.

However, as Marxists, we do not advocate the road of separation as a real and lasting solution to the oppression suffered by the Tamil people. We are in principle in favour of the largest possible integrated national territories as a way of fostering national political and economic development under the rule of the workers. The national geographical entity of Tamil Eelam would be the Northern and Eastern provinces which are amongst the most impoverished economically. Most of the guerilla groups have, to date, rejected the option of becoming integrated into a unitary state with Tamil Nadu in India. The majority of the Tamil groups recognise that those who hold this view in fact aim to reduce the Sinhalese to a minority and thus tend to fight chauvinism with chauvinism.

GUERRILLA SPLITS

Against this pro-Indian nationalism most Tamil groups claim to be in favour of a 'socialist' Eelam and some count themselves 'Marxist-Leninists'. They at least recognise that Rajiv Ghandi has not the slightest intention of allowing a socialist Tamil Eelam to be created on India's South-Eastern flank. However, this fact only serves to underline the opportunism and deceit involved in their attitude to Ghandi in the recent talks.

The failure to advance the cause of Tamil Eelam by the struggle of the masses has, this year, led to the ideological disintegration of the guerilla movement and organisational splits. Today, there are two umbrella organisations. The largest is called the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF). Within this are to be found the LTTE, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), the EPRLF and the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation (EROS). The second is the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) which claims 6000 fighters in the field and the Tamil Liberation Army (TELA). However there are probably no more than 1,000 armed fighters in the field spread across all six groups.

While the split reflects the growing impasse of the movement, the differences are of a secondary character. On a day to day basis the two groups differ as to the military targets of their guerilla action. Those in the ENLF tend to hit economic targets such as hotels and banks; in addition the LTTE tend to concentrate on killing individual soldiers. They have been accused by PLOTE of succumbing to chauvinism and killing Sinhalese civilians without good cause.

STAGEISM

PLOTE argue that the prime purpose of military action is to defend the Tamils from attack. They also conduct raids on barracks and police stations with the aim of capturing arms. They claim to be non-sectarian and even to have some Sinhalese members.

Despite these differences the groups are united at a more fundamental level; namely, over the relationship between the democratic and socialist stage of the revolution and over their attitude to the Tamil working class and its role in the struggle for national liberation. For example, PLOTE has argued: "In the struggle for the establishment of a socialist state PLOTE has clearly identified two phases. During the first phase the aim is a democratic revolution via a national liberation struggle,

the second stage being the consolidation of the first phase, and the continued class struggle leading to the establishment of a socialist state" (Our Enemy Is Imperialism page 2.)

It is only necessary to ask which class has the interest and power to achieve even the 'democratic revolution' in Sri Lanka, and the weakness of PLOTE's position emerges. The Tamil bourgeoisie are a weak force. Their social base is largely confined to commerce and the professions. It is only the Tamil working class - particularly the Tamil plantation workers of the hill country where 70% of the GNP is produced - that can crush Jayawardene's Bonapartist rule.

The PLOTE, more than any of the groups recognise the force of this argument. That is why they insist that the democratic phase means; "a strong people's democracy. This alone can guarantee the democratic rights of the masses as a whole, and do away with the pseudo-democracy enjoyed by a section of the people - the privileged class". (ibid)

Moreover, to prevent the emergence of Tamil Eelam as a "bourgeois state", it is essential that "the working class assumes leadership at all levels of the struggle". (ibid)

Yet it is precisely this recognition that introduces an unbearable tension into PLOTE's strategy. How, around what demands and goals, with what methods of struggle, can the working class come to the leadership of the struggle for national liberation? What exactly will it take to arouse the Tamil plantation workers? The simple call for a separate Tamil Eelam state has, by and large, left them unmoved.

CLASS STRUGGLE

This cannot simply be explained by reference to the slave-like conditions under which they toil. Rather, these Kandyan Tamils do not see how a separate Northern and Eastern Tamil Eelam relates to the question of relieving their oppression and exploitation. Are they being asked to vacate the Southern Highlands and move? For what? Poverty and unemployment under their 'own' state? The contradictions of a struggle limited to nationalist goals are obvious. They explain the passivity of the Kandyan Tamils in the present nationalist struggle.

To seriously mobilise the masses means to agitate and organise around the key democratic and social demands that strike at the heart of the enslavement of the Tamil plantation workers. Of course, this must include the fundamental democratic rights which have been stolen from the plantation Tamils. Today, only a quarter of them have voting and citizenship rights.

Yet unless the social demands of the plantation Tamils are placed in the foreground they will remain passive. Whole families work for less than £2 a day. They survive on rice handouts. Families of ten live in one room ten foot square. Demands on pay and conditions of work and home life are decisive here.

The guerilla groups must also recognise that the methods of class struggle needed to achieve these demands are the strike, occupation and General Strike. At the moment, as a statement of PLOTE reveals, they do not understand this: "There is a consensus of opinion among all groups involved in the liberation struggle of Tamil Eelam that the only means to achieve their goal is, through the armed struggle." (ibid page 7)

So long as this outlook predominates then the working class will not be allowed to assume the leadership of the struggle. Armed actions and guerillaism,

can only be an auxiliary method of struggle.

In the first instance, armed defence of the villages from attack, of workers meetings, of demonstrations or to supervise the occupation of factories and plantations, are the necessary military tasks that relate to the mass struggle. But the main weapons of the workers are the strike and the occupation. Only these will guarantee the participation of the mass of workers in their own liberation. Only these will generate a movement to immobilise and overthrow Jayawardene's rule.

REVOLUTION

To advance along this road, however, is to consciously abandon the search for a distinct 'democratic phase' in the Sri Lankan revolution. While common actions with bourgeois forces cannot be ruled out if those forces are prepared to engage in a real struggle against the Sinhalese oppressors, we cannot subordinate the demands and goals of the Tamil workers to what is acceptable to these forces. The forces in the TULF and those most closely associated with Ghandi's initiatives include landowners or small employers as well as professionals. They will oppose the mobilisation of the masses around their class demands because it threatens their own class privileges.

Those fighters sympathetic to the guerillas must face up to this dilemma. To achieve national liberation the Tamil workers must be mobilised in class struggle actions around their own class demands. If they come to the leadership of this struggle, if they succeed in establishing a Workers and Peasants government then they will not stop their revolution half-way. With political power they will move against capitalist property and their imperialist overlords. Indeed, the full flowering of a 'people's democracy' can only take place after the overthrow of capitalism in Sri Lanka. In short, the revolution must become a permanent revolution.

Finally, a radical break with the outlook and programme of Tamil nationalism is crucial precisely because success is unlikely unless the bulk of the Sri Lankan working class, which is Sinhalese, is brought over to the side of the revolution. It is hardly necessary to point out that they cannot be mobilised as a class to the fight for a separate Tamil Eelam even though it is crucial to the task of breaking them from the UNP that they are won over to supporting the right of Tamils to self-determination.

PROGRAMME

Above all, Sinhala-Tamil proletarian unity can be sustained to the end only by a common action programme of immediate and transitional demands aimed against Jayawardene's regime and its imperialist backers.□

Against the cuts in food subsidies!

Against all cuts in social services and benefits!

For the cancellation of all debts to the imperialist bankers and all payments to the former plantation owners!

For workers' control of the nationalised estates and plantations!

For a sliding scale of wages to defend living standards against inflation caused by repeated devaluations of the rupee!

For a real programme of agrarian revolution. Take the land away from the landowners and the state bureaucrats to ensure its collective co-operative or individual ownership by those who work on it!

Eelam. He also did an interview for Tamil Times.

At each of these meetings a lively, comradely exchange took place on the national question in Sri Lanka. Because of the nature of the current repression in Sri Lanka itself and the subsequent difficulties of establishing and maintaining political contacts between all the forces fighting Jayawardene, these meetings were of exceptional importance to the RWP.

Finally, we would like to thank Comrade Samarakkody for enabling us to participate in discussions with representatives of these forces in the forefront of the struggle in Sri Lanka. These discussions have greatly helped in writing this article.■

FOR AGAINST THE TAMILS

by Keith Hassell



THE TRANSITION FROM military dictatorship to bourgeois democracy
THE TRANSITION FROM military dictatorship to bourgeois democracy rule in Brazil has not led to the political and social stability that the bourgeoisie hoped for. The intense class conflict that began with the strikes of 1978, has not yet been dampened by "democracy".

In fact the tempo of the class struggle has intensified as workers have resisted the effects of Brazil's economic crisis. With inflation running at an unprecedented 230% real wages are continually falling. The whole economy is burdened with a foreign debt totalling \$100 billion. As a result the demands of the IMF and foreign banks are leading the government and the bosses to step up their attacks on the workers. In response the working class have taken militant industrial action.

Politically the bourgeoisie is finding things difficult. President Sarney's Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) which emerged as the dominant party in the transition from military rule, secured control of 17 out of the 23 state capitals in the November municipal elections.

However, it suffered a major set-back in the city of São Paulo where Junio Quadros was elected on an extreme right-wing, anti-communist, law and order platform. Of more significance, and of greater concern for the ruling class, was the advance of the left-wing Workers Party (PT). Quadros' success in São Paulo was an isolated instance of right-wing advance, and is widely seen as largely, although not wholly, a product of his personal popularity. In contrast the PT's vote increased substantially throughout the country. So while Fortaleza was the only city to elect a PT majority - itself an impressive indication of the PT's growing support - the party did manage to gain 20% of the vote in the major industrial city of São Paulo and came second or third in many other areas, defeating many of the established parties. These developments led a journalist, close to Sarney to comment, 'The threat of a more radical PT is high on the government's list of worrisome issues.'

STRIKES

The advance of the Workers' Party comes at a time of continued working class unrest in Brazil. At the same time as shifting allegiances to the PT from other parties (in particular the PMDB) workers are taking industrial action on a large scale. Rio de Janeiro health workers fought a 68 day strike during the winter (our summer). Bank workers held a national strike in September and in October 180,000 metal workers in Rio de Janeiro struck. November saw more than 500,000 workers in the São Paulo region wage a strike during which police used tear gas and truncheons to attack pickets. Chemical and plastics workers, retail clerks, bakery workers and metal workers were all involved in this mass strike wave.

Such strike waves are not new in Brazil. Industrial action by the working class was one of the major factors contributing to the collapse of bourgeois confidence in the military regime and the consequent transition towards "democratic" rule. Similarly, the developing political polarisation in Brazilian society has its roots in the period of military rule.

MILITARY RULE

Throughout the early 1980s it became increasingly clear that the military dictatorship was incapable of solving the severe problems besetting Brazil. The full brunt of the world economic crisis hit the country in 1981 causing a fall in the GNP for the first time in 10 years.

In 1981 and 1982 the government was unable to even meet the interest payments due on the foreign debt. Resorting to IMF direction in 1983 failed to solve the economic problems. Despite

BRAZIL AFTER THE MILITARY

IMF imposed austerity measures which cut public expenditure, reduced wages and increased taxes, the government failed in its attempt to reduce the rate of inflation.

Suffering the effects of rising inflation and a consequent decline in real wage levels, workers launched intensified action both industrially and politically. In 1983 workers launched street demonstrations, organised food raids on supermarkets and took widespread strike action. For example in July 1983, São Paulo was paralysed by a partial general strike which was about 80% effective.

Heightened trade union struggles led to greater working class politicisation. It was in this period that the PT established itself as a major force in the workers' movement. Indeed the formation and rapid growth of the Workers Party reflected the rising class consciousness of the working class. This posed a growing threat to the military government.

CONSENSUS

Faced with deepening economic crisis and the growing combativity of the workers, the ruling class, under pressure from its imperialist masters, was keen to contain unrest. Increasingly, the military was considered incapable of dealing with working class discontent. Moves to transform the dictatorship into a more "free" electoral system rapidly gained momentum.

In this way, the bosses hoped to obtain a consensus for "national reconciliation" and "peaceful" retrenchment. The more perceptive elements of the ruling class believed that a more subtle approach to making the working class pay for the crisis, was necessary. "Democratic" rule provided a way out of the impasse.

Once the government decided to institute moves towards increased democratisation, arguments concerning the form these elections should take raged fiercely.

So as to ensure the maximum continuity between the military and civilian regimes Figueiredo - the military President favoured indirect elections through an electoral college. Confident in the belief that the pro-government PDS party held a majority in the 686 member electoral college, Figueiredo opposed direct elections by the electorate as a whole. He well knew that an electorate would overwhelmingly reject his party.

In response, opposition parties united in the 'Direct Election Now' committees. These included the PMDB (which represents the liberal bourgeoisie, elements of the middle class and sections of workers) as well as the PT. During the period leading up to the vote on the issue in the Chamber of Deputies, a gigantic movement grew around the 'Direct Elections Now' committees. Demonstrations attracted over 10 million Brazilians onto the streets - the biggest mass movement in the history of Brazil.

Figueiredo moved against the call for direct elections and used his military powers to help squash the demand in the Chamber of Deputies. A majority of Deputies voted for elections via the electoral college. Yet Figueiredo had not recognised the depth of feeling on this question - including within his own party, the PDS.

Fearful of their constituents' views and influenced by pressure from their supporters, a group of PDS deputies took an independent line over 'Direct Elections'. They refused to support the government.

Then, during the process of selecting a PDS candidate for the impending Presidential elections (January 5th 1985), this grouping solidified into an open opposition within the PDS. The selection



PT leader Lula

of a right-winger, Paulo Maluf, as PDS candidate against the wishes of the more "liberal" elements of the party finally pushed the oppositionist into establishing a formal organisation known as the Liberal Front.

Allying with the main opposition party the PMDB, the Liberal Front supported the candidature of Tancredo Neves.

This grouping of the PMDB and Liberal Front became known as the Democratic Alliance and was successful in defeating Maluf. Tancredo Neves therefore be-

came the country's first elected civilian President in 21 years. José Sarney, Neves' running mate was elected Vice President, and after Neves' sudden death, became the President.

Since its formation in the late 1970s the Workers Party (Partido do Trabalhadores) has grown rapidly. Based on the most militant sections of the industrial working class (eg the metal workers) the Party has begun to attract other, traditionally less militant sections such as the agricultural workers.

The recent election results are just one indication of this.

Originating in the trade union movement and dominating the radical union federation, the CUT (United Workers Federation) the PT has developed political positions which reflected the influence of the various elements which constitute the party. Revolutionary and reformist tendencies co-exist within the party, though the Marxists, as yet, form only a minority current. Conflict between the different tendencies occasionally erupts into the open. The resulting tension means that the party frequently vacillates in its policies at crucial times in the struggle. This is particularly the case when there is conflict between the leadership and rank and file.

POPULAR

This was shown in the run up to and during the election process. Despite initially providing the main impetus behind the 'Direct Elections Now' campaign in the formative stages, the PT soon lost the initiative to the PMDB. Faced with the entry of these bourgeois forces the PT became satisfied with operating as the "left wing" of the popular movement led by the PMDB. It failed to advance an alternative strategy or leadership to counter the bourgeois-liberal elements. While it did advance and insist upon a series of important economic demands of the workers, it did not raise, as an alternative to bourgeois democracy, the call for a workers and peasants government.

Indeed, for a period, it played with the idea of a social peace pact with Neves and a vote for him in the electoral college. The leader of the PT, Luis Inacio da Silva, or "Lula", as he is popularly known, explained the potential terms of such a pact, "We are not opposed in principle to the idea of a pact, but it must be properly negotiated on a firm political basis."

In response to criticisms that

BEWARE A NEW

FOR THE LAST THREE years the Chilean ruling class and its imperialist allies have been struggling with a seemingly insoluble problem. How to dismantle Pinochet's dictatorship without at the same time producing an enormous working class upsurge.

The economic crisis facing Chile is intense. The foreign debt has risen to 20 billion dollars, unemployment is 30% and inflation running at 25% for the last 6 months. Continuing working class resistance to the poverty and repression adds to the instability of the regime. The Chilean bourgeoisie is looking enviously at moves towards controlled bourgeois democracy in both Uruguay and Brazil hoping that such a solution would both defuse working class militancy, and make it easier to open up the economy to further imperialist investment. But they have so far failed to persuade the military that they can achieve something approaching democracy without precipitating the Chilean workers into a revolutionary upsurge. The traditional strength of Chilean workers' political organisations makes the bourgeoisie fear a "Nicaraguan" road more than any other outcome.

The 1973 coup inflicted an enormous defeat on the Chilean workers and its organisations, but ten years later, led by a generation which has grown up under Pinochet's tyranny, the workers again took to the streets to oust the dictatorship. The bourgeois parties face a dilemma. Whole sections of business have suffered from the regime's economic policies and want a government more

responsive to their needs. But Pinochet remains intransigent, pointing to the spectre of a revived and militant workers movement if he is ousted.

The October 1984 general strike led to a marked change of strategy on the part of the largest bourgeois party - the Christian Democracy (DC). That strike, organised by the Peoples Democratic Movement (MDP) led by the Communist Party (PCC), demonstrated the growing strength of the workers movement in Chile. It was followed by a Declaration of a "State of Siege" by Pinochet. During the period it was in force (November 1984 - June 1985) repression escalated with over 33,000 people imprisoned, censorship extended and all meetings banned.

Terrified by the growing strength of the workers' movement the Christian Democracy moved rapidly to try and reassure the extreme right that the transition could be accomplished without handing power to the workers. It stepped up its attacks on the "violent" methods used by the PCC in the struggle against the dictatorship. In August of this year, under the good offices of Cardinal Francisco Fresno, appointed by the Vatican, a new "Accord" was signed which struck an agreement between the parties to the right of the DC, the National and National Union Parties, the DC itself and a section of the Socialist Party (the PS-Briones).

This National "Accord for the transition to democracy" does not call for the removal of Pinochet, nor for the abolition of his

1980 constitution, only its 'amendment'. It also declares that all those who advocate violence and reject democratic 'pluralism' place themselves outside the constitution and therefore the transition to legality - a threat obviously directed at the PCC. In this way the Christian Democracy is signalling its willingness to accept the most restricted democracy in return for some concessions from the dictatorship. The Accord has even been welcomed by the Pope and by Reagan.

Needless to say Pinochet immediately denounced the Accord - saying the gap between his government and the opposition was "unbridgeable".

The key to the destruction of the Pinochet regime lies with the workers' parties - the PS and PCC. The disaster of Popular Unity and its demobilisation of the working class before the military coup shattered the Socialist Party, which survived the repression only in warring fragments. The PCC with its well financed apparatus and international support from the Communist Bloc, survived the repression much better. In the last period of struggle it has been growing rapidly - especially amongst the working class youth of the 'Poblaciones' (shanty towns).

The Stalinists have followed a dual strategy. On the one hand to maintain and win support amongst the militant youth they have embarked on an "armed struggle" through the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (FPMR). The FPMR has been responsible for numerous bomb attacks on power stations, the US consulate, govern-

the PT was waging a class war Lula insisted, 'There is no war. All that is happening is that the workers are organising themselves to put their just demands.'

The pact that Lula and the other reformist elements in the PT had argued for, failed to materialise. Lula himself has since admitted that such a deal was never struck because of the success of the Liberal Front in striking a deal with Neves first!

After the defeat of the 'Direct Elections Now' movement Figueiredo put an end to all hopes of direct elections. Faced with this the PT could only argue for an abstention from the electoral college. With some of the PT's 8 deputies breaking ranks and voting for Neves anyway, the party was left making a symbolic protest at the moment of a political crisis.

This debacle did push the PT in a more militant direction. Emphasis switched to rejecting any social pact proposed by President Sarney, campaigning for democratic demands, including a sovereign constituent assembly, and using strike action to win economic improvements for the masses. This renewed militancy explains the recent electoral successes of the PT. Via the CUT, the PT has put itself at the head of the opposition to Sarney's austerity programme.

The growth of both the CUT and the PT has also stimulated militancy in the ranks of CONCLAT, a major union federation kept in check, until recently, by the "moderate" Brazilian Stalinists. Facing the danger of defections to the CUT, CONCLAT has made overtures to its rival and, in the November strike wave, an alliance was concluded between the two federations. Although the joint platform was a watered down version of the CUT's original demands, the fact that the strike was so effective, and largely successful, will possibly lead to calls for greater unity in the future. The main demands of the strike were met, including a real wage rise, quarterly wage increases, and a reduction of the working week from 48 to 45 hours.

Such unity must be encouraged. However, CUT sections and other militants must ensure that unity is not achieved at the expense of militancy. Militants must be wary of and prevent, attempts

by the CONCLAT leadership to weaken the CUT's tradition of militancy and radicalism.

Unity must be forged on the basis of a principled, militant approach to fighting for workers' interests, and not by accommodating to the right-wing union bureaucrats keen to sell out workers in the interests of "social peace" with the bourgeois regime.

At the same time revolutionaries must be ever ready to present a workers' answer to the continuing political crisis in Brazil. Here, a correct assessment of the PT is vital. Born under the shadow of repression and nurtured in the light of intense class struggle the PT has not yet finally crystallised into a reformist instrument of the bourgeoisie. Revolutionary tendencies are tolerated in its ranks. Its leaders, as the electoral debacle showed, still vacillate under the keenly felt conflicting pressures of the masses and the bourgeoisie.

TWO TASKS

In such a situation revolutionaries must combine two tasks within the PT. First they must combat every vacillation towards the right that Lula and the reformist leaders make. They must counterpose to all talk of pacts with the bourgeoisie, strict working class independence and class struggle against austerity measures. Secondly they must rally the class conscious workers to a revolutionary banner within the PT. The Brazilian working class cannot do without a revolutionary party. The starting point for building such a party is the fight within the PT.

A clear programme that links the completion of the burning democratic tasks in Brazil with the struggle for working class power must be advanced by a revolutionary tendency in the PT. Whether such a tendency will triumph within the PT, (which it should aim to do) or whether the PT will face a split, will be determined in struggle. It cannot be said that the transformation of the PT is, as yet impossible. No time must be lost. And no compromises by revolutionaries, in the interests of unity with the reformists, must be made. ■

by Steve Foster

CHOICES FACING COSATU

A MASS RALLY of 10,000 in Durban celebrated the formation of the new independent trade union federation COSATU. A day earlier on December 1st, 900 delegates met, debated and created the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

This conference brought to a conclusion four years of unity discussions between the various rival union federations which had emerged in the period after 1979. COSATU now embraces 33 unions with a combined membership of over 500,000. It is now the largest union federation in South Africa and the largest in the country's history.

The main components of COSATU are those previously in FOSATU, the powerful NUM and several smaller general and industrial unions.

The formation of COSATU is a great blow against Apartheid. This will be particularly true if COSATU lives up to its founding principles which set down a commitment to a centralised, but democratic structure based on industrial unionism. Already merger discussions are under way between various COSATU unions to build united industrial unions especially in the engineering, car and food sectors.

DELEGATES

The federation has made provision for a wide network of local and regional shop stewards councils and for worker delegates to form a majority at national congresses. While the independent trade union movement is growing from strength to strength the old union federations are split and declining. SACLA (whites only) has shrunk from 250,000 to 100,000 in recent years. TUCSA which has a large percentage of black workers has lost 150,000 members in two years and now stands at 340,000. COSATU now stands to make further inroads into TUCSA's black membership.

Socialists and trade unionists the world over will welcome the formation of COSATU. But the



Armed Boer

major task for black workers still lies ahead of them. The decisive questions are how and in what direction will the new union power be used?

The political and economic situation in South Africa is still deteriorating. The revolutionary crisis is deepening. Nearly 1000 people have died since the beginning of the present crisis in September 1984. Some 430 of these have been killed since the State of Emergency was declared on July 21st when Botha's state forces were given a licence to kill. This measure, as with the decision to ban media coverage from November 2nd, was designed to intensify the state's attack on black activists. The lie that it was the media's presence that caused much of the unrest has been well and truly nailed with the revelation that the daily death rate has gone up since the ban to 3.5. Seventy-six people were killed in November, the second largest monthly total in 1985. Nearly 1,500 of the six and a half thousand arrested under the State of Emergency remain locked up.

Meanwhile, many of the smaller townships - never the scene of major unrest - are now joining in the struggle against the troop occupations and organising boycott committees against white businesses. In addition, in the last weeks the ANC's military wing (Umkhonto we Sizwe) have stepped up their guerilla attacks in urban areas on black police, army patrols and economic targets.

A grave danger facing the South African revolution at this moment is that the energy and heroism displayed in the township struggles will be exhausted before the trade union might of the black workers is brought decisively into the political fight. Before the new amalgamation unions like the NUM and FOSATU as a whole not only rejected political affiliation to the ANC/UDF but eschewed any thought of the trade unions taking a leading role in the fight to bring down the apartheid state. They concentrated on the narrower (economic) aim of building up trade union strength and organization to fight for better wages and conditions now and protect the working class' independent interests in any future black capitalist South Africa.

The founding conference of

COSATU represented a shift away from this position. While the UDF affiliates to COSATU have agreed to industrial unionism the NUM and FOSATU have moved a step closer to the popular front politics of the UDF/ANC.

The influence of popular frontism, and its prime movers, the Stalinists who lead the ANC, presents COSATU with a very real danger. If the Stalinists are allowed to triumph they will turn COSATU into a powerful weapon but one in the hands of petit-bourgeois nationalists and subordinated to their interests. Genuine working class independence and therefore the potential for working class leadership in the revolution is jeopardised by Stalinism's popular front project in the unions. And, when Apartheid is defeated this leadership will try to limit the demands and struggles of the workers to what can be harmonized with a "democratic" black capitalist South Africa.

In fact the issues debated at the delegate conference - overtime bans, shorter working week, defending the minimum wage - show the incompatibility of workers' interests with any form of capitalism in South Africa. Capitalism in the country is crisis-wracked. A black "democratic" South Africa would have to take on the working class over these issues. The nationalist project of "economic reconstruction" would clash with the most vital needs of the workers. Moreover, pressure from world imperialism to make a black governed South Africa safe for their investments would necessitate attacks on the working class.

Precisely for these reasons COSATU, and AZACTU and CUSA, the black unions still outside its ranks, must reject the Stalinist inspired class collaborationist policies of the ANC. They must maintain absolute working class independence. They must throw their full weight into the present struggle for democratic demands and generalise this fight to one against capitalism as well as against Apartheid.

If COSATU is not won to this course then COSATU will be used by the ANC/UDF as a stage army to frighten Botha into making concessions.

VIGILANT

In the coming months militants in COSATU need to be vigilant. Their federation will stand as a pole of attraction to thousands of, as yet, unorganised workers. COSATU's ranks can and must be swelled. The new elements can be mobilised for a fight against Apartheid and for socialism. To ensure that this happens all tendencies towards bureaucracy in COSATU (which will be encouraged by the world's trade union apparatuses and possibly even the apartheid state itself) must be resisted. Today COSATU has the lions share of 12,500 shop stewards and 1,440 shop stewards committees, as well as most of the very small (306) layer of paid officials. This relationship of forces must be preserved and extended in the building of COSATU.

COSATU can and must play the key role in building an independent party of the working class. If this goal is set then leaders and rank and file can debate its programme and organisation. Against all attempts to direct such a workers' party onto the road of a reformist Labour Party, revolutionaries will fight for a combat party. They will fight for an action programme which starts from the burning revolutionary democratic task of smashing Apartheid and shows how this must culminate in the seizure of political power by the working class. The exploited and oppressed the world over will hail the emergence of COSATU. Forward to victory! □

POPULAR UNITY



Chilean army - still in control

ment buildings etc. A recent report to the central committee declared the aim was to render "a state of generalised rebellion which will paralyse the country". At the same time they have repeatedly declared their willingness to support a bourgeois government which represented a break with military rule, preferably a "government of advanced democratic tendencies, with a socialist perspective". Thus the armed actions remain for the PCC a negotiating tactic, aimed not at breaking the army, but strengthening its so called reform wing and forcing it "back to barracks" and out of the political arena.

The PCC and its allies in the MDP - the MIR and various PS factions - were even unwilling to denounce the Accord. Indeed

their first response was to declare it a "positive" step, because it brought in new sectors, eg the far right, into opposition to Pinochet. Later they declared they could not approve such a document because it did not specifically call for the removal of Pinochet.

The best the PCC and its allies offer the Chilean working class is a repeat performance of Popular Unity (although it would prefer to strike a broader alliance with the Christian Democracy.) With the Chilean economy in deep crisis after 14 years of "free enterprise" dictatorship, such a government could only manage capitalism and preserve the mixed economy by making the masses continue to sacrifice their living standards, this time in the name of "preserving democracy".

Against the fake democratic transition proposals the working class must counterpose the fight for a sovereign constituent assembly. Any assembly or parliament would be a farce if it met under the bayonets of the "gorillas". Only the destruction of the dictatorship by an insurrectionary general strike which disintegrated the armed forces and armed the proletariat would open the way to a constituent assembly genuinely under the democratic pressure of the masses. Such a struggle however poses in the sharpest form possible - which class shall rule in Chile? The only solution to the bourgeoisie's economic and political crisis is to fight for a workers government which would make the bosses and imperialists pay for their own crisis.

Such a government would include in its programme the immediate and complete cancellation of the debts to the imperialists and their banks, the nationalisation under workers control of major monopolies, be they Chilean or foreign owned. It would include a massive programme of public works to deal with unemployment and move to immediately solving the land question through a massive redistribution of land to small farmers and cooperatives.

The current leadership of Chilean workers by the PS and PCC offer no such similar solution. They merely propose a class collaborationist utopia which is of no use to workers seeking to destroy the dictatorship and its imperialist allies. ■

by Stuart King

AFTER HEALY, WHITHER THE W.R.P.?

NOT THE LEAST dramatic after effect of the 1984/5 miners' strike was the split in the WRP. Before the strike no organisation could have seemed more sealed off from reality, a closed world where the embalmed errors of 40 years had been turned into a cult around the figure of Gerry Healy.

But the great strike blew down the doors and threw open the shutters of the WRP. Having breathed the fresh air of class struggle and workers democracy in the strike, the WRP's members, especially the youth, were not going to be shut up again in Healy's fantasy land. Their pressure forced a section of the old-guard leaders to break with Healy. Once started this process went a good deal further than the expulsion of Healy and the blindly loyal gang that supported him.

POLITICAL CRIMES

Nowadays, scarcely a *Newsline* passes without extending the list of Healy's political crimes and the time scale of their duration. The problem is whether the present intoxication with denouncing Healy and with re-examining their past will pave the way for a thorough going Trotskyist break with the tradition that Healy represented or whether it will merely lead to a new form of watered down Healyism.

The danger to be avoided is to simply blame all of the WRP's past sins on the crimes of the cult-figure turned demon, Healy is and has long been a disgrace to the name of Trotskyism. But a single individual cannot be blamed for the degeneration of a political outfit for over 30 years. To answer the riddle of Healyism the WRP must address the political roots of their organisation's degeneration.

Much that many of us have known for years is at last acknowledged in *Newsline's* columns. This is to be welcomed. Healy's once vaunted dialectics are now ridiculed as gobbledeygook. The absurd perspective of a permanently existing revolutionary situation since 1974 and of the British working class having already entered into a 'decisive revolutionary struggle for power' has at last been jettisoned. The comrades have rightly recognised the relation between this perspective and the degenerate tyrannical rule that Healy and his henchmen imposed on those that believed it. Among



"Diabolical Materialism"

the youth and trade unionists there seems to be a genuine desire to break out of the sectarian isolation that Healy kept them in.

The craven and consistent opportunism that accompanied Healy's bombastic posturing has also been recognised. The outrageous assistance offered by the Healyites to the murderers of Iraqi communists, the slavish trumpeting of the ramblings of Gaddafi are now denounced by those who once bore well-deserved infamy for aiding and abetting Gerry Healy.

But even this helps to clear the political air. So too does the attack on Healy's unprincipled blocs with Ken Livingstone and other municipal Labour leftists. What is more significant here is that long serving WRPer Tom Kemp could go into print quite rightly pointing out that this opportunism has deep roots. In December 3rd's *Newsline* he argued that Healy took a similar thoroughly opportunist attitude to Aneurin Bevan back in 1952.

At their recent public meet-

ings WRP leaders have announced their intention of trying to get to the roots of quite how their organisation hit the depths they now acknowledges that it did. More to the point hundreds of past and present WRPer are asking themselves and their leaders that very same question. Having declared that Healy's methods 'virtually reduced the party to an opportunist sect'. The WRP has announced, in the words of Geoff Pilling, that, 'we intend to carry out a systematic investigation of the movement's history, from the time of Trotsky's death onwards'.

MYTHS

We think the comrades are right to start their investigation that long ago. Without doing so they will not be able to rid themselves of one of the fundamental myths that Healy propagated, namely that he and his International Committee embodied a principled revolutionary struggle against a degenerate liquidationist tendency called Pabloism. We

reject this understanding.

It is our view that in the aftermath of Trotsky's death and under the pressure of World War, the post-war expansion of Stalinism and stabilisation of capitalism, the Fourth International underwent a centrist degeneration and disintegration. This manifested itself in many ways and in different forms of political accommodation to non-proletarian and non-revolutionary forces.

Healy wrecked the British Trotskyist movement, the Revolutionary Communist Party, in his bid to take it deep into the Labour Party. In this opportunist project he was in a close alliance with his then close friend...Michel Pablo. The forces that were to form the International Committee - the SWP(US), the French section - all argued with the liquidationist line that Healy and Pablo were pushing. In the years that followed, as Tom Kemp has now observed, Healy pursued the policy of cuddling up to the Bevanites - who he dubbed centrist - via the "broad" paper *Socialist Outlook*. Of course after the 1953 split in the FI, Healy fulminated at Pablo for committing liquidationist crimes no different in content from those he himself had pioneered during the late 1940s!

Only if we can honestly address this reality can we begin to understand the problems of the history of the Trotskyist movement. The alternative will be for the WRP - and those who were once forced out of it like Alan Thornett - to simply argue over the day when Healy somehow became a "Pabloite". Tom Kemp,

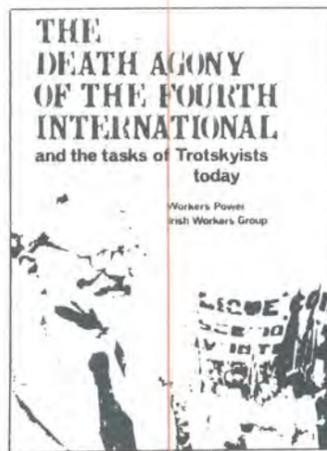
for example, has already raised the spectre of Healy having been a 'fully fledged Pabloite' back in 1952...one year before the International Committee split with "Pabloism".

The WRP promise an 'open and honest' discussion of the history of Trotskyism. Cliff Slaughter has declared that 'we are at the beginning of an objective analysis, and all those who wish to really learn the lessons can certainly participate.' Given the philistinism and national isolationism of the British left such a development is to be welcomed. Our views on the disputed questions are to be found in our book, *The Death Agony of the Fourth International*, which we are prepared to discuss publicly with any interested comrades and with the WRP as an organisation.

The rejection of Healy's gross opportunism and sectarianism by the majority of his followers marks an important moment in left politics. At a time when the USec section in Britain has also split and where the left is on the defensive after the defeat of the miners' strike there is a major crisis on the British left.

A serious discussion and principled resolution of the questions the WRP members have set themselves can play an important part in bringing together a serious revolutionary communist alternative to crisis wracked centrism. Without holding back on any of our criticisms of the WRP, past and present, we will work for such a development. ■

by Dave Hughes



The Death Agony of the Fourth International and the Tasks of Trotskyists Today
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Send your order to:
Workers Power, BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX

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Support the Jailed youth!

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

IN NOVEMBER THE Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI) held a conference in London. Delegates from all the MRCI sections - the Irish Workers Group, Pouvoir Ouvrier (France), Gruppe Arbeitermacht (Germany) and Workers Power - attended the conference. Chilean exiles working with the MRCI were also present.

At the start of the conference delegates discussed an application for entry into the MRCI from an Austrian group Arbeiter Standpunkt (AST). This group was recently formed following a split in the IKL. The split was over fundamental disagreements on the nature of reformism and the tactics of revolutionaries towards it. The comrades of the AST are in basic agreement with the estab-

lished positions of the MRCI. After many years discussion inside the IKL and between Workers Power and the IKL it was clear that the comrades who now constitute the IKL were wedded to a profoundly sectarian position. The AST, which has agreement with the MRCI on other questions, was welcomed into membership. We will continue to develop our common positions confident that the Austrian group will contribute much to the development of the MRCI.

Certain sessions of the conference were also attended by observers from the international grouping of the RWP (Sri Lanka) and GOR (Italy) and from the IKL.

The MRCI was founded in April 1984 with the common understanding that a principled regroup-

ment of revolutionary forces can only take place on the basis of programmatic agreement. This involves not simply common positions on fundamental principles, but also on major tactics in the international class struggle. A major section of the conference was therefore devoted to a discussion of the South African Revolution. The nature and development of the economy, the working class and Apartheid, the false leaderships in South Africa and the programme of Permanent Revolution were all discussed.

A high degree of agreement was reached within the MRCI and theses on the revolution are being drawn up for adoption at a delegate meeting of the MRCI in December.

A debate on Nuclear Power,

the role of workers' control, and tactics towards the anti-nuclear movement was launched at the conference. A document from the IWG laid the basis for a lively discussion which is to be continued within the sections, with a position document being taken to the 1986 conference of the MRCI.

The situation in New Caledonia was also discussed around a resolution from PO. The programme for liberation of the Kanak people is complicated by the specific nature of French domination, and as with South Africa the relative weight of democratic and socialist demands was discussed.

One session of the conference was devoted to a debate with the GOR. They reject the possibility of the anti-imperialist united front as developed by the

revolutionary Comintern. The written exchange on this will be published in the next edition of *Permanent Revolution*.

This conference revealed the correctness of the method we have adopted towards building an international tendency. We will continue to strengthen the national sections through collaboration and debate over key questions, combined with exchanges with other tendencies on the international left who are seriously concerned with programmatic re-elaboration, as the precondition for revolutionary regroupment. ■

- Forward to the Refounding of a Leninist-Trotskyist International!
- For a New World Party of Socialist Revolution!

DANEFORD STRIKES AGAINST RACISM

OVER 2000 TEACHERS were joined by other anti-racists in a strike on the morning of November 22nd, in support of 9 teachers and 2 other trade unionists arrested on a peaceful demonstration against racism in East London schools.

The demonstration followed the slashing of an Asian boy at Daneford School by a racist white gang (the culmination of a long history of racist violence at the school). Those arrested were appearing in court on the morning of the strike.

More broadly, the aim of the strike was to expose ILEA's refusal to implement its much-publicised 'anti-racist policies', in particular its failure to provide sufficient support and resources to prevent racist attacks on pupils.

The strike was only half-heartedly supported by ILTA (Inner London Teachers Association). This is led by the Socialist League dominated Socialist Teachers Alliance. The original decision to strike was taken by ILTA on October 16th. However, no ILTA publicity about the strike was issued until a mailing arrived in schools on November 14th (4 weeks after the decision was taken, and only 8 days before the strike date). Even then the information was on the back page of the mailing.

In contrast it only took them a few days to circulate a threatening letter from the Action Committee of the National Union, informing members that their action would be unofficial and leave them open to discipline both by the ILEA and the national leadership of the NUT!

Despite this over 70 schools were closed for the morning and many more sent delegations to the picket of the court hearing. Much more could have been achieved if the ILTA leadership had not sat on their hands for four crucial weeks. ■

by A Shier (Westminster NUT)

FORGEMASTERS

► continued from back page

The common attack they are under and the need for a united fight-back. The main obstacle to this will be the officials who already have cold feet. Two weeks ago the ISTC ordered their members back to work. The strikers held firm and rebuffed what was described by convenor Ron Ward as "the biggest sellout in Sheffield trade union history".

The AUEW national leadership are now doing the same - they brought the convenor down to London to try and force him to accept the ISTC demands! The strikers and convenor refused.

Strikers at Forgemasters and militants at other steel works must build now for a united fight-back against cuts and worsening conditions. In doing so they must transform the unions into fighting bodies, clearing out the careerists and time servers, and forging a militant leadership accountable to and under the control of the rank and file. □

Monies and messages of support, requests for speakers, etc, to:

Forgemaster Atlas Strike Committee c/o AUEW House, Arundel Gate, Sheffield 1 Tel (0742) 79042

LAMBETH
Defend the surcharged Councillors
Lobby the Law Courts 13 Jan
Rally Jubilee Gardens 8:30am
March to Courts 9:00am

IMPERIALISM and the BOMB

ATOMIC DIPLOMACY: EXPANDED & UPDATED EDITION by Gar Alperovitz. Published by Penguin (£4.95 pp)

THE INCREASED TEMPO of the arms race and the recent Geneva summit makes this new edition of Alperovitz's book extremely valuable and timely. First published twenty years ago and now republished with less timid conclusions 'Atomic Diplomacy' effectively destroys the major myths that surround America's decision to devastate Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the newly developed Atomic bomb.

America's then President, Truman, repeatedly claimed that the bombs were dropped in order to put a speedy end to Japan's war effort. As he put it himself: "The dropping of the bombs stopped the war, saved millions of lives." Alperovitz meticulously demolishes this claim. He makes it abundantly clear that prior to the August bombings the US administration knew that the Japanese military machine was collapsing and that Japanese diplomats were under orders to open peace negotiations.

COLLAPSE

From June 14th 1945 American Pacific commanders themselves were under orders to prepare for a 'sudden collapse or surrender'. This is not surprising given that the Japanese Foreign Minister had been given the go ahead by Japan's Supreme Military Council to approach the USSR in order to end the war by September. In July the Japanese Emperor's personal envoy made arrangements to visit Moscow to ask for mediation to end the war. The US administration was aware of all these moves yet it proceeded to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

For Alperovitz the key to explaining the decision to bomb Japan lies in America's view of the USSR and not in its military needs in the war with Japan.



At the Yalta conference in 1944 Stalin had agreed to deploy Soviet troops against Japan three months after Germany's surrender. At that particular time the US was desperate to secure such an undertaking from the USSR and prepared to make significant concessions to the Stalinist bureaucracy's demand for a 'buffer zone' in Eastern Europe in order to reach agreement. The successful testing of the Atomic bomb meant both that the US had the means of preventing the USSR playing any role in shaping the nature of post-war Japan and of undoing the agreements over a buffer zone

in Eastern Europe which had been struck at Yalta.

Using Truman's recently discovered diaries Alperovitz shows how Truman deliberately delayed his 1945 Potsdam meeting with Stalin until he knew the fate of the testing of the bomb. As he crossed the Atlantic he told an aide: "If it explodes as I think it will, I'll certainly have a hammer on those boys." Once the bomb was successfully tested the US administration set out to end the war with Japan as speedily as possible so as to dictate all of the terms and exclude the USSR. The USSR was due to enter the

war with Japan on August 8th - Hiroshima was bombed on August 6th, Nagasaki was bombed on August 9th.

In the aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima the US administration - particularly Secretary of State Byrnes - felt strong enough to increase their demands for the USSR to relinquish its European buffer zone and to cease American Imperialism's war time policy of reluctant but necessary cooperation with the USSR. This was made abundantly clear at the September 1945 Council of Foreign Ministers in London.

If Alperovitz provides a painstakingly exhaustive destruction of Washington's myths he is far less successful in explaining why the US initiated Atomic weaponry and used it as a direct means of weakening and threatening the USSR. As a liberal he can lay bare the actual events but without ever grasping their significance.

DOMINATION

The bomb was a means for securing global domination for US imperialism. The USSR - in which capitalism had been abolished by the October 1917 revolution - was the principal threat to that domination. It was and remains the real target of the atomic weaponry that the US deployed from 1945 to the present day. There is ample evidence for that case in Alperovitz's book. The author's politics prevents him from grasping this though.

The book should be read by all who are interested in the threat of nuclear war, the origins of the arms race, and the attitude of imperialism to the USSR. With so many recent works on the origins of the Cold War peddling Reaganite and Thatcherite anti-Sovietism, and with most of the better 'leftist' accounts of the period long out of print, it is a welcome change to see Alperovitz's book in paperback. ■

by John Hunt

BOOK REVIEWS

CAPITALISM AND APARTHEID

CAPITALISM AND APARTHEID by Merle Lipton. Published by Temple Smith/Gower 1985 (£18:00 hbk 376pp)

Lipton is a liberal academic. The purpose of the book is to: "investigate whether capitalists in South Africa wanted to retain, strengthen or destroy Apartheid and whether they have the power to secure these aims."

She is not primarily concerned with political apartheid (i.e. the various constitutional settlements that are possible to incorporate the black masses). Rather, she investigates in detail the labour policies of various sectors of capital and the apartheid state.

SOURCE

The wealth of statistics and the excellent collection of tables at the end of the book make it an invaluable source. Lipton also unravels the complex relationship of Apartheid to the labour process.

Her thesis is simple and uncontroversial: political restrictions on black labour (i.e. influx controls, jobs bar) makes it unskilled, abundant and low waged. Conversely, white labour is restricted and therefore scarce and, as a consequence, high waged.

She traces in detail the history of the Afrikaaner nationalist alliance that existed from the early 1920s between the white trade unions and the Afrikaaner petit bourgeoisie. Squeezed between the mass of unskilled black labour and the skilled English white immigrant workers above, the growing Afrikaaner working class in the 1920s and 1930s (as small

farmers were driven off the land) became the decisive component of a reactionary alliance. This had at its heart the super-exploitation of the black masses and immense labour aristocratic privileges of the white workers.

Lipton shows how all sectors of the South African ruling class (agriculture, mines, manufacture, state enterprises) benefitted from Apartheid in general, but each sector gradually came to oppose specific aspects of its labour policy in the 1960s and 1970s. This even applied to some extent to the mining interests, which generally relied upon the severest forms of Apartheid (influx control and jobs bar) to ensure a large supply of cheap labour. But the main advocates of restructuring Apartheid were the growing number of manufacturing bosses who felt the need for a greater industrial training of blacks to meet the shortage of skilled labour.

TOO EXPENSIVE

They were also driven by the fact that, by the 1970s, the cost of the labour aristocratic privileges of the white workers were too expensive to endure. By ending the job bar on skilled labour and employing black workers at lower wages (even if substantially higher than they had previously received) the bosses aimed to lower labour costs and restore productivity - both essential if South African capitalism was to compete effectively abroad.

Lipton is an advocate of "multi-racial capitalism" and believes this can be achieved in South Africa if the process of

reform advocated by the "progressive capitalists" is continued. At the same time she notes that all sections of the South African fulling class were, and remain, opponents of full democratic rights for blacks - one person, one vote - as they rightly perceive that this would be a severe blow to their continued economic dominance. While apartheid might need "reforming" from the point of view of South African capitalists they do not forget that the strength of their economy is founded upon the super-exploitation enshrined in that system.

That is why they - and their allies, the enormously privileged white workers - will fight tooth and nail against any movement which threatens to destroy Apartheid itself. Events since Lipton wrote her book and the growing resistance of the Afrikaaners to political change testify to the irreformability of the South African state through gradual and peaceful methods. It needs to be smashed from top to bottom. Only the black working class can do that - not the "enlightened self interest" of sections of South Africa's capitalists. ■



Multi-racial armed forces still gun down blacks!

