

Workers power

Six Page
THEORETICAL SUPPLEMENT
on the
**Socialist Workers
Party**

U.S. TROOPS OUT OF GRENADA!

IN THE AFTERMATH of the brutal assault of the United States Airborne Division, Grenadians are nursing their wounded and mourning their dead. Now they must brace themselves for the arrival of a Commonwealth policing or 'peace keeping' force. Fraud will now be added to force in the name of the restoration of democracy.

Reagan's democratic missionaries were perfect candid about their task, "We came here to fight communism, didn't we? I want to fuck communism out of this little island, and fuck it back to Moscow." (Marine quoted in the *Observer* 30.10.83) To this end, scores of Grenadians, men and women, have been rounded up, their wrists bound with wire and led off to unknown destinations.

Bernard Coard has been taken to a US warship and BBC radio carried reports that he has been "mistreated". A jubilant Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf appeared on television telling reporter that he would not reveal to them what his troops were doing with Mr. Coard. It is extremely likely that Coard, Austin and dozens of New Jewel Movement activists are being tortured into confessions. "Queen's Representative" Sir Paul Scoon's promise of an investigation and a trial of the murderers of Maurice Bishop clearly indicated that a trial will be set up in order to justify the invasion. It will set out to discredit the whole NJM. The lives of NJM activists captured by the US marines are clearly at risk.

The arrival of a Commonwealth force will in no way aid the Grenadian people. It must be opposed by the whole British labour movement. Unfortunately this is not the situation at the moment. The TUC's resolution calls on the British government, (ie Thatcher) to "offer its help in putting arrangements in hand for free elections and rule based on the democratic choice of the people." There are already reports of the return of Gairy's notorious 'Mongoose Gang' to Grenada. They have been seen operating road blocks with the American invaders. The untying of the hand of Grenada's landowners and capitalists with the backing of policemen and troops from Britain or Britain's stooges are the only 'arrangements' that will be put in hand by Thatcher.

The Labour Party has not gone beyond the evasive statement that 'no British forces should become involved in the military operation.' Here again the leaders of the labour movement cannot even defend a basic democratic principle - self-determination for the Grenadian people. For this to mean anything it must explicitly involve the immediate and unconditional removal of all US and East Caribbean States troops or 'police' from Grenada and the arming of the Grenadian militia. It must mean the release of all political prisoners taken during and since

NO COMMONWEALTH INTERVENTION!

the invasion and an end to the farcical measures of the Governor General to arrange show trials. Only the Grenadian have the right to try anyone in Grenada. The wretched puppet Scoon must be dismissed and no further Governor General sent or appointed. The Commonwealth policemen or 'peacekeepers' must be kept off Grenada.

The leaders of the labour movement have once again disgraced themselves in an orgy of offended British patriotism. Healey has attacked Thatcher as "the President's obedient poodle". Playing the Churchill he accused her of showing "...a lack of grit, a flaccid indolence in dealing with it. She has failed in her duty to the House, she has failed in her duty to the Commonwealth and she has failed in her duty to the Palace."

Concern for the offended Monarch seems to have been to the fore in many Labourites' minds, not all of them right-wingers at that! Tony Benn thought it was worth dwelling on in a speech to a protest rally in Lambeth on 28 October. "For the first time in my life, the Queen herself has found it necessary to make known publicly her grave displeasure..." (reported in *Tribune* 4.11.83) Such flunkeyism seems second nature to those who have kissed her majesties' hand or taken the oath of a privy-councillor. It is doubly indecent at a time when the "Queen's Representative" is setting up a Commonwealth force to pull Reagan's chestnuts out of the fire.

The Labour leaders are simply repeating the charges of weakness, lack of patriotism and letting down the Queen that they hurled at Thatcher immediately after the Argentine take-over in the Malvinas. It will rebound on them as it did last time round. Are they really arguing that they want a more vigorous assertion of Britain and the Queen's interests? All Thatcher is annoyed about is that it was an American and not a British and Commonwealth task force that overthrew communism. Do they believe her prattle about

international law?

The Labour left have no independent stance. Allan Roberts, MP (Labour Herald parliamentary columnist - as well as likening Grenada to Bootle, his constituency, in the Commons' debate, has dubbed Healey's performance first rate, "Denis Healey and Neil Kinnock performed brilliantly. Healey put Party policy on Grenada, Central America and Cruise with crushing force." (*Labour Herald* 4.10.83) *Labour Herald* editorially rejoiced at "the chance to deal a death blow to the already fading Falklands factor."

The real 'Falklands factor' is that the British labour movement is a sucker for chauvanist flag-waving. Thatcher will always out distance the Labour leaders in this whilst compromising them hopelessly in the first phases of what ever imperialist adventure she tries. She and her predecessors have done this in two world wars, and countless colonial ones.

Workers in Britain should shed no tears for the Queen, the insulted national honour, the Commonwealth, the prestige of the House of Commons or any such reactionary garbage. The Labour leaders may ring their chauvanist bells today. They will be wringing their hands tomorrow. At best they can discomfort Thatcher temporarily with loyalist or royalist taunts. She will use just these loyalties *against* the labour movement whenever it turns to struggle against her. The sight of the Labour front benchers arm in arm with Enoch Powell is not likely to impress black workers in Britain either.

Revolutionaries, socialists, militants must take their stand on the bedrock of working class internationalism.

Down will all US or British intervention in Grenada!
No British or Commonwealth 'police force'!
Unconditional support to the Grenadian resistance.
Moral, material and financial aid to help get the prisoners released and the imperialists out of Grenada!

The Special
Relationship!



Militant emphasises Thatcher's "humiliation";
Tribune attacks Thatcher for letting down the Crown (below)

YOUTH MUST FIGHT BACK NOW

A NATIONAL YOUNG WORKERS Assembly is to be held on December 10th in Manchester. It has been called by the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) and the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) It has been given official backing by Labour's NEC.

It is vital that this conference is packed to overflowing with young workers. They have been amongst the hardest hit by the Tories onslaught. The number of school leavers now on the dole is 168,135. Another 198,000 are only kept off the register through being on Youth Training Schemes. These miserable excuses for real jobs, pay £25 a week, involve no guarantees of future work, and, with their registration and record books are deliberately designed to discipline youth and weed out any militants.

The official Labour movement's record of fighting youth unemployment and the YTS is appalling. The TUC actually supports the existence of the YTS and collaborates with the Tories in running the scheme.

The only demonstration to be held explicitly to protest at the attacks on youth was mobilised by LPYS activists with virtually no help from the unions. The fact that 10,000 did turn out in Liverpool in October 1982, is clear evidence that the youth *are* prepared to act. It is the official leaders of the Labour movement who are refusing to mobilise the anger and energy of the youth.

The dominant tendency in the LPYS and YTURC is the Militant. It is quite happy to tolerate the inertia of the bureaucracy. In exchange it can maintain its own bureaucratic stranglehold over the LPYS. It can get the official backing necessary to allow it to convene and, it hopes, stage manage, events like the coming Assembly. Despite the attacks on youth the Militant has not used its position in the LPYS to launch a wide spread campaign. The LPYS has not grown significantly. Its activities are nearly all Labour Party orientated. It

has not hitherto addressed itself on any systematic basis, to the problems facing thousands of young workers

If Militant have their way, the December meeting will be a one-day wonder, a rally with little purpose beyond providing Militant speakers with a platform to spout from.

This need not be the case if a determined opposition is mounted on the day. If young workers are delegated armed with resolutions arguing a way forward for the working class youth then the dead-hand of Militant can be warded off. Delegates must fight for action in defence of youth. They must fight for a democratic conference where resolutions can be taken and fully discussed. The Militant proposed 'Charter for Young Workers' is full of fine words, but unless a series of active campaigns are mounted, it will be a redundant document. A campaign for union rates and rights in the YTS as part of a campaign to abolish it is crucial. It is necessary to organise around the dole queues in order to link unemployed youth to the Labour movement through an unemployed workers union. Failure to do this will only benefit the fascists.

The curse of capitalist militarism must also be fought. Cruise may be here, but the warmongers can still be fought with working class action. Youth must play a vital part in a campaign against capitalist militarism. It must fight it not with the useless pacifist phrasemongering and sentimentalising that has been the hall mark of the peace movement. It must wage class war against war.

If these campaigns can be undertaken from the conference - and that will mean a struggle to defeat Militant - then the day will be a success. It will be an important step towards forging what working class youth desperately need today - a revolutionary youth movement.

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NICARAGUA UNDER SIEGE

THE ONSLAUGHT OF US imperialism on Grenada indicates the vicious resolve of the Reagan administration. It aims to stamp out the flames of revolt in the semi-colonies of the Central American and Caribbean Area. The overwhelmingly dominant faction within the American ruling class supports this "reassertionist" strategy. The reason is simple. US imperialism's world hegemony has slipped seriously in the last thirty years. From Cuba to Vietnam the decline was slow but definite.

Thereafter something approaching disintegration set in. The "Carter years" centering on the Iranian nightmare convinced the US bourgeoisie of the need for a massive increase in armaments and a preparedness to use them in all the "geo-strategic" areas. That is, where the interests of the US were threatened. In the Middle East and Gulf regions, in Central America and in the Far East.

The Grenadian invasion whose preparation long pre-dated the military coup and the murder of Maurice Bishop, was aimed at what US strategists regarded as a key island guarding the shipping lanes into the Caribbean. There is no doubt that the next target for Reagan is the overthrow of the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua. The *Sunday Times* (30.10.83) reports a "variety of US and other Western Diplomatic sources" as saying that Reagan "hopes to see a new provisional government established in Marxist Nicaragua by December or January."

Even the personnel of the counterrevolutionary government has been worked out. The key figure is the millionaire businessman Alfonso Robelo, ex member of the Provisional Revolutionary Government after the overthrow of Somoza. The CIA has doubled the forces of armed counter-revolutionaries in the last six months - now these number 10,000 and the aim is to increase the figure to 15,000 in the next period. The economic blockade is being tightened with the freezing of 50 million dollars of loans from the World Bank. Rumours abound of an outright blockade of fuel supplies.

The first years of the Sandinista regime were ones of economic expansion. In 1980 and 1981 the Gross National Product rose by 10% and 9% respectively and unemployment fell from 36% in 1979 to 13% in 1980. The social gains of the revolution were dramatic. The infant mortality rate dropped by a quarter in four years. The illiteracy rate dropped from 50% to 12% in the same period, and the number in school has tripled.

Yet despite these gains Nicaragua remains a country with an economically powerful internal bourgeoisie and in the economic grip of world capitalism.

In industry, which accounts for 30% of the gross domestic product, about 60% is in private and 40% in state hands. The state exercises substantial supervision over the private sector and the Sandinista unions enjoy a certain degree of supervision "from below." However the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie is still in a position to use its economic power to hold the Sandinista Government to its defence of the mixed economy (ie. state and private capitalist production). The majority of the Nicaraguan exploiting class remains a more or less concealed foe of the Sandinista Government. They have starved the regime by exporting capital to "safer" areas outside the country. Yet the regime still defends the existence of a native bourgeoisie. Daniel Ortega defended the "active role as producers" that the private sector plays in the economy. In the main, statements like these are for international consumption. On an international scale the Sandinista regime remains chronically dependent. The US in 1982 still supplied 19% of Nicaragua's imports and received 22% of its exports. Western Europe supplies 78% of Nicaragua's aid, partially offsetting the US blockade. The tribute still paid to Imperialism is indicated by the fact that 45% of Nicaragua's income from exports goes to service its foreign debts. The "private sector" is therefore an important sop to maintain the benevolence of the European bourgeoisie.

The coming months will put to a cruel test the Sandinista popular front strategy. Already this is adopting evermore the character of an alliance with the phantom "national bourgeoisie". The real political and economic representatives of this class are in the camp of Reagan and the Contras. The bourgeois elements in Nicaragua and in the FSLN itself, represent little more than a fifth column, a trojan horse for Reagan and Robelo. When the pressure becomes unendurable the FSLN itself will begin to crack with its proto-Stalinist and pro-bourgeois (Social Democratic) poles appearing. If the pro-bourgeois elements triumph and rearrange the government for capitulatory negotiations with Reagan or if the proto-Stalinist elements win out and attempt to follow the "Cuban road" a dire future awaits the Nicaraguan masses. Contrary to the crypto-Stalinist advisors within the "Trotskyist" USec, the Cuban road is not the inevitable development of the "revolutionary process". The USSR is clearly unwilling to back a Cuban-style overturn of capitalism in Nicaragua. Moreover Castro himself declared that: "We would try to do everything possible for Nicaragua. But we would face the same problems as in Grenada." So the likelihood of Cuban assistance in this direction is small indeed.

The principal hope lies in the response of the Nicaraguan masses and that of the oppressed and exploited workers and peasants of Central and Latin America. Fifteen thousand US marines may be able to suppress 1,600 Grenadian soldiers and militia and 600 Cuban building workers. They will not triumph in Nicaragua without setting a torch to the whole region.

But even here a clear revolutionary strategy will prove decisive. In Nicaragua it is vital that a real workers and peasants government replace the popular front Government of National Reconstruction. What is needed is a government based on workers and peasants councils. The militia and army must likewise achieve democratic control of their officers and commanders. The proletariat must establish full workers' control of production, expropriating the saboteurs. Above all a really revolutionary policy of full aid to the FMLN insurgents in El Salvador is essential. This road is obviously not free of grave dangers. The victory of revolutions can never be guaranteed in advance. However as Grenada has shown the disastrous nature of Social-Democratic and Stalinist strategies hidden under the petit-bourgeois nationalist rhetoric, either singly or together, lead not only to defeat, but to defeats that shatter the morale of the masses and throw them back years if not decades. The route out of the impasse of the Nicaraguan Revolution can only be taken by the masses under the leadership given by the development of a genuine Trotskyist revolutionary party. Such a party must be built in Nicaragua. The name of the route forwards is Permanent Revolution.

THE GRENADIAN REVOLUTION of 1979 was the first popular revolution in the Caribbean since Fidel Castro ousted Batista in 1959. Followed swiftly by the revolution in Nicaragua, these two revolutions soon became the focus of the Reagan administration's determination to reassert its hegemony over its semi-colonial empire. Indeed both the Grenadian and Nicaraguan revolutions were results of this system of rule.

Gairy in Grenada, like Somoza in Nicaragua, survived through intimidation, corruption, rigged "elections" and above all by direct financial, "intelligence" and military support from his North American masters. Like Somoza however, he had become an oppressive burden to important sections of the local bourgeoisie and something of an embarrassment to the Carter Administration.

By 1979 after 23 years in power, Gairy, who had originally come to power at the head of a powerful strike movement of estate workers and small farmers, was politically isolated from all sections of Grenadian society. Having long made his peace with the Grenadian oligarchy and their British overlords, by the 1970s Gairy's personal greed and increasingly eccentric behaviour had made him a liability to the Grenadian ruling class. Constant interventions in favour of his own corrupt and undemocratic Grenada Manual and Mental Workers Union (GMM-WU) alienated both workers and business owners, many of whom were forced to take Gairyite loyalists onto their payroll. The powerful landowning interests came into conflict with Gairy in the late 1980s. When the marketing boards for Grenada's most important crops - Nutmeg, Cocoa and Bananas - were disbanded and stuffed with Gairy nominees. The division was further exacerbated by Gairy's takeover of 25 estates, a measure aimed both at intimidating the oligarchy and shoring up his neglected small farmer base. Even within the burgeoning tourist industry Gairy used his position to ensure his hotels and restaurants were full, while other sections of the industry were discriminated against.

Having alienated virtually all the important classes within Grenadian society, it is little wonder that when 40 armed members of the New Jewel Movement launched their insurrection on 13th March 1979, the Gairy regime collapsed like a pack of cards. There is no doubt that the overthrow of Gairy had enormous popular support on the island. This came not only from NJM activists and supporters but also from non-party members who joined in the rounding up of Gairy's hated "Mongoose Gang" of criminal thugs en masse, and also from the Grenadian oligarchy. The overthrow was hailed by the Grenadian Chamber of Commerce as "a glorious opportunity for Grenada to build something new and different in the Caribbean."

The New Jewel Movement, which had led the revolution, stood at the head of an all class alliance against Gairy.

The NJM, formed in 1973 out of the fusion of two organisations, had moved in the 1970s from an espousal of "Black Power" ideas to more traditional third world "socialism". Its leaders were largely western educated and drawn from the Grenadian petit-bourgeoisie. Maurice Bishop's father, Rupert, was a merchant and Bishop himself had tourist interests in Morne Rouge as well as being a barrister. They were revolutionaries in the sense that without an insurrection they would never have ousted Gairy. Beyond they sought to alleviate their country's chronic dependence on imperialism.

VOTE
the
PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE
MAURICE BISHOP
S-E St. Georges

Like other revolutionary nationalist movements the NJM sought to improve the social conditions of Grenada by developing a programme of diversification of industry, improvements in agriculture and restricting foreign capital's export of profits from the country. It was a programme which, for all its radical language, sought to improve Grenada's position within the system of world imperialism. It sought to do so primarily by seeking diversification of imperialist investment and also, if necessary, to lean on the non-capitalist states - Cuba, Russia, Eastern Europe - for support.

One wing of the NJM leadership principally Bishop and Unison Whiteman - saw this programme as being implemented along the lines of Michael Manley's Jamaican Socialism and looked primarily to the parties of the Second International for support. Another faction centered around Bernard and Phyllis Coard inclined more towards the Stalinist model of development - looking in particular towards Cuba. Both wings however were united on the defence of the mixed economy ie. capitalism, in Grenada, leaving the struggle for socialism for the dim and distant future.

It was this perspective which allowed the NJM to unite in the 1976 General Elections with the two bourgeois opposition parties - the Grenada National Party (GNP) and the United Peoples Party (UPP) in a "Peoples Alliance". The Alliance, although short-lived, managed to gain 48% of the votes and 6 out of 15 seats in parliament.

Ortega, Bishop and Manley: not wanted in Reagan's "backyard".



THE The New

This was no mean feat in Gairy's rigged and corrupt electoral system. The bourgeois parties, having already proved treacherous allies in the island wide general Strike against Gairy in 1973/4, rapidly distanced themselves from the NJM once in parliament. By 1979 Gairy felt strong enough to order the liquidation of the entire leadership of the NJM, a move which precipitated the NJM into the armed overthrow of the government in March. In this overthrow the bourgeois parties took no part though they gladly shared the results which the NJM was eager to have them do.

The "Peoples Revolutionary Government" installed in 1979 perfectly mirrored the politics and strategy of the NJM. Despite their treachery to the "Peoples Alliance", the bourgeoisie was invited to join the popular front which made up the PRG. Bourgeois figures like Norris Bain, ex-GNPer and owner of a merchant house and Lynden Rahmdanny, owner of one of the biggest merchant houses in Grenada and former President of the Chamber of Commerce were given important posts in the government - Bain as Minister of Health, Rahmdanny as Deputy Minister of Finance under Bernard Coard. Nine out of the original fourteen members of the PRG were members of the NJM. The PRG quickly reaffirmed its intention to stay in the Commonwealth and confirmed recognition of Gairy's appointee Sir Paul Scoon as the Queen's representative on the island; a move which turned out to be of no small advantage to imperialism.

The PRG commitment to the defence of capitalism in Grenada was quickly made clear by both wings of the NJM. Maurice Bishop being interviewed in the official organ of world Stalinism, *World Marxist Review* declared: "We see this revolution as being in the national democratic stage. We are an anti-imperialist party and government and we believe that the process we are involved in at this time is an anti-imperialist, national democratic socialist stage of development."

Taking up this theme, three years after the revolution Bernard Coard, architect of Grenada's economic strategy under the PRG, explained: "We are developing our economy on the mixed economy model (emphasis in original - WP). Our economy will comprise the state sector, the private sector and the co-operative sector. The dominant sector will be the state sector, which will lead the development process." (Report on the National Economy, 1982).*

While the Social-Democratic and proto-Stalinist wings of the NJM might have disagreed over the tempo of development of the state sector and its relative weight in the economy, both saw it as existing side by side with private capitalism. Both hoped to use a state capitalist sector to dynamise and develop the whole economy, a strategy not acceptable to important sections of the Grenadian bourgeoisie.

The problems that the PRG set out to solve were not unfamiliar ones to the imperialised world, except that the economy of Grenada, a tiny island almost totally dependent on three basic export crops and tourism, was particularly vulnerable to imperialist pressure. The revolution of March 1979, led as it was by a movement committed to improving the lot of the masses, created mobilisations unprecedented on the island since the general strike of 1950. Twenty thousand, 20% of the population, marched on the streets in celebration of Gairy's resignation a week after the overthrow of his government. The workers and peasants mobilised in the struggles against Gairy had expectations for immediate improvements which the PRG, at least partially, set about granting. The dramatic cuts in unemployment, improvements in health, free education and text books, a massive literacy campaign, improvements in basic facilities - transport, water, electricity etc were all undertaken. The most repressive aspects of Gairy's regime were dismantled, with the ending of restrictions on trade union recognition, arbitrary arrest, banning of meetings etc. The enthusiastic response of the masses for participating actively in the revolution was

ROAD TO DISASTER

Jewel Movement in power



Coard and Bishop (centre) lead the National Youth Section of the NJM.

channelled into the Parish councils and "popular organisations" of women, youth, and the militia.

Such is the material and cultural impoverishment imperialism has inflicted on the masses of the Caribbean and Central America that solving or alleviating these problems - by literacy campaigns, health measures, land reform indeed revolutionise the life of the masses. Yet they remain bourgeois democratic tasks even if semi-colonial servitude and a venal local bourgeoisie could never bring these gains. These measures are compatible with the maintenance of capitalism even though the landed oligarchy, the local bourgeoisie and the imperialists regard any regime that carries them out as Marxist.

Inevitable venomous counter-revolutionary opposition to elementary economic, cultural and democratic rights for the masses invests any regime that attempts to carry them out with an aura of socialism or communism. However as we have seen in Nicaragua and Grenada these governments remain on the terrain of the defence of bourgeois property relations. Opposed, sabotaged, undermined by imperialism and its local agents on the one side; pressed for an extension of the revolution by the masses on the other, these regimes play a bonapartist role. They exclude the bourgeoisie from direct political power and rely on the masses for this. On the other hand they prevent the masses from taking political power and utilising it to carry out a social revolution.

Thus the NJM did not base itself on genuine democratic organs of struggle and power - Councils or soviets - organising the urban and rural workers. Instead they created the typical "organs of popular power" so beloved of Castro and his imitators. In Grenada these were primarily the parish and zonal council which were presented with government plans for discussion and criticism but had no power over the policies or actions of the PRG. Thus popular power is little more than a plebiscite organised to approve the policies of the bonapartist leaders. Political questions - supremely who shall govern, do not fall within their sphere of competence.

The commitment of the PRG to the mixed economy also meant that it blocked any serious demands of the masses which threatened private property. Coard made this clear in a speech to the Chamber of Commerce shortly after the revolution when he declared "with the revolution has come the end to the forcible seizure of private property". One symptom of this was the failure of the PRG to introduce any land reform programme until the land occupations forced them to do so.

Land in Grenada is dominated by the large landowners who often have interests in tourism and the retail

trade. The big farms, those over 100 acres, which make up only 0.5% of all landholdings, control nearly 50% of all the cultivable acreage in Grenada. While the peasant farmers scratched a living on tiny plots of land, it was estimated that half the land holdings over 500 acres were left lying idle by their absentee landlords! Yet the PRG contented itself with concentrating on the 25 estates, the most infertile ones at that, taken over by Gairy.

In February 1980 when farm workers, complaining of bad conditions and low wages occupied the River Antoine estate owned by the De Gale family, they were variously denounced by the government as being CIA inspired or being in the pockets of Marijuana smugglers. The PRG quickly declared that it: "could not and would not support the seizure of people's property as the means of resolving the conditions of hardship of the workers." (*Government Information Bulletin*, May 5th). The estate was returned to the De Gales and a grateful member of this land-owning family wrote to the *Times* in the following terms: "It is relevant to record publicly that when, in Feb. 1980, our family estate was peremptorily taken over by a village commune and renamed 'The People's Collective Farm', government support was immediately forthcoming for the managers' protection and the estate was returned (eventually) to normal working."

It is by judicious, well regulated behaviour that Mr. Bishop - like Mr. Mugabe - hopes to transform this small nation into a homogenous structure of living communities." (*Times* 13 Feb. 1981)

While this revolt pushed the PRG into taking some reform measures, they remained minor. The "Utilisation Law" gave power to the Ministry of Agriculture to lease idle lands of estates over 100 acres. But the "idle lands for idle hands" scheme was employing only 160 youths on 146 acres of land by mid-1982.

If landownership remained fundamentally untouched by the PRG so too did the business community. The 1973 commitment in the NJM manifesto for "the complete nationalisation of all foreign owned hotels as well as foreign owned housing settlements" was unceremoniously ignored. Only Gairy's hotels were taken into state ownership. The US owned "Holiday Inn" which accounted for 33% of all available rooms on the island and 50% of all foreign exchange earnings remained untouched as did the private villa developments and land speculation projects.

In August 1979 a 5 week strike over the dismissal of two workers at the Coca Cola bottling plant owned by one of the biggest Grenada companies W.F. Julian and Co. led to the government taking over the plant. The PRG

however yielded to the bourgeoisie's screams of "creeping socialism" which greeted this measure and, two years later, returned the plant to its previous owners, together with all the profits made during that period!

While the PRG encouraged the formation of trade unions, particularly those under NJM leadership, strikes which threatened "the economy" were denounced in no uncertain terms. Industrial action by public sector workers in January 1981, taking the form of a "sickout" in pursuance of a wage claim was quickly branded by the government controlled newspaper *Free West Indian* as "part of a plan by certain unpatriotic and counter revolutionary elements to disrupt the second anniversary celebrations of our glorious March 13 revolution...".

Of course the PRG justified these attacks on the legitimate demands of the masses in terms of defending the "revolution". But the policies of the NJM limited this revolution to a bourgeois democratic one. The PRG was demanding sacrifices and discipline not in order to defend a socialist state where the workers and peasants exercised real power over decision making, and a planned economy geared to needs not profit, but for a still bourgeois state where the toil and sacrifice of the workers and peasants lined the pockets of the oligarchy and the imperialists and a few crumbs fell to the masses. Worse, the PRG's strategy of maintaining a mixed economy with a private sector subordinate to the "peoples' government" and state sector was a utopian one. It was utopian to believe that an isolated anti-imperialist Grenada could survive imperialist economic and military pressure and intervention, with an internal enemy only waiting for the opportunity to strike. Only the most energetic spreading of the struggle throughout the Caribbean could have kept Reagan's hands full.

The strategy pursued by the PRG played straight into the hands of the counter-revolutionaries. The masses had to be restrained to preserve the alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie. This alliance was crucial, as were the guarantees of private property, to obtain aid from the imperialist agencies - the IMF, EEC, World Bank, UN etc. The emphasis on building up the tourist industry, the most vulnerable to imperialist sabotage, emphasised the commitment of the PRG to stay within the imperialist orbit "on its own terms". Indeed both Cuba and the USSR, ever fearful of revolutionary situations developing outside their control and perhaps embroiling them, unswervingly encouraged this strategy of preserving the mixed economy.

Imperialism had no intention of allowing such a regime, which sought a degree of independence from it, to survive. Grenada posed the same threat to imperialism's untrammelled rule in the Caribbean that Nicaragua did in Central America. The Grenadian bourgeoisie, intimately linked with and dependant on imperialism was well aware of this.

Thus the struggle for parliamentary elections became crucial both for the Grenadian ruling class and imperialism. For the Grenadian oligarchy it meant the chance of regaining its political control over the state. For the imperialists it would have provided the "democratic" lever to bring down the PRG in the same way they ended Michael Manley's "experiment with socialism". For the PRG it would have spelled doom. It would have exposed the divisions within the NJM, so carefully concealed from the masses. Given that they had left intact a dominant and aggressive private sector, it would have meant at best a powerful bourgeois opposition, supported by imperialism.

Imperialism proceeded to use the carrot and stick on the PRG. European and Canadian imperialism preferred to emphasise the carrot - continued aid. Reagan preferred the stick - military threats. As the imperialist stranglehold tightened in Grenada - the US blocked as much aid as it could and warned US tourists to stay away from Grenada. The bourgeoisie stepped up its campaign internally.

The crisis over the bourgeois paper *Torchlight* represented the first phase of this struggle. In a running battle with the PRG, this GNP supported paper was finally closed in October 1979. The month before Carter had announced the formation of the "quick strike" Caribbean task force. The *Grenadian Voice*, *Torchlight's* successor - backed by 22 leading businessmen and landowners was closed on its second issue. In June 1980 a sophisticated bomb, planted by a former People's Revolutionary Army sergeant, under a platform where Bishop and other leading NJM members were speaking, went off killing 3 women in the audience and injuring 100 others. In August the following year the US launched a NATO exercise - operation "Amber and the Amberdines", which was clearly a dummy run invasion of Grenada.

As aid began to dry up (the PRG was forced to turn to Cuba and Libya to finance its international airport) - the economic situation became worse. Maurice Bishop pointed out in a speech in London that cocoa prices had fallen 65% between 1981 and 83 while Grenada had 10 million pounds of nutmeg in store, where the annual production was only 6 million pounds.

The growing economic impasse and increasing threats of imperialist intervention exacerbated the divisions within the PRG. The New Jewel Movement by its very nature was never a democratic party involving the masses. No congress of the party was ever held after 1978. Political disputes were hammered out behind closed doors within the leadership circles. Given the Bonapartist nature of the regime and the role of Bishop as "Popular leader" political disputes necessarily took on a personal as well as a political character.

Simmering disputes of this character had been going on for a considerable time within the leading cliques. On the one side stood the supporters of Bernard and Phyllis Coard, the organisers since the mid 70s of a body called the "Organisation for Revolutionary Education and Liberation" (OREL) which was clearly sympathetic to the Soviet Union and Cuba. This body played a leading role in the overthrow of Gairy and controlled key posts in the People's Revolutionary Army, the 20,000 strong militia, the NJM and the government. On the other stood Maurice Bishop and his supporters.

The crisis in the NJM erupted following Bishop's return from a visit to Hungary and Czechoslovakia on 10th October. The political basis of the differences is not clear, although it is possible that Bishop was considering making concessions to the US government on the question of elections following his visit to Washington in June. Whether these concessions included the ousting of pro-Cuban elements from the government is not known. What is known is that OREL gained a majority in the Central Committee of the NJM for Bernard Coard to become ideological leader of the party and share the leadership with Bishop. Bishop it appears rejected this and started to mobilise his mass following in his own defence.

On Wednesday 12th, Bishop and Jaqueline Creft, were placed under house arrest by the PRA and units of the security forces loyal to OREL. The government was deadlocked. On Saturday Kenrick Radix, the Attorney General, and close supporter of Bishop in the NJM led a demonstration of 300 in St. George's demanding Bishop's release - Radix was also arrested. On Tuesday 18th October 500 students marched on Pears airport, disrupting incoming flights. The result was a split in the government with Unison Whiteman, Norris Bain, Lynden Rahmdanny and George Louison resigning. Whiteman denounced Major Leon Cornwall and Hudson Austin - both members of OREL - for lying about the reasons for Bishop's arrest and proceeded to or-



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The massive demonstration on Wednesday morning 19th October was the result. Three to four thousand Grenadians led by Whiteman marched to Bishop's house to release him and Creft. Then led by Bishop they proceeded to march on Fort Rupert the military headquarters and arsenal. Here they were fired on by units of the PRA, possibly drawn from OREL supporters. Later it appears that Whiteman, Bishop, Creft, Norris Bain and Fitzroy Bain, General Secretary of the Agricultural Workers' Union were executed by these same units.

What political differences of such a deep nature could have led to such a tragic outcome? Any move by Bishop towards a compromise with imperialism, even involving elections was clearly unacceptable to the likes of Coard and Hudson who favoured strengthening the state sector and closer relations with the "communist" bloc as the way out of the crisis. What is certain is that neither faction of the NJM represented the historic or immediate interests of the Grenadian masses. The Cuban style proto-Stalinism of Coard and Hudson involved a deep fear of the masses. Whilst they may have opposed Bishop's proposed political concessions to Reagan, they could offer no real workers' democracy in counterposition to bourgeois democracy. Unlike Castro they had no mass popularity they could demagogically exploit. Bishop on the other hand did. A real barrier to Bishop's concessions to imperialism would have been the creation of real organs of workers and peasants power - councils with the decisive say on all policy matters and a mass armed militia which elected its officers and commanders. The discovery of large storehouses of weapons by the invading US marines indicated that neither faction trusted the masses with the weapons. Instead the "left" elements tried to settle matters behind the backs of the masses. They preferred to unleash the standing army on the masses. The killings of October 18th were indefensible. Not only did they provide a pretext for US intervention, but, a hundred times more importantly, they sowed deep confusion and demoralisation amongst the masses, disarming them in the face of that intervention. The bloody dead end of both Social Democratic and the Stalinist poles of petit-bourgeois nationalism have both been tragically demonstrated in Grenada.

Only the programme of revolutionary communism - Trotskyism - of workers power and permanent revolution holds an alternative for the masses of the semi-colonial countries. The role of social-democrats and stalinists alike in blocking the revolution, of seeking alliances with the bourgeoisie to preserve a "democratic stage" has been shown once again for what it is - a bankrupt strategy which delivers the masses into the hands of imperialism. Starting from the resolute defence and the extension of the gains of the 1979 revolution, the strategy of permanent revolution, would have necessitated breaking through the radical bourgeois programme of the NJM and the PRG. The genuine democracy of workers' power is inseparably bound up with meeting the desperate needs of the workers, small farmers and the urban poor at the expense of the sacred rights of private property. Only thus can the masses be consciously and irrevocably won to the side of revolution. The extension of that power throughout the Caribbean and Circum-Caribbean area is the only guarantee of the defense of such a revolution against imperialism's onslaught. Grenadian and Caribbean revolutionaries must inscribe on their banners "For a socialist federation of the Caribbean."

In Grenada, no "Workers and Peasants Government" that was answerable to workers' councils and an armed mass militia, existed. Nor did a genuine revolutionary party exist which would have fought for its creation. Both a revolutionary party and a revolutionary workers' and peasants' government were, are and will be vital goals of struggle, both in Grenada and in Nicaragua, if the same bloody pattern is not to be repeated there as Reagan and Thatcher rage like rabid dogs through the semi-colonial countries.

*Both quotes taken from Fitzroy Ambursley, *Grenada: the New Jewel Revolution, in Crisis in the Caribbean*. This article draws heavily from the information provided by that essay as well as *Grenada: The Peaceful Revolution*, Epica Task Force.

by Stuart King

ROAD TO DISASTER

Jewel Movement in power



Coard and Bishop (centre) lead the National Youth Section of the NJM.

channelled into the Parish councils and "popular organisations" of women, youth, and the militia.

Such is the material and cultural impoverishment imperialism has inflicted on the masses of the Caribbean and Central America that solving or alleviating these problems - by literacy campaigns, health measures, land reform indeed revolutionise the life of the masses. Yet they remain bourgeois democratic tasks even if semi-colonial servitude and a venal local bourgeoisie could never bring these gains. These measures are compatible with the maintenance of capitalism even though the landed oligarchy, the local bourgeoisie and the imperialists regard any regime that carries them out as Marxist.

Inevitable venomous counter-revolutionary opposition to elementary economic, cultural and democratic rights for the masses invests any regime that attempts to carry them out with an aura of socialism or communism. However as we have seen in Nicaragua and Grenada these governments remain on the terrain of the defence of bourgeois property relations. Opposed, sabotaged, undermined by imperialism and its local agents on the one side; pressed for an extension of the revolution by the masses on the other, these regimes play a bonapartist role. They exclude the bourgeoisie from direct political power and rely on the masses for this. On the other hand they prevent the masses from taking political power and utilising it to carry out a social revolution.

Thus the NJM did not base itself on genuine democratic organs of struggle and power - Councils or soviets - organising the urban and rural workers. Instead they created the typical "organs of popular power" so beloved of Castro and his imitators. In Grenada these were primarily the parish and zonal council which were presented with government plans for discussion and criticism but had no power over the policies or actions of the PRG. Thus popular power is little more than a plebiscite organised to approve the policies of the bonapartist leaders. Political questions - supremely who shall govern, do not fall within their sphere of competence.

The commitment of the PRG to the mixed economy also meant that it blocked any serious demands of the masses which threatened private property. Coard made this clear in a speech to the Chamber of Commerce shortly after the revolution when he declared "with the revolution has come the end to the forcible seizure of private property". One symptom of this was the failure of the PRG to introduce any land reform programme until the land occupations forced them to do so.

Land in Grenada is dominated by the large landowners who often have interests in tourism and the retail

trade. The big farms, those over 100 acres, which make up only 0.5% of all landholdings, control nearly 50% of all the cultivable acreage in Grenada. While the peasant farmers scratched a living on tiny plots of land, it was estimated that half the land holdings over 500 acres were left lying idle by their absentee landlords! Yet the PRG contented itself with concentrating on the 25 estates, the most infertile ones at that, taken over by Gairy.

In February 1980 when farm workers, complaining of bad conditions and low wages occupied the River Antoine estate owned by the De Gale family, they were variously denounced by the government as being CIA inspired or being in the pockets of Marijuana smugglers. The PRG quickly declared that it: "could not and would not support the seizure of people's property as the means of resolving the conditions of hardship of the workers." (*Government Information Bulletin*, May 5th). The estate was returned to the De Gales and a grateful member of this land-owning family wrote to the *Times* in the following terms: "It is relevant to record publicly that when, in Feb. 1980, our family estate was preemptorily taken over by a village commune and renamed 'The People's Collective Farm', government support was immediately forthcoming for the managers' protection and the estate was returned (eventually) to normal working."

It is by judicious, well regulated behaviour that Mr. Bishop - like Mr. Mugabe - hopes to transform this small nation into a homogenous structure of living communities." (*Times* 13 Feb. 1981)

While this revolt pushed the PRG into taking some reform measures, they remained minor. The "Utilisation Law" gave power to the Ministry of Agriculture to lease idle lands of estates over 100 acres. But the "idle lands for idle hands" scheme was employing only 160 youths on 146 acres of land by mid-1982.

If landownership remained fundamentally untouched by the PRG so too did the business community. The 1973 commitment in the NJM manifesto for "the complete nationalisation of all foreign owned hotels as well as foreign owned housing settlements" was unceremoniously ignored. Only Gairy's hotels were taken into state ownership. The US owned "Holiday Inn" which accounted for 33% of all available rooms on the island and 50% of all foreign exchange earnings remained untouched as did the private villa developments and land speculation projects.

In August 1979 a 5 week strike over the dismissal of two workers at the Coca Cola bottling plant owned by one of the biggest Grenada companies W.F. Julian and Co. led to the government taking over the plant. The PRG

however yielded to the bourgeoisie's screams of "creeping socialism" which greeted this measure and, two years later, returned the plant to its previous owners, together with all the profits made during that period!

While the PRG encouraged the formation of trade unions, particularly those under NJM leadership, strikes which threatened "the economy" were denounced in no uncertain terms. Industrial action by public sector workers in January 1981, taking the form of a "sickout" in pursuance of a wage claim was quickly branded by the government controlled newspaper *Free West Indian* as "part of a plan by certain unpatriotic and counter revolutionary elements to disrupt the second anniversary celebrations of our glorious March 13 revolution..."

Of course the PRG justified these attacks on the legitimate demands of the masses in terms of defending the "revolution". But the policies of the NJM limited this revolution to a bourgeois democratic one. The PRG was demanding sacrifices and discipline not in order to defend a socialist state where the workers and peasants exercised real power over decision making, and a planned economy geared to needs not profit, but for a still bourgeois state where the toil and sacrifice of the workers and peasants lined the pockets of the oligarchy and the imperialists and a few crumbs fell to the masses. Worse, the PRG's strategy of maintaining a mixed economy with a private sector subordinate to the "people's government" and state sector was a utopian one. It was utopian to believe that an isolated anti-imperialist Grenada could survive imperialist economic and military pressure and intervention, with an internal enemy only waiting for the opportunity to strike. Only the most energetic spreading of the struggle throughout the Caribbean could have kept Reagan's hands full.

The strategy pursued by the PRG played straight into the hands of the counter-revolutionaries. The masses had to be restrained to preserve the alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie. This alliance was crucial, as were the guarantees of private property, to obtain aid from the imperialist agencies - the IMF, EEC, World Bank, UN etc. The emphasis on building up the tourist industry, the most vulnerable to imperialist sabotage, emphasised the commitment of the PRG to stay within the imperialist orbit "on its own terms". Indeed both Cuba and the USSR, ever fearful of revolutionary situations developing outside their control and perhaps embroiling them, unswervingly encouraged this strategy of preserving the mixed economy.

Imperialism had no intention of allowing such a regime, which sought a degree of independence from it, to survive. Grenada posed the same threat to imperialism's untrammelled rule in the Caribbean that Nicaragua did in Central America. The Grenadian bourgeoisie, intimately linked with and dependant on imperialism was well aware of this.

Thus the struggle for parliamentary elections became crucial both for the Grenadian ruling class and imperialism. For the Grenadian oligarchy it meant the chance of regaining its political control over the state. For the imperialists it would have provided the "democratic" lever to bring down the PRG in the same way they ended Michael Manley's "experiment with socialism". For the PRG it would have spelt doom. It would have exposed the divisions within the NJM, so carefully concealed from the masses. Given that they had left intact a dominant and aggressive private sector, it would have meant at best a powerful bourgeois opposition, supported by imperialism.

Imperialism proceeded to use the carrot and stick on the PRG. European and Canadian imperialism preferred to emphasise the carrot - continued aid. Reagan preferred the stick - military threats. As the imperialist stranglehold tightened in Grenada - the US blocked as much aid as it could and warned US tourists to stay away from Grenada. The bourgeoisie stepped up its campaign internally.

The crisis over the bourgeois paper *Torchlight* represented the first phase of this struggle. In a running battle with the PRG, this GNP-supported paper was finally closed in October 1979. The month before Carter had announced the formation of the "quick strike" Caribbean task force. The *Grenadian Voice*, *Torchlight's* successor - backed by 22 leading businessmen and landowners was closed on its second issue. In June 1980 a sophisticated bomb, planted by a former People's Revolutionary Army sergeant, under a platform where Bishop and other leading NJM members were speaking, went off killing 3 women in the audience and injuring 100 others. In August the following year the US launched a NATO exercise - operation "Amber and the Amberdines", which was clearly a dummy run invasion of Grenada.

As aid began to dry up (the PRG was forced to turn to Cuba and Libya to finance its international airport) - the economic situation became worse. Maurice Bishop pointed out in a speech in London that cocoa prices had fallen 65% between 1981 and 83 while Grenada had 10 million pounds of nutmeg in store, where the annual production was only 6 million pounds.

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by Stuart King

SMASH THE 'SUPERGRASS' SYSTEM

QUESTION: When is "contradictory, bizarre and in some respects incredible" evidence good enough to convict seven men?

ANSWER: In Northern Ireland when there is no jury, one judge drawn from a Unionist background and the seven men are Republicans.

The words quoted above are those of Lord Chief Justice Robert Lowry during the latest "supergrass" trial last month when Kevin McGrady's uncorroborated evidence led to seven more republican fighters joining over 300 others held in prison solely on the word of paid informers.

The use of informers has been publicly supported in the last month by both the Director of Public Prosecutions and James Prior, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. They would have preferred to have remained silent. However, recent retractions of evidence by "supergrasses" Robert Lean and Patrick McGurk in October led to 28 republicans

being freed. Also there have been further reports of bribery, intimidation and invitations to perjury. Every week Prior receives complaints from liberal-minded solicitors and barristers who object to having their reputations further shredded through participation in this latest mockery of "justice". These events have demanded that the government openly back the use of these measures.

The use of paid informers, while not new, has been a prime tactic of the RUC and British Army since 1978/9. It was then that a series of embarrassing revelations by Amnesty and the Bennett Report confirmed the widespread use of torture against republicans in order to extract information. The international furor and the alienation of bourgeois nationalist opinion produced a re-evaluation of tactics. The British State decided it could achieve the same ends - gain information on IRA operations, achieve bogus convictions and sow disunity in the republican camp - by using informers. The method is simple. First, break a suspect under interrogation and force them to implicate themselves. Secondly, in return for immunity from prosecution, substantial payments and by use of sophisticated psychological harassment born of protracted isolation, get the informer to give (or invent) information on others.

In the 1979/81 period, the RUC's preferred device was to recruit informers this way and put them back into the republican community. However, successful reprisals by the IRA and an amnesty in 1982 undermined this ploy.

It was the defeat of the hunger strikes in 1981 that led to the new "supergrass" development. The demoralisation experienced by many prisoners, the prospect of decades in jail and the open espousal by the IRA of a "long war of attrition" produced fertile soil for informers to spring up in prison. Add to this that on the fringes of the republican movement there are barely politicised elements, least able to resist the pressures, and one can understand the initial successes enjoyed by the RUC.

Their first major victory against the republican movement was last August when 35 men were convicted on the evidence of Christopher Black. Twenty-two received sentences totalling 4,000 years. Black is now in Australia living in refuge from the IRA, seeking comfort in his £40-100,000 blood money. The IRA's initial response was to kidnap relatives of the "supergrass" (as with Harry Kirkpatrick) to put pressure on them to retract. This has been abandoned largely because of the isolation of the informers which makes them relatively immune from this pressure. Many have been in custody for over a year. This is especially so now that the British have abolished preliminary hearings in which family and friends in attendance often induced a retraction.

The confirmation by Prior of their usefulness means that, despite spectacular defections such as Robert Lean's, the use of "supergrasses" will con-

tinue. The IRA are resigned to this. However, both the British and the nationalist population know that nothing fundamental will be altered by their use. To date, the main effect has been to break up the Ardoyne unit of the IRA. In fact, their use to date has done more to disrupt the operations of the loyalist UVF in Belfast. *The Economist* recently admitted that previous repressive victories, such as internment, and the introduction of Diplock Courts were only "temporary successes (which) did not prevent the problems coming back." (17.9.83) *The Economist* went further and accepted that protracted use of these measures was "an admission of defeat."

The reason for this is clear. Since the October 1982 elections for the now-moribund Assembly, the strength of political support for Sinn Fein has been well-demonstrated. This was confirmed in the June '83 election results which gave Sinn Fein candidates over 100,000 votes. This popular base will not easily be eroded, since the IRA, INLA and Sinn Fein are looked to, by the oppressed section of the nationalist minority, for defence against the brutal repression of the RUC and the British Army. In addition, one unintended effect of the "supergrass" campaign has been to rekindle action committees on the basis of "Stop the Show Trials", committees which fell apart in the wake of the 1981 Hunger Strike defeats.

The absence of even the most elementary democratic and legal safeguards in Northern Ireland is nothing new. The British State (and before it Stormont) has used a battery of repressive legislation against the nationalist population in the Six Counties since the Partition in 1922. Nor have the British ruling class seriously attempted to hide the fact. As long as they can make the British working class accept the lie that nationalist resistance is "terrorism" then they can convince most on the mainland that extra-special measures are necessary and legitimate to combat it. The political inertia of the British Labour movement is crucial in allowing the ruling class to keep fighting its long running war in Ireland.

In the present period, amongst the prime tasks of Irish solidarity work in the mainland is the ruthless exposure of the nature of the present "show trials". United activity in the labour movement with all those who wish to see the return of "normal" justice in Northern Ireland is both possible and necessary so long as it is realised that only politically independent working class action can force a retreat by Prior and his ilk.

However a campaign which confined its appeal to the democratic sentiments of British workers will quickly be shown to be self-defeating. The political support for the Army's role in the Six Counties would sweep aside any democratic impulses that might initially motivate sympathetic action.

Revolutionaries, therefore, need to argue that only anti-imperialist propaganda can convince the working class that they share a common bond with the nationalist struggle in the Six Counties. Only by unambiguously explaining our unconditional support for the IRA resistance to the RUC and the Army, only by explaining why British imperialism is compelled to redefine "British justice" for the nationalists can we create a longlasting anti-imperialist solidarity movement.

by Keith Hassell

ELECTIONS IN ARGENTINA

The sweeping victory for the Radicals in the October 30th Argentine election has thrown the Justicialist Party (Peronists) into confusion. The disintegration of Peronism is a real possibility. Official Peronism is reaping the bitter fruit of its overt and covert co-operation with the military junta in the post Malvinas war situation.

All the parties of the Multipartidaria (an alliance which included both major bourgeois parties) and the bureaucratic of the two CGTs (Confederacion General del Trabajo - General Confederation of Labour) collaborated to hold back the mass movement. The massive general strikes of December 1982 and March 1983 which mobilised millions of workers were kept to 24 demonstrations rather than developed into a mass indefinite strike to drive the Junta from power.

Only the latter could have broken the hold of the bloody Generals, perpetrators of the 'dirty war', over an armed force whose rank and file were disaffected and politicised by the incompetent conduct of the Malvinas War.

The bourgeois parties and the Peronist union bureaucrats feared the eruption of the masses more than they fear the Generals who still have a gun in the back of the 'Argentine Democracy'. Both parties have given undertakings not to prosecute the perpetrators of atrocities. They prefer to hold out the threat of a return to military rule as a means of disciplining the masses.

The non-Peronist left has been gaining in influence since the Malvinas War. The Communist Party, the Workers Party (PO) and the movement Towards Socialism (MAS) - the latter two parties being supported by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and the International Workers League (Morenoites) respectively - all stood candidates.

PO received 13,500 votes for its Presidential slate and 17,500 votes for its parliamentary candidates. MAS did considerably better with 46,000 and 55,000 in each category. The CP received 160,000 votes for its parliamentary candidates and supported the Peronist candidate Luder for the presidency.

PO centrally argues for an "anti-imperialist united front" to lead a "great national uprising against imperialism". Its paper *Prensa Obrera* suggests as one of the key provisions for such a front the call for nationalising the banks and foreign trade "before complying with payments on the foreign debt". MAS centres its agitation on the slogan for the repudiation of Argentina's national debt and for the "Second Independence" of Argentina.

Certainly Argentina's astronomic national debt rampant inflation and chronic unemployment centrally pose the need to struggle against imperialism in the shape of the IMF. A direct struggle on these issues would certainly involve the rural and urban petit-bourgeoisie. But the central and decisive force for such an onslaught remains the Argentine proletariat. It must be broken from its Peronist links and the tactic to do this would be the call for an independent class party based on the trade unions. These would have to be wrenched from the corrupt Peronist bureaucracy and the two federations united. Genuine revolutionary Trotskyists should argue for a revolutionary transitional programme for such a party. Without this, "anti-imperialist fronts" and anti-imperialist rhetoric threaten to merely produce water for the mill of Peronist populism.

Our January issue will carry a fuller analysis of the positions of the Trotskyist groups in the Argentine elections.



National H-Block Committee march in Dublin, 1980

Derek Spiers (IFL/Report)

Grenada: Socialist Action covers its tracks

SOCIALIST ACTION READERS who opened their paper the week that Maurice Bishop was killed must have been shocked. Phil Hearse proceeded to inform them for the first time that "Despite the paraphernalia of alleged participatory democracy in Grenada, in reality the revolution has been led by a small group of leaders of the New Jewel Movement." (SA 28.10.83)

The Grenadian form of "mass consultation, the Parish councils and the Zonal councils", he went on to inform his wide eyed supporters, "in no way amounted to genuine mass participation in decision making....The illusion that this system represented authentic participatory democracy have been proved to be absurd".

Indeed they had. But who has been sowing these terrible illusions in the NJM? In fact none other than the Socialist League, whose members are among the most avid readers and sellers of *Socialist Action*. It is this organisation which has been among the most slavish hagiographers of the New Jewel Movement and its leadership. Over the last 4 years its members (and those of its predecessor the IMG) have lost no opportunity to make propaganda for this "island of socialism" in the Caribbean. In the many articles in their own press and Labour Party publications they have extolled the virtues of Grenadian democracy. Thus in *Socialist Challenge*, predecessor of *Socialist Action*, Paul Lawson would declare in a review of *Three years of the Grenadian Revolution* that, "Foremost has been the establishment of the system of 'peoples democracy' which allows the vast majority of Grenadians to participate in the running of their country." (SC 11.3.82)

At the end of 1982 *International*, published by supporters of the Socialist League and the Fourth International, produced a major four page eulogy to "Grenada's Big Revolution". The article informed its readers that Westminster-style democracy had been rejected, "in favour of the direct involvement

of the working people, through their own organisations, in the running of the country."

It has been no secret that the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USEC) has been split over the characterisation of the government in Grenada. Neither is it a secret or a surprise that the permanent factions in the Socialist League are at loggerheads with each other on the question with the pro-SWP(US) elements visibly reluctant to part with recent copies of *Socialist Action*. The Socialist League's co-thinkers in the USA, the SWP (US), in their enthusiasm to dump the Fourth International and embarrassing remnants of Trotskyism like the theory of Permanent Revolution have been angling for a merger with the Stalinists in Cuba and Latin America. These "Trotskyists" of the USFI, according to their own account, first began to take "serious notice" of the Grenada revolution when they saw Maurice Bishop rush to the podium at the non-alligned conference and embrace Fidel Castro after one of his speeches. Having long since politically embraced Castro themselves, the SWP (US) rapidly despatched Ernest Harsh, Andrew Pulley and Diane Wang to investigate, and by August Grenada had been added to the SWP's growing list of "genuine Workers and Peasants Governments" while the NJM was declared a "Revolutionary Proletarian leadership". (Pulley it seems was very impressed not only by the reforms introduced by the regime but by the fact that he found a poster of Che Guevara in front of Barclay's Bank! Not, mind, by the fact that Barclay's had been taken over (which it hadn't) nor by the fact that it was under workers control (which it wasn't) but by the fact that there was a Che Guevara poster outside it!)

While the Mandelites tut-tutted at this over-enthusiasm for Castroism on the part of its American co-thinkers, in practice their programme for the Grenadian Revolution was identical.

They preferred to talk about a "Revolutionary Government" in Grenada, a more helpfully imprecise term which left the reader to decide whether this meant nationalist revolutionary or socialist revolutionary, or indeed whether there was a difference. Not one word of criticism of the policies of the NJM or its government appeared in the pages of the USEC publications. They sowed chronic illusions in the democratic nature of the regime. The popular front nature of this government was passed over in silence, as was its commitment to the "mixed economy". While the Mandelites shied away from declaring the NJM a "revolutionary proletarian party" they were certainly not in favour of fighting for a revolutionary Trotskyist Party. Why should they? They had no criticisms of the New Jewel Movement.

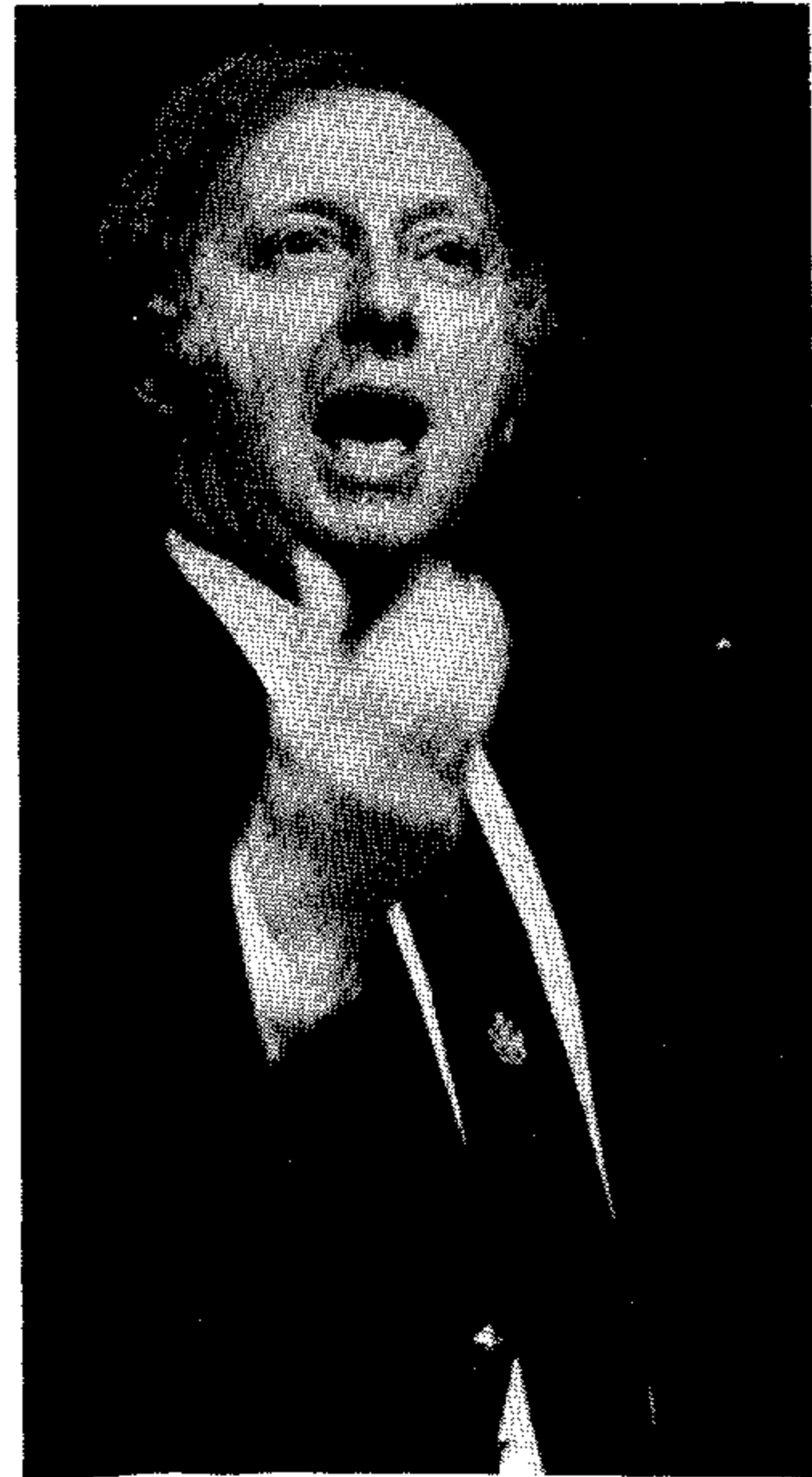
Had the USFI had a section in Grenada, of course they never tried to build one despite a positive flood of USEC tourists (thither) their programme, indistinguishable from that of the NJM, would have spelt disaster, as did the programme of Bishop and Coard. In Britain, the SL consciously peddled illusions in the Grenadian regime, declaring as hopeless "sectarians" and "ultra-lefts" any who tried to put revolutionary alternative to these policies.

It is completely in character with the spineless centrists in the leadership of the SL that immediately the crisis hit the NJM and the Grenadian revolution they "discovered" that democracy in Grenada was a sham and the first criticisms of the NJM's programme appeared. This has nothing to do with revolutionary criticism, it has a lot to do with running scared and attempting to cover one's tracks. The catastrophe in Grenada has once again exposed the bankruptcy of the USEC's centrism and its uselessness as a revolutionary leadership.

BROAD LEFT ROAD TO DEFEAT

In the NUM

THE 'LEFT LEADERS' of the NUM are doing their utmost to avoid a showdown with MacGregor in the coalfields. The miners are being left at the mercy of a management committed to drastic cuts in the workforce and a fundamental weakening of the bargaining power of the NUM itself.



Arthur Scargill

Despite rave reviews in the press, MacGregor has had no change of heart about the future of the mining industry. For example, plans to close pits currently producing at over £60 a ton would lead to the closure of the entire Kent coalfield and half the South Welsh coalfield in the near future. With that in mind MacGregor is quite prepared to hold out the bait of large redundancy payments to older miners and guarantees of work to younger trained miners who are prepared to leave their ravaged communities and travel to coalfields earmarked for development.

The man who broke the power of the ISTC is out to do the same with the NUM. The NCB intends to link pay more firmly to bonus schemes so that wages and conditions are determined by local managers and the NUM's wage claims and negotiating role can be successfully undermined. Already face workers are dependent on bonus payments for 30% of their take home pay. As a result the management has been extremely effective

in holding down miners' wages over the last year by the systematic revision of bonus rates. Despite last year's much heralded 9% wage offer to the miners the new government earnings survey shows that underground workers' earnings increased by 3.6% and those of surface workers by 3.1% over that same period. In this situation the national wage claims of the NUM have less and less bearing on miners' take home pay. At the same time the struggle to defend living standards and conditions has become sharply expressed in a wave of unofficial stoppages against management measures to increase discipline or alter shift patterns in pursuit of higher productivity at lower bonus rates.

In this situation the only way to maintain the morale of the miners and foil the plans of the NCB is to support all miners taking industrial action and attempt to spread their action with mass pickets so as to prevent the NCB taking on the miners in a series of pit by pit conflicts. That such action is possible was shown by the Yorkshire miners in October. That the lefts in the NUM are set on opposing such action was shown by the Yorkshire NUM's refusal to give any real backing to the Monktonhall strikers.

The Monktonhall strike was symptomatic of many that have taken place in the mines this year. Management shelved development plans for the pit and refused to even discuss that decision with the union. The anger of the men could have been the signal for generalising the struggle against the new 'get tough' MacGregor management. But Scottish NUM leader and CP executive member Mick McGahey had no intention of doing anything of the sort. The clammy hand of the NUM left bureaucracy immediately descended on the strike. For even though the Monktonhall strike was the first of this wave of pit disputes to be declared official, the strikers were officially discouraged from picketing out other miners in their support. Instead McGahey suggested they stay at home backed by a £2 a week levy of Scottish NUM members.

The Monktonhall miners were being lined up as an exemplary selective action aimed at winning public support for the cause of defending the Scottish coal industry. A Scottish TUC rally was held in defence of Scotland's coalfields. A one day strike was organised to back the Monktonhall strikers without any plans for further action. Once the rallies had come and gone the Scottish NUM stabbed Monktonhall in the back. After eight weeks on strike McGahey recommended a return to work on the grounds that the NCB management was now prepared to discuss its development plans with the local NUM....there was no offer to withdraw the redundancy threat posed by management's plans. No wonder a sizeable proportion of Monktonhall miners resisted a return to work and denounced the deal as the sell out that it was.

Repeatedly the NUM lefts have shown their profound distrust of the membership and their refusal to back them up when they move into action against the NCB. Monktonhall! is just one more betrayal chalked up by the NUM left. The membership will repay this with ever greater distrust of the NUM leaders whenever they talk of fighting MacGregor. A growing rift between the NUM leadership and the rank and file will work to the advantage of the NCB unless militants can channel the anger of the rank and file into a fight to commit the NUM to beat MacGregor. It is the

answer to the NUM leaders' disgraceful charges that the members are not willing to fight. For the executive this is an excuse to back out of a fight with the NCB.

In the face of MacGregor's 5.2% pay offer the left NUM executive gave no lead. Scargill talked of handling the offer "very carefully" and made no recommendation to the special delegate conference convened to discuss pit closure and the pay claim. The result was a decision to operate an overtime ban which Scargill and co are taking no responsibility for while demagogically claiming it represents the decision of the conference delegates. The truth is that in the absence of a clear lead conference voted for the overtime ban more as a means of registering their opposition to the pay offer than as an effective action against the NCB. With coal stocks running at record levels an overtime ban will actually cut the NCB's costs.

That the miners have been committed to such a token action is itself a further proof of the treachery of the NUM left leaders. They were not prepared to put their positions at risk by going to

the members with a package of demands on closures, pay and discipline which would unite the coalfields in action. That would have meant challenging the right wing on the executive and supporting all struggles against the NCB. Above all it would have meant organising the rank and file of the union. As Dodworth and Monktonhall show all too graphically this is what the NUM left, from McGahey through to Scargill, will not do.

MacGregor and the NCB still want to cut 70,000 jobs and around 70 pits. They are intent on tightening the managerial screw in the pits so that they can claw back on bonus payments. Scargill and McGahey will not stop them. The NUM executive is openly discussing a joint approach to the Tories with MacGregor on behalf of the coal industry. The militants in the pits will have to build their own rank and file miners' movement and based on strengthened and democratic workplace organisation if they are to force the NUM to act effectively on behalf of its members and destroy the NCB's plans.

by Dave Hughes

IS THE PARTY OVER FOR C.P.?

IN THE RUN UP to the Communist Party's 38th Congress in November, rival factions were openly at each others throats. In itself the dispute is nothing new but the open ferocity with which it is being conducted is. For the first time in years there is a battle to topple the party leadership.

The principal actors in this Stalinist drama are the Eurocommunists who dominate the Executive and run the magazine *Marxism Today* (McLennan, Jacques, Cook) versus the largely trade union based elements who control the *Morning Star* (Chater and Costello).

The main issue under debate is how the party is to interpret its Broad Democratic Alliance strategy embodied in the 1977 programme the *British Road to Socialism*. The Eurocommunists are eager to use it to justify a shack-up with everyone from the CND to the SDP. This is the way they will build an 'anti-Tory majority'.

Of necessity this means jettisoning the party's formal commitment to the centrality of the labour movement in the alliance. In fact the Eurocommunists are open about their hostility to the class struggle. Bill Ward of Manchester CP argued, "In my view the idea that intensification of the class struggle, however it is presented, is the sole, or even the main area of struggle, is as sectarian a delusion as it was before 1930." (*Focus* 9.83) To varying degrees the motley array of feminists, peaceniks and party full-timers who constitute the Eurocommunist faction, share this outlook. Hence their tireless efforts, particularly in the pages of *Marxism Today* to prove that the industrial working class is disappearing.

The trade-union based faction have tried to present themselves as a 'left' alternative. Deposed industrial organiser Mick Costello attacked the Jacques/Cook axis as a "right-wing reformist trend". This faction stress the need for a 'Leninist' party, more newspaper coverage in praise of the 'socialist countries' and an orientation to the trade unions. They insist that the labour movement is central to, indeed must be the leadership of, the Broad Democratic Alliance.

In fact their politics are every bit as right-wing and reformist as those of their opponents. They are not a left alternative. They are a variation of Stalinism just as the Eurocommunists are. Their much spoken of working class orientation is in reality no more than the traditional Stalinist orientation to the trade union bureaucracy. They are keen to construct alliances with the likes of Moss Evans, Kitson and co, as well as certain old-style Tribune MPs. It is the good old Broad left strategy that brought us traitors like Scanlon, and that led Ken Gill to drop a motion at the TUC opposing the Social Contract. Costello and Chater have been using the formal control of the *Morning Star* viz the autonomous Peoples Printing Press to regularly espouse this strategy.

Neither wing of the CP is 'evolving' in a revolutionary or left direction. Sincere militants who find themselves in the CP's ranks need to understand this and break altogether with Stalinism in all its variants. This choice could well face such militants sooner, rather than later. While the two factions have hitherto co-existed, this can not go on for much longer.

The CP is facing a dramatic crisis. The YCL has, according to Costello, collapsed. The *Morning Star* faces a cash crisis. Over 14,000 members have left the CP during the last ten years. The party is down to 16,000 members, most of whom do little more than carry the card. The erosion of the CP's industrial bases continues apace. It is no longer able to mount even bureaucratically run LCDTU conferences.

For the British Stalinists the chips are down. Even if they survive as a united party after November's congress their problems will be far from over. The dispute has reached the point of no return and the Executive's warning "that inner-party struggle could immobilise the party." (Draft Congress Resolutions), will be fulfilled. We will not mourn the collapse of the CPGB. For revolutionary communists, the destruction of that party is to be welcomed.

In the POEU

THE BATTLE AGAINST the privatisation of British Telecom has put the "Broad Left" union leaders to the sharpest of tests. In the POEU the "Broad Left" took control of the executive from the right wing "Mainstream" group last June. It is their members that have been in the frontline of resistance to the Tories' plans to make £4 billion and scrap 15,000 jobs from the sale of this choice growth industry to private buyers.

In the face of this attack the Broad Left has adopted a strategy of selective action as an alternative to fighting for all-out action. To fight for all-out action would mean fighting the right wing in the POEU executive and trying to mobilise the anger of the members against them. But this the Broad Left leaders will not do, and the result is that their policies are tailored to maintaining agreement with the POEU right.

AN EXPENSIVE DIVERSION

Because they never see any further than the next executive elections, the Broad Left are keen to prove that they are "responsible" leaders. The censure they received from a delegate meeting for not putting right-wing MP John Golding forward for the NEC has made them deeply suspicious of the members. The fact that by failing to consult the members on this in the first place they laid themselves open to censure seems to escape these aspiring officials. Thus, with the time-honoured bureaucratic refrain that the members don't want an all-out fight, they are vying with the right to ensure that one does not develop.

The Broad Left has based its strategy on two main ideas. On the one hand, they have set out to

wage a publicity campaign to swing "public opinion" against privatisation. To this end the six Telecom unions are spending a cool £200,000 on press advertisements entitled "Whose finger will be on the button?" which graphically point the finger at Japanese and American interests. But this expensive nationalist propaganda is not the only means of diverting a head-on clash with British Telecom that the Broad Left leaders have up their sleeves.

On September 18th a special POEU conference set the pattern for the fight against privatisation. Motions calling for all-out strike action were not taken by the Broad Left dominated executive. As a Socialist Action correspondent put it, in a piece of inadvertently candid reportage, the motions "were not reached on the agenda. The union's chairperson assured conference that they were only opposed because they tied the executive's hands". (*Socialist Action* 23.9.83) Too right! The Broad Left wanted at all costs not to have their hands tied by a commitment to an all-out fight with Telecom and the POEU right.

The solution advanced by the Broad Left was to try to stop the Tory attacks with selective action. Behind all the talk of "imaginative new tactics" and "guerrilla campaigns" the Broad Left refused to give a lead and fight to win the membership to an all-out battle with the Tories. Instead they held out the prospect of the majority of POEU members continuing to work normally and providing financial backing for a selected few strikes in strategic places.

In early October 1,000 engineers in International Services began an officially backed work to rule. They were to be backed by selective stoppages in Aberdeen. This action was supposed to hurt the government. In addition action was planned against the major backers of Mercury private communications company - Barclays Bank, British Petroleum and Cable and Wireless. With a fund of £1 million the POEU executive argued that this action would immediately hit the government. POEU Broad Left and

executive member Dave Ward, for example, waxed enthusiastic about the possibilities of selective action "in the end it would mean 35,000 union members out, supported by 100,000 financially - that could bring Telecom to its knees." (*Socialist Action* 21.10.83).

While the Broad Left leaders may have wished to keep the bulk of their members out of the dispute, the Government and British Telecom management had no such intentions. The employers hit back with a lock-out. This was inevitable and, for that very reason, the Broad Left had always been fearful of this outcome. As Dave Ward put it in the same interview "The real problem is how we prevent a national lock-out." The truth is the POEU leaders had no way of preventing a lock-out and opened themselves up to precisely such a management counter-attack.

BACKING DOWN FROM A FIGHT

British Telecom locked out 2,500 at the International Exchange on 11th October. Their retaliation was co-ordinated with an application from Mercury for a court injunction under the anti-union laws against the POEU's "secondary action". The strategists of the Broad Left were put on the spot. If the management widened the scope of their lock-out then the union stood to lose its strike fund within weeks. Lock-outs threatened to destroy the entire strategy of the Broad Left executive and they accordingly cut the number of workers involved in selective action so as to save on strike pay. The prospect of British Telecom being crippled by selective action was even further from realisation. In an important showdown the POEU leaders missed the opportunity to broaden the dispute. With engineers out on mass pickets winning support from other

engineers who were refusing to scab and with the lock-out threat hanging over all Telecom workers, the chance to take decisive action was there. When it wasn't taken the pickets shrank, the anger of the rank and file subsided, and orders went out from the executive that it was alright to cross picket lines provided the work of strikers wasn't undertaken!

The POEU executive backed down in the face of legal attack too. In advance of the court hearing they called off action against Mercury's backers so as to clear themselves of some "secondary action" charges and thus not prejudice the High Court decision. In the event they received a temporary respite when the High Court ruled against Mercury.

The POEU still faces the threat of court action and of a wave of dismissals and lockouts at the hand of British Telecom. Management deferred plans to sack 19 engineers in the hope that the POEU could be persuaded to climb down further and negotiate a timetable and terms for negotiation. If the special POEU conference on November 7th voted to escalate action in any way, British Telecom signalled that they were ready to declare war on the union.

With their strategy of selective action, the Broad Left lulled the majority of POEU members into a false sense of security and complacency. Rather than put their executive posts to the test of winning the rank and file to effective industrial action the Broad Left - effective prisoners of the right wing that they only organise against at election times and through their electoral caucuses - in fact treated their rank and file with the traditional suspicions of Trade Union bureaucrats and went for the soft option of selective action. The history of the dispute shows that selective action will not win; that is the bitter truth about the Broad Left's leadership in the POEU. Only all-out action to cripple the Government and British Telecom - action that draws on and extends trade union action to block Mercury can stop the Tories' privatisation plans.

by Dave Hughes

HARD LEFT GO SOFT ON KINNOCK

CONFERENCES USUALLY HAVE their own catch-words which indicate who has won the day. At the TUC conference the catch word was "credibility", signifying the right wing advance. At the Labour conference the catch-all catch word was "unity". This little word sums up the new balance of forces in the Labour Party.

The election of the Kinnock/Hattersley leadership was the prelude to the establishment of a centre-right ruling coalition at every level of the party. In the NEC elections, as in the electoral college, the union block votes made sure that the centre, around Kinnock, McCluskie, Kitson and co., and the right around Dunwoody and Varley, had a solid majority over the constituency-based Bennite left.

With the conference's overwhelming vote to expel Militant's five leading members and rejection of calls for no more witch-hunts behind them this centre-right majority has given notice that it will "protect" the Labour Party from "entrists". This was the significance of its 14 to 9 vote to expel Tariq Ali on the grounds that his views were incompatible with the Labour constitution.

The ruling coalition are not going for a new round of massive witch-hunting, but they will take care to satisfy right-wing demands to tame the left. Hence their refusal to reinstate the suspended left-wing Wythenshawe party and the exclusion of left-wing trade union delegates from its re-convened AGM.

Hence the confidence with which right-wingers in the local parties are enforcing the ban on sales of the *Militant*. In Gillingham, a long-standing member, Bob Herley, faces expulsion for selling *Militant* at a meeting.

UNITY ON THE RIGHT'S TERMS

The "balanced" leadership on the NEC is itself at the mercy of a right-wing Manifesto Group dominated Shadow Cabinet. Healey, Hattersley, Kaufman, John Smith and Shore command all the key portfolios. On Grenada and Cruise it has been Dennis Healey who has been calling the shots for the Labour opposition. The right-wing's power over policy is to be enhanced through representation on the new Campaign Committee. This body, the brain-child of Kinnock's Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC) mentors - Hain, Hewitt, Clarke et al - will render Benn's old base, the Home Policy Committee, and the NEC itself, irrelevant as far as policy formulation is concerned. The "modernisation" campaign in the party will be carried out under the auspices of this body. This, as the much diluted policy statement "Fairer Britain" indicates, will involve a retreat from the left's cherished policy goals enshrined in the last manifesto. Kinnock and Hattersley both agree on the need for this. As *Labour Weekly* reported: "Both want to see changes. Kinnock calls them 'refinements'. Hattersley refers to 'adjustments.'" (7.10.83)

This real shift rightwards is being perpetrated in the name of the new "unity" in the party. The so-called "hard left" in the party, the Bennites, Ken Livingstone and the axis around *Labour Herald* and *Tribune* are rapidly falling-in behind Kinnock. Like their friends in the LCC and the "soft left" they were thrown into disarray ever since Benn made his deal with the right at Bishops Cleeve. They were forced to give up mounting a challenge to Healey after Bishops Cleeve and then dithered in the face of the last NEC's witch-hunt. The scale of the electoral defeat finished them off. None of them could disagree with Kinnock's new version of

ment. That includes the Left if it stands on the sidelines sniping from a position of ideological but ultimately sterile purity." (14.10.83). The sniping at "ideological purity" is to be expected of the ideological eclectics in the *Tribune* office. They are now accepting unity on Kinnock's terms, which, inevitably means trimming the policies of the established "left". Benn has been singing a similar tune: "This year's conference has built confidence." (*Socialist Action* 14.10.83) True - but confidence in what? When the interviewer asked him about the policy evasions in the "Fairer Britain" document an exasperated Benn snapped: "I think you're nit picking." The mood of "confidence" (in Kinnock) and the pull of "unity" (around Kinnock) have been enough to tame the once feared Bennite legions.

Few Labour leftists expected to see Ken Livingstone join in the lurch to the right. Many of his admirers - particularly around London (and now national) *Labour Briefing* - were shocked to hear Ken at a rally in Brighton argue that "the left could easily isolate itself if we are seen to be wanting only to keep arguing over the battles of the past."

THE NEW MODEL LABOUR PARTY

His paper, *Labour Herald*, rationalises this retreat by arguing that the NEC has a left majority (they are describing the same NEC which expelled Ali!) and that Hattersley's election is not a move right but (wait for it): "a result of a widespread desire for unity." (7.10.83) Talk about not seeing the wood for the trees. *Labour Herald* completely fails to understand that the only basis for this unity is that the left has been prepared to shift to the right.

Each in their own particular way the various fragments of the rightward moving Labour left are drawn to the prospect of building a new model Labour Party. The model they wish to emulate is that which ardent popular frontist Eric Hobsbawm calls a "neo-socialist party." Modelled on Papandreou's Pasok and Mitterrand's PS such a party would cease to be a "narrow", "class based" party and become a party of "all the people." In order to achieve this the left must unite with the right inside a tolerant and broad Labour Party.

At present Benn may be spurning the idea of a coalition with the SDP and Liberals. But he and his followers are not opposed to the conception of building a broad party in alliance with, and therefore on the terms of, the right. A recent *Guardian* column of Benn's was dedicated to calls to the marvellous "radicals" of the Liberal Party to take their rightful place in the Labour Party. Similarly Ken Livingstone has recently made no secret of the fact that he does not want the party to be dependent on the "white male worker" but that it should "learn a lot from the Liberals" in terms of community politics and become a party that aggregates the interests and campaigns of minorities and the oppressed.

The whole problem with this strategy whether it takes the form of positively promoting a coalition with the Liberals and SDP, or the form of fighting for a "neo-socialist" party, is that it relegates the interests of the working class behind those of the electorally important middle classes. As well, it rejects the primacy of working class action against the Tories, in favour of constructing an electoral alliance based on policies that all sections of the alliance accept. Mitterrand's repeated austerity plans directed against the working class are an indication of where this whole schema leads to. Socialists need to learn from this and reject it outright. That this project leads logically to doing the right's dirty work against the left in the Labour Party is shown by the LCC's recent open letter to the left.

In a transparent bid to flush out and isolate any forces that won't jump on the Kinnock bandwagon they propose to unify the left around a platform of defending existing Labour Party policies, no challenge to the new leadership, opposition to a new witch-hunt (not a fight against the present one) and fighting to help "construct a new, wide base of support."

PUTTING ON A LEFT FACE

The clear purpose of the LCC letter is to split the Bennite/Livingstonite left from the ostensibly Trotskyist forces around *Socialist Organiser* and *Socialist Action*. As such it should be condemned as a witch-hunting manoeuvre. But have *Socialist Organiser* ("we're all Bennites") or *Socialist Action* (the new cheerleaders for the National Labour Briefing) drawn any correct conclusions from the realignment of forces in the Labour Party?

A quick glance at *Socialist Organiser* might lead an ill-informed left-winger, disillusioned with Benn, to think that they have. Their favourite failed MP Reg Race has been given acres of space to fume at the new leadership. Their chief ideologue John O'Mahoney denounced "the soup of compromise" and a report of the *SO* intervention at the conference proudly stated that "we were there, prepared to stand against the unity tide and point to the future". They have rejected and attacked the LCC letter as a threat: "unity or else". All of this points to one thing. The centrist *SO*, after a long period of accommodation to the Bennites, now hopes to pose as the only true "hard left" current remaining. To do this, they have to put on a left face.

At the same time, however, the essence of their centrist politics, their continuing accommodation to left-reformism, is evident in their paper. They argue for the reconstruction of a left-reformist alliance to "remake the labour movement." To achieve this



Mitterrand and Kinnock

they are raising the call for workplace branches, as though they are a panacea, a substitute for clear politics.

SO are not going any further than their old goal of "organising the left". They are not fighting to construct a revolutionary alliance pitched against Benn. They are still attempting to form a hard left grouping on "hard-left" Labourite politics while now being prepared to accept that Benn will not be coming in on it. In other words their fundamental perspective is unchanged. It appears leftist precisely because it is now being fought for in a climate where most of the Left are in headlong retreat.

THE SAME BANKRUPT PROJECTS

Socialist Action, late onto the Benn bandwagon, are determined to hang on now they are there. They are piling into the *National Labour Briefing* - safe cover at the moment. They attacked *Socialist Organiser* for voting at a Briefing meeting to reject the LCC letter outright because of the "importance of not isolating Briefing" (NB. as we go to press *SA* has published no reply to the LCC letter in its own name - WP) from those who voted for Kinnock in the Party by having clear proposals for left unity ourselves." (SA 4.11.83) Their purpose in arguing this is really not that different to *Socialist Organiser*. They want to create a left-reformist bloc: "And Briefing could begin to bridge that gap precisely because it wasn't associated with one particular set of ideas." (4.11.83) No clear sets of ideas please, merely a loose grouping with a paper - *National Labour Briefing* - that has got something for everyone.

The project of *Socialist Organiser* and that of *Socialist Action* remain the same bankrupt ones of 1980/81. The difference is that *Socialist Organiser* have modified theirs to suit the times. *Socialist Action* hope that *Briefing* will excuse them from

having to do that and allow them to continue to cling to their scenario of an ever growing left in the labour party that they can blend with.

In the face of the new "unity" in the Labour Party the tasks of real revolutionaries are straightforward. Given the leadership's emphasis on campaigns we must force them to act on their words. Every action against cuts in the NHS must be supported, publicised and built on, to achieve mass action against the Tories. The same must be done around struggles on unemployment, wages and conditions. Kinnock must be forced to turn rhetoric into real deeds. This way he will either stand exposed as a faker - which we think he is - or he will be forced by the action of the workers to put up or shut up. This way too the right wing will be weakened since the emphasis of activity will be shifted from parliament to the streets, the factories, and the hospitals. Alongside this we should call on the PLP to use their parliamentary opposition to the cuts etc as an auxiliary to and tribune for workers' struggles against the Tories.

The present witch-hunt still needs to be fought and reversed. But this must be linked to a struggle to further democratise the party. The lessons of the last five years are that this means a campaign in the unions to democratise the block vote.

A ceaseless drive to link up with workers' struggles and to democratise the party are crucial. But the object must be to construct a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party. Permanent "alliances" of the left are will o' the wisps. The leaders of left-reformism have supple spines. Electoral demands will bend them easily. Their followers, more sincere and often more resolute, must be broken from reformism and won to a revolutionary banner. In the period ahead that is the most decisive task facing revolutionaries inside the Labour Party.

by Mark Hoskisson

LETTERS

Credibility gap?

Comrades,

I was interested to read the article by Dave Stocking in which he urged support for Heffer and Meacher in the Labour Party elections. Would I be right in thinking that your organisation is not too confident about this since there is no bold headline stating your position but only a reference buried towards the end of the article? What is wrong with an abstentionist position instead of supporting "politics and programme... (which) deserve no endorsement"?

As far as the right-wing MPs are concerned, their defection to the SDP would well occur under a Kinnock-Meachers leadership as well as Heffer-Meachers; and if "The sleepwalking of Kinnockism or Bennery will lead straight to the precipice in the late '80s" then why discriminate between the two? You may say that my position is too purist, but if only Kinnock and Hattersley were standing would you urge a vote for the former as the least-worst reformist? In other words, does the tactic of critical support always end up by landing credibility to fake-left reformists?

Another point which surprised me in the article was the reference to the "scandalously undemocratic electoral system". Surely Trotskyists are not in the business of arguing that bourgeois parliamentary elections can be made democratic by reforming the system?

Fraternally,
Arthur Ford (Wolverhampton)

The leadership election contest provided us with an opportunity of putting the fake lefts - Heffer and Meacher - to the test in front of their supporters. This is the essence of critical support. We never support any reformist in any election on the basis of their programme. The problem with abstentionism is that it would have not allowed revolutionaries to put these candidates to the test.

-EDITORS

Statement by two members of Slough SWP

This year's annual conference has resulted in yet another "victory" for the politics and perspectives of the Cliff-dominated leadership. The perspectives for the coming year have been rammed through by the leadership and their ever-faithful middle cadre. The membership have been assigned to their usual role of passive spectators.

In order to head off the vilification and rubbish that dissenting voices (such as ours) are greeted with in the SWP let us point out the real nature of political debate in the supposedly democratic centralist SWP. For a start, people may ask why we have not used the channels for debate prior to the conference. Democratic centralism is, in a nutshell, maximum internal discussion by an informed and educated membership to reach a decision, combined with maximum centralism in carrying out the decision. For this to work, democracy has to exist throughout the year, not just before conferences. We would need a regular unedited Internal Bulletin (even if we did choose to publish some internal material in *Socialist Review*). We would need a real national internal life through fractions, and a regular flow of information, available to all members, between branches and the centre and between branches. Furthermore, there would have to be the right to form factions and tendencies between conferences as well as just before them. Only with these things could the leadership be classified as really accountable to an involved membership. None of these things exist inside the SWP.

From intimate experience of SWP-style democratic centralism, we can only laugh at accusations that we are the ones guilty of a breach of democratic centralism. Democratic centralism, SWP-style, means a few words to the crowd before being hung, drawn and expelled. The IB seems to have been quietly suppressed. One of us has received no IBs, while the other last received an IB in mid-1981. Two or three IBs are supposed to have been produced since then, but unfortunately do not seem to



Unity on the Tribune platform?

their old slogan "Never Again". Never again would they conduct the sort of battle that, for a brief spell, they did in 1980/81. The *New Statesman* was accurate when it noted: "Perhaps the most significant difference between 1980 and 1983 is that the far left was then in the ascendant and is now in retreat. More than that: it is in disarray." (7.10.83)

Evidence for this judgement leaps out of every week's edition of *Tribune*. Its editor, Chris Mullin, wished Kinnock much "goodwill" in a fraternal open letter to him. Taking up Kinnock's own favourite theme he offered the vacuous advice that: "You have first to unite the party." (7.10.83) The following week it gleefully declared: "The Labour Party is on the road to recovery. For the first time in many years it enjoys a leadership in which all sections of the party apparently have confidence."

The same editorial went on to distance itself from the "hard left" arguing: "Anyone who upsets that new found unity of purpose and confidence will deserve short shrift from the rest of the move-

CAN LABOUR DEFEND LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAD pride of place at this year's Tory party conference - almost on a par with Argentina at last year's do. A measure of Tory resolve to do unto Labour town halls what was done unto the *General Belgrano* can be gleaned from the fact that there were no less than three major "debates" on local government.

One after another, Maggie's ministers trooped onto the stage to describe how local authority budgets would be slashed, how the "big spending" metropolitan juntas would be sliced up, and how Ken Livingstone, this year's Galtieri - would be chopped: "neutering the newt" as one minister put it.

After that display, no-one could be left in any doubt about the Tories' determination to drastically reduce town hall spending and strip away the last vestiges of local autonomy. Of course, attacks on local government are nothing new. Callaghan and Healey started the recent trend in 1977. The first Thatcher government continued and extended their work. They cut town hall spending by 5% in real terms, meaning that some 120,000 jobs were lost.

AN ALL OUT TORY OFFENSIVE

Local government remains a prime target for cuts because of the huge sums of money involved: 21.3% of total public expenditure, some £23 bn in 1983. Local government will account for 12.8% of Gross Domestic Product this year. It employs 1.75 million people, excluding "law and order", the one sacrosanct growth area.

Such figures make mouths water at Tory Central Office. They also put the "achievement" of Thatcher's first term into perspective. They did not achieve as much as they hoped for. No wonder then, with a general election victory under their belts, the Tories launched an attack on several fronts.

The government plans massive reductions in the central grant element of local spending for next year. This will be enforced by stiff "hold-back penalties" for any authority that does not keep its spending in line with government targets. These targets themselves are highly arbitrary and long since altered by the Tories to the detriment of the inner cities, in favour of the Tory shires.

At the same time, they are falling in absolute

terms: in 1983 total grants are 53% of local authority income; in 1979 they were 61%. Already, inner city areas like Islington have seen Rate Support Grants (RSG) fall from £53m in 1979/80 to £28m in 1983 4% in real terms, while Camden receives no RSG at all. Next year's targets are between 3% and 12% less than this year in real terms. The highest reductions are reserved for inner-London boroughs, and for the GLC, which is faced with an astonishing 35% cut.

If the Tories are not stopped either services must be butchered or enormous rate increases would be essential just to stay still. For example, the London Borough of Southwark is faced with a £35m gap between revenue and expenditure next year. This would require a 60% rate increase according to their Treasurer. Such a rate rise represents a massive blow to the living standards of workers and, the Tories gleefully note, a one-way ticket to electoral suicide for Labour councillors.

The second element of the attack, effective in 1985, is "rate-capping". This means simply that town halls which do not stick within Whitehall guidelines will have their rates decided by central government.

Partly in order to prevent discussions within their own ranks, the Tories have included a provision which excludes authorities from rate capping if their budgets fall below the "safe" figure of £10m. This conveniently excludes the vast majority of Tory councils. But here too, the real intention is to target the metropolitan councils and their boroughs - the so-called Labour "big spenders".

By and large, the councils on the "hit-list" are also those with the worst conditions in England. According to "Urban Deprivation", produced by the Department of the Environment, eleven of the topline authorities with the highest levels of deprivation are in London. They include Brent, Hackney, Lewisham, Lambeth, Islington and Southwark, who with Greenwich have recently seceded from the London Boroughs Association to form the Association of London Authorities. Add Liverpool and Sheffield to this list and it begins to read like a "Who's Who" of Tory hates.

Jenkin has underlined the centrality of these areas to the Tories' plans by bringing forward the proposal to abolish the metropolitan councils. This openly political attack on Labour councils is part of the wider ruling-class offensive to permanently weaken the Labour Party.

class with the steel workers against the Tories. In that strike it was the actions of the bureaucrats, not the "downturn" that led to defeat. The SWP's perspective is in fact political fatalism which, in the case of the health workers' struggle of 1982 led to the party writing off the health workers to defeat before the final battle with the bureaucrats had been fought.

Turning to the question of Ireland, the CC's self-congratulations on the party's work around Ireland must have come as a shock to the three of us on the Bobby Sands Memorial demo last May, and to the small group of activists who worked hard around the hunger strikes. The coverage of the Irish struggle by the party is pathetic during the times when the Republicans are not launching an offensive in Britain. When the Republicans are militarily active in Britain, the coverage is not only pathetic, but also capitulates to the anti-Irish chauvinism within the British working class - criticism of the bombings as headlines, calls for troops out now and support for Republicans only in fine print. This is a disgrace given that it is our own bourgeoisie that is oppressing the Irish people. The SWP has failed to maintain unconditional solidarity with the struggle of an oppressed people. We ask SWP members and supporters to examine the attitude of its leadership and its publications to Aldershot, Birmingham, Chelsea and Hyde Park (all scenes of Republican attacks in Britain) and ask themselves if the SWP really has stood firm against pro-imperialist and chauvinist prejudices inside the British working class. Our answer is that the SWP has not and that, without a clear anti-imperialist perspective, it never will.

For the reasons we have outlined we have decided to leave the SWP. But we are not leaving politics. Nor are we sinking into the "swamp" or going off to wander in the sectarian wilderness. We have decided to enter into discussions with the Workers Power group. This group is not sectarian, nor has it collapsed into the Labour Party. It is an organisation that takes seriously political discussions of relevant issues in the class struggle, that takes seriously the education and political development of its members and that, to the best of its ability, involves itself in the day-to-day class struggle. We call on other revolutionary-minded militants who are members, or supporters of the SWP to read the publications of the Workers Power group and to consider taking the same step as us.

Yours fraternally,
K. Norris and I. Cam



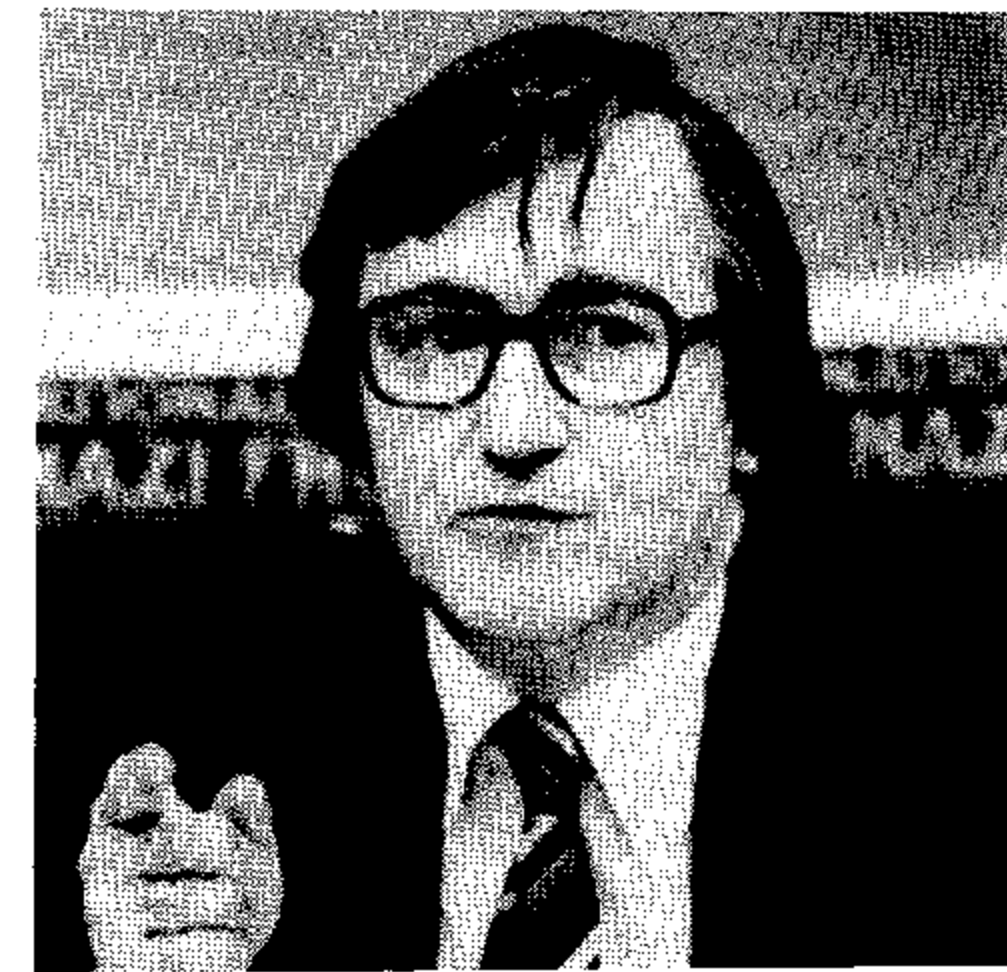
Residential Social Workers demonstrate outside pay negotiations

At the same time, it is an attack on the jobs and conditions of local government workers. Though the Tories have refused to publish reports which "conclusively prove" that the proposed quangos, which would replace the local authorities, would be more efficient and save money, they have made no secret of the fact that 9000 jobs would be "saved" immediately.

If this were not enough, local government workers face attacks on two further fronts. The *Private Eye* sation of Cecil Parkinson may have cost him his job as a Minister, but at least he could fall back on an MP's salary and a business. Not so the growing number of local authority workers threatened with the dole by privatisation. The entire range of services are vulnerable, from whole housing estates, for example Knowlesley District's sale of 3200 homes and flats to a private company, to professional services, like Westminster's recent proposal to privatise architects and valuers.

The last, but by no means least, component of the Tories' onslaught is next year's pay settlement. The published "guideline" is a 3% "increase". This also has to be put in the context of next year's funding cuts. As the *Guardian* recently noted, "The best the employers can be expected to do if they keep reasonably close to financial limits and bargaining priorities is an increase of around 1 per cent" (18.10.83). But in order to achieve this, many authorities, as in past years, would have to cut the numbers on the payroll - for the higher spenders these cuts would need to be drastic.

By forcing the employers, some of whom need little encouragement, into a tight corner, the Tories clearly intend to cut real wages in this sector for the fifth successive year. Taken together the measures proposed by the government amount to a massive reduction in the already inadequate services provided locally. The effect on jobs would be staggering.



Ted Knight - defending who?

In the frontline of the attacks, most of the metropolitan Labour councils are attempting to marshal their forces under the slogan "Defend local democracy". This is the refrain of the Labour leaders in South Yorkshire and London, for example. No-one can doubt that the combined effect of the Tory plans would make local government an even more hopeless appendage of the central state machine. But the calls to safeguard "democracy" are based on, and spread, dangerous illusions and false strategies. They proceed on the basis that local democracy is real and that it can be used to achieve socialism piecemeal and by example.

In fact, local powers are entirely controlled by the central state. The only real measure of autonomy is the freedom to spend the product of a 2p rate! Outside this provision, no local authority can spend a penny without statutory authority - the conditions see to that.

The strategy for fighting the Tories that flows from this perspective is pie in the sky. In a nutshell,

Livingstone and Blunkett appeal to the "centre" of British politics to rally to the defence of "its" local democracy. Already the municipal lefts are taking comfort in the grumbling of Tory associations. Not content with appeals to SDP and Tory conferences to save local government, Ken Livingstone recently claimed that the very House of Lords that crushed the GLC's cheap fare scheme will not stand by and see local democracy perish! In order to get the GLC a good name, Livingstone and Tony Banks fought and won a battle in the GLC Labour group to get the Queen to open the Thames barrier.

This "broad front" approach will not force Thatcher to change her mind. In this strategy the workers whose jobs and services are threatened are "demo fodder". Tightly controlled, token action is contemplated as a last resort. The only potentially effective weapon, mass strike action, is jettisoned for fear of losing their fair-weather friends.

Labour councillors who genuinely want to fight the Tories must put their effort into building industrial action. Workers must demand of them that they use their positions to lay hold of the machinery of local government and spend the massive amounts of money paid to the finance houses on the needs of working people in their community. In this way, workers could be involved in a political struggle against Tory austerity measures.

But if the Defend London Charter set up by the newly-formed Association of London Authorities is anything to go by, the prospect of council-led resistance is remote. Described as a 10-point Charter of popular demands for London, the campaign aims to get "hundreds of thousands of signatures" and "build up to a Defend London week in the New Year" (London Labour Briefing, October 1983).

These measures are totally inadequate. To the Councils who launched the campaign, we say: support workers taking action now! But given the hostile attitude of Southwark and Lambeth (two of the signatories of the Defend London Charter) to the residential workers' current industrial action, a hard fight will be necessary.

ALL OUT STRIKE ACTION!

In place of gimmicks, local government workers must organise now to put their unions on a war footing. On paper, the TUC and affiliated unions in local government are pledged to campaign against the attacks on them and organise support for official action. Left to the trade union leaderships, the reality is different. For the most part the unions are confining themselves to publicity on the nature of the attacks and trying to "raise public awareness" of the value of the services provided, like NALGOs £1m "Put People First" campaign. Squandering the unions' resources in this fashion goes alongside promises of support to individual branches taking action. These promises translate into leaving workers in struggle, (like Kent social workers on strike since August 4th), isolated from the rest of the union and vulnerable to the bosses' attacks. In the nature of local government, and the attacks on it, different workers are affected by the proposals at different times. The current recipe is ultimately one of demoralisation and defeat.

The unions must be won to a position of all-out strike action, nationally to

Defend jobs and services!
Stop the cuts - no rent or rate increases!
Defend the metropolitan councils!
Smash the privatisation plans!
Settle the wage claims in full!

The Labour councillors must be won to using their office to support and organise such action. Without it the Tories will have their way with local government and the already inadequate services that workers depend on.

by Dave Jenkins

