



Unite all struggles to defeat Tories!

THE PAST months have seen the biggest upsurge in the class struggle in Britain since the summer of 1984. With Tory economic policy in disarray – hit by rising inflation, punitive interest rates and a massive trade deficit – the basis exists for the working class to go onto the offensive.

Already, unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers, mostly in the public sector, have clashed with employers in the current round of pay claims. Bus, Underground, British Rail and BBC workers; ambulance drivers and firefighters; college and polytechnic lecturers; water, power and engineering workers; manual workers in the NHS; construction and oil workers; and local government employees have all come up against the government's unofficial 7 per cent ceiling for wage rises. At the same time, dock workers are faced with a struggle for survival in the wake of the Tory plans to abolish the National Dock Labour Scheme.

Though the Tories sanctioned a settlement of 9.2 per cent for the power workers,

By the
Editorial Board

thus avoiding a costly national dispute in the electricity industry and showing that they are prepared to make tactical concessions to reduce the possibility of a united struggle by workers, they have no intention of allowing a general rise in living standards. To do so would undermine the whole strategy of the three Thatcher governments since 1979 – to drive up the rate of exploitation of labour to offset the decline of British capitalism and to meet the requirements of intensified competition in the world market. Workers must therefore prepare, not just for a battle against their respective employers, but for a political campaign to defeat the Tories.

But before it can settle accounts with the Tories, the working class faces a fight with its own leaders. In every arena of struggle, the determination of workers to defend jobs and living standards is frustrated by the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions. Almost two months after the Tories announced the abolition of the National Dock Labour Scheme, Ron Todd and the leadership of the T&GWU had still not called the dockers out on strike. This was in spite of a 2-1 vote in favour of action, in a record 90.8 per cent ballot turn-out. Cowring before the High Court, Todd put the assets of the union, that is, the interests of its paid officials, above the interests of the members. At the end of May, he indicated to the court that he had no intention of fighting to preserve the national scheme, saying: 'I do accept that some understanding can be reached that falls short of the provisions of the National Dock Labour Scheme but which can provide the basis for a national agreement.'

At the beginning of June, after five successful unofficial one-day strikes by London Tube drivers demanding wage increases for working one-person-operated trains, leaders of ASLEF and the NUR ordered ballots on official action, with an instruction to their members to suspend the series of stop-

pages pending the result. Far from signifying a willingness to make the action more effective, it marks the start of a serious attempt by the union leaders to bring the dispute under their control – and under the jurisdiction of the anti-union laws and the High Court.

Labour Party and trade union leaders alike have couched their opposition to the anti-union legislation in terms which clearly show that their first consideration is not the ability of the working class to defend itself. Scarcely bothering to conceal his hostility to unofficial strikes, Labour's employment spokesman, Michael Meacher, complained that lawful disputes had been rendered 'almost impossible' by the legislation. Rail union leader Jimmy Knapp was even more explicit when he attacked the Tories for reducing his ability to control the Tube drivers: 'It is the government's own laws and the attitude employers are taking to those laws which produces what we are now seeing.'

The Labour and trade union bureaucracy has good reason to be worried. Unofficial industrial action on the Tubes expresses the accumulated hatred felt by workers



Demonstration in London on June 4 following the massacre of unarmed demonstrators in Beijing

VICTORY TO THE CHINESE WORKERS AND STUDENTS!

See
page
2

for a leadership which has capitulated without a fight to every clause in four rounds of anti-union legislation. It represents an unconscious striving towards building a new leadership, whatever may be said about it being merely a tactic to avoid prosecution. A similar anger is building up as a result of the contradiction between the overwhelming desire to fight the employers, which has been the content of ballot after ballot throughout widely differing industries, and the reticence of the trade union leaders to act decisively.

However, unless the political vacuum is filled by a conscious revolutionary leadership, such progressive instincts will be crushed, either by the trade union leaders themselves or by the Tories.

On June 1, the Employment Secretary, Norman Fowler, confirmed that he will introduce new legislation in the autumn aimed at impeding unofficial strikes by deducting fines direct from wage packets.

The present wave of disputes must, therefore, become the springboard for building a Trotskyist leadership inside the trade unions which will give voice to the independent interests of the working class, fight every attempt to place limits on the struggle, and clearly outline the political tasks necessary to guarantee a secure future. Faced with the cowardice of the Labour and trade union leaders, the opportunist manoeuvres of the 'lefts', the crude betrayals of the Stalinists and the sophisticated excuses of revisionism,

such a leadership must base itself firmly on a scientific understanding of the revolutionary role of the working class.

Building on the spontaneous attempts to link up different disputes which are constantly frustrated by the present leaders, it must fight for the unity of the working class in action to drive the Tories out and place Labour in office. The demands must be raised that a future Labour government immediately repeals all anti-union legislation, re-establishes trade union immunity under the law, introduces index-linked pay rises and a statutory minimum wage at a level agreed by the trade unions, and extends the present National Dock Labour Scheme to cover every port.

INSIDE

Labour's
policy
review
page 2

Marxism
and the
French
Revolution
pages 4-5

Sri Lanka:
The LSSP's
road to
coalition
page 6

Khomeini's legacy of chaos

THE DEATH on June 4, at the age of 86, of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, spiritual leader of Iran, will lead to an intensification of the factional struggle within the leadership of the Islamic regime.

So long as Khomeini was alive, the intense rivalry between the various clerical groups was held in check. The Iranian economy, exhausted by the eight-year war with Iraq, remains in chaos. The substantial state sector is operating well below capacity, with 80 per cent of oil production still out of action. Every attempt to restore the economy by the Council of Experts appointed by Khomeini has foundered on the rift between so-called 'radicals' and 'pragmatists' among the clergy. Unable to agree either on

the degree of state intervention in the economy, or on relations with the West, it now faces the problem of the spiritual successor.

A few hours after Khomeini's death, President Ali Khamenei was appointed caretaker head of state. In August, however, presidential elections are due and Khamenei is constitutionally forbidden to stand. The speaker of the Iranian parliament and 'pragmatist' Rafsanjani is so far the only candidate. The presidency will carry increased powers, including the right to dismiss the prime minister (currently the 'radical' Mousavi). In a further twist to the clerical in-fighting, one of Khomeini's last acts was to dismiss Ayatollah Montazeri as his designated spiritual successor. Montazeri was subsequently beaten up and

his son and daughter temporarily imprisoned. Khomeini's son Ahmad, identified with the 'radicals', is likely to challenge Rafsanjani's authority.

Khomeini's political legacy is a regime which is rapidly breaking up. All the goals set by Khomeini for the Islamic republic have come to grief – a stable clerical leadership; the extension of Shi'ite fundamentalism throughout the Middle East; victory in the war with Iraq and the downfall of Saddam Hussein; and the overthrow of Najibullah's regime in Afghanistan.

Khomeini and the clergy were able to take the leadership of the immense popular movement which overthrew the Shah in February 1979 in the absence of a revolutionary workers' party. Organisations such as the Tudeh (Communist) Party

and the People's Mujahedin, which played a prominent role in the insurrection, failed to fight for the independence of the working class, and backed the creation of an Islamic Republic.

Having wooed the left with his anti-imperialist rhetoric, Khomeini appointed a conservative bourgeois prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan. With the assistance of Bazargan, workers' councils in the factories were suppressed. Next, Khomeini employed the salami tactic to slice off the Iranian left. Having leant on the Tudeh party to crush the Fedayeen and the Mujahedin, Khomeini finally turned on his erstwhile supporters in 1983.

Khomeini remained a life-long adversary of the organised working class and a bitter opponent of Kurdish independence.

EDITORIAL

Policing the working class

THE LABOUR PARTY's policy review marks a thorough-going adaptation to the Tories. Having betrayed every major struggle of the working class in the last ten years, Kinnock and Hattersley are now trying to use three successive election defeats to justify eliminating even verbal commitments to social reform from Labour's programme.

Confronted with a mass movement against the Tories in the early 1970s, the Labour leaders were forced to promise 'an irreversible shift of wealth and power to working people'. The reality was the Wilson/Callaghan government, with its policies of wage restraint, public spending cuts and strike-breaking.

Under the impact of the 1979 election defeat, the ranks of the Labour Party were radicalised. This was reflected in the left capturing leading positions throughout local government, the support for Benn's campaign for deputy leadership in 1981, Michael Foot's election as leader and the adoption of unilateralism. But the opportunist left leaders capitulated at every serious test - from the Falklands/Malvinas war and the miners' strike to rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC. This layer of ex-lefts is the crucial factor underpinning Kinnock's latest turn to the right.

Labour is not, and never was, a socialist party. It is a capitalist party which draws its support from the working class, and expresses the outlook of the most privileged elements of that class. It was founded at the turn of the century with the limited aim of restoring trade union immunity before the law. It has never had anything resembling a socialist programme.

Over 15 years of turmoil in the world economy has peeled away the veneer of reformism from social democratic parties on a world scale. In France, Spain, Austria, Australia, New Zealand and Peru, Kinnock's co-thinkers are carrying out 'Thatcherite' policies. Paralleling this development, western European Stalinist parties are queuing up to embrace the mixed economy and multilateral disarmament, and expunging class struggle from their programmes. The Italian Communist Party is revising its programme along social democratic lines and is poised to apply for membership of the Second International. The Communist Party of Great Britain announces that: 'The fact and language of the working class as the main agent of political change is a thing of the past.'

Central to Labour thinking, too, is the attempt to abolish the collective struggle of the working class. At one pole of society stands the 'national' economy, at the other are a mass of 'individuals'. The task of a future Labour government is seen as motivating individuals to put their shoulders to the wheel, and enhancing the choice for 'consumers'.

The concentration on the rights of the individual running through the policy review is the most potent expression of its acceptance of Tory attacks on the working class. The language of capitalist individualism is a direct overture to those elements of the middle class who have benefited most from Thatcher's rule. This support is to be bought by distancing the Labour Party from its own trade union base. In a television interview on June 18, Kinnock stated that the trade union block vote would be abandoned when sufficient trade unionists had become individual members of the party. Although the block vote has for years been a source of support for the right wing, Kinnock is worried that a substantial leftward movement in the trade unions might be able to wield it against the leadership. He is also keen to show that his hands are not tied by the working class.

In every important aspect, the recommendations of the policy review are deeply reactionary.

Anti-union laws: No commitment to their abolition and only a limited restoration of the right to secondary action proposed.

Privatisation: 'Common' ownership of British Telecom promised through buying back a further 2 per cent of its shares; other Tory measures will remain.

Nuclear weapons: The dumping of unilateral in favour of multilateral disarmament.

Housing: No programme to tackle the crisis; councils to be encouraged to build for the private market; the 'right to buy' to be extended to private tenants.

Social services: No commitment to reverse cuts in education, local government services or the NHS, or to abandon the hospital 'opt out' plan.

Jobs: No trace of former pledges of 'full employment'; unemployment to be solved by a combination of local job creation and future economic growth.

Law and order: A promise to increase the number of police.

Ireland: Renewed support for the Anglo-Irish agreement, and reaffirmation of the power of the Unionist veto.

It is not surprising that Dr David Owen and John Cartwright of the SDP have warmly welcomed the policy review, and have hinted that they are considering rejoining the Labour Party. They have little option; the rapid decline of the SDP is due to the rightward shift of the Labour Party leadership, which has stolen their thunder. But the SDP's role in forcing the pace has been vital, and Owen and the other ex-Labourites can justifiably claim to be the hidden authors of many of the new policies.

Labour Party members and supporters opposed to the right wing must take due warning from the review. However, the way forward lies not in returning to a mythical golden past, but in developing a revolutionary opposition throughout the labour movement.

Victory to the Chinese workers and students!

Down with the bureaucracy!

THE WORKERS International League salutes the courageous struggle of students and workers in China and calls for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its replacement by a workers' democracy based on soviets. Only such a political revolution, directed against both the 'liberal' and 'hardline' factions of the Chinese Communist Party, can halt the murderous onslaught by the army on the revolutionary upsurge whilst defending the nationalised property relations.

The mainspring of the enormous wave of revolt which has swept the major cities is the economic crisis - intensified by the frantic zig-zags of the Chinese model of 'socialism in a single country'. Since 1978, Chinese Stalinism has pursued ever closer relations with imperialism and, at the same time, created even greater social inequalities within the country. By 1984, the communal basis of China's agriculture was broken up, and individual peasant households were, in the words of Deng Xiaoping, encouraged to 'enrich themselves'. Paralleling this has been a series of overtures to former capitalists and landlords resulting in compensation for businesses and land confiscated since the revolution in 1949.

While right-wing exiles have been encouraged to open up avenues for private investment to enter the country, the infrastructure of the planned economy has become severely dislocated under the weight of bureaucratic mismanagement and corruption. The record harvest of 1984 was wasted due to the lack of roads, transport and storage facilities. According to one official survey, bureaucrats in 15 provinces exploited the shortage of fertilizers by intercepting subsidised stocks on their way to farmers and selling them at the higher market price, pocketing approximately £6 million in the process during 1988. The effect on the rural population is vividly illustrated by the recent admission in the *People's Daily* that 170,000 peasants took part in 200 raids on fertilizer warehouses in Hunan province alone between June and August 1987. Twelve peasants were killed and 80 injured during the incidents.

The upshot of the crisis in the countryside is that an estimated 80 million landless peasants have migrated into coastal cities, swelling the army of unemployed. In addition, last year saw a record number of strikes in China's cities as workers fought for wage rises to offset growing inflation and food shortages.

Recent austerity measures introduced by the Stalinist leaders have severely undermined education. University professors and lecturers have been pauperised, with many forced to find alternative

Statement by the Central Committee of the Workers International League

work or take part-time jobs to supplement their wages. Conditions for students have rapidly deteriorated: for most, the prospect is a compulsory job servicing the vast bureaucracy.

The wave of student demonstrations and strikes by workers which began in April in Beijing spread rapidly to the coastal cities and provincial capitals by mid-May. The trigger was the withdrawal of the reform programme put forward by CCP general secretary Zhao Ziyang and the announcement of cuts in the state budget. As in Hungary in 1956, the intelligentsia and students proved to be the most sensitive social barometer. With their hopes that the reform programme would alleviate the economic crisis and end censorship dashed, the students turned the death of Stalinist 'reformer' Hu Yaobang on April 15 into the reason for a week-long mass demonstration against the regime. The students occupying Tiananmen Square called for more

of 40 million was paralysed, with instances of party members supporting the demonstrations, and 1,000 journalists from official newspapers signed a declaration supporting the lifting of censorship. Repeated attempts during May to move peasant troops into the capital, inciting them to act decisively against 'counter-revolutionary elements' and 'anti-patriotic forces' failed, and led to widespread fraternisation between soldiers and demonstrators. With Zhao Ziyang and Wan Li, chairman of the National People's Congress, under close guard, Deng Xiaoping returned to his home province of Sichuan to rally regional army commanders, and the hated premier, Li Peng, took his family to the military enclave for protection.

Faced with the paralysis of its political and military machine, the sole remaining asset of the bureaucracy has been the absence of a revolutionary leadership and a programme around which to unite workers, students and

bureaucracy is a trap. The 'liberals' lean closest to imperialism in their advocacy of the 'open door' policy and their championing of private enterprise. Their famed sympathy for democratic demands is a function of their collaboration with 'democratic' imperialist countries. The 'hardliners' fear that the economic reforms will undermine the source of their own bureaucratic privileges. The task of the workers, students and poor peasants of China lies not in arbitrating between two forms of counter-revolutionary Stalinism, but in overthrowing the bureaucracy in its entirety.

The only way forward for the students is in linking their destiny with that of the working class and the rural poor. Students have recalled the inspiring example of the Movement of May 4, 1919 - this revolutionary heritage must be fully rediscovered. The leader of the May 4 movement, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, became not only the first general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, but broke with Stalinism to found the Chinese Trotskyist movement. Hundreds of his comrades were subsequently murdered and imprisoned by



Students burn copies of the 'People's Daily' in Beijing

'democracy', the end of corruption and censorship, and for the bringing down of the 'hardline' elements in the bureaucracy - the end of the rule of the 'old men'.

These demands struck a powerful chord in the working class. Despite the bureaucracy's attempt to portray the events as solely the result of student agitation, there were general strikes in Beijing and Shanghai, and sympathy strikes in the major coastal cities and the coalfields. It was the scale of this movement by the working class, and the formation of strike committees independent of the official 'trade unions', which prompted the declaration of martial law in Beijing on May 22. This was countered the following day with the largest demonstrations since 1949, with a million marching in Beijing, supported by a further 500,000 in Shanghai.

As in the popular rebellions against Stalinism in East Germany in 1953, Poland and Hungary in 1956, and Poland in 1981, the ranks of the Communist Party disintegrated, leaving the bare shell of the apparatus. Its boasted membership

poor farmers. The price paid for this political vacuum was the bloody events of June 3 in Beijing, when the Stalinist leaders felt that the mass movement had receded sufficiently for them to move in and crush the remaining demonstrators. In the most cowardly and brutal attack ever launched on unarmed civilians in the history of Stalinism, thousands were murdered and seriously injured by troops equipped with automatic weapons, flame-throwers and tanks.

Despite their audacity, students cannot carry out the overthrow of the bureaucracy unaided. 'Democracy' cannot hang in mid-air. It must be filled with a social content: either workers' or bourgeois democracy. The demand for 'democracy' raised by the students can lead down either path - reform of the bureaucracy by the removal of its most hated and corrupt figures will not change the essential nature of Stalinism. Illusions exist not only in the so-called liberals around Zhao Ziyang, but in Soviet leader Gorbachev and the reputation of Mao Tse-tung.

The alternative offered between the two wings of the

Mao for their revolutionary internationalist convictions and opposition to Stalinism. They were betrayed by the major 'Trotskyist' tendencies in the 1950s and 60s, who lent support to Mao as a 'revolutionary leader'.

Allied to this task must be the urgent creation of workers', soldiers' and poor peasants' soviets - freed from the stranglehold of bureaucracy - alongside genuinely independent trade unions and student assemblies. Plans must be drawn up to combat the economic crisis within the framework of nationalised property, and thoroughly expose the proportion of the social wealth consumed by the parasitic bureaucracy. The foreign policy of the Chinese leadership, particularly its support for the Cambodian Khmer Rouge, must be repudiated, and a revolutionary appeal for solidarity made to the peoples of the Soviet Union and Asia.

■ Down with the Stalinist butchers!

■ Long live the political revolution!

■ Build a Trotskyist party in China!

Poll fraud continues

WIDESPREAD allegations of fraud followed the May 1 presidential and parliamentary elections in Paraguay, the first since the ousting of General Alfredo Stroessner by his close colleague in the Colorado Party, General Andres Rodriguez.

Stroessner's 34-year rule, during which elections were conducted under a system of institutionalised corruption which guaranteed the Colorado Party victory, came to an end when the dictator fled to Brazil on February 3. Rodriguez has pledged to introduce reforms, including the overhaul of the electoral laws by 1993.

In a bid to gain support prior to the elections, Rodriguez 'officially' disbanded the notorious *pyraques*, the network of government informers in every workplace, and introduced some limited civil liberties which prompted landless peasants to demonstrate. However, all the indications point to an imminent crack-down on those calling for land reform, and on the growing industrial unrest.

Army on call

General Augusto Pinochet of Chile will retain considerable powers well after the presidential elections to replace him take place in December, despite the agreement reached with opposition leaders on a package of constitutional reforms.

Pinochet is prohibited from standing in the elections, but can remain commander-in-chief of the army until 1997 and a senator for life. Early in May, the 17-party opposition grouping in Chile rejected minor constitutional changes proposed by the ruling junta as still leaving the military with too much power, and making it too difficult to amend the constitution. Pinochet's response was to withdraw the 'reforms'.

Two weeks later, the army's second-in-command, General Jorge Zincke, issued a scarcely-veiled threat of a military coup, reminding the opposition of the 'example of 1973' - the bloodbath which overthrew the elected government of Salvador Allende and brought Pinochet to power. By the end of the month, the opposition had agreed to a new set of proposals in which Pinochet has conceded nothing on the main points at issue.

Coup failure

An attempt by a section of the armed forces to oust Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo and his Defence Minister, General Gramajo, was defeated early in May, and the rebel leaders arrested. This, the second coup attempt in a year, was organised by a group of retired and serving army and air force officers, intent on returning Guatemala to military rule after three years of unstable 'democracy' under the right-wing Christian Democrat government of Cerezo. Prior to Cerezo's election, the country had suffered 30 years of almost continuous military dictatorship.

US IMPERIALISM OUT OF PANAMA!

THE ATTEMPTS by the government of the United States to topple the regime of General Antonio Manuel Noriega, the military leader of Panama, must be thoroughly condemned by the international workers' movement. The task of overthrowing the hated dictator is the responsibility of the Panamanian workers and poor peasants, the only force which can not only rid the country of Noriega, but also prevent his replacement by another stooge of US imperialism.

The concern expressed by the Bush and, previously, the Reagan administrations for the welfare of the Panama-

nian people is utterly fraudulent. Whilst Noriega remained a dependable ally, acting as a policeman for US interests in the region, his role as the leading middleman in the cocaine trade between South and North America was accepted. Indeed, the CIA is known to have passed on the names and itineraries of US Drug Enforcement Agency officers to Noriega prior to their trips to Colombia, in order to strengthen his hand against the drug barons. And in 1982, the CIA successfully negotiated with Noriega for the setting up of a secret training base for Nicaraguan Contras in Panama.

However, as Noriega accrued vast fortunes from the drug trade, US patronage became less important, and the man who had been installed via the CIA-

By Philip Marchant and Eugene Ludlow

orchestrated assassination of the former dictator, General Torrijos, became increasingly independent of Washington's control. The moral indignation about drug trafficking conceals US imperialism's paramount concern - that the maintenance of its control over an area of strategic military importance might be lost if Noriega is replaced by a popular regime.

The initial attempts by the US to remove Noriega, which culminated in the implementation of a total economic blockade, had the effect of deepening the rift between the ruling military clique and the Panamanian capitalists. If President Bush now calls for Noriega's over-

throw 'by any means', he does not, of course, mean by the independent revolutionary movement of the Panamanian masses. What he has in mind is either a military coup by a section of the Panamanian Defence Forces, or harnessing the hatred that the majority of the working class and peasantry feel for Noriega to the wagon of the bourgeois opposition led by Ricardo Calderon and Guillermo Ford.

The latest tactic of US imperialism has been to exert pressure through the Organisation of American States, the grouping of 22 countries, most of whom are heavily in debt to US banks and the IMF. Four representatives of the OAS were sent to Panama with instructions to persuade Noriega to surrender power. They were correctly identified by Panamanians as agents for US interests, and left the country empty-handed on May 27 after four

days of talks.

If all else fails, the Bush administration is prepared to intervene directly using military force. The 13,000 US troops permanently on station in the Canal Zone have already been supplemented with an additional 2,000; if necessary they will be used to 'restore order' in the rest of the country.

The Panamanian workers and poor peasants must take immediate steps to mobilise and organise independently of the national bourgeoisie who are incapable of leading a struggle for complete self-determination.

■ US troops, administrators and intelligence agents out of Panama! Nationalise the Canal Zone!

■ No dealings with the OAS!

■ Down with Noriega! For a workers' and small farmers' government!

■ Build a Trotskyist leadership in the Panamanian working class!

Peronists return as economy crumbles

By Martin Sullivan

THE SWEEPING victory of Peronist candidate Carlos Menem in Argentina's presidential election on May 14 cannot hold back a spiralling economic and political crisis. Menem will inherit a galloping inflation rate, currently 80 per cent per month, and a foreign debt of \$60 billion on which \$3 billion interest repayments are overdue.

Menem's campaign attempted to maintain a balancing act - one foot on the neck of the Peronist CGT trade unions and the other in the camp of the military. His populist rhetoric pledged more state subsidies and government intervention in industry, and wage rises to restore living standards; threatened not to honour two-thirds of the foreign debt; vaguely denounced 'speculators'; and called for the retaking of the Malvinas. Alongside this were pleas for

'social pacts' to achieve a 'revolution in production' and a commitment to increase the military budget.

When President Raul Alfonsin introduced tough austerity measures on May 28 - including price and foreign exchange controls, and budget cuts - in an attempt to stem the crisis, there was immediate and widespread resistance from the working class. Buenos Aires, Rosario and five other cities were hit by mass protests, and the government declared a 30-day state of siege under which constitutional democratic rights are suspended. This was supported by the Peronists, their only condition being the calling of a concurrent two-month 'social emergency', during which food and medi-

cine parcels will be handed out to the poor!

According to official reports, 14 people were killed and 80 injured during the disturbances. Hundreds were arrested, including leading members of the centrist Movement Towards Socialism (followers of the late Nahuel Moreno) and Workers' Party.

Since the election, the withdrawal of the Peronists from talks to speed up the transfer of presidential power (not due until December) has shown their unwillingness to be seen supporting Alfonsin's policies. However, Menem was quick to join the president in accusing 'identified' left-wing parties of 'generating conditions of political instability' and of 'inciting violence', and will welcome his call for military intelligence to investigate their part in the uprising.

Bank raids Ecuador deposits

IN A MOVE which appears to cut across the current negotiations led by the United States on debt rescheduling, the New York Citibank has seized \$80 million of deposits held by Ecuador and used them to pay off a trade credit made to the country.

The loan is not in default, neither is it a part of Ecuador's rescheduled medium- and long-term debt of \$12.3 billion. However,

General strike

The first general strike in Venezuela for 31 years took place on May 18. It was directed against austerity measures introduced since February by the government of President Carlos Andres Perez aimed at cutting inflation, reducing the large balance of payments deficit and tackling the \$33 billion foreign debt. Factories and shops throughout the capital, Caracas, were closed.

the main debt is in default, the interest not having been paid on it for two years, and Citibank cited cross-default clauses in its loan agreements with Ecuador in order to seize the deposits.

The so-called 'new debt initiative', launched by the US in March, is a recognition that the stringent conditions demanded by the International Monetary Fund in return for debt rescheduling are leading to a rise in the militancy of the working class. But the plan is not designed to substantially ease the debt burden - on the contrary, its main aim is to protect creditors by extending the influence of the IMF over the domestic policies of debtor countries.

Behind Citibank's action lies the fear of private bankers that the new debt arrangements will either be insufficient, or come too late, to prevent major defaults which could lead to huge losses, or even the collapse of some banks. Over \$6 billion of Ecuador's total foreign debt is owed to

commercial banks, and the same pattern is repeated in other countries. The tactic of seizing its deposits is intended to force the pace at which Ecuador introduces austerity measures, and resumes interest payments on its main debt. By breaking ranks with the IMF, Citibank has shown that the debt crisis remains an intractable problem for capitalism which still threatens to plunge the banking system into chaos.

Banzer attempts come-back

THE FINAL result of the disputed May 7 elections in Bolivia place the country's former dictator, General Hugo Banzer, within 5,800 votes of topping the poll for president.

Banzer, the candidate of the National Democratic Action (ADN) party which ruled from 1971-78 after a military coup, was narrowly defeated by Gonzalo Sanchez de Losada of the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR).

Leading MNR spokesmen claim that the ADN colluded



Demonstration in Lima, Peru, against IMF policies

Resignation of cabinet forces Garcia's hand

PERU's beleaguered president, Alan Garcia, appointed his fourth cabinet in as many years in mid-May, after the mass resignation of the previous cabinet over his handling of the fight against the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas.

Under pressure to 'untie

the hands of the military', Garcia has promoted Agustín Mantilla to the key Interior Ministry. Mantilla is suspected of links with the Comando Rodrigo Franco, a right-wing death squad thought to have been set up by leading personnel of the ruling APRA party.

During the three days of the cabinet reshuffle, Sendero Luminoso organised a strike in Peru's three central departments which brought most of the mines and transport in the region to a halt, closed banks, shops, schools and public offices, and caused power-cuts throughout the area and in parts of Lima. Meanwhile, thousands of public sector workers have been taking strike action for a doubling of their wages. Prices have risen by 343 per cent since December 1988, and inflation this year is predicted to top 10,000 per cent.

with the third-placed party, the mis-named Movement of the Revolutionary Left, to rig the elections. The official results reveal that 90,000 voters were disenfranchised because of a law which allows the entire contents of a ballot box to be declared null and void if a single voting paper is spoilt.

If new elections are not called, the congress will choose which of the top three candidates will be president when it convenes in early August.

Understanding the

IT IS a tribute to the significance of the French Revolution that, on its 200th anniversary, it still inspires the fiercest passions. The immense social upheaval from which modern capitalist France arose has been taken over and institutionalised by the French ruling class, for whom Liberty, Equality and Fraternity serve as fig leaves behind which to hide its own interests. The Communist Party of France, for its part, sees in the revolution only a precedent for its Popular Front policy of uniting the 'nation' in a multi-class coalition, subordinating the working class to the bourgeoisie. But in its struggle against absolute monarchy, the most

advanced elements of the French bourgeoisie were forced to rally the poorest sections of society to smash down the walls of feudalism. It is this, deeply revolutionary, movement which historians and journalists obscure today, whilst expending thousands of words denouncing the events of 1789-94 as an orgy of mindless violence. A recent televised 'trial' of the tyrant Louis XVI resulted in his 'acquittal'! Below, we reprint extracts from the Marxist classics which set out the importance of the French Revolution for the modern revolutionary movement and the working class.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

IDEAS CAN NEVER lead beyond an old world order but only beyond the ideas of the old world order. Ideas cannot carry out anything at all. In order to carry out ideas men are needed who can exert practical force . . .

. . . the French Revolution gave rise to ideas which led beyond the ideas of the entire old world order. The revolutionary movement which began in 1789 in the *Cercle social*, which in the middle of its course had as its chief representatives Leclerc and Roux, and which finally with Babeuf's conspiracy was temporarily defeated, gave rise to the *communist* idea which Babeuf's friend Buonarroti re-introduced in France after the Revolution of 1830. This idea, consistently developed, is the *idea of the new world order* . . .

. . . After the fall of Robespierre, the *political enlightenment*, which formerly had been *overreaching* itself and had been *extravagant*, began for the first time to develop *prosaically*. Under the government of the Directory, *bourgeois society*, freed by the Revolution itself from the trammels of feudalism and officially recognised in spite of the Terror's wish to sacrifice it to an ancient form of political life, broke out in powerful streams of life. A storm and stress of commercial enterprise, a passion for enrichment, the exuberance of the new bourgeois life, whose first self-enjoyment is pert, light-hearted, frivolous and intoxicating; a *real enlightenment* of the *land* of France, the feudal structure of which had been smashed by the hammer of the Revolution and which, by the first feverish efforts of the numerous new owners, had become the object of all-round cultivation; the first moves of industry that had now become free – these were some of the signs of life of the newly emerged bourgeois society. *Bourgeois society* is *positively* represented by the *bourgeoisie*. The bourgeoisie, therefore, *begins* its rule. The *Rights of Man* cease to exist *merely* in theory.

It was not the revolutionary movement as a whole that became the prey of Napoleon on 18 Brumaire . . . it was the *liberal bourgeoisie* . . .

. . . Napoleon represented the last battle of *revolutionary terror* against the *bourgeois society* which had been proclaimed by this same Revolution, and against its policy. Napoleon, of course, already discerned the essence of the *modern state*; he understood that it is based on the unhampered

development of bourgeois society, on the free movement of private interest, etc. He decided to recognise and protect this basis. He was no terrorist with his head in the clouds. Yet at the same time he still regarded the *state* as an *end in itself* and civil life only as a *subordinate* which must have no *will of its own*. He *perfected* the Terror by *substituting permanent war for permanent revolution* . . .

. . . Just as the liberal bourgeoisie was opposed once more by revolutionary terror in the person of Napoleon, so it was opposed once more by counter-revolution in the Restoration in the person of the Bourbons. Finally, in 1830 the bourgeoisie put into effect its wishes of the year 1789, with the only difference that its *political enlightenment* was now *completed*, that it no longer considered the constitutional representative state as a means for achieving the ideal of the state, the welfare of the world and universal human aims but, on the contrary, had acknowledged it as the *official* expression of its own *exclusive* power and the *political* recognition of its own *special* interests.

(From 'The Holy Family' by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels)

★ ★ ★

THE REVOLUTION of 1789 had as its prototype (at least in Europe) only the Revolution of 1648, and the Revolution of 1648 only the insurrection of the Netherlanders against Spain. Not only in time but also in content both revolutions were a century beyond their prototypes.

In both revolutions the bourgeoisie was the class that *really* formed the van of the movement. The *proletariat* and the *strata of the burghers which did not belong to the bourgeoisie* either had as yet no interests separate from those of the bourgeoisie or they did not yet constitute independently developed classes or subdivisions of classes. Hence where they came out in opposition to the bourgeoisie, as for instance in France in 1793 till 1794, they fought only for the realisation of the interests of the bourgeoisie, even if not *in the fashion* of the bourgeoisie. The *whole French terrorism* was nothing but a *plebeian manner* of settling accounts with the *enemies of the bourgeoisie*, with absolutism, feudalism and philistinism.

The Revolutions of 1648 and 1789 were not *English* and *French* revolutions; they

were revolutions of a *European* pattern. They were not the victory of a *definite* class of society over the *old political order*; they were the *proclamation of political order for the new European society*. The bourgeoisie was victorious in these revolutions; but the *victory of the bourgeoisie* was at that time the *victory of a new order of society*, the victory of bourgeois property over feudal property, of nationality over provincialism, of competition over the guild, of partition over primogeniture, of the owner of the land over the domination of the owner by the land, of enlightenment over superstition, of the family over the family name, of industry over heroic laziness, of civil law over medieval privilege. The Revolution of 1648 was the victory of the seventeenth century over the sixteenth century, the Revolution of 1789 the victory of the eighteenth century over the seventeenth century. These revolutions expressed still more the needs of the world of that day than of the sectors of the world in which they occurred, of England and France.

(From 'The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-revolution' by Karl Marx)

★ ★ ★



Gracchus Babeuf

CAMILLE Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Napoleon, the heroes as well as the parties and the masses of the old French Revolution, performed the task of their time in Roman costume and with Roman phrases, the task of unchaining and setting up modern *bourgeois* society. The first ones knocked the feudal basis to pieces and mowed off the feudal heads which had grown on it. The other created inside France the conditions under which alone free competition could be developed, parcelled landed property exploited and the unchained industrial productive power of the nation employed; and beyond the French borders he every-

where swept the feudal institutions away, so far as was necessary to furnish bourgeois society in France with a suitable up-to-date environment on the European Continent.

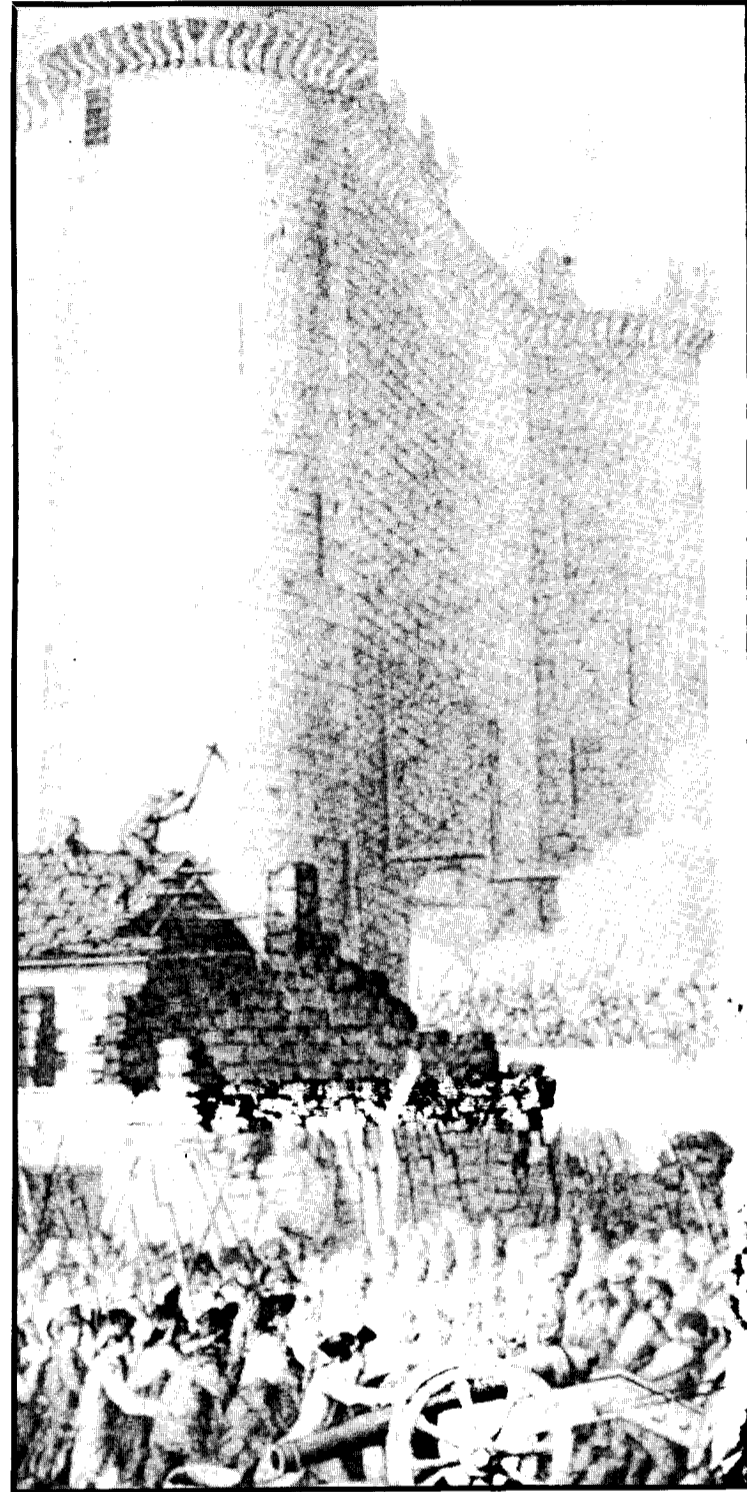
(From 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' by Karl Marx)

★ ★ ★

THE GREAT MEN, who in France prepared men's minds for the coming revolution, were themselves extreme revolutionists. They recognised no external authority of any kind whatever. Religion, natural science, society, political institutions – everything was subjected to the most unsparring criticism: everything must justify its existence before the judgment-seat of reason or give up existence. Reason became the sole measure of everything. It was the time when, as Hegel says, the world stood upon its head; first in the sense that the human head, and the principles arrived at by its thought, claimed to be the basis of all human action and association; but by and by, also, in the wider sense that the reality which was in contradiction to these principles had, in fact, to be turned upside down. Every form of society and government then existing, every old traditional notion was flung into the lumber-room as irrational; the world had hitherto allowed itself to be led solely by prejudices; everything in the past deserved only pity and contempt. Now, for the first time, appeared the light of day, the kingdom of reason; henceforth superstition, injustice, privilege, oppression, were to be superseded by eternal truth, eternal Right, equality based on Nature and the inalienable rights of man.

We know today that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealised kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that this eternal Right found its realisation in bourgeois justice; that this equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the essential rights of man; and that the government of reason, the Social Contract of Rousseau, came into being, and only could come into being, as a democratic bourgeois republic. The great thinkers of the eighteenth century could, no more than their predecessors, go beyond the limits imposed upon them by their epoch.

(From 'Socialism: Utopian and Scientific' by Frederick Engels)



The storming of the Bastille July 14, 1789

FIRST OF ALL, Robespierre, Saint-Just and the other leading men of the 'Mountain' did not represent the proletariat at all and did not even desire to represent them. The party of the proletariat and of the proletarian petty-bourgeoisie was represented by Roux, Varlet, Dolivet, Chalier, Seclerc, and other bearers of the Communist agitation who were fought in the fiercest manner and ultimately sent to the guillotine by the 'Mountain' and the Robespierrian elements precisely because of their Communist tendencies. In a more modified form the Paris Commune, under the leadership of Chaumette (who likewise was sent to the guillotine by Robespierre) represented the proletarian interests. Robespierre and his government stood *resolutely* on the platform of *bourgeois private property*, and this found expression as follows in the Constitution of 1793: 'The right to property is granted to every citizen and the right to enjoy his income and the fruits of his labour and industry and to dispose of them as he thinks proper,' and again! 'Not even the smallest part of his property can be taken from him except when demanded by public necessity, and then only on condition that just

compensation be given.' *Robespierre was a representative of bourgeois Republicanism* – neither more nor less. He came to power on the wave of the proletarian petty-bourgeoisie movement when the French Revolution, after three years of existence, had not abolished either feudalism or the monarchy. Deceived by the Feuillants and the Girondists – that is, by the representatives of the constitutional nobility and large capital – the masses of the people returned the bourgeois democracy – the 'Mountain' – to power. Against their radical bourgeois measures, the actual abolition of feudal dues (on 4th August, 1789, they were only abolished on paper), the realisation of democracy, the decapitation of the King, etc., the feudal counter-revolution entered into union with England, Prussia and Austria for a furious resistance. Then began the war on all fronts against the armies of the coalition as well as against domestic counter-revolution. The greatest scarcity prevailed throughout the country. The revolutionary armies had no shoes, clothing or food. In the country ruined by feudalism, and suffering from the bad harvests of many years, there was a shortage of everything.

French Revolution



IN THE HEROIC period of French history we saw a bourgeoisie, enlightened, active, as yet not aware of the contradictions of its own position, upon whom history had imposed the task of leadership in the struggle for a new order, not only against the outworn institutions of France but also against the reactionary forces of the whole of Europe. The bourgeoisie, consistently, in all its factions, regarded itself as the leader of the nation, rallied the masses to the struggle, gave them slogans and dictated their fighting tactics. Democracy bound the nation together with a political ideology. The people – urban petty-bourgeois, peasants and workers – elected bourgeois as their deputies, and the instructions given these deputies by their constituents were written in the language of a bourgeoisie coming to awareness of its messianic mission. During the revolution itself, though class antagonisms were revealed, yet the powerful inertia of the revolutionary struggle consistently threw the more conservative elements of the bourgeoisie off the political path. No stratum was thrown off before it had transferred its energy to the stratum behind it. The nation as a whole continued therefore to struggle for its aims with sharper and more determined methods. When the upper layers of the rich bourgeoisie, breaking away from the national core which had entered into the movement, formed an alliance with Louis XVI, the democratic demands of the nation were directed *against* this bourgeoisie, and this led to universal suffrage and the republic, as the logical, inevitable form of democracy. The Great French Revolution was indeed a national

Karl Radek

What could a radical bourgeois government do in the circumstances? Had it been acquainted with Kautsky's 'Erfurt Programme' it would perhaps have renounced its 'illusions', have given up the struggle and abandoned the country to feudalism. But since they, happily, had no presentiment of that gentleman's castrated Marxism they sought no 'statistical' reasons for abandoning the struggle, but fought with all the means at their disposal, including that of terrorism, against speculation and counter-revolutionary treachery and defeated the armies of the counter-revolution. How little they pursued illusions is shown by their struggle against the Communist current which strove for far-reaching, but at that time unattainable reforms. When the power of the feudal counter-revolution was broken the task of the bourgeois-terrorist Government was fulfilled. Even the bourgeoisie were unwilling to tolerate it any longer. That was the cause of the 9th Thermidor, and of the fall of Robespierre.



Maximilien Robespierre

revolution. And what is more, within the national framework, the world struggle of the bourgeoisie for domination, for power, and for undivided triumph found its classical expression.

Jacobinism is now a term of reproach on the lips of all liberal wiseacres. Bourgeois hatred of revolution, its hatred towards the masses, hatred of the force and grandeur of the history that is made in the streets, is concentrated in one cry of indignation and fear – *Jacobinism!* We, the world army of Communism, have long ago made our historical reckoning with Jacobinism. The whole of the present international proletarian movement was formed and grew strong in the struggle against the traditions of Jacobinism. We subjected its theories to criticism, we exposed its historical limitations, its social contradictoriness, its utopianism, we exposed its phraseology, and broke with its traditions, which for decades had been regarded as the sacred heritage of the revolution.

But we defend Jacobinism against the attacks, the calumny, and the stupid vituperations of anaemic, phlegmatic liberalism. The bourgeoisie has shamefully betrayed all the traditions of its historical youth, and its present hirelings dishonour the graves of its ancestors and scoff at the ashes of their ideals. The proletariat has taken the honour of the revolutionary past of the bourgeoisie under its protection. The proletariat, however radically it may have, in practice, broken with the revolutionary traditions of the bourgeoisie, nevertheless preserves them, as a sacred heritage of great passions,

This was well understood by Mignet, although he wrote his history of the French Revolution almost a hundred years ago, and in the language of the Restoration. He says in his book:

The numerous victories of the Republic, to which its drastic measures or great enthusiasm greatly contributed, made violence on its part superfluous. It was the Committee of Public Safety which held down the interior of France with a strong and terrible hand, and at the same time opened sources of assistance, created armies, discovered field-marshal

and achieved victories by which the triumph of the Revolution against Europe was ultimately assured. A favourable situation no longer demanded the same efforts, and the problem was solved, as it is the peculiar characteristic of such a dictatorship to save a country and a cause and to perish itself in the work of salvation.

The opposition which the Jacobin Terror showed to bourgeois private property means for Karl Kautsky no more than the bankruptcy of an illusion. A certain Frederick Engels, however, wrote: 'In order that even those fruits of victory should be secured which were ripe at that time it was necessary that the revolution should be carried considerably beyond its goal – exactly as in France in 1793 and in Germany in 1848. This, in fact, appears to be a law of development of bourgeois society.' In order finally to abolish feudal property and to trample the feudal restoration in the dust it was necessary for the bourgeois revolution to lay violent hands on bourgeois private property. It was bound to be wrecked in the long run, but its task – the destruction of feudalism – could not have been accomplished without terrorism. (From 'Proletarian Dictatorship and Terrorism')

Leon Trotsky

heroism and initiative, and its heart beats in sympathy with the speeches and acts of the Jacobin Convention.

What gave liberalism its charm if not the traditions of the Great French Revolution? At what other period did bourgeois democracy rise to such a height and kindle such a great flame in the hearts of the people as during the period of the Jacobin, *sansculotte*, terrorist, Robespierrian democracy of 1793? (From 'Results and Prospects')

★ ★ ★

AT THE END of the 18th century in France there developed a revolution which is called, not completely without reason, the great French Revolution. This was a bourgeois revolution. As is well known, power passed at a certain stage to the Jacobins, who were supported by the *sansculottes*, the lower class urban worker-tradesmen; they placed the rectangle of the guillotine between themselves and the Girondistes, the liberal party of the bourgeoisie, the Kadets of their day. Only the dictatorship of the Jacobins gave the first French revolution its real significance and made it great. And meanwhile, this dictatorship came about not only without the bourgeoisie, but directly against it. Robespierre, who did not manage to become acquainted with Plekhanov's ideas, broke all the laws of sociology, and, instead of shaking hands with the Girondistes, cut off their heads. This was very cruel, there's no denying the fact. But this cruelty in no way prevented the French Revolution becoming great, without crossing the boundaries of its bourgeois character. Marx, whose name is misused by all sorts of vulgar hacks in our country, wrote that 'the entire French terror was nothing but the plebeian means of dealing with the enemies of the bourgeoisie'. And since the bourgeoisie itself feared these methods of plebeian reprisal against the enemies of the people, the Jacobins not only threw it from power, but repressed it with an iron will each time it attempted to halt or 'soften' their work. Clearly the Jacobins made a bourgeois revolution without the bourgeoisie. (From 'What Next?')

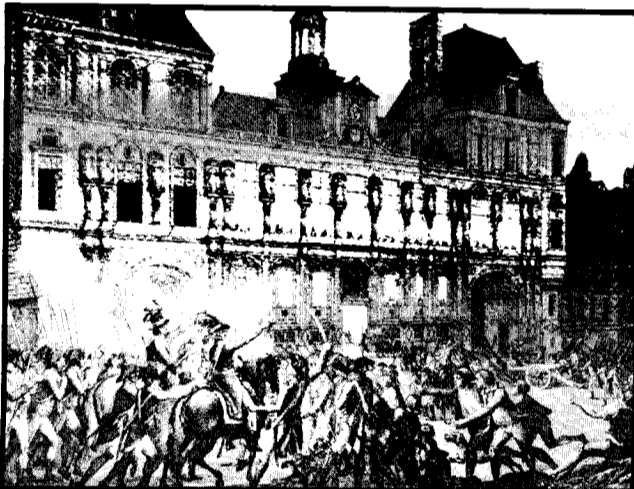
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IN THE GREAT French revolution, the Constituent Assembly, the backbone of which was the upper levels of the Third Estate, concentrated the power in its hands – without however fully annulling the prerogatives of the king. The period of the Constituent Assembly is a clearly-marked period of dual power, which ends with the flight of the king to Varennes, and is formally liquidated with the founding of the Republic.

The first French constitution (1791), based upon the fiction of a complete independence of the legislative and executive powers, in

reality concealed from the people, or tried to conceal, a double sovereignty: that of the bourgeoisie, firmly entrenched in the National Assembly after the capture by the people of the Bastille, and that of the old monarchy still relying upon the upper circles of the priesthood, the clergy, the bureaucracy, and the military, to say nothing of their hopes of foreign intervention. In this self-contradictory regime lay the germs of its inevitable destruction. A way out could be found only in the abolition of bourgeois representation by the powers of European reaction, or in the guillotine for the king and the monarchy. Paris and Coblenz must measure their forces.

But before it comes to war and the guillotine, the Paris Commune enters the scene – supported by the lowest city layers of the Third Estate – and with increasing boldness contests the power with the official representatives of the national bourgeoisie. A new double sovereignty is thus inaugurated, the first manifestation of which we



The fall of Robespierre, 9th Thermidor (July 27, 1794)

observe as early as 1790, when the big and medium bourgeoisie is still firmly seated in the administration and in the municipalities. How striking is the picture – and how vilely it has been slandered! – of the efforts of the plebeian levels to raise themselves up out of the social cellars and catacombs, and stand forth in that forbidden arena where people in wigs and silk breeches are settling the fate of the nation. It seemed as though the very foundation of society, trampled underfoot by the cultured bourgeoisie, was stirring and coming to life. Human heads lifted themselves above the solid mass, horny hands stretched aloft, hoarse but courageous voices shouted! The districts of Paris, bastards of the revolution, began to live a life of their own. They were recognised – it was impossible not to recognise them! – and transformed into sections. But they kept continually breaking the boundaries of legality and receiving a current of fresh blood from below, opening their ranks in spite of the law to those with no rights, the destitute *sansculottes*. At the same time, the rural municipalities were becoming a screen for a peasant uprising against that bourgeois legality which was defending the feudal property system. Thus from under

the second nation arises a third.

The Parisian sections at first stood opposed to the Commune, which was still dominated by the respectable bourgeoisie. In the bold outbreak of August 10, 1792, the sections gained control of the Commune. From then on the revolutionary Commune opposed the Legislative Assembly, and subsequently the Convention, which failed to keep up with the problems and progress of the revolution – registering its events, but not performing them – because it did not possess the energy, audacity and unanimity of that new class which had raised itself up from the depths of the Parisian districts and found support in the most backward villages. As the sections gained control of the Commune, so the Commune, by way of a new insurrection, gained control of the Convention. Each of the stages was characterised by a sharply marked double sovereignty, each wing of which was trying to establish a single and strong government – the right by a defensive struggle, the left by an offensive. Thus, characteristically – for both revolu-

tions and counter-revolutions – the demand for a dictatorship results from the intolerable contradictions of the double sovereignty. The transition from one of its forms to the other is accomplished through civil war. The great stages of a revolution – that is, the passing of power to new classes or layers – do not at all coincide in this process with the succession of representative institutions, which march along after the dynamic of the revolution like a belated shadow. In the long run, to be sure, the revolutionary dictatorship of the *sansculottes* unites with the dictatorship of the Convention. But with what Convention? A Convention purged of the Girondistes, who yesterday ruled it with the hand of the Terror – a Convention abridged and adapted to the dominion of new social forces. Thus by the steps of the dual power the French revolution rises in the course of four years to its culmination. After the 9th Thermidor it begins – again by the steps of the dual power – to descend. And again civil war precedes every downward step, just as before it had accompanied every rise. In this way the new society seeks a new equilibrium of forces. (From 'The History of the Russian Revolution')

THE LANKA Sama Samaja Party (Ceylon Equality Party) was founded by a group of radical youth from the educated Sinhalese elite, who came together as students at the London School of Economics in the late 1920s and early 30s.

The central figures in this group were Philip Gunawardena, Leslie Goonewardene, Colvin R. de Silva, N.M. Perera and S.A. Wickremasinghe. At the LSE they encountered a variety of political currents, including, of course, the reformist ideology which predominated at that Fabian institution, the theories of Harold Laski being particularly influential at the time.

The politically most advanced member, and real leader, of the group was Philip Gunawardena. In 1928 he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain, and served on the executive committee of the CP-sponsored League Against Imperialism during 1929-31. Having established links with the first British supporters of the International Left Opposition, Gunawardena encouraged his Ceylonese colleagues to study Trotsky's political writings, and on his way home in 1932 he contacted Trotskyist groups in France and Spain.

After their return to Ceylon (then a British colony), the LSE group became active in the labour movement, taking the lead in forming the Wellawatte Mill Workers' Union which organised a famous 14,000-strong strike in 1933. This, along with work in the anti-imperialist Youth Leagues and Suriya Mal movement, laid the basis for launching the LSSP in December 1935.

Its first manifesto defined the party's aims as national independence, the abolition of inequality due to class, caste, race, creed or sex, and the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. The manifesto listed 22 'immediate demands for day-to-day agitation and struggle'; these included such measures as a minimum wage, an eight-hour day, cheap housing, economic relief to the peasantry, the provision of free books, meals and milk in schools, and the abolition of child labour.

This was scarcely a revolutionary programme; nor was the LSSP intended to be a revolutionary party. A very loose organisation, it numbered among its members not only Marxist intellectuals, but also petty-bourgeois nationalists who were attracted to the LSSP in the absence of a strong bourgeois anti-colonial movement. It was only in the late 1930s that the Gunawardena group moved towards a more openly Trotskyist stance, when a faction headed by S.A. Wickremasinghe - who had returned from a second period of study at the LSE as a convinced Stalinist - tried to push the LSSP into the Communist International.

The 'T Group', as the Trotskyists were called, established a dominant position on the party's executive committee and, in 1939, passed by 29 votes to 5 a resolution of no confidence in the now degenerate Comintern. Early the following year, they expelled the Stalinist minority (who went on to found the Ceylon Communist Party). It was, as Leslie Goonewardene later wrote, 'possibly the first occasion in the history of party expulsions where the Trotskyists expelled the Stalinists, and not the reverse'.

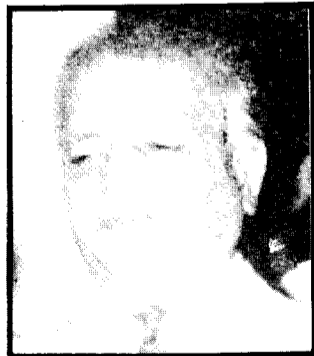
THE ROAD TO COALITION

How the LSSP betrayed Trotskyism

But in refusing the Stalinists' demand that the issue be put to a party conference, the T Group failed to educate the membership and re-establish the LSSP on firm Trotskyist foundations, even though a programme and constitution based on those of the Fourth International were adopted in 1941.

By then the LSSP was the object of political persecution because of its revolutionary defeatist stand against the imperialist war and, in line with this policy, its organisation of a series of strikes by Tamil plantation workers during 1939-40. Despite continued repression, the LSSP carried on the struggle in Ceylon throughout the war, while in 1942 several of its imprisoned leaders staged a dramatic jail-break and escaped to India, where they helped to found the Bolshevik-Leninist Party as the Fourth International's section on the sub-continent. The courageous conduct of the Samasamajists during these years, not least their principled defence of Trotskyist politics in the courts of their British imperialist oppressors, marks this as the height of the party's 'heroic period'.

In 1945, the LSSP split into two following the expulsion of Philip Gunawardena and N.M. Perera, who had opposed the formation of the BLP, apparently from a national-reformist standpoint. Despite this split, the Samasamajists intervened vigorously in the upsurge of class struggle after the war. They ousted the right wing



N.M. Perera

from the leadership of the important Ceylon Mercantile Union, took control of the Ceylon Federation of Labour and played a leading role in the wave of industrial conflict which culminated in the 1946 general strike. However, the employers' refusal to honour the agreements made at the end of this struggle provoked a second general strike in 1947 which was heavily defeated, a set-back from which the labour movement took some years to recover.

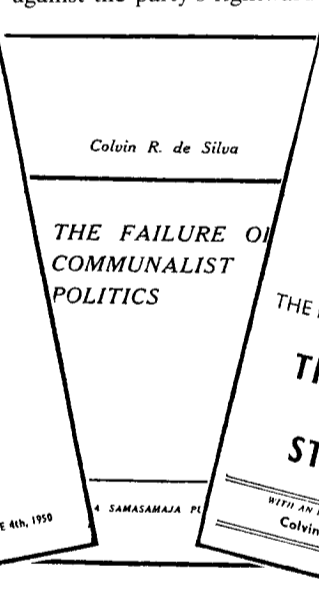
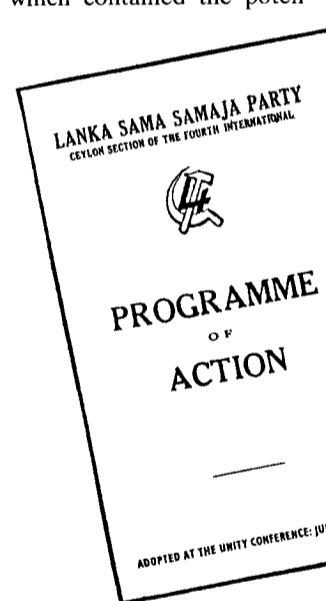
It was against this background of a defeat for the working class that Ceylon was granted dominion status within the British Commonwealth. In the 1947 parliamentary elections which preceded 'independence', the two Samasamajist parties gained between them over

Twenty-five years ago, in June 1964, a special conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Ceylonese section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, voted to join a bourgeois coalition government under Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The LSSP's betrayal was a major blow to Trotskyism, not only in Ceylon but throughout the world. In the first of two articles, **Bob Pitt** traces the rise and fall of a party which, campaigning beneath the banner of revolutionary Marxism, established itself for a quarter of a century as the leading political force in the Ceylonese working class.

300,000 votes (17 per cent of the total), the Gunawardena-Perera LSSP winning ten seats and the BLP five. But an overwhelming victory was secured by the right-wing bourgeois United National Party, which was to remain in office until 1956.

The end of direct rule from Britain presented a new challenge to a Samasamajist leadership whose politics, in some cases, owed more to anti-colonial nationalism than to Marxism. The group which contained the poten-

tial to develop into a proletarian-revolutionary party, waging an uncompromising political struggle against its 'own' bourgeoisie, was undoubtedly the BLP. But the prospects for such a development were not improved when the two parties were reunited in 1950, and petty-bourgeois nationalist elements from the Gunawardena-Perera group took leading positions in the fused organisation. Unification was in any case only partial, for Gunawardena left to form an alliance with the CP which, in the name of the 'United Front', campaigned for a popular-frontist 'democratic government'.



LSSP pamphlets from the 1950s

Gunawardena's defection was followed in 1952 by the rise of another pro-Stalinist group, advocating the same orientation to the CP and the liberal bourgeoisie, which gained the support of almost half the central committee and took a third of the membership out of the LSSP in 1953. The similarity between this group and the factions which had arisen in other sections of the Fourth

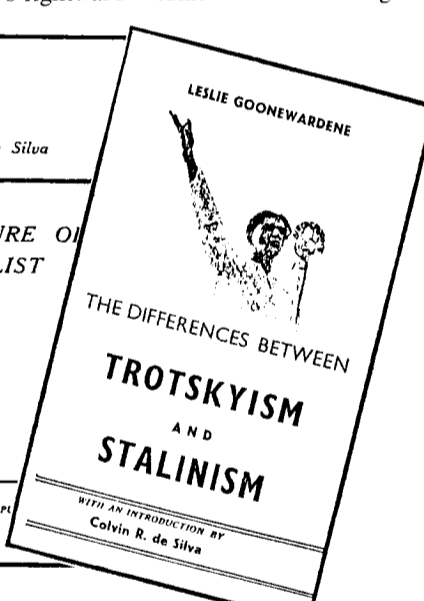
International, inspired by the revisionist politics of Michel Pablo, explains why at first the LSSP sympathised politically with the international opposition to Pabloism. Yet when the International Committee was set up in 1953, the LSSP refused to join. It was able to cite the principle of organisational discipline against the IC sections, whose premature split prevented them from winning the LSSP away from Pablo, or from fighting effectively against the party's rightward

drift which proceeded apace over the following decade. On reunification in 1950, the LSSP had adopted a *Programme of Action* which committed the party to overthrow the capitalist state and establish a soviet government through 'mass revolutionary action'. This was tested in 1953 when the LSSP, in co-operation with the Gunawardena-CP United Front and the Tamil-based Federal Party, organised a one-day general strike against the UNP government's policies, in particular a steep rise in the price of rice.

Far exceeding the expectations of the LSSP leaders, the 'great hartal' (as it became known) took on an insurrectionary character, with workers tearing up railway lines, blocking roads with boulders and clashing violently with armed police and troops. But the Samasamajist leaders made no effort to bring down the hated UNP government and open up the struggle for power; instead they directed their supporters to return to work the next day. Significantly,

no criticism of their actions was made either by the Pabloite International Secretariat or by the IC opposition, both of which were anxious to court the leaders of this 'mass Trotskyist party'.

In reality, throughout its history the LSSP never evolved beyond a centrist formation. After reunification, the genuine revolutionists, among whom Edmund Samarakkody was for many years the principal figure, were always in a minority. The rest of the party was divided between an openly opportunist wing around N.M. Perera, and a nominal Marxist centre group led by Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin de Silva, whose often correct exposition of Trotskyist principles in the pamphlets they wrote increasingly served, not to arm the party with a revolutionary line, but to provide a cover of 'orthodoxy' for its opportunism. For although the



1950 programme had stated firmly that the party's 'fundamental aims cannot be realised through bourgeois parliaments', in practice the LSSP's politics became thoroughly parliamentarianist, viewing the battle for working class representation within the bourgeois state not as one tactic in the mobilisation of the masses, but as the road to 'power'. The leading proponent of this view was Perera, whose election as mayor of Colombo in 1954 was greeted with the slogan 'Today Mayor - Tomorrow Premier'.

The growth of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (formed in 1951 as a break-away from the UNP), which gathered substantial electoral support in the rural areas, came as a great upset to the LSSP leaders' parliamentary ambitions. Vacillating over the class character of the SLFP, which was defined alternately as capitalist, petty-bourgeois or even centrist, the LSSP sought a series of increasingly unprincipled political compromises with this liberal bourgeois party.

Before the 1952 general election, at the LSSP's initiative the two parties held discussions aimed at avoiding clashes between their candidates. And the 1956 election was fought on the basis of a formal 'no contest' pact, which handed over a majority of seats to the SLFP, enabling it to defeat the UNP and form a coalition government which included Gunawardena's party. The LSSP then offered 'responsive co-operation' to this new bourgeois administration. If a crucial episode in the party's degeneration is to be identified, it was here, eight years before the 1964 debacle.

Adaptation to the national bourgeoisie was accompanied by a reversal of the LSSP's previously intransigent opposition to Stalinism. In 1957, when the LSSP was invited to send an official delegation to China, the American and British supporters of the IC urged them to raise the question of the Chinese Trotskyists, hundreds of whom had been imprisoned by the Stalinist regime. But the LSSP refused, and the workers' movement was treated to the spectacle of Samasamajist leaders making flattering speeches to their Stalinist hosts at Peking banquets, while Trotskyists continued to rot in Mao's prisons.

The decade following reunification was not without its positive features. There was a great expansion of the party's youth leagues, which drew tens of thousands of young people into political activity, providing an important link between the masses and the LSSP itself, which had a membership of less than 1,000. It is also necessary to give credit to the party's refusal to bow before a wave of chauvinism among Ceylon's Sinhalese-Buddhist majority, directed against the Tamil-Hindu minority. Despite violent attacks on its public meetings by racist thugs, the LSSP resisted demands for Sinhala to be made the sole official language, insisting on equal status for Tamil. The respect which this principled stand won for the party among Tamil plantation workers, the main section of the agricultural proletariat, bore fruit in the expansion of the LSSP-led Lanka Estate Workers' Union which reached a membership of 60,000 in 1959.

Nevertheless, by the end of the decade the LSSP leadership had largely renounced the revolutionary elements in its political heritage. The party's transformation into an openly reformist organisation was reflected in the growing influence wielded by Perera, who in earlier years had left the responsibilities of political leadership to theoretically better qualified men like Goonewardene and de Silva. Intent on achieving national office, Perera went out of his way to assure the class enemy that the LSSP was committed to the preservation of bourgeois democracy. By 1960, it was possible for one author to write that 'among many government servants, public professional bodies and businessmen there seems to be a fairly solid conviction that there would be little difference between an LSSP government led by the "Trotskyist" Dr N.M. Perera and the British Labour Party'. The LSSP was now well down the road towards the great betrayal of 1964.

To be continued

From revolution to respectability

THE WRITER C.L.R. James, who died in Brixton, London, on May 31, has been the subject of a flood of tributes in the press and on television. It is a measure of the distance James had travelled since breaking with Trotskyism that he could find such admiration from the bourgeois media. But whilst the many obituaries paid homage to James as historian, cricket writer and cultural figure, they drew a discreet veil over the period of his life when he fought as a revolutionary.

Born in Trinidad in 1901, James came to Britain in 1932, already a gifted intellectual. In 1935, he joined the Independent Labour Party, working with the Trotskyists active in the Marxist Group. He played an important role in fighting for a policy of 'workers' sanctions' against Mussolini's Italy during its war on Ethiopia, combating the position of James Maxton who appealed for action by the League of Nations, and who subsequently became a wretched neutralist. C.L.R. James formed the 'International African Friends of Ethiopia' and issued, with George

C.L.R. James: An obituary By Richard Price

Padmore, a journal called *International African Opinion*.

James was also prominent in exposing the Moscow trials, courageously intervening in Stalinist public meetings called to applaud the frame-up and execution of Lenin's comrades. His political judgments, however, became increasingly erratic under the influence of the American sectarian, B.J. Field. He combined ultra-left positions with a determination to remain in the ILP, although it was clearly in decline and the Labour Party's fortunes were rapidly reviving.

In 1937, James wrote *World Revolution*, a history of the Comintern from 1919-36. Despite its vigorous style and many good qualities, Trotsky was sharply critical of what he called its 'Anglo-Saxon empiricism and formalism' - its tendency to view Stalinism as a fully-pledged counter-revolutionary current from

1924 onwards, rather than examine the processes at work in its evolution. He took issue with James's position that Stalin consciously engineered Hitler's taking power - an argument repeated by James at the founding conference of the Fourth International in September 1938 (where he was elected to the International Executive Committee).

The year 1938 also saw the publication of James's classic account of Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo slave revolt, *The Black Jacobins*, and his *History of Negro Revolt*. In November, he was sent by the International Secretariat to the United States to assist the Socialist Workers Party in its intervention among black workers. A number of his articles from this period have been reproduced, under the pseudonym J.R. Johnson, in the book *Fighting Racism in World War II*.

That Trotsky had high hopes of this collaboration is

evident from his writings, and from the discussions he had with James in Mexico in April 1939. However, James's growing opposition to the defence of the USSR, and his individualistic traits, were taking him further and further away from the principled positions of the Fourth International. In 1940, he split from the SWP, along with James Burnham and Max Shachtman.

Under the influence of idealist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya, James developed state capitalist positions. Their 'Johnson-Forrest tendency' inside Shachtman's Workers' Party rejoined the SWP in 1948 following the on-off unity negotiations between the SWP and the WP during 1946-47. James's sole contribution of note in this latter period of SWP membership was his work towards the resolution 'Negro Liberation through Revolutionary Socialism', and his group finally split with the SWP during the Korean war, once again over the question of the class nature of the USSR and its defence against imperialism.

In the 1950s and 1960s, C.L.R. James, although



C.L.R. James in the 1930s

maintaining a verbal commitment to 'socialism', became an apologist for emerging nationalist regimes in Africa and the West Indies. His emphasis on 'cultural', rather than class, struggle made him a guru in recent years to

many black petty-bourgeois intellectuals around such journals as *Race Today*. It is this part of his life which finally gained him acceptance in the establishment he once fought as a Trotskyist to overthrow.

Memoirs of a Jewish Revolutionary By Hersh Mendel Pluto Press

WHEN JEWISH workers from eastern Europe participated in a demonstration in Paris on May Day 1917 to celebrate the February Russian revolution, they got the worst of the police attacks. 'They fought in the front ranks, for they expected more from the revolution than other workers,' writes Hersh Mendel.

The poignant history of the Jewish workers' movement in Poland, which disappeared under the rubble of the Warsaw ghetto and in the hell of Treblinka, Sobibor and Belzec, is the thread running through Hersh Mendel's memoirs, which trace his political odyssey from militant trade unionist to Bundist, anarchist, Bolshevik, Trotskyist and finally 'proletarian Zionist'.

Struggles of the Jewish working class

Although not a work of theory, and written in the final phase of his life, this first English translation of Mendel's book is a vivid portrait of the hardships undergone and the courage shown by the Jewish workers of Warsaw - the account of a participant who endured the persecution of both tsarism and Polish nationalism, broke with Stalinism and founded the Polish Trotskyist movement.

Writing in a straightforward and unpretentious style, Mendel is at his best describing the upward curve of his political development. Cut off from Bolshevism, Mendel was a young convert to the Bund and, although firmly adhering to its programme of 'national-cultural

autonomy' for the Jewish people, was a convinced internationalist. He recalls how on May Day 1912, the young Jewish workers of the Bund held a general strike and defied the police authorities by marching for the first time in years - in an act of solidarity with the Russian workers of Petrograd. Unemployment, hunger, jail sentences and the attentions of provocateurs regularly punctuated Mendel's life.

Bitterly repelled by the Second International's collapse into chauvinism in 1914, Mendel turned to anarchism - an attachment only broken by his taking part in the Russian civil war with the Red Army.

Mendel's account of his role as a leading member of



Hersh Mendel

the Communist Party of Poland is anecdotal rather than analytical. Most disappointing, however, are the chapters dealing with the formation of the Polish Trotskyist movement. They contain little not already known about this period, and are strongly coloured by his subsequent evolution, peppered with factual errors and contain a series of highly confusing chronological mistakes, not all of which are explained by the editor.

By the mid-1930s, Mendel was already losing his political balance. He opposed the 'French turn' - entry into the mass reformist parties - advocating instead the entry of the Trotskyists into the collapsing centrist 'London Bureau'. It was Mendel who put forward Isaac Deutscher's position of opposition to the creation of the Fourth International at its founding Congress in 1938.

Included as an appendix is a hostile review by J.S. Hertz, published in Israel, challenging the authenticity of a number of episodes in the book. Strangely, the translator's introduction does not comment upon Hertz's allegations.

Nevertheless, despite its serious weaknesses, Hersh Mendel's monument to the Jewish workers of Poland deserves to be widely read.

'Chinese Pabloism'

To the Editor
'Workers News'

I read with great interest your review of *The Heritage We Defend* - 'The revisionism North defends' - and especially your tangential reference to a letter I wrote to *Labour Review* (September-October 1957) on an article Mike (Banda) had written on the Maoist 'Three Speeches'. The impression you have created is that my letter was an 'official' reaction from the leadership to Mike's 'Chinese Pabloism' (a term I coined at the time). This was very far from the case. Mike's views were published as a major article in *Labour Review* and would have been perceived as the official view of the leadership.

No attempt was made either in the Editorial of the issue where it appeared (July-August 1957), or in any subsequent issue to dissociate the Editorial Board or the 'leadership' from the views expressed in

this important article discussing developments in China at a most critical time when a clear, principled line had to be drawn on Mao's 'Hundred Flowers' campaign. The 'orthodox Trotskyist' leadership remained absolutely silent on the issue, and apparently never saw the irony of Hunter's 'Under a Stolen Flag' denouncing Russian 'Pabloite revisionism' in Paris and yet happily 'coexisting' with a Chinese variety of the same 'Pabloite revisionism' in its own backyard!

The letter I wrote received no support whatsoever from the Editorial Board or the leadership of the tendency at the time - still less for a massive critique of both the SWP's then Chinese 'state capitalist' positions published by Miller in their theoretical journal, and Mike's own 'Maoist' position. So much for the principled struggle against 'Pabloism'!

ELLIS HILLMAN

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Unite all struggles to defeat Tories!

THE PAST months have seen the biggest upsurge in the class struggle in Britain since the summer of 1984. With Tory economic policy in disarray – hit by rising inflation, punitive interest rates and a massive trade deficit – the basis exists for the working class to go onto the offensive.

Already, unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers, mostly in the public sector, have clashed with employers in the current round of pay claims. Bus, Underground, British Rail and BBC workers; ambulance drivers and firefighters; college and polytechnic lecturers; water, power and engineering workers; manual workers in the NHS; construction and oil workers; and local government employees have all come up against the government's unofficial 7 per cent ceiling for wage rises. At the same time, dock workers are faced with a struggle for survival in the wake of the Tory plans to abolish the National Dock Labour Scheme.

Though the Tories sanctioned a settlement of 9.2 per cent for the power workers,

By the
Editorial Board

thus avoiding a costly national dispute in the electricity industry and showing that they are prepared to make tactical concessions to reduce the possibility of a united struggle by workers, they have no intention of allowing a general rise in living standards. To do so would undermine the whole strategy of the three Thatcher governments since 1979 – to drive up the rate of exploitation of labour to offset the decline of British capitalism and to meet the requirements of intensified competition in the world market. Workers must therefore prepare, not just for a battle against their respective employers, but for a political campaign to defeat the Tories.

But before it can settle accounts with the Tories, the working class faces a fight with its own leaders. In every arena of struggle, the determination of workers to defend jobs and living standards is frustrated by the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions. Almost two months after the Tories announced the abolition of the National Dock Labour Scheme, Ron Todd and the leadership of the T&GWU had still not called the dockers out on strike. This was in spite of a 2-1 vote in favour of action, in a record 90.8 per cent ballot turn-out. Cowering before the High Court, Todd put the assets of the union, that is, the interests of its paid officials, above the interests of the members. At the end of May, he indicated to the court that he had no intention of fighting to preserve the national scheme, saying: 'I do accept that some understanding can be reached that falls short of the provisions of the National Dock Labour Scheme but which can provide the basis for a national agreement.'

At the beginning of June, after five successful unofficial one-day strikes by London Tube drivers demanding wage increases for working one-person-operated trains, leaders of ASLEF and the NUR ordered ballots on official action, with an instruction to their members to suspend the series of stop-

pages pending the result. Far from signifying a willingness to make the action more effective, it marks the start of a serious attempt by the union leaders to bring the dispute under their control – and under the jurisdiction of the anti-union laws and the High Court.

Labour Party and trade union leaders alike have couched their opposition to the anti-union legislation in terms which clearly show that their first consideration is not the ability of the working class to defend itself. Scarcely bothering to conceal his hostility to unofficial strikes, Labour's employment spokesman, Michael Meacher, complained that lawful disputes had been rendered 'almost impossible' by the legislation. Rail union leader Jimmy Knapp was even more explicit when he attacked the Tories for reducing his ability to control the Tube drivers: 'It is the government's own laws and the attitude employers are taking to those laws which produces what we are now seeing.'

The Labour and trade union bureaucracy has good reason to be worried. Unofficial industrial action on the Tubes expresses the accumulated hatred felt by workers



Demonstration in London on June 4 following the massacre of unarmed demonstrators in Beijing

VICTORY TO THE CHINESE WORKERS AND STUDENTS!

See
page
2

for a leadership which has capitulated without a fight to every clause in four rounds of anti-union legislation. It represents an unconscious striving towards building a new leadership, whatever may be said about it being merely a tactic to avoid prosecution. A similar anger is building up as a result of the contradiction between the overwhelming desire to fight the employers, which has been the content of ballot after ballot throughout widely differing industries, and the reticence of the trade union leaders to act decisively.

However, unless the political vacuum is filled by a conscious revolutionary leadership, such progressive instincts will be crushed, either by the trade union leaders themselves or by the Tories.

On June 1, the Employment Secretary, Norman Fowler, confirmed that he will introduce new legislation in the autumn aimed at impeding unofficial strikes by deducting fines direct from wage packets.

The present wave of disputes must, therefore, become the springboard for building a Trotskyist leadership inside the trade unions which will give voice to the independent interests of the working class, fight every attempt to place limits on the struggle, and clearly outline the political tasks necessary to guarantee a secure future. Faced with the cowardice of the Labour and trade union leaders, the opportunist manoeuvres of the 'lefts', the crude betrayals of the Stalinists and the sophisticated excuses of revisionism,

such a leadership must base itself firmly on a scientific understanding of the revolutionary role of the working class.

Building on the spontaneous attempts to link up different disputes which are constantly frustrated by the present leaders, it must fight for the unity of the working class in action to drive the Tories out and place Labour in office. The demands must be raised that a future Labour government immediately repeals all anti-union legislation, re-establishes trade union immunity under the law, introduces index-linked pay rises and a statutory minimum wage at a level agreed by the trade unions, and extends the present National Dock Labour Scheme to cover every port.

INSIDE

Labour's
policy
review
page 2

Marxism
and the
French
Revolution
pages 4-5

Sri Lanka:
The LSSP's
road to
coalition
page 6

Khomeini's legacy of chaos

THE DEATH on June 4, at the age of 86, of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, spiritual leader of Iran, will lead to an intensification of the factional struggle within the leadership of the Islamic regime.

So long as Khomeini was alive, the intense rivalry between the various clerical groups was held in check. The Iranian economy, exhausted by the eight-year war with Iraq, remains in chaos. The substantial state sector is operating well below capacity, with 80 per cent of oil production still out of action. Every attempt to restore the economy by the Council of Experts appointed by Khomeini has foundered on the rift between so-called 'radicals' and 'pragmatists' among the clergy. Unable to agree either on

the degree of state intervention in the economy, or on relations with the West, it now faces the problem of the spiritual successor.

A few hours after Khomeini's death, President Ali Khamenei was appointed caretaker head of state. In August, however, presidential elections are due and Khamenei is constitutionally forbidden to stand. The speaker of the Iranian parliament and 'pragmatist' Rafsanjani is so far the only candidate. The presidency will carry increased powers, including the right to dismiss the prime minister (currently the 'radical' Mousavi). In a further twist to the clerical in-fighting, one of Khomeini's last acts was to dismiss Ayatollah Montazeri as his designated spiritual successor. Montazeri was subsequently beaten up and

his son and daughter temporarily imprisoned. Khomeini's son Ahmad, identified with the 'radicals', is likely to challenge Rafsanjani's authority.

Khomeini's political legacy is a regime which is rapidly breaking up. All the goals set by Khomeini for the Islamic republic have come to grief – a stable clerical leadership; the extension of Shi'ite fundamentalism throughout the Middle East; victory in the war with Iraq and the downfall of Saddam Hussein; and the overthrow of Najibullah's regime in Afghanistan.

Khomeini and the clergy were able to take the leadership of the immense popular movement which overthrew the Shah in February 1979 in the absence of a revolutionary workers' party. Organisations such as the Tudeh (Communist) Party

and the People's Mujahedin, which played a prominent role in the insurrection, failed to fight for the independence of the working class, and backed the creation of an Islamic Republic.

Having wooed the left with his anti-imperialist rhetoric, Khomeini appointed a conservative bourgeois prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan. With the assistance of Bazargan, workers' councils in the factories were suppressed. Next, Khomeini employed the salami tactic to slice off the Iranian left. Having leant on the Tudeh party to crush the Fedayeen and the Mujahedin, Khomeini finally turned on his erstwhile supporters in 1983.

Khomeini remained a life-long adversary of the organised working class and a bitter opponent of Kurdish independence.