

# WORKERS' ACTION

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ABORTION ON DEMAND performed for no other reason than that a woman has chosen not to have that baby, is both central to every other right women are fighting for, and inseparable from the winning of those rights.

Abortion is the only fail-safe that women have in controlling childbearing. As long as free access to it is denied, every other activity of a woman is in jeopardy and will always be classed as secondary to her potential motherhood.

'If men got pregnant, abortion would be as easy to get as a pint of beer'. Which is another way of saying that if women were on an equal footing with men in society, abortion on demand would be taken for granted.

We have to break through this vicious circle of cause and effect. It involves a bigger task than winning the present battle to stop the Corrie Bill, important though that battle is. And it will not be confined to parliamentary votes.

What must we do after this Sunday's demonstration?

■ Use the demonstration to organise more support: in unions, workplaces, schools and colleges, estates and local Labour Parties. All the experience of organising for the TUC demonstration has shown enormous feeling and widespread concern, but also a lack of knowledge about the effects of the Corrie Bill. We must continue to give out leaflets, organise meetings and local demonstrations, get petitions signed and labour movement bodies lined up to take action.

■ Go on working on the MPs. Join the Labour Party and use re-selection as our three-line whip. An MP's delicate conscience isn't worth tuppence compared with one woman's life, let alone the diminishing of every woman and the injury and death that will be suffered by hundreds of thousands if backstreet abortions become common again.

Why not hound your Tory MP too? Many of them vote according to how much pressure they're under: don't leave that field wide open for SPUJ and Life.

■ Keep on fighting the cuts that are hitting hard at women's health and abortion facilities and closing down nurseries and child-care.

■ If the Corrie Bill does get to be law, women will not meekly return to pre-1967. Since then many safe methods have been pioneered which don't need very expensive equipment. Attempts will be made to defy the law and make it unworkable, as women take matters into their own hands.

We must prepare to give mass support to people providing safe abortions in defiance of the law, while continuing to fight for free abortion on demand on the NHS.

■ Build a mass movement of women that is a force to be reckoned with, able to mobilise the industrial power of working women for women's rights at work, in society and in the home, and to commit the labour movement to fight for those rights as a major priority.

■ The battle of women to control their own bodies is a fierce one, and is fought out on a world scale. Gains have been won, but few have measured up to our needs, and everywhere those gains can be reversed — until we have won a socialist society which truly respects women instead of using them as cheap labour, slaves of its wage slaves, and underpinning of an authoritarian family structure which is deeply oppressive.

## Demo. Oct. 28 11.30 Hyde Pk.

# FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND

## Stop the Corrie Bill

### BL: demanding votes with menaces

MICHAEL EDWARDES is demanding that Leyland workers give an unqualified commitment to his plan for British Leyland in the present ballot. The threat underlying the ballot is that if the workforce votes "no", or even if the "yes" majority is insufficient, the BL board will refuse to apply for further funds, and the company will go into liquidation.

There has been an enormous campaign in the local and national press and television for a "yes" vote. Interviews with Edwardes, "personal messages" to the workforce from the BL, Lucas and Dunlop bosses, half-page ads from the company and from the Confed — all this and more is being used to put across the basic message "Accept the plan or the whole of BL goes West".

Even the question on the ballot form is crooked: "Do you support BL's recovery plan?" The only official union opposition has come from AUEW TASS, which has produced leaflets arguing for a "no" vote, albeit on the dubious basis

that a "no" vote will ensure the survival of BL. The T&G has produced a reply to Edwardes that criticises the proposals, but avoids calling for a "no" vote, or proposing any fight. So it seems quite likely that Edwardes and the Confed traitors will achieve a "yes" majority.

BL workers know they are being blackmailed but see no alternative to the plan. But the fight won't finish there. Resistance in any one of the threatened plants would render a "yes" vote irrelevant, and it has become clear that the Edwardes plan involves more than the loss of at least 25,000 jobs and the closure of thirteen plants. It will also mean a generalised attack on shop floor organisation in every BL plant. The Confed Emergency Committee has published copies of a letter from Pat Lowry of BL to Alex Ferry of the Confed. The letter states that "the board is looking for specific and unqualified commitment on the following points:

- \* that in an intensely competitive industry, BL must

continue to be operated on proper commercial lines, in accordance with the previous government's guidelines;

\* that capacity and manning levels must be adjusted to realistic forecasts of BL sales at home and abroad;

\* that resources must be concentrated in such a way as to achieve economies and minimise costs. This means, for example, that car and van assembly must be concentrated on Longbridge, Cowley, Common Lane, Solihull and Brown's Lane, and that the activities of Leyland Vehicles Ltd must be largely centred on Albion, Bathgate and Leyland;

\* that the necessary changes and facilities and processes must be accepted to enable BL to deliver its revised and accelerated new model programme;

\* that there must be substantial improvement in productivity; this would involve the acceptance of standards derived from the use of proper industrial engineering techniques;

\* that as regards BL cars, the Executive Committee of the CSEU undertakes to

deal with such matters as the inter-union differences that have been the underlying cause of so many damaging disputes over the past two years. If these continue, management cannot deliver the profits necessary for survival. The board will certainly not ask the taxpayer to continue to subsidise disruption."

There is no doubt that the company would use a "yes" vote in the ballot to justify implementing these kinds of attacks. But it is inconceivable that BL workers would be willing to accept that passively, whether they had voted yes or no in the ballot.

We must campaign for a "no" vote — and for preparation for direct action against the Edwardes plan, including blacking of work transfers and occupation of threatened factories. Reorganisation of the car industry with a shorter working week, under workers' control, must be our answer to the industry's world crisis, not mass sackings and job cuts.

### FUND DRIVE

Received this week: East London £10, South London £50, Manchester £25, Leicester £5, Sheffield £2. Total this week: £92. Total so far this month: £128.75. This month's £200 target closes with the next issue of Workers' Action, dated Nov. 10. Send donations to Fund, PO Box 135, London N1.

### SOCIALIST ORGANISER LONDON MEETINGS "STOP THE CUTS NOW, SUPPORT LAMBETH'S FIGHTBACK"

HARINGEY: speaker Bill Bowring [Lambeth Cllr], Thursday 1st November, 8pm, Hornsey Labour rooms, 28a Middle Lane N4.

TOWER HAMLETS: speakers Neil Turner [Lambeth Cllr], Jim Farrell [CPSA DE Section Executive, in personal capacity] Monday 5th November, 8pm, Bancroft Rd Library, off Mile End Road. Nearest tube Stepney Green.

ISLINGTON: speakers Len Hammond [Lambeth Cllr], Jenny Morris [Islington Cllr] Tuesday 6th November, 7.30pm, Islington North Library, Manor Gardens N7, by Royal Northern Hospital, off Holloway Rd.

Supported by Islington Campaign against the Cuts. BRENT: speaker Ted Knight [leader Lambeth council]

Tuesday 13th November, 8pm, Anson Hall, Anson Rd/Chichele Rd, NW2

CAMDEN: speakers Matthew Warburton [Lambeth Cllr], James Ryan [Islington Campaign against the Cuts]

Thursday 15th November, 7.30pm, 'Inquire', 85 Chalton Street, NW1



## PRAGUE TRIALS

# WHERE RESPECTING THE CONSTITUTION IS A CRIME

THE BIGGEST political trial for a decade has just started in Prague. Those on trial have been charged with "subversion on a large scale", an offence that carries a punishment of between 3 and 10 years in jail. The authorities allege that members of two civil rights committees have been collaborating with Amnesty International and the CIA — a typical example of the Stalinist technique of amalgamating harmless truth with bizarre and criminal falsehood.

On trial are ten members of the Committee in Defence of Unjustly Prosecuted Persons (VONS). Among them is Peter Uhl, a Trotskyist who played a leading role in the setting up of the Revolutionary Youth Movement that opposed the Soviet invasion in 1968. Uhl was jailed for 4 years in 1969 and had not long before his recent arrest been released from another term of imprisonment.

Like the others arrested, Uhl is an important organiser within the Charter 77 movement, which sought to exploit the pressure put on

the Soviet Union and its satellite governments by the Helsinki agreements of 1977 to campaign against abuses of democratic rights guaranteed by law.

The best known of the accused is playwright Vaclav Havel. Prominent in the short blossoming of the Prague Spring, he was one of the signatories of the 10-point Manifesto of August 1969, the last public manifesto against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Clearly, the Czech government is out to smash VONS and with it the Charter 77 movement. According to many, however, the importance of these trial goes beyond the boundaries of Czechoslovakia.

In an interview published in "Labour Focus on Eastern Europe", Zdenek Mlyane, a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's Presidium and a secretary of its Central Committee under Dubcek, stated that "the Prague trial is part of a coordinated offensive against the opposition throughout the Soviet bloc.

"It appears that a decision was made last April at a meeting in Prague of all the Eastern European ministers of the Interior and the Heads of Security Departments and of the CP Secretaries, that the opposition movement would be crushed by 1980. They seem to be attempting to ensure that

Peter Uhl — 5 years, Vaclav Havel — 4½ years plus 14 months of a previously imposed suspended sentence, Vaclav Benda — 4 years (he is considering appealing), Jiri Dienstbier — 3 years, Ms Otta Bednarova — 3 years, and Ms Dana Nemcova — 2 years suspended for 5 years. The Prosecutor has reserved the right to appeal against the 'leniency' of all these sentences bar the last mentioned.

what happened before the Belgrade Conference of 1977 should not be repeated before the Madrid follow-up conference next year.

"Soviet leading circles also seem to be concerned that the political opposition in Eastern Europe should be silenced before Brezhnev disappears. There is a continuous chain of events from the Scharansky-Orlov trials right through the steps taken against the writers and intellectual circles in East Germany, down to the present attempts to stage a

Prague trial."

In part, the present move seems designed to isolate the much stronger movement in Poland. There the level of the workers' struggles in the past and the activities of "dissident" groups like KOR (very much a counterpart of VONS) threaten to make suppression difficult.

The arrest of the VONS activists took place on May 29th, on the eve of the Pope's visit to Poland — attention to that event, the authorities hoped, would obscure any reporting of the arrests. They followed on the arrest of two other VONS activists, Albert Cerny and Jaroslav Sabata.

VONS was created in April 1978 as a civil liberties committee similar to the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) in Poland. The committee only has 33 members in Czechoslovakia, but

it has been very active in publicising cases of arbitrary police measures and other abuses of the law. Such simple activities have drawn the fury of the barbaric Stalinist authorities.

As an open letter demanding the release of the VONS members last summer put it, "We do not know of any human state in which the publicly declared demand to observe the Constitution is a priori held to reveal the intent to wreck the system..."

Defence of the arrested activists has been made difficult by the state, with lawyers being intimidated. Dr Josef Danisz, for instance, was expelled from the legal profession earlier this year for his defence of Charter 77 signatories. In a recent circular from the Prague Municipal Association of Lawyers, Dr Danisz is accused of "criminal activity".

The same circular outlines three categories of lawyers who should be denied all positions within the Lawyers' Union: those involved in criminal activity (Danisz is mentioned),

those who wilfully obstruct police and judicial processes (a pretty wide category according to present definitions), and finally those who are under suspicion of being in the first two categories...

So far, the authorities' attempts to crush this opposition has failed. When Charter 77 spokespersons Vaclav Benda and Jiri Dienstbier were arrested, Jiri Hajek and Ladislav Heydanek stepped into the breach. Far from folding up, VONS at that time recruited another 12 members. And the journals 'Quadrangle' and 'Charter Information Bulletin', published by Jiri Dienstbier and Peter Uhl respectively, have continued publication.

The ability of these activists to avoid the heaviest of sentences, and the morale and militancy of their fellow campaigners depends largely on the scope of the campaign that can be developed in solidarity with them, demanding their immediate release.

Write to: Charter 77 Defence Committee, c/o Ruth Tosek, 14 Elgin Court, 16 Montpelier Road, London W5.

by RACHEL LEVER

WHEN Moshe Dayan, late of Israel's Labour Party, joined Menachem Begin's far right Likud coalition government as Foreign Minister, it wasn't with the idea of being passed over and relegated from the Israel/Egypt horse-trading. Finding himself ousted from the current negotiations over West Bank 'autonomy' by Interior Minister Yosef Burg (of the ultra-right National Religious Party), he has taken up an increasingly critical stance. After calling for the West Bank to be ruled by a civilian administration instead of being under military rule, he resigned from the government on October 21st.

Dayan has tended to represent the wishes of US imperialism in Israeli politics. The major dispute is over the colonisation of West Bank land by Israeli settlers.

Despite a supposed Camp David understanding that the Israeli government would put a stop to the plunder of land on the West Bank, Begin's government has never seriously deviated from its leader's statements and actions in the days after his election: his first call then was to one of the colonies of religious fanatics (the Gush Emmunim), where he pledged his support, stating that this sacred Jewish land would never be given up.

Begin's agriculture minister, Zionist strong-man ex-general Ariel Sharon, has come out as another champion of the Gush, evidently seeing them as a sufficiently broad power-base for a future leadership bid in Herut, the party which dominates the governing coalition.

According to *The Economist*, "In return for the settlers' support, Mr. Sharon has been syphoning off money from the agricultural budget to Gush Emmunim outposts", and a few days ago

# Draining the West Bank

he declared at a settlement which has been blocked by the Supreme Court that its future would be determined by 'action on the ground'.

Instead of sacking him for defying stated government policy and flouting the Supreme Court, the cabinet proceeded to authorise seven new settlements on 350 acres of land to be expropriated. Sharon still wants a total of 40,000 acres to be confiscated from Palestinians and handed over to what he calls the 'real Israeli pioneers'.

Behind the dramas — and the incidents like the one last week when gangs of Gush would-be settlers were chased off various sites by the army — lies the fact that the dominant forces in Israeli society have far-reaching plans for the West Bank, and that these plans are already going ahead.

The Jewish National Fund and Jewish Agency — the two organisations centrally responsible for the creation of the State of Israel, and today in entrenched and controlling positions in the state — have detailed plans for running new road systems and swathes of settlements through the West Bank in such a way as to break up any coherent, continuous Palestinian entity.

The settlements of Bible-thumping fanatics will be grouped around planned new cities (such as the near-fortress overlooking Hebron that already serves as a commuter-town for Tel Aviv) and supplemented by army camps and firing ranges (designed to clear and hold very large tracts of land until it can be settled and farmed).

There is one vital West Bank resource that Israel is already plundering on a massive scale: water. Out of 620 million cubic meters of annually usable water on the West Bank, Israel is pumping away some 500 mn. cubic meters for use inside the pre-1967 borders of Israel. As Rami Khouri commented in the journal *Middle East* 'The West Bank has become little more than a water reservoir for Israel. The political implications are obvious: only under the most compelling pressure will Israel evacuate the region that now provides it with 30% of its water'.

He continued: 'Israel has prevented any new Arab wells from being drilled on the western side of the occupied West Bank. This has already caused problems for Nablus, which was forbidden to drill a drinking water well to the west of the city. Israel's Water Commissioner has stated clearly that West Bank towns will have to depend on water from the Israeli networks if the only alternative is tapping the west-

ern aquifer. [Source of the 500 mn. cu. m. Israel is taking.]

'Since the Israeli occupation in 1967, no Arab farmer has been allowed to dig a new well for irrigation whereas some 20 deep Israeli wells have been sunk to provide water for the Jewish agricultural colonies in the West Bank.

'Meters have been put on existing Arab wells to record how much water is used and strict limits have been imposed by the Water Unit of the Israeli Military Administration with severe penalties if they are exceeded.

'No existing Arab wells have been allowed to increase their capacity, and in some areas the Israelis have even forbidden the Arabs to obtain spare parts for their pumps. Four wells owned by Arabs who have, for various reasons, lived outside the West Bank since the occupation have been taken over and exploited by the Israeli authorities.

'Arab municipalities have found it difficult to dig new wells to supply homes and offices. And in Ramallah permission for new Arab wells has been withheld unless they also supply Israeli colonies. In the past 12 years only Ramallah has succumbed to Israeli pressure to link its municipal water system to the Israeli network.

'As Jewish settlement has increased in the West Bank, highly sophisticated water pumping, transport and storage systems have been set up for the exclusive use of the Jewish colonies and their water-intensive agriculture. Since 1967 Israel has drilled 24 deep wells in the West Bank

for the Jewish colonies, including 17 in the Jordan valley.

According to a confidential report drawn up by a major western embassy in Israel, the Jewish colonies in the West Bank are using 15-17 mn. cu. m. of water a year, and this will increase to 53 mn. cu. m. a year when the agricultural colonies attain their goal of irrigating 53,000 dunums of land.

The report states: 'These settlements are in direct competition with Arab farmers for the West Bank's limited water resources. ... Arab farmers can only stand by and watch the Israeli National Water Authority drilling new wells for these settlements.'

Khauri continues: 'Of the 100 mn. cu. m. remaining for the West Bank's own needs, therefore, 15 per cent are being siphoned off by the 8,000 Jewish settlers who account for one per cent of the area's population.'

'Israeli drilling of wells 500 metres deep in the West Bank has adversely affected the shallower Arab wells and springs (about 100 metres deep) that are vital for the survival of Palestinian villagers.'

'In some cases Israeli wells using powerful pumps have completely dried up springs and wells vital to Palestinian farmers, like the Awja spring and the wells of the villages of Bardala, Ain al-Baida and Karada in the northern West Bank. ... The quantity of water pumped from pre-1967 Arab wells has increased noticeably in the past few

years. The Arabs have little power to do anything but watch their 300 springs and 350 pre-1967 wells slowly turn salty, and then dry up completely.

'The five-sixths of the West Bank's water being used to serve Israel's needs is expected to rise in proportion to Israel's water deficit which is expected to be 265 mn. cu. m. this year, rising to 500 mn cubic metres by 1985.

Arab investment in irrigated agriculture is already at a standstill, causing the agriculture sector's contribution to the West Bank's gross national product to fall from 35% in 1968 to 28% in 1976 (according to a UN report).

The autonomy that the Begin government has proposed for the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians includes continued Israeli control of the area's water resources, which makes a mockery of the principle of self-determination and the prospect of continuing exploitation under the guise of autonomy remains unacceptable to the Palestinians.'

Begin is now in any case reinterpreting the version of 'autonomy' that is to be rammed down the Palestinians' throats by Israel and Egypt with US backing. Fitting in with the blueprints for a West Bank as fragmented and discontinuous as the South African Bantustans, he talks of autonomy 'applying to people, not territories': presumably a simple continuation of the limited community local government, under Israel's martial law, that exists already.

The US State Department is far from happy with these developments. It genuinely wants to see friendly relations between Egypt and Israel, its most stable allies in the Middle East.

But if Dayan has left the coalition with US backing to prepare for a challenge to Begin and Sharon, the question remains: will the American dog.

## A new scab's army

THE NATIONAL Federation of the Self-Employed has announced the setting up of a scab force to provide their members with supplies in the event of a strike.

South Wales businessman Brian Kelly is the National Secretary of the 50,000 strong NFSE. "The aim", he says, "is to keep essential supplies flowing to member companies. We see there will be a growing problem with strikes over the next few years."

What obviously put the wind up Mr. Kelly and his cohorts of the self-employed was the lorry drivers' strike early this year. To make sure that nothing like that happens again, he has drawn up a list of 700 lorries that could be used to break such a strike in the future.

And, of course, he expects protection: "If we have to cross picket lines, we will first contact the police. We expect to get the protection of the law."

It is doubtful that Kelly's 'scab's army' will make a big difference at its present level of organisation. So far, he has claimed that it will only aid companies that are members of the NFSE. The danger lies in the fact that the NFSE is trying to whip up anti-union hatred which could lead to the organisation of a considerable scab force in the event of a big strike — a scab force that would certainly not stop at supplying 'essentials' to the members of the NFSE.

### Irish meeting defies threats

A MEETING of support for Irish national liberation in Bristol last week, organised by the Revolutionary Communist Group and the Provisional Sinn Fein, had to be protected by a large steward force of sections of the Bristol left, after threats of violence and intimidation from British Movement and reactionary troops on leave in the area.

The threats were encouraged by an article in the Bristol Journal, a right-wing advertising paper produced by Bristol businessmen and distributed to every household in the city.

The article (published a week before the meeting) was entitled "Bristol Outcry at pro-IRA show", and made sad

lament about the "murders" of imperialist leaders like Airey Neave and Lord Louis Mountbatten. The article urged reactionary members of the public to smash up the meeting, and gave the time and venue. The Journal also phoned the owner of the venue to try and get the booking cancelled — the owners, however, refused.

The meeting consisted of a film ["The Patriot Game"] and speakers from the RCG and the Provisional Sinn Fein. About 60 members of the public attended, including many from the local Irish community, and there was a steward force of 50. It was well organised and people entering the meeting were searched as a result of a bomb warning which turned out to be a hoax.

TONY LEWIS

### Trots rule Brent?

AN EXAMPLE of the tactics which may be tried by right-wingers in the Labour Party following the left's success in Brighton was given in N.W. London last week. Henry Fried, chairman of Mapesbury Branch of Brent East CLP wrote a letter to the rabidly anti-Labour local papers full of smears and innuendos.

Fried, who at a previous ward meeting had expressed sympathy for the bosses' organisation Trumid, was quite happy to see his 'letter' turned into a front page article under the headline "Trots ruling Brent", after a conversation with the editor.

He claimed "Mapesbury Ward is dominated by Trotskyite supporters of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory — an extreme left wing grouping set up last year which includes people formerly in the Workers' Revolutionary Party. The constituency is much the same."

It also has supporters gaining highly influential positions within the party. The SCLV believes in a one-party state, nationalisation of everything in sight, compulsory nationalisation without compensation, complete disarmament. The Labour Party locally and nationally is no longer a party

representing British working people: it has been completely taken over...

"I'm not a neurotic screaming 'reds under the bed'. The extremists, the people who wish to destroy democratic society, control every facet of the Labour Party."

"I'm a social democrat, I'm against the extremism of Mrs. Thatcher and the extremism of the left."

Fried's allegations are so full of lies, half-truths and smears that not a single other member of the ward was prepared to come to his defence in sending the letter. The Ward agreed to send a letter in the name of the officers (bar Fried who has since resigned as chairman) and two Ward Councillors dissociating itself from Fried and pointing out that he refused to give evidence (both in the article and at a special meeting called by the Ward) for his claims that the SCLV believes in a one-party state or that the SCLV includes people formerly in the WRP.

This last point is important, not because the SCLV refuses to associate with ex-members of the WRP, but because Fried was trying to prove the SCLV guilty by association.

A letter will also be written to the local press in the name of the SCLV, and the local SCLV group should attempt to use the publicity to build an active group in the borough, rather than resting on the laurels of the CLP's affiliation to the campaign.

Fried's attempt at a witch-hunt is so full of holes that other right-wingers will not associate themselves with it, but it gives an indication of the level to which 'moderates' are prepared to descend to ensure that the left does not build on the gains made so far.

PETE FIRMIN

### Students fight for housing

A TOKEN force of 40 students from all over London camped out last week on Birbeck Green in the University of London to launch a campaign against homelessness in London. (Another 60 were turned away for lack of tents.)

There are a thousand homeless students in London. And that figure doesn't include people who sleep on floors or who commute long distances to college every day.

Sean Costello from the London Students' Organisation told WA that the campaign started by the camp-in will be linking up with tenants' associations, trades councils, squatting groups and other housing campaigns to fight the acute housing crisis in London — of which student homelessness is just a part.

The aim of the campaign is to force housing authorities to increase provision for students and increase public housing. Costello described some local authority attitudes to students: "Hillingdon have a three year residency qualification for other people — but it's ten years for students."

The campaign also proposes to take direct action by squatting — particularly in empty council properties, many of which are left vacant while councils try to sell them off.

The LSO opposes the sale of council houses and also opposes the proposed legislation (based on Brandon Rhys Williams' private member's bill) which would introduce a new 'shorthold' tenancy of between one and three years. After one year the landlord can evict tenants at 90 days notice.

The shorthold tenancy agreement is likely to be used particularly against students to give them almost no security of tenure. The bill also proposes to allow landlords to demand a deposit of one month's rent for a one year shortholding and two months for a long period — lump sums that will put accommodation out of many people's reach.

KATE GLEESON



## The Southall vendetta

SO FAR, 10 of the 112 Southall defendants have received jail sentences, and many others have had massive fines imposed. The first appeal, against a one month sentence, has been rejected, and defendants doubt whether they will win any of the appeals pending, against jail sentences and against the most blatantly fabricated cases.

McDermott, the magistrate sitting at present, has a long history of passing the stiffest sentences on black people, gays, and in drug cases.

He has refused the defence's request to see the

police's logs and operational orders for the day, unless the police agree. In addition, only regular police are turning up to court and the SPG, responsible for some of the worst of the violence at Southall, including the death of Blair Peach, have not put in an appearance.

A new move by the court is to take groups of defendants together where they are charged with similar offences and were arrested in the same area. In the first day of this system, 3 defendants were sent down for assault, with sentences of one to three months, and the next day,

Juliana Hendrick, of Peoples Unite, was sentenced to one month in jail for threatening behaviour.

There are another 230 cases to be heard. The magistrates ignore the testimony of any number of witnesses in favour of the police's vague and contradictory stories. Defence funds are very low.

Send money to the Defence Campaign, and get your CLP or TU branch to sponsor defendants, ~~and~~ to raise money for fines and to provide support.

Defence Campaign, c/o PO Box 151, London WC2



ABOUT 1000 pickets turned out at the Barbarians' match in Coventry to protest against the arrival of apartheid rugby.

The pickets had a strong presence, jostling incoming spectators, but there was nothing like the massive student mobilisation that characterised the 1969-70 Springbok tour.

The police were out in force, 2000 strong, maintaining the posture of guaranteeing both "the spectators' right to watch the game and the protestors' right to express their views", while in fact they provided a massive defence for the racists.

The picket never had a realistic possibility of stopping

the match, but we succeeded in making it expensive and difficult to hold, using the occasion to explain the issues concerning the whitewash of recent South African reforms, the links between apartheid and racism here, and the close economic connections between the Coventry bosses and those who provided the economic foundation of apartheid.

At the rally afterwards, Peter Hain emphasised that this was a preview for further links with South Africa, and a local Leyland steward recently returned from a visit to South Africa, stressed the importance of trade union contacts.

### Anti-racist demo set for Nov.25

A 200-STRONG conference last Saturday (20th) decided on a united Campaign against Racist Laws. The campaign will involve the three Indian Workers' Associations in Britain and many labour movement organisations.

Action proposals were agreed:

\* A national demonstration on Sunday 25th November against the 1971 Immigration Act and against the Tory proposals for new immigration restrictions and a new Nationality Act. (This had originally been planned for 2nd December).

\* Support for a protest march from Bradford to London organised by Bradford Asian youth.

\* A campaign to call for the disbanding of the Special Patrol Group, an inquiry into police brutality in Southall on April 23rd (including the killing of Blair Peach) and an end to the trials at Barnet of people arrested by the police in Southall on that day.

A steering committee was elected for the campaign and it can be contacted at PO Box 151, London WC2.

Protest against racist laws Sunday 25th November 12 noon, Speakers Corner

### Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory Socialist Organiser

CONFERENCE: Saturday November 24 At Central Library, Holloway Rd, N7 10am to 2.30pm, followed by a rally in support of Lambeth's fight against the cuts, from 3pm to 5pm.

All Socialist Organiser supporters are invited to attend. Labour movement bodies are invited to sponsor the SCLV and send delegates. For all details, write to the Conference Organising Secretary, John Bloxam, c/o Hackney North Labour Rooms, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

## Workers' ACTION

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Letter to Women's Voice Steering Ctee  
from the Basingstoke WV Group

## How we were shut out of Women's Voice

After months of debates, the Basingstoke Women's Rights Group took the decision to become a Women's Voice group.

We took this decision in recognition of the need for a working class orientated women's movement in this country. We felt as a group that it was vital to be part of a national movement, which would address itself to the

needs of working class movement and would bridge the gap that has baulked the women's movement for too long. The decision wasn't taken lightly. The sticking point had been the question of "sister organisation" status to the SWP.

However, because we felt that such great potential existed in Women's Voice, and knowing the views of a number of SWP women, who were also

against the 'sister organisation' tag, we would join as a group to help WV to fulfill the role it should play.

The decision of the conference of September 28-29th makes that impossible. The SWP now has the exclusive right to organise for its politics in Women's Voice and those of us who are not aligned with the SWP will have no say in it. We could stay within WV

but feel now that the atmosphere inside the organisation would be so hostile to those critical of SWP politics that we would be wasting our time trying to build it.

Therefore we would like our affiliation money returned in the recognition that the fight-back of women's rights cannot and will not be won through an organisation in the form WV now takes.

WORLD-WIDE, it is estimated that 25% of all pregnancies are terminated by induced abortion. Despite the introduction of safer contraceptive methods, 40 million abortions are performed every year. At least half of these are illegal, induced by women themselves or by backstreet abortionist in conditions of filth, disease and ignorance.

In Latin America, the Middle East and areas with scarce family planning services, the medical complications of illegal abortions have reached epidemic proportion. The mortality rate is appallingly high.

The struggle for safe, legal abortion is not limited to Britain. All over the world, women are fighting to establish or to defend their right to control their bodies, often against overwhelming odds. Not only ignorance, age-old custom and male chauvinism deny women this fundamental right; in almost every country, the state and/or its religion deliberately seek to control women and to restrict their rights in order to control the reproduction of the next generation.

In most Third World countries, legal abortion is virtually non-existent. Often living in abject poverty, women's lives are controlled by religions, such as Islam, which relegate their status to that of child-bearing chattel. In order to preserve women's chastity and the 'honour' of the family intact, sexual mutilation is practised on a wide scale throughout Africa and the middle-east countries.

### SEXUAL MUTILATION

In Egypt, for example, clitoridectomy (removal of the clitoris) is performed on 90% of the rural female population, in order to deter sexual activity until marriage. After marriage, a woman's ability to produce healthy offspring is often the determining factor in whether or not her husband divorces her to a life of shame and poverty.

When the state intervenes, it is usually not to counter traditional prejudices but to push programmes of sterilisation of women. In Bangladesh, mass sterilisation campaigns for men and women have been carried out in the name of 'population control'. 11,000 sterilisations were performed in two years, with the inducements of 50p, 10 lbs of rice or wheat, and a new sari as a 'reward'.

Although abortion is illegal, it is available clandestinely for about £850 — fine for rich women, but totally unavailable for the poor, for whom sterilisation becomes an attractive alternative. In India, compulsory sterilisation (civil servants with more than three children had to be sterilised to keep their jobs) has now been stopped, but no abortion or satisfactory contraceptive service has replaced it.

It is important to realise who is controlling such programmes. For each Bangladeshi sterilisation, the Bangladesh Association

for Voluntary Sterilisation receives £2 from the University of North Carolina. US imperialism seeks to extend its tentacles in a particularly nauseous way under the hypocritical guise of "aid" to the developing countries.

The US Agency for International Development (AID) made low-interest loans available to Bolivia in the late 1960s on condition that the government accepted population control programmes. Bolivia now has one of the sparsest populations in Latin America, and therefore found it quite easy to accept 150,000 white Rhodesians later in the '70s!

In 1975, the US Congress adopted the International Development and Food Assistance Bill, stating that 67% of all funds to other nations had to be used for population control programmes. This nearly always means mass sterilisation, and not a legal contraception and abortion service which allows women themselves to control their fertility.

In the US colony of Puerto Rico, a massive campaign has resulted in two-thirds of all women between 20 and 49 years being sterilised. The Family Planning Association performs this, and receives 75% of its budget from the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Childcare facilities in Puerto Rico have been

'It is obvious that Spanish justice is condemning women because they do not have the £250 which it costs to go to England for an abortion'.

1300 Spanish women, many of them well-known figures in Spanish public life, have declared that they had had abortions (which are illegal

cut drastically, and abortion is only available in expensive private hospitals.

In Colombia, sterilisation is free, but abortion illegal. Despite this, 250,000 illegal abortions are performed annually, resulting in 1,000 to 1,500 deaths. There is a punishment of 1 to 6 years imprisonment for having or performing an abortion.

Under the aegis of the Colombian family planning institutes, the US spends \$3 million sterilising people in 1260 centres. In 1967, the Colombian government accused the Ford Foundation of sterilising 40,000 women in return for lipstick and artificial pearls.

Abortion also carries the risk of imprisonment in Chile and Mauritius. 25,000 illegal abortions are performed in Mauritius every year: an average of 1 per 10 women. In Chile, the penalty is 3 years' imprisonment for both the abortionist and the patient. A legal

# 20 million illegal abortions each year

BY WENDY MUSTILL

abortion is theoretically possible if the women contracts rubella (German measles) in the first 12 weeks or if her life is in danger. But 3 doctors' signatures are required, and these are often denied, because illegal abortion is more lucrative.

Abortion is also illegal in Indonesia and in Peru, where an estimated 60% of women's deaths stem from the 140,000 yearly backstreet abortions. 'Right to Life' organisations — similar to SPUC and Life in this country — are active in Mexico, Peru, and Colombia, backed by the Catholic Church.

pioneered the aspiration method, using a hand-operated syringe, and have perfected it for use in rural as well as urban communities.

Abortion facilities are available promptly, and almost every service is free. A national network of family planning organisers exists to encourage those who need an abortion to seek it, and no stigma is attached.

In the wealthier capitalist countries, there have been real advances, reflecting the increased social and political weight of women, over the last two decades,

in Spain) and denounced the trial starting on 26th October of 11 women charged with having abortions. The 11 could be jailed.

When 300 women staged a sit-in protest at the Palace of Justice in Madrid last weekend, they were driven out by a police baton charge. Police also forcibly evicted 500 women

protesters from the College of Medicine in Madrid.

The fight against the Corrie Bill is also a fight for the rights of Spanish women, at least of that minority who can afford to come to Britain for an abortion. And it is also the fight to make sure tomorrow's Britain is not like today's Spain.

People in the Third World countries are beginning to fight back, however, against the combined repression of state and religion. In Hong Kong, where abortion is totally illegal, forcing 10,000 women a year into China to obtain terminations, a group of doctors are planning to open an abortion clinic. And in Venezuela, which harbours 40,000 illegal abortions every year, a book by Giovanni Machado called 'In Defence of Abortion in Venezuela' has caused a great stir.

### NO STIGMA

In a few countries the situation is different. Despite all the crimes of the bureaucracy, the social revolution in China has meant great advances for women. The Chinese have developed a once-a-month birth pill and a morning-after pill. But demand for abortion continues. The Chinese

but the gains are limited and constantly under threat. A world-wide economic recession and state spending cuts will thrust more women out of work and reinforce ideologies about women's secondary place in society.

Countries which have legalised abortion to a greater or lesser extent have failed to provide a thorough and efficient service for working class women. Limited rights to safe, legal abortion were passed in Canada in 1967, for example, but less than one-third of state hospitals provide facilities.

In the USA, the right of abortion has been under attack since 1973, and the latest attempts to curtail it seek an amendment to the constitution to protect the rights of the foetus. The facility of medical insurance has also been withdrawn for abortion: the implications for the working class are obvious.

In Holland, where abortion

is technically illegal but is tolerated by the government, with abortion easily available up to 18 weeks, new proposals are attempting to impose a five day waiting period between the consultation and the abortion, and a 12 week upper time limit. This will virtually exclude all but the richest of the foreigners who currently seek asylum for abortion from neighbouring countries.

The 1975 Veil Act in France, now due for reconsideration after its 5 year trial period, legalised abortion on demand for the first ten weeks only, but many areas do not have hospitals with abortion facilities. Moreover, money paid for a legal abortion (France has no national health service) is not recoverable from the DOASS (DHSS). The official justification for this from the woman deputy of the Gaullist party said that those who don't agree with abortion shouldn't have to pay for abortions through taxes! Poorer women who cannot afford legal abortion are being forced into the backstreets. On 7th October, 15,000 women demonstrated in Paris against the repeal of the law, and for legal obligations on hospitals to provide facilities and the DOASS to pay.

In Italy, abortion on demand became legally available in summer 1978, but the practical barriers remain formidable. 75% of Italian doctors have registered as "conscientious objectors" on religious grounds, gaining exemption from performing abortions. But many such objectors have no qualms of conscience at offering private abortions at lucrative fees, while long queues form at hospitals such as San Giacomo in Rome which provide free abortions. Many women are turned away from hospitals, insulted or ignored — denied their legal right.

The arrest of a doctor openly doing abortions in Belgium in 1973 led to a petition signed by 400,000 people calling for repeal of the anti-abortion laws. The doctor was released after 6 weeks, but despite a Royal Commission advocating that abortion laws should be liberalised, it remained illegal. Clandestine abortions are however performed by doctors and women's groups, and the National Abortion Campaign recently reported that the Socialist Party is proposing depenalisation of abortion following the renewal of the debate. The possibility of trials and repression of centres offering abortion continues, however.

### NEW ZEALAND

Abortion is illegal in all but one of the Australian states (Southern Australia) and is no longer available under the national health scheme. Nevertheless, many New Zealand women are forced to seek abortions in Australia, because the restrictive New Zealand laws do not allow abortion even in rape cases, or in extremely harsh social and economic conditions. And liberal doctors are currently being refused licences by

the Roman Catholic Minister of Health.

Abortion rights are also under threat in Israel, where the 1977 Abortion Law Reform allowed women to go before government committees to obtain permission for an abortion. The present government is now trying to reform the section of the Act which allows abortion on social and economic grounds.

Women in the Catholic countries of Western Europe are now organising against the repressive laws bolstered by the church. In a well-publicised case earlier this year, Maria Antonia Palla, vice-president of the Portuguese journalists' union, went on trial for a film she made in 1976 called 'Abortion is not a crime'. Following a campaign supported by the trade unions and left groups (not the Communist Party) she was released.

This did not prevent the trial in July this year of a young student nurse who had an abortion in Alentajo. After the 1974 revolution in Portugal, abortion clinics were established, but they have since been closed down. Illegal abortions continue, with evidence that police and doctors divide the money obtained for procuring them.

A campaign has also begun in Spain, where 3000 women die each year from illegal abortions. Contraception is not widely available, and the only birth control clinics are run by women's groups in Barcelona and Madrid.

### LIFE SENTENCE

Nearer home, procuring an abortion is an offence carrying life imprisonment in Southern Ireland, under the 1861 Offences against the Person Act. About 4000 women come to the UK each year for abortions. Northern Ireland is covered by the same Act, but also has the Criminal Justice Act of 1945 which allows abortions where there is risk of serious, genetic deformity or to save the mother's life during the first 7 months. The 1967 UK Abortion Act does not apply.

The international picture is bleak: in most parts of the world, the woman has no right to control her own fertility, either by access to contraception and abortion, or by rejecting enforced sterilisation in the guise of "population control". It is important to remember that when we organise against the Corrie Bill we are part of this international struggle. In defending our own limited gains, we also help our sisters in other countries, both indirectly and directly, since a number come to Britain for abortions they cannot obtain at home. After the Seveso explosion in Italy, only 28 out of the 278 pregnant women in the area managed to get abortions, despite sanction from the Italian government because of the threat of dioxin poisoning to the children. Some of those 28 came to Britain, others to Holland. In both places the facilities are in danger of being withdrawn.



## 1500 join Nottingham cuts demo

1500 PEOPLE joined an anti-cuts protest in work time at Nottingham's County Hall on Tuesday 16th. Local college students, teachers, trade unionists, and parents protesting against cuts in nursery provision were strongly represented on the picket, which was organised by a joint trade-union coordinating committee. Some support also came from the NUM. The Tory-controlled County Council voted to go ahead with the cuts. But the

campaign is continuing. A local conference is planned for Saturday November 17th. The Nottingham cuts committee has decided to send a contingent down for Lambeth's anti-cuts demonstration on November 7th, and to invite a Lambeth councillor to speak at the Nottingham conference. A special campaign against the cuts in day nurseries has been organised, and has published a newsletter to get its message out.

## A NIGHT FOR PUTTING ON A LEFT FACE

A CALL for industrial action should any councillors be victimised, or social services be attacked by the Tories, met with thunderous applause at a rally held at Sheffield's City Hall on Sunday 14th October. The call came from Yorkshire Miners' leader Arthur Scargill. His speech was the culmination of an anti-cuts rally organised by the South Yorkshire Federation of Trades Councils which drew a near capacity audience of 2000, miners, engineers, white-collar workers and many others. Scargill's speech was however one of the few highlights in what seemed to be an endless list of speakers. By the close of the meeting the audience had been treated to no less than 16.

As speaker after speaker blazed away heatedly against the Tories, it became clear that it was a night for putting on the left face. Yet despite the continuous references to the evils of capitalism, Maggie Thatcher and Heseltine, little was proposed in terms of a strategy for fighting the cuts.

The main focus for the speakers was the lobby of Parliament against the cuts on Nov. 28th — after that, apart from Scargill's call for industrial action, your guess is as good as mine.

The local councillors who spoke (two from Sheffield, one from Doncaster) said nothing about not implementing the cuts, but went on at some length about how the cuts they have made and are

going to make aren't all that bad really and anyway a rise in the rates will solve the problems. The leader of Doncaster council, Les Adams, said, "At the moment we have not made any deep cuts. Next year the cuts will be at 5% — they're not on." So cuts of 1 or 2 or even 3% are OK but 5% isn't.

David Blunkett of Sheffield Council advocated rate rises, backing up his argument by saying that a 50% rise in the rates only meant an extra 2% increase in the family budget. He didn't mention anything about all the other 2% rises in this, that and the other.

Probably the most unsavoury spectacle of the evening was Ken Curran, NUPE full time official, leading the singing of the Red Flag. Curran has done precisely nothing to fight cuts in hospital services in the region. They are woefully inadequate in the Sheffield Area and there isn't even a burns unit — a fact which has already had tragic consequences in a city which specialises in steel and hot metal processes.

Sheffield Council has said on a number of occasions that they will not implement any cuts, yet already severe cuts have been made in adult education. As a final irony on this point, the Sheffield Morning Telegraph on Monday had an article, just above the one reporting the

rally, saying that 285 jobs are to go in education in Sheffield. Chairman of the Education Committee, Councillor Peter Horton was quoted as saying, "We have been told to maintain pupil-teacher ratios. With the population falling, ratios throughout the city could be held if 180 jobs go, although we are certain that would lead to some over-size classes and possible industrial action by teachers' unions."

One thing for sure the Sheffield Council will be able to save many pounds on heating the City Hall over the winter, as the hot air generated by Sunday night's rally will keep the place warm for months.

Calls for industrial action, such as those made by Scargill, must be taken up and the Sheffield Council must be made to stand by its stated policy of not implementing the cuts. As a leaflet given out by supporters of Socialist Organiser said: "...a rally has its limitations and if all that is going to happen is a string of fine speeches, then its usefulness will have been limited. What is needed is a conference of delegates from trade union and labour bodies, tenant associations etc. to thrash out and set about implementing a campaign to fight back against the Tory cuts. The Labour councillors and the Trades Council should get together and call such a meeting as soon as practically possible."

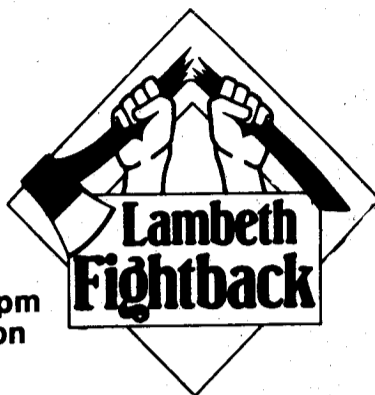
JOHN CUNNINGHAM

## FIGHTBACK AGAINST THE CUTS

MARCH ON PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 7th November

Assemble 12.30 pm Clapham Common



Support is still pouring in for the Nov 7th demonstration against the cuts called by Lambeth Council. The CPSA National Executive Committee passed the following resolution: "This NEC agrees to officially back the November 7th Lambeth Council March against the cuts. The NEC agrees to notify all London branches as soon as possible that official backing without (strike) pay will be given to those branches wishing to take strike action in support of this march."

## Just what the US wanted

IF THE RECENT coup d'état that ousted General Carlos Humberto Romero in El Salvador was not organised by the United States, then it came as the prompt answer to their prayers.

Humberto Romero became President after an electoral fraud in 1977. His two years in power were two years of mounting terror in a vain bid to exterminate the massive opposition that came from a strongly organised trade union movement, several leftist parties and guerrilla organisations and a section of the bourgeoisie.

The reaction of the United States was predictable: a few pious statements about the need to guard against violations of human rights, but otherwise wholehearted support — until the fall of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua. Then the US panicked. They decided that Humberto Romero's latest gimmick of the "democratic opening" didn't go far enough. The longer Humberto Romero hung on, they felt, the more the centre would be weakened and the far left strengthened.

If Romero didn't go, then El Salvador might go ... and if El Salvador were to do the same as Nicaragua, then the US's ability to squeeze the Sandinistas would also diminish, and the governments in Guatemala and Honduras would be unstable.

Many see the new government as a tool of the US. It has not yet released political prisoners (though it is not unlikely that such a gesture will come), it has shot at demonstrators in the streets, and it has sent troops into factories occupied by workers, in order to break strikes.

But Christian Democrats and Social Democrats have joined the government, and the Communist Party is expected to do so too. And in a bizarre turn of events, the Popular League, after having attempted an insurrection against the new government, has now decided to join it.

## The Kurds hit back

THE KURDS have managed to cut off numerous roads in the north of Iran, to retake several towns, and seem now to be on the point of taking over Mahabad, the town which in 1946 was the capital

of the short-lived Kurdish Republic.

And, despite repeated government denials, it seems that minister of labour Darioush Forouhar is in talks with the Kurds' most popular leader, Sheikh Ezzeddin Hussein — whom the radio claims is out of the country. As Forouhar is still in Iran, it is clear that Sheikh Ezzeddin at least never left Iran.

Perhaps the most important development in Iran, however, is the campaign that is starting up against the Guardians of the Revolution, the Pasdaran, and against their principal organiser, the Defence Minister Mustafa Chamran.



Several papers including the recently republished paper of the Tudeh (Moscow-line Communist) Party, Mardom, have reprinted a confidential report drawn up by Khomeini's special envoy to Kurdistan, Mr. Mehdi Bahadoran. Bahadoran accuses Chamran of arming the 'feudals', that is, the reactionary tribal leaders of the Iranian Kurds, so that they could butcher the peasantry.

At the same time, the conduct of the Revolutionary Guards has come under attack from different quarters. There are complaints about their activities in Kurdistan and there is now a new campaign against the Guards for their actions against Caspian Sea sturgeon fishermen.

Chamran, an Iranian, rose to prominence during the Lebanese Civil War where

## To the Tories, it's just waste

THE TORY government is to scrap a scheme under which pensioners and people on supplementary benefit can get help with electricity bills. And it is also — according to an opposition spokesman — planning to cut employment schemes for the disabled.

Those are the latest examples of what the Tories mean by cutting waste in the public sector.

From the Tory point of view, help for the old, the poor, and the disabled is waste because it does nothing to boost profits.

Thousands of old people die every winter because of the cold. Many more will die this year because of the Tories' decision. But the Tory answer is that boosting profit is the first necessity.

That is what the cuts mean. That is why we have to fight, not only the Tories, but the whole profit system they represent. Their profits, or the most elementary measures of help and humanity for the old and the disabled — that is the choice.

## Bahro in W. Germany

RUDOLF BAHRO, the Marxist dissident recently released from jail in East Germany, has chosen to come to the West.

Bahro was given an eight-year jail sentence after he published a book critical of the East German regime. There were strong protests from the labour movement internationally, and he was released on 11th October [during a general amnesty] after serving only two years.

Now, soon after arriving in West Germany, he has given an interview to the Paris daily Le Monde. He explains that his move did not reflect a preference for West Germany over East Germany, but simply a calculation as to where he could be more politically effective.

In his book Bahro expressed sympathy with Eurocommunism, and the interview is along those lines: "I also believe that communists, socialists, and all the left, have the duty to extend a hand to the centre. We must not attack problems from a marginal position." Bahro also explicitly proposes a reformist perspective for the Eastern states [his book was ambiguous], and suggests that too rapid action in East Germany would be counter-productive because it would imperil détente.

But Bahro maintains his internationalist outlook, stressing that the problem is not just to change Germany but "first of all, the USSR itself". And in reply to a question of whether he sees himself as 'saving communism' in Eastern Europe, he says, "I cannot save communism where it does not exist. If something has to be saved, it is the original Marxism and communism".

## A broad umbrella full of holes

THE South East Region of the TUC held a conference against the cuts last weekend. Despite dozens of speeches describing the effects of the cuts, there was little discussion of what practical steps to take next. The platform called for support for the November 7th demo called by Lambeth, for a week of action to coincide with the demo at the end of November and a day of action called by the TUC to be held some time in the New Year.

The conference however did bring a few insights into how SERTUC sees fighting the cuts. Two key speeches on this came from SERTUC Secretary, Jack Dromey, and from TUC Chairman and Fire Brigades' Union General Secretary Terry Parry.

Dromey went on at some length about how the Tories would be able to sit out five years and how their election reflected a shift to the right in British politics. He then said that the cuts fight would find unions with "some strange bedfellows" such as Hospital Leagues of Friends, before attacking what he described as the "Kamikaze approach" to fighting the cuts. He said that

the trade unions would not tolerate councillors putting local government workers jobs at risk as a result of commissioners being called in, particularly when some councillors were talking about resigning in such a situation.

While resignation is clearly not the correct policy for councillors to follow, Dromey was using this as an excuse for not confronting the government now. He postponed a fight into the far distant future when the Tory government was coming nearer to the end of its term. Practically, all he suggested for the TUC to take up nationally was that the day of action in January should be called for a work day.

Parry began by endorsing what Dromey had said and advising the conference: "Don't leave it to the General Council." This line was not a criticism of the TUC — rather it was an attempt to abdicate responsibility for leading a campaign by stressing the need for local action.

Parry said nothing else, throughout his speech which was largely given over to pointing out the dangers of the silicon chip — about any steps

the TUC was taking to mobilise a fight versus the government.

Parry looked less enthusiastic when Reg Taylor of the T&G Region 1 Committee pointed out the reality of the talk about unity at all costs. He said "The broad umbrella that is talked about is full of holes." He pointed out that at the recent Greater London Labour Party Emergency Conference on the Cuts, Ashley Bramall, Leader of the ILEA, had been on the platform. At the same time he was trying to push through £12m cuts in education in London.

"We have to say to Bramall: now is the time to get out." He also said that since 1951 Labour governments "have carried out a surrender of the things which we fought for after 1945..." The last Labour government had had "The assistance of too many union leaders in what they did. Spare us from another Callaghan or another Denis Healey."

Unfortunately too few of the speeches followed this one beyond the level of general anti-Toryism. Little new came out of the conference in terms of action to begin a fight now.

BRUCE ROBINSON



# DOSSIER: TROTSKY AND NICARAGUA

THE NICARAGUAN revolution has led to a major crisis in the world revolutionary-Marxist (i.e. Trotskyist) movement.

When the brutal Somoza dictatorship and its state apparatus of repression were smashed in July, it was a great triumph. But it was not the end of the revolution. All classes had participated in the struggle against Somoza.

The majority of the bourgeoisie had come out against Somoza, though they did not want the struggle to go so far as smashing his state apparatus. Now they do not object to Somoza's property being nationalised and social reforms carried out, but they want a stable bourgeois state to be reconstructed as soon as possible.

The drive of the working-class struggle is to go forward to the overthrow of capitalism and to workers' power.

Between these two poles, petty bourgeois forces vacillate.

The Sandinista movement, which led the armed overthrow of Somoza, was founded in 1962, soon after the Cuban revolution. Its general political background is Castroite. It is what Marxists characterise as a petty-bourgeois revolutionary movement: although it has mass working-class support, it is not organically linked to the working class, and it does not have a consistent working-class political outlook.

Until shortly before the last offensive against Somoza, the Sandinistas were split into three factions. The dominant Terceirista faction put strong emphasis on alliances with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie. The Prolonged People's War faction had a perspective of rural guerilla warfare (as against the Terceiristas' concept of a concerted uprising), and the Proletarian faction stressed organisation in the urban working class, but neither fundamentally questioned the view that the Nicaraguan revolution should first have a democratic (not socialist) stage in alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie.



Since their victory, the Sandinistas have maintained their alliance with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, in the Government of National Reconstruction. There are strong forces working to preserve capitalism: the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, neighbouring bourgeois governments in Panama, Costa Rica, etc., the USA, and, almost certainly, elements within the Sandinista movement itself. But the crucial barrier to the revolutionary drive of the Nicaraguan masses, the bourgeois state, is in ruins.

It is possible that under the pressure of the tempestuous mobilisation of the masses, the Sandinistas (or decisive sections of them) will radicalise politically, and go forward to the overthrow of capitalism, as the Castroites did in Cuba.

The policy of the major internationally-organised current in the Trotskyist movement, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI), consists of passively hoping that this possibility will be realised (and building solidarity with Nicaragua against any imperialist intervention). For Marxists, the problem with this policy is not that the possibility does not exist (though there can be debate about how probable or improbable it is). The problem is that the possibility does not exhaust the question.

Marxists firmly support the Nicaraguan revolution, and the Cuban revolution, against their counter-revolutionary enemies. But our policy does

not end there. Our task is not just to help along the 'revolutionary process', but to arouse and educate the working class to intervene in that process. We fight for conscious control by the working class over society — and that goal still needs to be fought for, and still needs a party to fight for it, both in Nicaragua today and in Nicaragua tomorrow if it follows the Cuban road.

Even the USFI concedes (in passing) that there is no guarantee that the Sandinistas will move against capitalism like the Castroites did. It is irresponsible politics to renounce a Trotskyist struggle to mobilise workers against capitalism in favour of hopes that someone else (the FSLN) will deal with the bourgeoisie. And even if the FSLN do follow the Cuban road, what then?

The Cuban state, though far less repressive than the regimes in the USSR, in China, in Vietnam, or in Eastern Europe, and though it undoubtedly has massive popular support, is not under the control of the working class. Nor has it ever been. An exceptionally courageous and resolute petty bourgeois revolutionary leadership smashed the decaying bourgeois state apparatus in Cuba.

It then faced the choice of going back on its democratic anti-imperialist aims or going forward to break private ownership of the means of production. Backed up (and pushed forward) by powerful mobilisations of the workers and peasants, it moved against capitalism.

But it never introduced more than a sort of plebiscitary democracy (and, arguably, a degree of direct democracy at local level). The working class did not raise itself to the level of conscious collective control over society — and, indeed, it is hard to see how the working class as a whole could raise itself to that level without its vanguard being able to raise itself to the level of building a Leninist party.

Anyone influenced by the USFI would not even reach the level of posing the need for such a party, or posing the programme of workers' democracy as something to consistently advocate and struggle for. That is why, as we wrote in an editorial last week, 'The USFI policy amounts to simply giving up the programme of permanent revolution and workers' democracy, or relying on vague hopes that the Sandinistas will somehow start fighting for the Trotskyist programme... although the Trotskyists themselves do not even have the courage to proclaim the programme boldly'.

The problem is to dare to put forward a working class programme, and on that basis the need for a party. The USFI's endorsement of the Sandinistas does not just mean failing to build a party — by its denial of the programme, it wipes out the very purpose of such a party. It is not an organisational question primarily, but a question of political self-negation. (Because the USFI, in so far as they raise the question of a party, raise it as an organisational question, they can suppose the call for the Sandinistas to organise a 'vanguard party' [USFI resolution of October 1st] answers it. From a Trotskyist viewpoint, of course, it does not.)

Our attitude does not stem from us wanting a 'perfect' revolution, as philistine wiseacres say. The Russian revolution in its early years, with which we identify completely, was far from perfect. But there is a qualitative difference between a regime of workers' power such as existed (with whatever shortcomings and deformations) in the USSR between 1917 and 1923, and a petty-bourgeois bureaucratic regime on the social and eco-

nomic foundations of a workers state (regardless of how hardened and crystallised the bureaucracy is — on this Cuba offers room for debate).

It could be argued that the Marxist programme has been proved to be a utopia, that bureaucratic 'socialism' of the sort that exists in Cuba (or, in much more repressive forms, in the USSR, China, etc.), is the best we can hope for. That view is of course implicitly held by the Stalinists, though they 'argue' it not with

will almost certainly require major restrictions on democratic rights. But now we find the USFI approving an anti-democratic act — the expulsion from Nicaragua of the Simon Bolivar Brigade — by authorities which even the USFI admits are not those of a workers' state (though they may, the USFI hopes, become so), without definite crimes being proved or even alleged, without trial... On paper the USFI is intransigent in the defence of the democratic rights

ist-Trotskyist Tendency.

Both currents originated in the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction which existed in the USFI between August 1973 and August 1977. (A Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency existed between March and August 1973, transforming itself into the LTF in August. That LTF was, however, different in both composition and politics from the present LTF).

The LTF was led by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) of the USA. Its major plank

most advanced struggle. They poured scorn on the workers' commissions, neighbourhood commissions, and other beginnings of dual power.

The leading Latin American members of the LTF, round Nahuel Moreno, split from the LTF during 1975. They opposed the SWP's dismissal of the prospect of dual power, though on many other issues in Portugal they shared SWP attitudes. (In 1976, the Portuguese PRT, close to Moreno, campaigned for a 'Socialist

tion which for with the SLL/V For example, the OCI's view agitation of F ists should be government w ministers'.

These dis raise the cent the responsibility in Nicaragua way. Three issu ly in their poler cy, the Hava and the Gover



Sandinista fighters: should Marxists just say to them, 'We hope your leaders will move to the left like Castro did', or should we have an independent working-class policy?

the theoretician's pen but with the bureaucrat's bludgeon. But it is not — at least formally — the view of the USFI. Nor is it a view that can possibly be held by proletarian activists committed to developing the collective consciousness and power of the working class — for, to such activists, this view means that their work is futile or at best dispensable, an optional extra.

The USFI can square their circles only by sacrificing the integrity of their politics.

'In all its general propaganda', we pointed out last week, 'the USFI proclaims the need for Leninist parties. In the documents produced for its forthcoming World Congress, it denounces guerilla warfare (exaggeratedly, in our view) as a strategy leading to nothing but disaster, and argues that under present-day conditions only a solid Leninist party can lead a socialist revolution. In relation to Nicaragua, all these ideas are simply forgotten'.

The USFI is currently circulating a policy statement on Socialist Democracy which blandly elevates democratic norms above the class struggle, and ignores the fact that the harsh and bloody conflict involved in revolutionary confrontation with the bourgeoisie

even of pro-bourgeois forces, even against a workers' state. In reality they do not stand up for the democratic rights even of their own (dissident) comrades, against a petty-bourgeois force.

The USFI's current attitude is not new. They took a similar attitude to the Cuban revolution. To this day they see no need to build a Trotskyist party in Cuba. But the same mistake, repeated despite experience, is worse. And this time the USFI leaders have to defend their attitude against strong opposition in their own ranks.

This week we publish a dossier on the USFI and Nicaragua, to enable our readers to judge the issues for themselves and participate in the debate. Most of the items are taken from the public press of the USFI. A few are taken from *Lettre d'Informations Ouvrières*, a newsheet circulated by the French OCI. The OCI does not have a good reputation for veracity, but there is no reason in this case to suppose that when they reprint USFI resolutions they do so inaccurately. Most of the resolutions from *Ld'IO* have in any case been checked against other sources.

The dossier also includes documents from the dissident currents in the USFI, the Bolshevik Faction and the Lenin-

ist-Trotskyist Tendency. Both currents originated in the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction which existed in the USFI between August 1973 and August 1977. (A Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency existed between March and August 1973, transforming itself into the LTF in August. That LTF was, however, different in both composition and politics from the present LTF).

The LTF was led by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) of the USA. Its major plank most advanced struggle. They poured scorn on the workers' commissions, neighbourhood commissions, and other beginnings of dual power.

The leading Latin American members of the LTF, round Nahuel Moreno, split from the LTF during 1975. They opposed the SWP's dismissal of the prospect of dual power, though on many other issues in Portugal they shared SWP attitudes. (In 1976, the Portuguese PRT, close to Moreno, campaigned for a 'Socialist

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These dis raise the cent the responsibility in Nicaragua way. Three issu ly in their poler cy, the Hava and the Gover

Party government with socialist policies'). The split was consolidated by a sharp difference over Angola: the SWP and LTF held that revolutionaries should not take sides as between MPLA, Unita, and the FNLA, while Moreno, like most Marxists, favoured critical support for the MPLA against the FNLA and Unita (which were allied with South African forces). Moreno and his co-thinkers formed a Bolshevik Tendency in February 1976, which has since declared itself a Faction.

The Moreno current also has a distinctive political history prior to 1973, though from a distance it is difficult to pass detailed judgment on it.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency of today (not to be confused with the LTF of 1973) was formed when the LTF was dissolved in August 1977. That dissolution followed on from the USFI majority making a self-criticism and coming over to the SWP's views on guerilla warfare in Latin America. Members of the French and Spanish sections of the USFI (in particular) wanted, however, to continue the struggle of the LTF on other issues.

The LTF as it exists today is politically quite distinct from the SWP, and appears to be close to the OCI, a French avowedly-Trotskyist organisa-

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aga. For the SWP apparently the in the USFI, th Nicaragua is cl an assessment the 1960s the f the Castroites, adequate critic several years Cuba did not fig ly in their press several month suddenly starts energetic pro-C (The precise re turn are not clear, however, line fits in wa method of the tion to what the the objective process).

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# STALINISM

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the Stalinists and the so-called "Third Camp" social democrats".

So the SWP considers the Cuban leadership to have a serious revolutionary international policy (though it does mildly criticise the Cubans on some points). It interprets the Cuban influence on the Sandinistas as a strong influence in favour of socialist revolution in Nicaragua.

Now in the early years of the revolution, and especially in 1965-7, the Cuban leadership did have an independent international policy, and did try to spread the revolution, at least to Latin America. But Cuba's dependence on the USSR took its toll. In 1968 Castro supported the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and endorsed the nationalist military regime in Peru. Since then, and especially since 1970 (when Cuba failed in a great effort to achieve a ten million ton sugar harvest), Cuba has not adopted a different position from the USSR on any major international issue.

To be sure, the Cubans often try to give a radical twist to the Moscow policy in the way they express it; and the subjective attitudes of the Cuban leaders are probably quite different from those of the Kremlin bureaucrats. But to argue, as the SWP does, that "Cuba's foreign policy is the opposite of Moscow's 'détente' policy", is sheer delusion.

Castro's speech at Havana was indeed a "stinging rebuke to imperialism", of a revolutionary-nationalist sort. But it was not, as the SWP makes it out to be, an expression of working-class internationalism. As regards the various resolutions passed by the Havana Conference, a prime question for Marxists is not only what was said, but who said it. The governments represented at Havana all (except the Cubans) vilely oppress their own working classes. They cannot lead a consistent fight against imperialism. The Conference may have discomfited imperialism. But to hail it as a victory for the working class is to forget about the role and the tasks of the working class in the 'non-aligned' countries.

As regards the Government of National Reconstruction, Jack Barnes' reported comment that it "is and isn't

bourgeois" is right as far as it goes. It is a bourgeois government without a bourgeois state, in the basic Marxist sense of the state as "bodies of armed men". Somoza's National Guard has been smashed or driven out. The only armed power in Nicaragua is the Sandinistas, and they are not definitely tied to or controlled by the bourgeoisie.

On the basis of this assessment, the SWP obviously takes its cue from the experience of Cuba. In Cuba a government with strong bourgeois representation was formed after the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship. As the revolution radicalised, the Castroites — who controlled the armed power — were able to push the bourgeois ministers out with little trouble.

There was a similar experience in the Yugoslav revolution.



It makes sense to draw the SWP's conclusion of approval for the coalition government as an intelligent manoeuvre — if we have full confidence in the Sandinistas and their ability to manoeuvre without betraying or committing naive blunders, and if we do not envisage any independent fight for working class politics. To arouse and educate workers to fight consciously for a society "in which there will be no place for exploiters and oppressors" (as the USFI delegation statement of September 3rd puts it) is, after all, difficult if you have to explain that there is "no place for exploiters and oppressors" — except in the government! (even if only for the moment and with the hope things will work out...)

Equally it is impossible to organise a fight for "the democracy of workers' and peasants' councils" (USFI resolution of October 1st) without having the will to organise a party which consciously fights for that aim and mobilises the workers to fight consciously for it. Conscious working-class control of society cannot be established by an unconscious process, over the heads of the working class vanguard.

COLIN FOSTER

**As the Sandinistas neared victory against the Somoza dictatorship, the USFI issued a statement on Nicaragua dated July 4th. It did not explicitly mention the building of a Trotskyist party, but it put forward an independent programme, and criticised both the Sandinistas' general strategic ideas and their alliance with bourgeois forces in the Government of National Reconstruction. The political conclusion of the USFI statement was:**

**IT IS CLEAR** to revolutionists in Nicaragua and throughout the world that if the overthrow of Somoza does not lead to the overthrow of domination by the imperialists and the national bourgeoisie, any victory will be short-lived and the masses will be quickly stripped of all the gains won through their heroic struggle. The imperialists and their representatives don't hide the fact that their main aim is to prevent the Nicaraguan revolution from taking the Cuban road.

The response of revolutionists is unambiguous. It is necessary to prevent the Nicaraguan revolution from suffering the fate of the Guatemalan revolution of the 1940s and 1950s, of the Bolivian revolution of the 1950s, or of the Chilean workers' and peasants' upsurge of the 1970s. It is in the elementary interests of the masses of Nicaragua, of Latin America, and of the whole world, that the Nicaraguan revolution should follow the Cuban example by overthrowing the dictatorship, expelling imperialism, and removing from power and expropriating the native ruling classes. In this way the conditions will be created to satisfy the basic needs of the masses for food, housing, health, education, and jobs.

Inside the FSLN there exist clear ideological and political divisions. The 'tercerista' or 'insurreccional' tendency is largely predominant; it is they who determine the orienta-

tion and methods of the FSLN and who, among others, led the September 1978 offensive. Partisans of collaboration with anti-Somoza sections of the bourgeoisie, they place the greatest importance on action by the Sandinista armed detachments, considering the organised mobilisation of the masses as playing only a supportive role. This has produced tensions in the past, and can lead to many conflicts in the future.

The 'prolonged people's war' tendency has an eclectic orientation, adopting aspects of Maoism and Castroism. The 'proletarian' tendency stresses the importance of the role of the working class in the struggle against imperialism and capitalism, but it does not challenge the basic strategy of the FSLN, including its policy of alliances.

The formation of the government of national reconstruction, in which well-known representatives of the anti-Somoza wing of the bourgeoisie — Violeta de Chamorro, Alfonso Robelo, and Sergio Ramirez — join with representatives of the FSLN, shows that the concept of the democratic revolution is not without implications for the immediate course of the revolutionary struggle.

In fact, the government of national reconstruction is a card played by the bourgeoisie to try to prevent the overthrow of Somoza from leading to the break-up of the socio-economic structures of capitalism and the bourgeois state apparatus. Thus it operates against the interests and aspirations of the overwhelming majority of those who are struggling against the dictatorship and its National Guard assassins. This means a concrete danger to the development of the military battle taking place and an even greater threat to a victorious outcome of the revolutionary struggle as a whole.

To reach the goals of the exploited and oppressed masses and to fight back against any imperialist intervention, the masses must be armed and workers' and peasants' militias must be formed. There must be a struggle to extend and strengthen the organs the masses have begun to throw up in the course of the civil war to assert their demands and to defend their vital interests.

In the case of any serious operation to impose an alternative solution on the basis of maintenance of the apparatus of the Somoza regime, the struggle for the convocation of a constituent assembly, elected through universal, direct and secret vote, could centralise the aspirations of the masses that are expressed in their struggle against the dictatorship.

In the framework of the struggle to overthrow the dictatorship, which is the fundamental immediate task, revolutionary Marxists will be struggling for:

- Dissolution of the National Guard
- Freedom for all political prisoners
- The winning of all democratic rights (freedom of speech, of the press, and of political and trade union organisation above all)
- Rejection of all political, economic and military pacts with the imperialist powers and with the OAS.
- Repudiation of the foreign debt accumulated by the dictatorship in the interests of the exploiting classes and imperialism, and a break with the International Monetary Fund.
- Expropriation and nationalisation, without compensation and under workers' control, of all the property of Somoza, of his family, of high officials of the regime, of imperialism, and of the 'national' capitalists.
- Implementation of a genuine agrarian reform that would give land to the peasants who are demanding it and would assure them the means to cultivate it.

The only government that can carry out such a programme embodying the vital interests of the Nicaraguan people and the needs of developing and strengthening the revolution is a government that defends the interests of the workers, the peasants, and the other exploited layers, and that excludes all representatives of the ruling classes and imperialism.

For the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship!  
For the victory of the Nicaraguan masses and the fighters of the FSLN!

For a campaign of international solidarity against any attempt at intervention, including political, economic or military blackmail by imperialism!

Break all diplomatic ties with Somoza!  
Not one penny, not one weapon to the dictatorship!

SOURCE: *The Militant*, 27.7.79.

**But the American SWP soon took a different line. A special issue of their paper, *The Militant*, dated August 24th, carried an article by Pedro Camejo, Sergio Rodriguez, and Fred Murphy. Despite saying, "There are no guarantees" as to the Sandinistas' future political development, the article concretely considered danger to the full development of the revolution as coming only from the risk of the Sandinistas being "beaten back by imperialism" militarily, not from the Sandinistas' policy. The Sandinistas' bloc with bourgeois forces in the Government of National Reconstruction was described as an intelligent "concession" to avert a too-rapid direct clash with imperialism; their long-standing strategy of alliance with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, criticised by the July 4th USFI statement, was described as "obviously the correct, intelligent and revolutionary policy". The article argued that revolutionary socialists must "recognise the revolutionary capacities of this leadership... identify with it, and join forces with it...". The concluding section of the article ran as follows:**

The FSLN LEADERS are fighting to gain time to counter the imperialist manoeuvres and to win broad international support. They are fighting to get as much material aid as they possibly can for the Nicaraguan people. And they are trying to make it as difficult as possible for the imperialists to find pretexts to intervene.

This means making concessions. For example, the Sandinistas have announced that they do not plan to execute any of the captured National Guard, not even the worst murderers and torturers. This concession has made it harder for the imperialists to mount a lying propaganda offensive claiming that the revolution has resulted in a bloodbath, the way they did when the Cubans executed a few hundred of Batista's police torturers.

As Fidel noted in his July 26 speech, the 'magnanimity and generosity' of the Sandinistas will 'deprive the reactionaries of arguments, it will deprive them of weapons, it will deprive them of fuel for slander and defamation'.

Fidel added: 'Of course, we are not going to deceive ourselves. We're not going to imagine that the reactionaries will leave the Nicaraguan Revolution in peace, despite its magnanimity, generous attitude and democratic aims'.

The composition of the official Government of National Reconstruction represents a concession. Three of its five members are from the procapitalist forces that opposed Somoza. Only one is a leading Sandinista. So in form it is a coalition government with the Sandinistas in a minority.

The reality is different. The reality is that Nicaragua today is being run by the Joint National Directorate of the FSLN, made up of nine Sandinista commanders. All nine are Fidelistas. All have lived in exile in Cuba.

Real power is in the hands of the FSLN. With each capitalist minister in the government they have put a Sandinista commander. And the ministers do not act unless the Sandinistas approve their actions.

Even within this context the Sandinistas have taken certain further steps. For example, they removed the original minister in charge of agrarian reform, who was a landowner. In his place they put Jaime Wheelock, a central FSLN leader — one of the nine.

The officially designated minister of defence is a former officer of Somoza's National Guard who switched sides before the civil war. But he has no army or police. Those are run by the FSLN. Sandinista political leaders are in every battalion of the new army.

In the struggle against Somoza the Sandinistas consciously tried to create the broadest possible front, including bourgeois forces who were opponents of Somoza. That was obviously the correct, intelligent, and revolutionary policy.

But once they came to power, they did not want that same coalition running the government. They express this in their own way.

Right after Somoza fell, Henry Ruiz, one of the top nine FSLN leaders, tried to explain to the Costa Rican weekly *Pueblo* who should govern Nicaragua. He said:

"I believe that effectively we have to take the composition of the Provisional Government junta with caution. Because it appears to me that the initial mechanism is not complete... Other mechanisms have to appear that are the real base of power. The government junta can represent those forces, but the decisions will be taken at another level."

"I'm inclined to think that we should have the representation of the workers, as well as representation of the peasants, who were those who have carried the weight of the war in these times."

Talking about what individuals should be put in government positions, Ruiz said:

"To say, how should I say it, that X person because he has written three or four books, or X person because they own a business, or that person because I like him, or I consider him a honest person... It appears to me that would be to disconnect the question of class. Here we have to have our workers, our peasants, and also the revolutionaries represented."

And in conclusion he said: 'We have to have representative figures that really will not betray the interests of the revolution'.

The Sandinista leadership is trying to mobilise the workers and peasants to deepen this revolution, to defend and move forward the interests of the Nicaraguan masses.

The power that exists today in Nicaragua is a revolutionary power. The road is open to move toward the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government — that is, a government independent of the old ruling classes, which mobilises the power of the workers and their allies to implement progressive social measures that more and more challenge the economic prerogatives of capital.

A workers' and peasants' government has not yet been established. While capitalism has been dealt a stunning blow, it still exists. The capitalists and those determined to defend their interests still remain a factor in the government. Nevertheless, the direction in which the Sandinista leadership is moving is toward deepening the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses to defend their interests.

The Sandinistas have proven themselves to be a revolutionary leadership in overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship and destroying the old armed forces of the capitalists. And they are proving themselves in action after taking power, by mobilising and arming the masses to defend their own interests.

There is no way of knowing in advance how far the Sandinista leadership will go in changing the character of the state, or at what pace. There are no guarantees. But the only way for revolutionary socialists around the world to help advance the Nicaraguan revolution is to recognise the revolutionary capacities of this leadership, to identify with it, and to join forces with it in the struggle to defend and extend the revolution.

The working class of the entire world will see the Nicaraguan revolution as its own. Nicaragua will gain enormous solidarity from the workers of other countries, including the United States.

Revolutionary Cuba has set the example by calling on all countries to compete in sending reconstruction aid to Nicaragua. The Cubans have been waiting and working for this victory for twenty years. For the first time, they are not alone in this hemisphere. Their dedication to the Nicaraguan cause should inspire a wave of solidarity throughout the Americas.

The choice in Nicaragua is either to move forward to the victory of a socialist revolution, as in Cuba — or to suffer a bloody defeat, as in Chile. Either the Sandinistas will consolidate the power of the workers and peasants and deepen the revolution into a socialist transformation, or they will be beaten back by imperialism in a counterrevolutionary blow that will drown in blood the entire generation that has made this revolution. There is no third road.

In this historic battle the Sandinista leadership will be tested many times over — their ability to mobilise the mass-



es, manoeuvre and fight intelligently, move the revolutionary process forward, and be decisive when it is necessary.

Nicaragua is also a test for the Cuban leadership, the Fidelistas — a test of their ability to give revolutionary leadership in Latin America.

Finally, Nicaragua is a test for the Fourth International — whether the world Trotskyist movement can mobilise an international campaign of solidarity and defence, and thus help the Nicaraguan revolution advance. No sectarianism or factionalism can be allowed to stand in the way of our identification with and defence of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The Sandinistas have a slogan, a quote from Sandino, whose meaning they feel very deeply. They say that 'the sons of Sandino neither sell out nor give up. They will be free or dead'.

That is the commitment they are making here inside Nicaragua. They are organising and educating the workers and peasants, the entire young generation, to prepare to give their lives to free Nicaragua and through that to help the Latin American and world revolution.

They must know that they will have the Fourth International at their side, that Trotskyist parties around the world will organise to help them and stand with them along the road to the second workers' state in Latin America.

SOURCE: *The Militant*, 24.8.79

**The USFI published a new statement on Nicaragua on August 15th. In contrast to the July 4th statement, this statement made no criticism of the FSLN leadership, nor any call for a political struggle independent of that leadership; on the contrary, by citing as "the factor that determines the future of the Nicaraguan revolution", the upsurge of the masses and "the evolution of consciousness of the leadership of the mass movement itself", it implicitly relegated the tasks of Trotskyists to organising solidarity and hoping for a favourable evolution of the FSLN. It put forward Cuba as a model for the best development of the revolution "through to the end", implying that if the Sandinistas, like the Fidelistas, were to go forward to overthrow capitalism without a full, conscious working-class self-mobilisation, then no supplementary Trotskyist struggle for that conscious class mobilisation, for the direct power of workers' councils and for a revolutionary international policy, would be necessary.**

**The August 15th statement concluded:**

FOLLOWING THE Cuban road outlined by the Second Declaration of Havana, the road of permanent revolution, is the way for the Nicaraguan toilers to consolidate their victory.

In order to resist the pressures of Washington, to assert its complete independence of the imperialists, to press forward the agrarian reform, to expropriate all imperialist property and the big holdings of the national bourgeoisie, to assure control by the workers over industry and over domestic and foreign trade — to do these things the Cuban revolution had to break with the bourgeoisie, put an end to the coalition government installed in 1959, and set out on the course charted by the new workers' and peasants' government based on the armed and mobilised masses and organised by the July 26 Movement. In this way the Cubans were able to carry the revolution through to the end — the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers' state.

The road to socialist revolution in Nicaragua is mined with obstacles. Imperialist pressures and attacks will oblige the FSLN leadership to manoeuvre. The difficulties created by the lack of food and goods of all kinds will compel this leadership to try to gain time.

But these obstacles can be overcome, as the example of Cuba has shown, if the tremendous power and energy of the masses is organised.

The example of the Cuban revolution showed the close relationship between the upsurge and mobilisation of the exploited and oppressed classes, the development of their consciousness according to the rhythms imposed by the revolution, and the evolution of consciousness of the leadership of the mass movement itself.

This will also be the factor that determines the future of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The Fourth International calls on the mass parties and organisations of the workers' movement to build the broadest possible international movement — united and non-exclusionary — in support of the struggle of the Nicaraguan people and the fighters of the FSLN, whose courage has become a most precious heritage of the world proletariat.

Immediate aid to Nicaragua!

Imperialist hands off!

No threats against Cuba!

Solidarity with the Nicaraguan Revolution!

SOURCE: *The Militant*, 24.8.79.

**Colombian supporters of the dissident Bolshevik Faction in the USFI had organised a 'Simon Bolivar Brigade' to go to Nicaragua. This Brigade was expelled by the Sandinista authorities for its political activity. An August 21st statement by the Political Committee of the SWP denounced, not the expulsion, but the Brigade. The argument was couched in the**

**form of an attack on the bourgeois press, but relied on a notion of the sort always used when 'unity' is made a slogan against the left: that the demands of solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution exclude political differentiation from the Sandinistas.**

THE IMPERIALIST enemies of the revolution in Nicaragua have opened a concerted international campaign to pressure the Sandinista leaders, to isolate the revolution from its supporters and potential supporters, and to divide and confuse the forces organised in solidarity with the revolution.

Three articles that recently appeared in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and were picked up by papers across the country, convey the line the State Department and top circles of the ruling rich are promoting. Articles with the identical line have appeared in major capitalist dailies in Europe and in Latin America.

The three items are: an editorial in the August 15 *Times* entitled 'Crosswinds in Nicaragua'; an August 20 piece by *Times* special correspondent Richard J Meislin in Managua, titled 'Adversity forges unity among rebel Nicaraguan leaders'; and an August 21 *Post* article by Marlise Simons, also in Managua, titled 'Nicaragua expels Trotskyist group in crackdown'.

Contrary to previous reports by *Times* correspondents, Meislin writes: 'In Managua, the perception that the Sandinist military leadership, and not the five highest members of the civilian junta, was running the country, which was prevalent in diplomatic circles and among some junta members themselves only two weeks ago, has virtually disappeared'.

Simons' article begins: 'Despite the revolutionary euphoria of the past months, the first signs of organised opposition to Nicaragua's new government are coming from the extreme left and not, as widely anticipated, from conservative businessmen'.

'At the same time, the government's first act of political impatience has been to expel some sixty Latin American Trotskyists who were charged with being 'counter-revolutionaries' and 'creating problems for the Sandinista revolution'.

'Although the government is anxious not to disappoint popular expectations of change, it seemed determined to resist extremist pressure for sudden, radical measures that could frighten both the domestic and foreign private sectors and retard economic reconstruction'.

That this is the line the State Department wants the 'responsible' capitalist press to take is underlined by Simons: 'Some US diplomats here agree that several reports in the US media have been 'irresponsible', or 'distorting the truth'. This applies, they say, to clichés about 'the new Cuba' and 'rising anti-Americanism'.

This is certainly not objective news reporting on the contradictions in the Nicaraguan revolution. By asserting that the 'civilian junta', which includes bourgeois figures, is in command as against the Sandinistas, by asserting that 'conservative businessmen' are the mainstay of the revolution and left 'extremists' are the enemy of it, these mouthpieces for the State Department are giving clear warning to the Sandinista fighters: *this is the way it has got to be* — the revolution is a *bourgeois* revolution and must stay within *bourgeois* limits.

In warning of the 'extremist' danger to the revolution both Simons and Meislin are very precise. They point to any measures that 'could frighten both the domestic and foreign private sectors'. As an example, Meislin singles out the proposal that workers be paid back pay 'for the two months the country was at war. It is money the government has promised the workers but that few of the hard-pressed employers have been able to pay'.

Simon and Meislin utilise the activities of the 'Simon Bolivar Brigade' in Nicaragua (the 'Trotskyists' Simons refers to) as a convenient target. But their warning is directed squarely against the Sandinistas. Their message is that any measures the new leadership has to take against either the native or foreign capitalists to advance the interests of the Nicaraguan masses will be considered 'extremism' by Washington.

These are not idle threats. Washington is backing them up by making desperately needed aid contingent upon acceptance of political concessions. If these concessions prove insufficient they are holding in reserve the threat of military intervention, possibly through the Somocista National Guard units that withdrew to El Salvador and Honduras.

The fact is Washington has reneged on its promises to send the necessary aid. For decades it armed and backed the Somoza dictatorship. Now that the Nicaraguan people face a desperate situation caused by the massive destruction inflicted on them by that dictatorship, Washington cruelly withholds aid to blackmail the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan masses.

Simons drives the knife home. 'In recent days, leaders of the Sandinista command and junta members have said privately they fear they may be caught in a vicious circle: they require fast massive foreign assistance to ensure that moderation prevails, yet Western governments appear to be withholding funds until they can be sure that they are not financing 'a new Cuba'.

The *Times* editorially advises Congress not to get in the way of this blackmail plan by placing any restrictions on the State Department's manoeuvres:

'No one can say that Nicaragua will not go the Cuban route but it is significant that the junta is pressing for American economic help. The legislation needed to expand American aid programmes must pass a Congress in which diehard Somoza supporters command key [congressional] committees. Doubtless they will fight every outburst about 'Yankee Imperialism' as proof that Nicaragua is undeserving, in turn confirming the leftist view that America is an implacable antagonist. It will be a test of American maturity to keep extremists on all sides from fulfilling their own dire prophecies'.

In her article, Simons utilises the Simon Bolivar Brigade to launch an attack on Trotskyism. This attack is designed to further one of Washington's key objectives: to divide and thus weaken the international solidarity movement with the Nicaraguan revolution.

The Simon Bolivar Brigade was organised by the Colombian PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores — Socialist Workers' Party) under the direction of an international grouping known as the 'Bolshevik Faction', led by Nahuel Moreno.

The Bolshevik Faction, most of whose members belong to sections or sympathising organisations of the Fourth International, claims adherence to the Fourth International. However, it has its own international structure, finances and discipline. It sets its own policies without regard for the policies decided by the elected leadership bodies of the Fourth International.

In the case of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, the Bolshevik Faction never consulted the Fourth International about this project or about the policies the Brigade followed. These policies ran counter to the policies decided by the leadership bodies of the Fourth International.

Through the Simon Bolivar Brigade the Bolshevik Faction led young militants from several Latin American countries — people who wanted to help the fight against Somoza — into a sectarian adventure. Masquerading as a section of the Sandinista front (FSLN), the Simon Bolivar Brigade entered Nicaragua from outside to engage in its own organising efforts along the lines of 'outflanking' the Sandinistas on the left. Their tactic was to up the ante on what the Sandinistas were saying, trying in this way to build a counterforce to them.

This grotesque idea — that people from the outside can manoeuvre to capture the leadership of the revolution from those who have emerged in the course of the struggle — has nothing whatever to do with Trotskyism, revolutionary socialism.

The unfortunate episode of the Simon Bolivar Brigade was just what the Carter administration was waiting for. This is why the *Washington Post*, which is not noted for featuring news about Trotskyism, splashed Simons' articles on the front page.

The incident gave Simons the opportunity to smear all proponents of the socialist road in Nicaragua, as we have noted. It serves two other functions as well.

The first is to falsely portray the Sandinistas as bourgeois liberals, or at least in the tow of bourgeois liberals. This is sucker bait for inexperienced revolutionists. The purpose is to sow confusion among working class forces around the world, who would be less inclined, if this were true, to wage a campaign in solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution.

These articles give the impression that a solidarity campaign among the toiling masses outside Nicaragua is not necessary, that the imperialists will provide the necessary aid, and that there is no real imperialist threat. At the same time they try to create this impression, the imperialists keep the economic squeeze on the Nicaraguan people.

The second function is to seek to divide the solidarity movement. By smearing Trotskyism, they hope to make it more difficult for Trotskyists around the world to help organise the solidarity campaign which the Fourth International has called for.

In this country, the obvious aim is to try to isolate the Socialist Workers' Party, which, as the government is well aware, just held a national convention which launched a campaign to help build a broad solidarity movement with other forces. This movement will be demanding, among other things, that Washington immediately send massive aid to Nicaragua.

The ruling class's objective is furthered by Simons' unfounded assertion that there are 'some Americans' in the Simon Bolivar Brigade. In fact there was not a single US Trotskyist in the group.

The deadly objective of the imperialist bourgeoisie is clear: to bring massive economic pressure to bear against Nicaragua, while at the same time to lull, confuse, and divide the Nicaraguan solidarity movement. Should this be insufficient to block further advances of the Nicaraguan revolution, the imperialists hope these tactics will isolate the revolution from the toilers of the world. This would open the way to military attacks against the revolution.

Against the machinations of the imperialists, the Socialist Workers Party calls on working people and all others who are for fair play for Nicaragua to unite in a broad and non-exclusionary movement in support of the struggle of the Nicaraguan people and their leaders in the FSLN.

Immediate aid to Nicaragua with no strings attached!

Imperialist hands off!

Solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution!

SOURCE: *The Militant*, 31.8.79

**On September 3rd a delegation of the USFI in Nicaragua made a statement expressly approving the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade. The Stalinist-type argument was used that the expulsion was justified because "all activities which seek today to create divisions between the mobilised masses and the FSLN are contrary to the interests of the revolution".**

THROUGH a heroic popular insurrection under the revolutionary leadership of the FSLN, the Nicaraguan people have overthrown the bloody Somoza dictatorship, which had the direct backing of the United States.

The Nicaraguan working masses, women, youth and FSLN fighters have thus provided an irreplaceable example to the peoples around the world who are fighting the oppression and exploitation of imperialist rule.

Under the banner of the Sandinista movement, the people of Nicaragua today are continuing their struggle to safeguard the independence of their homeland and to establish a society where social and economic justice will reign, in which there will be no place for exploiters and oppressors.

Faced with their inevitable defeat, the imperialists and Somoza did not hesitate to resort to genocide and massive destruction of the country. Confronted with the gigantic tasks of the revolution, the Nicaraguan people under the leadership of the FSLN, are showing the same courage and determination they did in the struggle against the dictatorship.



It is the duty of all revolutionary and democratic forces in the world to solidarise with the struggle of the people of Sandino and the FSLN. They should mobilise to carry out a vast international campaign with the goal of defeating any attempt at counterrevolutionary intervention, and to see that Nicaragua receives massive material aid immediately and unconditionally. The Fourth International and all its members pledge to devote their full energies to this necessary campaign of solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution.

To defend this struggle means to support the struggle whose vanguard is the FSLN. All activities which seek today to create divisions between the mobilised masses and the FSLN are contrary to the interests of the revolution.

This was the case, specifically, with the activities of the "Simon Bolivar Brigade". This group had a dual policy: to capitalise on the prestige of the FSLN, it cloaked itself with the Sandinista banner; but, at the same time, in the mass organisations its sectarian policy tried to separate the workers from their vanguard.

According to certain assertions that have appeared in the press, the activities of this group represented the attitude of our organisation toward the revolution and its leadership. This is totally false. This group acted on its own.

In a political and economic situation that required the greatest possible unity in struggle, the FSLN was right to demand that the non-Nicaraguan members of this group — which defined itself above all as a military organisation — leave the country.

Charles-André Udry  
Pedro Camejo

SOURCE: *Intercontinental Press*, 24.9.79. The article was prefaced by the following: "The following statement was given to the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Managua September 3rd by a delegation from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International consisting of Manuel Aguilar, Jean-Pierre Beauvais, Hugo Blanco, Pedro Camejo, Barry Sheppard and Charles-André Udry."

**The SWP's view that the Cuban government is dedicated to spreading socialist revolution is important to their attitude on Nicaragua. This view received its most crass expression in a SWP Political Committee statement of September 19th hailing the Havana Conference of Non-aligned Nations as a victory for the working class.**

AMERICAN working people have every reason to hail the outcome of the Sixth Summit Meeting of Non-aligned Nations in Havana. The gathering gave voice to the most burning needs and demands of peoples in the semicolonial and underdeveloped countries, who make up the great majority of the human race.

The capitalist press has dismissed the conference as "anti-American".

That is a lie. Its fire was directed at only a tiny minority of the people of this country — the owners of the big corporations, who dominate and exploit most of the world's people, including the American workers and farmers.

The conference showed that this exploiting minority is isolated as never before. And that is good news for the struggles of American working people against war, against racism, and for a better life.

The Havana summit condemned US war moves in the Middle East and Central America. It demanded independence for Puerto Rico, which is today a colony of the US. It called for removing US troops from Cuba and South Korea. It gave new inspiration to the fight for the massive international aid that the peoples of Nicaragua and Indochina desperately need to rebuild their ravaged war-torn lands.

These actions put new obstacles in the way of the Carter administration's war drive, which threatens to use American working people as cannon fodder, as it did in Vietnam.

The conference registered the hatred that hundreds of millions of people feel for apartheid, Zionism, and every other form of racist oppression. That will strengthen the fight against racist oppression and discrimination here in the United States as well.

The Cuban government, which hosted the gathering, argued forcefully for the adoption of these progressive stands. The leadership displayed by the Cubans at the conference is an extension of their anti-imperialist actions in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere.

This heroic and self-sacrificing example — not "Soviet troops" or "Soviet domination" — is the reason for the escalating US attacks on Cuba. The capitalists who run this country harbour an undying hatred for a government that in Fidel's words, cannot be bribed, bought or intimidated.

Not least of all, Washington hates the Cubans because they tell the truth to the oppressed masses of the world.

As Fidel Castro told the conference, the evils of war, poverty, underdevelopment and racial oppression are "inseparably linked in the course of history to the system of the exploitation of man by man and the tremendous greed of that system to take over the natural resources of other peoples. As we one day said at the UN, 'Halt the philosophy of plunder and the philosophy of war will be halted.'

"Socialism as a system does not require arms production for its economy. It doesn't need armies to seize the resources of other people..."

"In short, if the system is socially just, the possibilities of survival and economic and social development are incomparably greater."

War, economic misery and social catastrophes are built into the capitalist system — not only for the peoples of the colonial and ex-colonial countries but for the American working class as well.

The Vietnam war, the drive to lower workers' living standards, and near-disasters like Three Mile Island are only a taste of what the rulers of this country have in store for us if their decaying system is not replaced.

The nuclear arsenal being piled to ever greater heights by the US rulers shows that they are ready to consider the mad

act of destroying the world in order to defend their profits.

More and more workers in this country are realising that their interests lie in opposing the policies of the capitalist government at home and abroad. Their thinking is beginning to converge with the consciousness of superexploited millions in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

They are coming to the realisation that the fate of the American working people and of the peoples whose demands were voiced in Havana are completely tied together.

The rule of the rich means economic ruin, environmental destruction, and war for all of us.

Fighting together against capitalism and imperialism, we can open the road to the abolition of war, inequality, exploitation, and every form of injustice.

United, the working people of the world can build a socialist future for humanity.

SOURCE: *The Militant*, 28.9.79.



**On issues like the character of Castroism, the Havana conference, or the Government of National Reconstruction, the European USFI press had been expressing different views from the SWP. In April this year Livio Maitan, a European leader of the USFI, wrote, "Cuba's international policy today is, on the whole, part of the international policy of the Soviet bureaucracy" [IP, 23.4.79, p.423]. The French USFI paper Rouge said, "The popular masses of the so-called Third World states... have no stake in these [Havana] resolutions" [7.9.79], and "The bourgeoisie and imperialism are trying to give the government of reconstruction the full capacity to govern. This is the most immediate danger" [28.9.79].**

**But at a United Secretariat meeting on October 1st, the SWP line on Nicaragua was adopted as official USFI policy.**

**The resolution on Nicaragua approved [despite certain qualifications] the coalition with the bourgeoisie in the government of National Reconstruction by saying that to demand the removal of the bourgeois ministers would be an ultra-left move, provoking too-rapid confrontation. And it stated as clearly as possible that the USFI had no perspective of building a Trotskyist party or faction in Nicaragua, but only of acting as "loyal militants" in the FSLN.**

**The central political sections of the resolution were as follows:**

8. ... MANOEUVRING TO gain the time to consolidate the CDSs [Sandinista Defence Committees] and CST [Sandinista Workers' Federation], to set up a mass youth organisation (whose involvement in the struggle against the dictatorship was decisive) fits into a correct policy of preparing for future battles with the forces of counter-revolution. No headlong plunge into ultra-leftism can replace this preparation, which is necessary to raise the consciousness of the masses. For it is the masses themselves who would be the main victims of any attempt to precipitate a premature confrontation.

The tempo will be dictated, to a large extent, by the logic of the conflicts involved in solving the social and economic crisis in the interests of the toilers, and by the danger of

imperialist intervention. But preparing the masses through their own struggles to understand the inevitability of this confrontation — and doing so without adventuristically forcing the rhythm of the class struggle in its international context — is one of the most important and difficult tasks of the leadership of the revolution.

The unavoidable confrontation with imperialism is exactly what the FSLN leadership is feverishly preparing for. It has correctly devoted a large part of its energy to building an army, the Sandinist People's Army (EPS) — initially based on the 'regular' guerilla troops and on the incorporation of a section of the popular militias.

The Somozaist National Guard, with thousands of men, is waiting on the borders; it can be beefed up by CIA-recruited mercenaries and get support from the CONDECA (Central American Defence Council) military forces. Only a strong and efficient regular army can reduce the human cost of repulsing direct or indirect intervention by imperialism and its local allies.

The popular militias in the neighbourhoods remain an important element of the revolution's defence system. The leadership of the FSLN has forcefully taken the offensive to defend the militias against the campaign launched by *La Prensa* concerning 'abuses' by militia members. The FSLN has declared that it wants universal military training for youth and workers conducted in the barracks of the Sandinist People's Army.

The Sandinist People's Army and the popular militias — led, trained and disciplined — are complementary to one another. Both are needed to respond to sabotage and military operations of all kinds. Nicaragua is geographically vulnerable to an armed invasion by counterrevolutionary forces.

Any plans the bourgeoisie may have of trying to consolidate a capitalist state and relaunch a rationalised capitalist economy are more difficult to realise because of the total replacement of the old army by the FSLN troops. For this reason the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, together with the rulers of various Latin American countries, will try to 'regularise' the Sandinist People's Army by offering to train the bulk of its officer corp in the military academies of Panama, Venezuela, or Mexico. The FSLN publicly rebuffed Carter's 'offer' to initiate this process through bases in Panama.

In order to accomplish their strategic goals, the FSLN leadership places high priority on building a vanguard party, rooted in the masses, organised through the CDSs.

The consolidation of the gains of the toiling masses in a workers' state based on centralised workers', soldiers' and peasants' committees is intimately connected to progress in the construction of a revolutionary socialist proletarian party within which the political vanguard of the Nicaraguan working class can debate out and decide the most important questions facing the revolution.

The character and history of the leadership of the FSLN as well as its role in the first phase of the revolution show that it would be an error to place any a priori limit beyond which decisive sectors of the FSLN cannot go as the process of permanent revolution unfolds.

9. The victorious popular insurrection tore apart the Somozaist bourgeois state structure and destroyed its central pillar, the National Guard. However, a decayed bourgeois state remains whose fundamental laws protect private ownership of the means of production (industry and land), hence capitalist accumulation.

The bourgeoisie has its economic organisations (chambers of commerce and industry and various employers' associations) which are supported by their counterparts in Central America and international financial institutions.

They own the country's main daily paper (*La Prensa*) and own and operate several radio stations; they are getting support from the Catholic hierarchy; and they are rebuilding their political parties, the Social Democrats, the Social Christians, and the Democratic Conservatives. They have a presence in the government, ministries, and central bank, and even have a finger in the FSLN.

The bourgeois camp faces the growing power of the CDSs, the popular militias, the CST, and the ATC [Association of Field Workers]. The prestige of the FSLN is based on these strengthened mass organisations. It is intensifying its education and propaganda campaign through control of the daily *Barricada*, the only national TV network, and several radio stations.

Through large-scale nationalisations and the implementation of the agrarian reform, the economic and social power of the bourgeoisie has been weakened. Most importantly, the leadership of the FSLN totally and directly controls the armed forces, the Sandinist People's Army.

The FSLN, whose authority and prestige among the masses is undisputed, holds the real political decision-making power. This reflects the social relationship of forces, the FSLN's role in reinforcing and leading the mass organisations, and their total leadership of the army and militia.

The place and role of the GRNN [Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction] must be understood in the context of the present transitional phase in Nicaragua. While governmental decisions cannot be made without the consent of the leadership of the FSLN, it would be an error to reduce the bourgeois presence in this government to mere decoration. They get support from four sources: the native exploiting classes, which are trying to reorganise; imperialist institutions, which hope to slow down the advance of the revolution while the counter-revolution on the economic, diplomatic and military planes is prepared; the national bourgeoisies in Latin America, who desire, above all, to prevent a new Cuba; and the international apparatus of the Social Democracy, which is a political tool of imperialism, especially for the European powers.

Progress toward the establishment of a workers' state will be reflected in a realignment of social forces that will have repercussions in the composition of the government, including a break with bourgeois forces, and even shifts within the FSLN itself.

10. Revolution and counter-revolution are confronting one another in Nicaragua. In the near future, three different attempts to stall and then brutally reverse the revolution will converge, complement each other, or be jointly organised.

The first attempt is the preparation for a military intervention from the neighbouring countries, through the proliferation of sabotage or the formation of a counter-revolutionary 'guerilla' force.





The second attempt — organised by imperialism and some Latin American bourgeoisies — will be to take advantage of the urgent need for food, financial, technical, and economic aid in general. The pressures will be exerted in many ways. First of all, the imperialists seek to change the relationship of forces in various governmental and non-governmental institutions (role of the central bank, place and role of the bourgeois ministers, etc.) In addition, aid programmes may not only have strings attached, but may be channelled to specific sectors of the economy with the goal of reinvigorating a section of the bourgeoisie (for example, construction, an important sector that is still privately owned). Finally, the aid will be doled out in such a way as to make it appear that imperialism is not trying to strangle the revolution. But aid doled out with an eyedropper is part of a deliberate strategy to bide time until accelerating social and economic difficulties provoke a growing discontent and weaken the popular support and prestige of the Sandinistas. This is the precondition for any potentially successful political and military counterattack.

The third angle of attack is taking shape within Nicaragua itself. Using every weapon of economic sabotage at their disposal, all sections of the ruling classes will seek to prevent the liquidation of an economy based on private ownership.

Among the middle peasants, and even the small peasants, industrialists and latifundists will try to find allies to consolidate a social base of support.

At the present time, having lost control over events since the middle of July, the bourgeoisie is carrying on a political campaign to slow down the revolutionary process and reassert its role. This offensive is focused on trying to actually implement the 'constitution of the Republic', which reflects the agreements signed in June. Their goal is to make the country's legal institutions into the sole real decision-making centres. They call for the 'institutionalisation' of a 'Council of State' and demand that the Supreme Court assert its power. In this way they hope to reduce, before obliterating, the power of the CDSs, militias, the joint national leadership of the FSLN, etc.

Tomorrow, if economic dislocation produces a more tense political climate, the bourgeoisie will not wage a battle to 'institutionalise' the popular organs of power but to hold 'free elections' and set up parliamentary institutions.

The bourgeoisie understands quite well that the anti-capitalist struggle combined with the fight against imperialism has replaced the struggle against the dictatorship. On the social and political level, this means that the working class and agricultural labourers and the poor peasantry will spearhead future developments in the revolution. Sabotage by the bosses, a capitalist investment strike, hoarding and speculation with respect to food produces, and refusal to sow and harvest will need to be met by an extension of workers' control over production, greater control over distribution by the neighbourhood committees, and extension of the agrarian reform. It is through the CDSs, the CST, and the ATC that these battles can best be organised and led.

'Institutionalisation', and tomorrow the campaign for 'free elections', are tried and tested methods of the bourgeois counter-revolution when faced with the social dynamic and its organisational expression — the consolidation of the mass organisations.

To raise the slogan of 'free elections' for a constituent assembly today amounts to blocking the proletariat's assertion of its anti-capitalist strength, to counterposing the establishment of bourgeois parliamentary institutions to the development and nationwide centralisation of organs of power of the popular masses. These institutions can only facilitate the bourgeois political counter-offensive, derail the mass movement, and break the dialectical interrelationship that has been established between the activity of the masses and the leftward evolution of the FSLN leadership.

To focus political intervention today on the slogan 'all bourgeois ministers out of the government!' would likewise be to succumb to the sectarian temptation of applying an abstract schema. Such an orientation fails to correctly assess the far-reaching break in continuity that has taken place in terms of military power, the location of the real centre of power, the character of governmental measures up to now, and the experiences necessary for the consciousness and organisation of the masses to develop. Such a slogan amounts to deliberately choosing, today, a direct confronta-

support the FSLN.

American imperialism is already organising an intervention to prevent the birth of a new Cuba in Latin America. It will need the more or less open complicity and participation of the Latin American bourgeoisies.

To stay the criminal hand of the American government and its henchmen and the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres of the Latin American bourgeoisies, a vast solidarity and aid movement must be built through the broadest possible outreach and education work, and through the proliferation of united-front initiatives.

Members of the Fourth International in all countries of the world, first and foremost those in the Latin American sections, and their comrades who are struggling in the very heart of the bastion of Yankee imperialism — will be able to revive the example of proletarian internationalism provided by the movement against the imperialist war in Vietnam, which contributed to the resounding political defeat inflicted on Washington.

Economic aid and food are also weapons in the arsenal of revenge the international bourgeoisie will use against a revolution that has inherited the ruins of a bloody dictatorship!

The unified solidarity and aid movement must use every means to provide material help to Nicaragua.

It will demand that the mass working class organisations, humanitarian and church groups, contribute their resources to meet the immediate needs of the Nicaraguan people.

It will expose governments that indulge in humanitarian rhetoric while doling out sums that are ludicrous by comparison with the needs of a population deprived of food and medical care. It will demand that these governments immediately provide massive aid, unconditionally and with no strings attached, to the authorities of free Nicaragua.

The organisations of the Fourth International, in building the solidarity and aid movement, will strive to create a united front of all parties and trade unions in order to forge the chain of class solidarity with the Nicaraguan workers. Within this framework, they are renewing the urgent appeal to the workers' states that was made by Che Guevara for the defence of the Vietnamese revolution. Following Cuba's example, all the workers' states must provide massive material aid to the Nicaraguan revolution with no strings attached!

By furthering this campaign of solidarity and aid, by rejecting any routinist or passive attitude, the Fourth International can best contribute to defence of the revolution on the march in Nicaragua.

By explaining its programme and ideas the Fourth International places itself firmly on the side of the FSLN's battle to ensure the victory of the socialist revolution.

By acting as loyal militants in the framework of the organisation which led the overthrow of Somoza and leads this revolution, the members of the Fourth International in Nicaragua will defend the fundamental ideas of revolutionary Marxism. For these ideas reflect the interests of the workers and poor peasants and point to the strategic tasks to be carried out that can culminate in the establishment of a workers' state based on the democracy of workers' and peasants' councils.

SOURCE: *Intercontinental Press*, 22.10.79.

**The United Secretariat meeting also adopted a resolution on the Simon Bolivar Brigade. The resolution condemned the Brigade, adding the new excuse for its expulsion that it was a military, not political, organisation. [This had been just hinted at in the September 3rd USFI delegation statement; but, as was made plain in the earlier accounts, the Brigade was expelled for political, and not for military, activity]. A final clause suggested the Sandinistas could have dealt with "the problem" of the Simon Bolivar Brigade better than by expulsion. [This clause, according to Lettre d'Informations Ouvrières, 10.10.79, was added as an amendment by Ernest Mandel against the opposition of the SWP].**



Popular militias which sprang up during the revolution are being disarmed while the Sandinistas build a small professional army.

tion on the national and international level, based solely on the correct observation that representatives of antagonistic social forces exist within the governmental structure.

In the struggle to build a workers' and peasants' government, forces that to many appeared united in the struggle against the dictatorship will openly confront each other. But the coming confrontations can be most effectively prepared for today by explaining and supporting the government measures that help meet the needs of the toiling population and promote the organisation of the masses...

13. The Fourth International and its sections must mobilise all their forces to defend the Nicaraguan revolution and

IN AUGUST the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) expelled the non-Nicaraguan members of the 'Simon Bolivar Brigade' from Nicaragua. The world capitalist press has portrayed the Simon Bolivar Brigade (SBB) as 'Trotskyist'. The United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the worldwide Trotskyist organisation, is issuing this statement to clarify its relation to the Simon Bolivar Brigade.

The Simon Bolivar Brigade was formed in June of this year by the Colombian Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST — Socialist Workers Party). Its ostensible purpose was to recruit a military brigade to fight with the FSLN

in the final offensive against the Somoza regime.

Although individuals who passed through the brigade found their way to the front and were integrated into the FSLN units, the brigade as a unit entered Nicaragua after the fall of Managua. Sections of the brigade went to Managua, Bluefields, and other cities.

The Simon Bolivar Brigade not only presented itself as part of the FSLN, but claimed to be acting for the FSLN and its leadership. However, it never in fact accepted the discipline of the FSLN, but instead set its own course. Falsely posing as an armed unit of the FSLN, the brigade endeavoured to impose its own leadership on workers involved in organising unions in various factories, in some cases through authoritarian and manipulative methods. It even introduced the outrageous rule of 'double affiliation' of these unions to both the Sandinista Workers' Federation (CST) and the SBB! This activity received broad notoriety in Nicaragua. In Bluefields, a town on the east coast largely cut off from the rest of the country where there were few FSLN cadres, the brigade presented itself as the FSLN leadership of the city and the surrounding area. The FSLN was obliged to send an armed unit into Bluefields to establish its authority.

Faced with this situation, the FSLN leadership publicly called for a meeting with the Simon Bolivar Brigade. The Brigade responded by organising a demonstration of workers near the meeting site. The workers involved were brought to this demonstration under the false pretence that they were there to discuss their problems with the FSLN leadership.

The FSLN leadership held two meetings with the Simon Bolivar Brigade, lasting many hours, to try to resolve the situation. They proposed that the brigade become a disciplined and loyal part of the FSLN, as an international brigade. But the brigade leadership refused to place itself under the discipline of the FSLN, despite its public stance that it is a military, and not political organisation. Consequently, the FSLN leadership expelled the brigade's non-Nicaraguan members. They were sent to Panama, as a first step on their way. When the Torrijos regime utilised the opportunity to arrest and beat members of the brigade before sending them on, which we condemn and denounce, the FSLN leadership issued a statement that it had not arrested or mistreated any member of the brigade, and that its intention was solely to expel them from Nicaragua.

The Colombian PST is a sympathising organisation of the Fourth International. However, the entire project of setting up the Simon Bolivar Brigade was not done under the guidance of, or in collaboration with, the elected leadership bodies of the Fourth International. It set its own course, against the policies of the Fourth International.

The disregard for and contempt of the Fourth International on the part of the leaders of the Simon Bolivar Brigade was exemplified by their refusal to allow a representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International who was present to attend the meetings between the FSLN and the Simon Bolivar Brigade, although this was agreeable to the FSLN.

Documents of the Colombian PST state that the project of the Simon Bolivar Brigade was largely conceived and executed as a factional manoeuvre against the FSLN and the majority of the Fourth International. The Colombian PST placed their own factional interests above those of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The behaviour of the brigade could provide a pretext to forces opposed to the advance of the revolution to advocate the use of repression in the workers' movement to settle political differences, against the policy of the FSLN.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International condemns and repudiates the Simon Bolivar Brigade and its activities.

At the same time, the Fourth International considers the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade from Nicaragua to be a mistake. We don't want to minimise the fraudulent and irresponsible character of the Simon Bolivar Brigade operation. But we believe that the prestige and political authority of the FSLN are sufficiently great to have enabled it to solve the problem of the Simon Bolivar Brigade by using public criticism and condemnation.

SOURCE: *Intercontinental Press*, 22.10.79.

**The resolution on Nicaragua was also followed up by a resolution spelling out the practical consequences for Central American Trotskyists.**

IN SEVERAL countries of Central America where the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship has created a new context for the class struggle, there is no section or sympathising organisation recognised by the Fourth International. In light of this fact, the United Secretariat resolves that in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, in Guatemala and in Honduras, all the political activity of the members of the Fourth International or those who accept the leadership of the Fourth International, should be undertaken under the direct control of the leadership of the U.Sec. on the basis of the political line adopted by it.

The OST of Costa Rica and the Bolshevik Faction in particular are instructed to cease all activity in Nicaragua, including the construction of organisations, and to limit themselves to activities undertaken in collaboration with the U.Sec. and on the basis of the line of the International.

As the resolution on the Nicaraguan revolution adopted by the U.Sec. of 1st October 1979 outlined, all Nicaraguans who are members or sympathisers of the Fourth International should act 'as loyal militants in the framework of the organisation which led the overthrow of Somoza and leads this revolution... to defend the fundamental ideas of revolutionary Marxism'.

SOURCE: *Lettre d'Informations Ouvrières*, 10.10.79, checked with English version circulated inside IMG. Note: both in the French and English versions, the final clause: to act 'as loyal militants... to defend the fundamental ideas...' is not an accurate quotation from the United Secretariat resolution on Nicaragua, which states 'By acting as loyal militants... the members of the FI in Nicaragua will defend the fundamental ideas...' [English version], or 'It is by acting as loyal militants... that the militants organised in the FI in Nicaragua will defend...' [French version, Rouge, 12.10.79].





**Another resolution threatened the leaders of the Bolshevik Faction with expulsion from the USFI if they do not carry out the instruction to cease independent activity in Nicaragua.**

THE ESTABLISHMENT and the activity of the Simon Bolivar Brigade as a vehicle for political intervention in the Nicaraguan revolution represents a qualitative new stage in the evolution of the Bolshevik Faction. This operation was an open and very grave breach of the democratic centralism of the Fourth International as defined by its statutes. Comrades who are members of the Bolshevik Faction in several countries organised a large-scale, public, international operation independent of the elected bodies of the Fourth International, outside their control and discipline, and on a line contrary to that adopted by these bodies. They placed the discipline of their faction above that of the Fourth International in the midst of an unfolding revolution.

The members of the Bolshevik Faction and the organisations they lead must immediately halt any activity in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras except for that decided upon by the leading bodies of the Fourth International. They must place themselves under the discipline of the United Secretariat.

Members of the Bolshevik Faction obviously retain all their rights to fight inside the Fourth International for their political positions, including those on Nicaragua.

The leadership of the Bolshevik Faction is once again urged to participate in the work and responsibilities of the Secretariat in accordance with their numerical weight in the membership of the Fourth International.

If the comrades supporting the Bolshevik Faction decide to maintain their faction following the World Congress, they must abide by the statutory rule that only individuals, not groups or sections, can decide to join a faction or tendency, whether national or international.

The U.Sec. reaffirms its intention to recommend that the coming World Congress recognise only one section or sympathising organisation in each country. Within this framework we reiterate our recommendation that the PST be recognised as the Argentine section of the Fourth International.

If the Bolshevik Faction fails to act according to the line adopted at this meeting of the U.Sec., and continues to function as a public faction that places its discipline above that of the elected bodies of the Fourth International, the U.Sec. will recommend that the declared leadership of the Bolshevik Faction be expelled from the Fourth International by the coming World Congress of the FI.

SOURCE: published internally in the IMG, checked against French version in *Lettre d'Informations Ouvrières*, 10.10.79



Jack Barnes [left] and Nahuel Moreno

**The United Secretariat meeting rejected a resolution from the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency. This resolution focused on the USFI's failure to condemn the Government of National Reconstruction, and the SWP's hailing of the Havana Conference.**

THE TEXT dated 15th August 1979, published in several organs of the International (*The Militant*, *IP*, *Rouge*...) was neither discussed nor adopted by the United Secretariat, which constitutes the only regular leadership of the International between meetings of the International Executive Committee.

The United Secretariat notes that it was wrong to publish this text as a 'declaration of the Fourth International'.

The United Secretariat reaffirms that the only document committing the Fourth International and reflecting its orientation on the proletarian revolution in Nicaragua is, as of now, the declaration regularly adopted by the United Secretariat, dated 4th July 1979.

The United Secretariat has noted the article by comrades Murphy, Camejo and Rodriguez entitled 'Workers and peasants fight for a new Nicaragua', and published in *The Militant* of 24th August 1979.

In this article they write, in relation to the 'government of national reconstruction', "So in form it is a coalition government with the Sandinistas in a minority. The reality is different. The reality is that Nicaragua today is being run by the Joint National Directorate of the FSLN, made up of nine Sandinista commanders. All nine are Fidelistas. ... Real power is in the hands of the FSLN".

While affirming that "A workers' and peasants' government has not yet been established", this same article concludes, "The power that exists today in Nicaragua is a revolutionary power". *The Militant* of 31st August draws the conclusion from such a characterisation, political support to the sitting government and to its activity of 'national reconstruction': "We think that the Sandinista government that is trying to get Nicaragua on its feet is doing a good job of it".

The United Secretariat affirms that this analysis, which introduces a move towards revision on the bourgeois nature and the counter-revolutionary role of coalition governments and leads to political support for the government of national reconstruction, runs counter to the programme of the Fourth International in relation to the revolution in Nicaragua as it was outlined in the United Secretariat's resolution of 4th July, which correctly affirmed: "The government of national reconstruction is a card played by the bourgeoisie to try to prevent the overthrow of Somoza from leading to the



Castro: he calls for a "national reconstruction programme with the participation of every sector of Nicaraguan society" but SWP thinks he wants to help oust the bourgeoisie.

break-up of the socioeconomic structures of capitalism and the bourgeois state apparatus", and concludes by calling for the formation of a government "that excludes all representatives of the ruling classes and of imperialism".

The United Secretariat has noted the articles which appeared in *The Militant* and *IP* in relation to the Conference of the 'non-aligned' powers and the Cuban policy at this conference. Aside from the publication without any political differentiation of Castro's speech, these articles characterise the Cuban policy as "a stinging rebuke to US imperialism" (*IP*, 24.9.79, p.890) and contrasts it, point by point, to the Yugoslav position, analysed as "the maintenance of the nonaligned movement's 'traditional' stance — that is, a policy of acquiescence to imperialism". In addition it is asserted that "Cuba's foreign policy is the opposite of Moscow's 'détente' policy" (*IP*, 24th September 1979, p.891).

These analyses constitute a distortion of the reality of Cuban policy as it was openly expressed in Castro's speech itself. The speech expressly gave political solidarity to several bourgeois regimes (including Iran, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Algeria, and the government of national reconstruction in Nicaragua) or imperialist regimes (Spain).

The speech calls for "friendship" with the "industrialised countries of western Europe", solidarises itself with the bureaucracy in the name of the Stalinist slogan of the "socialist community", gives active support to "peace, détente, peaceful coexistence and disarmament between the USSR and the United States", in particular expressing its "satisfaction" as to the SALT II agreements between the USSR and the United States "as well as other steps in this field".

In addition, the *IP* articles, which characterise as "anti-imperialist" a Cuban policy which is expressly and completely inscribed within the very framework of the 'non-aligned movement', are led by this fact to give an analysis of that movement which abandons the most elementary class criteria: "The coming together of these countries reflects the realities of the laws of the world capitalist market and the resulting economic and political conflicts with imperialism, even among the most overtly pro-imperialist member governments. It is these realities, rather than alignment or nonalignment, that defines this grouping of nations".

Such an analysis leads to denying the elementary necessity for the Fourth International to denounce this grouping as such as a reactionary organ, an association of bourgeois neo-colonial states dominated by imperialism with the approval of the bureaucracy and the participation of certain bureaucratic governments, constituting on this account one of the pivots of class collaboration and the defence of the world status quo. From these two aspects, the United Secretariat expresses its total disagreement with the line of these articles.

SOURCE: *Lettre d'Informations Ouvrières*, 10.10.79

**At the conclusion of the United Secretariat meeting, the Bolshevik Faction and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency presented a statement. This registers a 'cold split' in the USFI: the Bolshevik Faction and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency refuse to observe discipline on the basis of the liquidationist policy in Nicaragua, while the United Secretariat disavows the Bolshevik Faction and even refuses to solidarise with it against political repression by the petty-bourgeois Sandinista authorities.**

CONSIDERING THAT:

The United Secretariat has refused to condemn the positions taken by the leadership of the SWP — openly revisionist positions, breaking completely with the orientation voted by the U.Sec. of 4th July — on the nature and role of the Government of National Reconstruction, on Castro's policies, and in this connection on the Conference of non-aligned countries. By taking this attitude, the U.Sec. prevented a real debate on orientation on the only terrain where such a debate could take place, that of an indispensable return to the constitutive principles of our movement as regards the elementary necessity of the fight for the most complete political independence of the proletariat.

The resolution adopted is in no way a real orientation document, giving on the basis of our fundamental ideas a clear definition of the political tasks necessary for the con-

struction of a section of the Fourth International in Nicaragua. The resolution adopted is nothing but a cover given by the U.Sec. to all the revisionist positions taken by the leadership of the SWP and an attempt to legitimise this same orientation for the future. The real content of this orientation is support for a bourgeois government and its activity of 'national reconstruction' in the framework of a bourgeois state, total political subordination to the Castroite leadership and to the FSLN's leadership, a mere apology for their policies, the abandonment of any perspective of building a section of the Fourth International by virtue of an orientation which, far from being an entrust tactic, leads to a pure and simple dissolution of the Trotskyists into the FSLN without organisation or programme.

Comrade Jack Barnes and other leaders of the SWP have clearly declared that the Government of National Reconstruction "is and isn't bourgeois", that it should not be defined as class-collaborationist (thus, the resolution adopted says that it is a coalition government "in form"), that it would be "criminal" to do Trotskyist faction or tendency work in the FSLN, that its leadership is revolutionary and that therefore the Fourth International should apply Pablo's tactic in relation to the Algerian FLN.

The United Secretariat has decided to publicly denounce the activity of the Simon Bolivar Brigade and at the same time it has refused the most elementary duty of declaring its solidarity with the members of the Brigade who were tortured and unambiguously denouncing the collaboration of the Panamanian and Sandinista police forces in this operation.

The U.Sec. was mortally divided in relation to the elementary necessity of declaring its opposition to the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade by the Sandinista Front and the Government of National Reconstruction. The position finally adopted on this question is an act of pure form, expressed in the most moderate terms possible. Given the conditions in which it was adopted, it has been denied all political validity by several members of the U.Sec.

On the other hand, the U.Sec. decided to show complete unanimity in refusing to clearly condemn public positions giving explicit support to the Government of National Reconstruction's repression, thus showing clearly what its real political orientation is. The attempt to give a cover to this orientation by declaring in a purely formal way a disagreement with the expulsion of the Brigade, finds its true measure in this.

The U.Sec. claims to instruct Trotskyists to cease all activity in Nicaragua, including the building of organisations of the Fourth International, in favour of an orientation of pure and simple liquidation into the FSLN.

The U.Sec. is trying to make a petty-bourgeois leadership not belonging to the Trotskyist movement the judge of Fausto Amador's past errors (\*). Comrade Jack Barnes wrote in 1977 that those errors had been publicly clarified, and that the Stalinist attempt to "dig them up" had no other object than "to discredit Trotskyism and to destroy one of the groups of the Fourth International"; "all those who publicly agitate about this affair are also playing the Stalinists' game".

The motions adopted, and the rejection of those presented by the LTT and the BF, are directed towards evading political discussion on the real activity of the Fourth International in relation to the Nicaraguan revolution, a discussion which would shed full light on the abandonment of all the principles of the Fourth International in favour of the Castroite orientation that the new leadership of the SWP is trying to impose on our movement. These measures bear the mark of all the practices of Stalinism. It is impossible for militants of the Fourth International to accept such instructions, contrary to all the traditions of the revolutionary movement.

Trotskyist militants can under no circumstances abandon the fight for class political independence against petty bourgeois currents which, like the FSLN, practise collaboration with the bourgeoisie, or give political support to a bourgeois government of any sort.

Under no circumstances is there justification for abandoning the absolute imperative to build, in whatever tactical way, a section of the Fourth International.

Democratic centralism can find its political content only in the building of the Fourth International in every country, and cannot give political authority to administrative measures tending to the pure and simple destruction of political positions and positions gained in struggle which constitute gains of the battle for the Fourth International.

The motions adopted mean a total refusal to open the discussion, and those who claim to be the majority of the International have decided to organise a split in its ranks.

WE REJECT, therefore, these measures, which break with all the rules of democratic centralism, and we demand that this meeting of the U.Sec. approve the present resolution, the only one which can make the splitters led by the new Castroite leadership of the SWP back down.

We assert, also, that those who support the measures adopted are morally and politically responsible for offering in the name of the Fourth International a political cover for all the measures of police repression which have been or may be directed against the Trotskyist militants in Nicaragua and Central America.

If necessary, we will after this vote take all the necessary decisions to safeguard the unity and integrity of the Fourth International on the basis of its programme.

Therefore we call on all the parties, all the leaders, and all the militants supporting our world movement to regroup to prevent an anti-democratic World Congress being held and to guarantee a real democratic Congress with moral and political authority which can reverse the present positions liquidating our programme in Nicaragua.

SOURCE: *Lettre d'Informations Ouvrières*, 10.10.79, checked against English version published internally in IMG. The English version bears the marks of a stilted and rough translation and has been taken as less authoritative than the French version: it also lacks one complete paragraph. 'The U.Sec. was mortally divided...'. The political gist of the two versions is, however, the same. [\*] Note: Fausto Amador, a brother of the celebrated Sandinista leader Carlos Fonseca Amador [now dead], was a member of the FSLN up to 1969. In 1969 he left the FSLN and made his peace with the Somoza regime. Subsequently he came over to the USFI and is now a member of the USFI group in Costa Rica, the OST. The OST is led by the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.



## SPG busts S.Wales picket

200 POLICE including officers of the S.Wales SPG descended on Rosedale Moulding at Bedwas near Caerphilly last week on a Picket-busting operation.

This show of strength allowed the Rosedale bosses to remove vital equipment from the factory in a convoy of scab lorries. Five weeks ago, the factory, which makes plastic mouldings for the car components industry, was closed because the company claimed it was losing money in the engineers' strikes.

According to the AUEW convenor in the factory, Ivor Sibley, the company has full order books and this is borne out by a shortage of the components they make at British Leyland Llanelli.

There have been concerted attempts to break the strike. From the start the 350 strikers were refused dole by the local DHSS office — a decision only overturned by a demonstration and an appeal to the regional DHSS authorities.

Donations to the strike fund have been coming in from factory collections and the Rhymney Valley council have given £150 to the strike fund.

On Thursday 4th October, 17 lorries entered the factory and loaded up over £1/2m worth of components. Without a copper in sight, the strikers helped by a flying picket sent by a meeting of AUEW stewards who were discussing the national action in Pontypridd, prevented 10 lorries from leaving. They let down the tyres and unloaded the components, scattering them over the yard — and setting fire to some. The lorries were sent away empty leaving the pickets to build a barricade across the gates.

Since then, the police and the bosses have been itching to hit back and this is what happened two weeks later on Thursday 18th.

The police showed up in strength and refused to allow the pickets to assemble outside

the gates. Pickets were pushed aside as the scab drivers removed the valuable moulds used to make the components.

This blow to the strikers' hopes could have been avoided if the flying picket of Oct 4th had developed into a full-scale occupation of the factory but unfortunately there was hesitation at the crucial moment.

But all is not lost — despite the biggest local police action since the bakers' strike last winter, the bosses failed to get all the moulds out. We need the kind of solidarity action shown at by S.Wales trade unionists — particularly the miners — at Grunwicks at Rosedale for the moulds to stay put.

The strikers are already tracking down exactly which London depot the BRS lorries used to scab come from — and the drivers' union branch will be asked to take action against them — we don't want these scabs in the labour movement.

MARTIN BARCLAY

# WORKERS' ACTION

## Ferranti votes to stay out

WORKERS AT Ferranti in Edinburgh have decided to stay out for their claim for a 25% across-the-board pay increase. At a mass meeting last Tuesday in Edinburgh's Usher Hall, the workers accepted a recommendation from the shop stewards to reject the latest offer from management which would have meant an increase of about 17%. The management offer (which Ferranti has claimed is the last they will make) was derisory. It would have given

workers on the top grade an increase of £12.82 a week, only £3.31 more than the offer made before the strike. For the lowest paid workers, the strike would have only brought an extra £1.47 a week on top of the management's original offer. This strike is developing into a major confrontation between the workers and the Ferranti bosses. The workers have been out for 10 weeks now and this is the first strike they have ever engaged in.

The vote to stay out was very close. Even though the strike is official, many workers are feeling the effect of 10 weeks on strike pay. It is especially important for these workers not to become disillusioned with their first experience of strike action and that the bosses are defeated.

Help the Ferranti workers to win by sending messages of support to: D. Rooney, Shop Convenor, c/o AUEW House, Morrison St, Edinburgh EH3.

## UNION OFFICIALS TELL TALBOT WORKERS: 'Go back or the French will get your jobs'

A MASS meeting of 2000 Talbot workers at the Stoke (Coventry) plant on Thursday 18th voted 60-40 to go back to work, although the shop stewards' committee had unanimously recommended an indefinite continuation of the strike.

Dave Edwards, the TGWU convenor, explained that after a 15 week strike all that was being offered was £75 cash (£5 a week for 15 weeks) on top of the original offer of 5 1/2% and an incentive scheme. The grading system and the incentives offered were an insult. To go back would be a defeat.

The company was trying to blame the strikers for putting the Iran order (which is Stoke's main contract) in jeopardy. "But it isn't us who are doing that — its Peugeot-Citroen. They put aside time and money for a ten week strike to beat us into submission, and it's only now they are raising Iran. They are raising it now to frighten you and your families into ending the strike."

It was not only the company using Iran as a stick against the strikers. The next speaker was TGWU National Officer Grenville Hawley. Recommending a return to work, he argued, "If you don't go back now, you'll lose the order and the French workers will get it." Just as with the Ryton strikers, the Stoke workers were told that they may as well go back since the bosses weren't prepared to offer any more. "We have come to the end of the road with our negotiations."

After the meeting, Dave Edwards talked to Workers' Action.

"We had very good cooperation from the unions until the last three weeks, then both the AUEW and TGWU National Committee instructed the national officials to get involved to try and find a solution to the strike.

"It only became clear that the national officials were to recommend a return to work the night before the mass meeting."

On blacking: "An instruction was

issued by the TGWU nationally to stop all parts. No instruction was issued to black all Peugeot-Citroen cars. The only Peugeot-Citroen car which was a direct equivalent of Chrysler models built in Britain was the French Alpine and that was stopped."

At Newport, dockers promised to stop Talbot shipments, but on Thursday 11th 8,000 car kits for Iran got through.

"The TGWU Regional Secretary was contacted, dockers loaded the ship up but didn't complete it. They were having a mass meeting over piecework when the boat sailed. The tugboatmen seem to have got an instruction to tow the ship out and the Greek seamen finished the dockers' job."

But the strikers failed to make international links.

"We hit up against a multinational without unions. Peugeot-Citroen used this strike as an attempt to break the British workers in the same way as they have their other workforces. We must find out where the Peugeot-Citroen suppliers are and, if they are unionised, involve them in any future action.

"We have been in touch with the CFDT and CGT about unionising the French plants, but the prospects here aren't great. Any multinational involved in Britain should be legally obliged to have labour conditions elsewhere the same as in Britain."

Now the Stoke workers face a fight to save jobs.

"In December 78 there were 3800 manual workers, now only 2600 are left in the plant. Some were transferred to Ryton during the Iran crisis against their will. Many have just left."

And Dave Edwards felt that there was a lesson from the pay struggle which could be useful to future battles.

"Picketing was quite hazardous towards the end. We didn't keep the lads informed as much as we could have done, although there were mass meetings. We should have had a weekly strike bulletin as well."

RICHARD PAINE  
JEAN LANE



## No spies in the cab!

A SERIES of weekly one day strikes by lorry drivers is planned to start on Monday Nov. 5th.

The aim is to stop the government making the 'spy in the cab' tachograph compulsory in Britain's lorries. The TGWU National Commercial Transport Committee decided on Thursday 18th to recommend that all regions strike every Monday and impose a complete ban on overtime and rest day working.

They have called on other sections of the union which organise drivers, such as the Food, Drink and Tobacco trade group to support the action. Other unions (including USDAW, the URTU and the NUR) organising drivers will also be asked to join in.

The tachograph is detested by most lorry drivers. It is a device which, in its simplest form, records speed and distance against time on a removable disc. It is capable of providing a complete picture of a driver's working day: when he started, what breaks he took, what speeds he drove at, how long he took to load and unload, and what time he went home at night. It can even be adapted to record things like engine revs.

The tacho will undoubtedly be used by the police and Department of Transport Inspectors to prosecute drivers for minor breaches of speed limits and the drivers' hours legislation. But the worst aspect is that it will give the employers a complete rundown on what their drivers are doing.

Traditionally, transport managers have allowed drivers to work in their own way so long as the work gets done. Mostly out of necessity: close supervision is impossible, and the driver's opportunity to get his own back is too great. Under the tacho, all this would change, with the machine providing stricter supervision than any human foreman ever could.

In practice, at least at first, most companies would not take all the opportunities. But tacho discs could and would certainly be used to cook up the evidence to sack militants and to strengthen management's hand in trying to force through heavier delivery schedules.

Successive governments have been trying to bring in tacho for the last 11 years. But they have been discouraged by strong union opposition and a lukewarm response from the employers, who feared widespread strikes if the machine were brought in, and also balked at the cost of installing them.

In the past few years there have been protest strikes in several areas, notably Birmingham and the Grimsby district.

But in March this year the European court ruled that Britain must make the tacho compulsory, and the Tory government is committed to passing legislation this autumn to implement this by January 1982.

It will certainly take more than one-day strikes to make the government retreat this time, and the TGWU strategy is totally inadequate for

the task. In fact it is a recipe for defeat.

Given that many haulage firms are short of work at present, and that most drivers depend on a lot of overtime, often guaranteed by employers, the planned strikes will hit the drivers harder than the companies. Earnings would be cut by over half for many drivers.

To start a long term struggle on these terms, seven weeks before Christmas, has to be asking for disaster. It could well be that some of the national officials, frightened of a confrontation with the government, intend the action to be no more than a facesaver.

Only an all-out strike, involving at least the key sections of the industry, such as tankers and container haulage can beat the tacho. Militants should be organising both within the official structure of the transport unions and through unofficial liaison committees to get such a strike off the ground.

But the immediate job is to make the one-day strike on Monday November 5th the biggest success possible.

Many drivers have already given up hope of stopping the tacho. A weak response on the 5th would increase that feeling and might even mark the end of any real struggle against it. A really successful strike that day could convince them there is a real chance of winning, and would lay the basis for further, more effective action.

SIMON TEMPLE

## NEW COURT THREAT TO VAUXHALL STRIKE

VAUXHALL workers at Ellesmere Port are continuing their 8 week strike for a 25% wage increase. Last week they picketed Vauxhall dealers in the North West. They will probably continue to do so, despite some of the dealers taking out court injunctions against the convenors and threats that anyone picketing will be arrested.

They also face a number of other attacks: some strikers' wives face great difficulty in getting Social Security payments, a meeting has been called to start a wives' back-to-work movement. At the same time, the Vauxhall bosses called a meeting with the national officials and shop stewards in Coventry. Management are now hinting at a ballot of the Ellesmere Port workers. Despite a picket of several hundred workers at the meeting, Gerry Russell, of the AUEW Executive, urged the strikers to call off the picketing and return to work pending further negotiations.

The strike is clearly now at a crucial stage. Messages of support and contributions are still needed. Send to: J. Mullally, Treasurer, TGWU, Vauxhall Motors, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire.

## EVENTS

FRIDAY 26 OCTOBER. Songs of struggle from Portugal and South Africa, and political discussion with Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. Admission £1 (unwaged 60p). Organised by Portuguese Workers' Coordinating Committee.

SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER. 'Liberation' conference on Ireland, from 10am at NUR Hall, Euston Rd, London NW1. Credentials £1 from 'Liberation', 313 Caledonian Rd, N1 (01-607 0465).

SATURDAY 3 NOVEMBER. Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement conference. 10.30am to 5pm in Birmingham (Digbeth Halls). Credentials for labour movement delegates, £1 (50p unemployed) from Godfrey Webster, 99 Barclay Rd, Warley, West Midlands.

"From immigration control to 'induced repatriation'" by A. Sivanandan. Race and Class pamphlet no. 5: price 20p, from Institute of Race Relations, 247 Pentonville Rd, London N1 (send 30p to cover p&p).

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