

into a powerful machine to wreck the French "ecology" movement, one of whose primary assignments is to coopt the PCF and CGT into supporting zero-growth anti-nuclear demands. In a speech addressed to an audience of 2000 intellectuals this week, PCF General Secretary Georges Marchais affirmed his party's absolute commitment to the "continued development of technology... research and development... and fundamental and applied sciences" as the source of mankind's progress. He deplored the ecologists attacks on "the consumption soc-

iety," as nothing less than an attack on the working class's aspiration for a higher standard of living and asserted the PCF's endorsement of the "peaceful use of nuclear energy." He reaffirmed this in a speech several days later in Lorraine.

Marchais' speech underscores the resurgence in the party of the "economic section," in which are represented some of the party's most competent cadre. The PCF also announced programs this week for the development of the French machine tool and aerospace industries.

New Parliamentary Coalition Ahead?

BRITAIN

Under increasing pressure from the so-called Left faction of the Labour Party — grouped around the Tribune group and Energy Minister Tony Benn — and sections of the non-Thatcher-controlled wing of the Tory Party, the Callaghan government has suffered a wave of tactical defeats over the past two weeks which has raised the very real possibility of a fundamental political realignment by the fall. While the usual hints of early elections are being floated by the press and Liberal and Conservative party leaders, more interesting are the rumors that Callaghan may be "looking for some device even bolder than the Lib-Lab pact," in the words of the London *Spectator*, hinting at the possibility of a Parliamentary grand coalition between Labour and at least a portion of the Conservatives.

As distinct from a straightforward attempt by Tory leader Margaret Thatcher to bring down the government, paving the way for her pro-Rockefeller faction in the Conservative party to take control of Britain, the thrust of the campaign led by Benn is to break the Liberal Party-IMF control over the Callaghan government's policies.

Internationally, Benn has been vigorously pushing increased energy and related trade and cooperation with the Soviet bloc, calling for a joint East-West European energy grid and setting up vital talks for supply of western drilling technology for the critical Soviet oil and gas projects. In Britain, the three pillars of the Lib-Lab deal — direct elections to the European Parliament, the social contract, and national assemblies for Scotland and Wales (devolution) — have been singled out by Benn and the Tribune group for special assault. As a result, Callaghan has been forced to make major concessions on these issues with the result that Liberal leader David Steele warned last week that his party's pact with the Callaghan government would have to be reviewed. While announcing that no legislation on devolution would be introduced in this session due to lack of consensus within the various parties, the government has also taken the unusual step of allowing a "free vote" to all Labour Party MPs, including Cabinet ministers, on the highly volatile European elections issue after six ministers,

including Benn, and 80-90 MPs threatened to vote against their government's stated policy.

Even more damning was the report released last week by the Labour Party National Executive Committee, a body elected by the party conference each year and dominated by the Tribune left, which charged that "capitalism has failed the nation," and called for a revitalized public sector, a national economic plan to expand industrial investment and the restoration of public spending cuts made under the IMF loan dictates. Directly attacking the austerity measures the government has undertaken in the last six months, the report states: "we must emphasize that with the right economic policies, there would be room for restoration of public spending cuts and for selected increases in public spending." The reports adds, "neither the arrangement made with the Liberals, nor those with the IMF need deflect the government from its basic strategy of investment and industrial growth."

While the resurgence of the Tribune left — especially in the person of Tony Benn, the "bogey man" of the Tory party — would normally raise calls for Callaghan to take strict measures against his party rebels, in fact a curious alliance has emerged to back up the Tribune initiative against the government from members of the Tory party, a move which simultaneously destroys Thatcher's credibility as "opposition" leader.

The combined Tory, left-wing Labour Party opposition to the government's Finance Bill in Committee last week made a shambles of the government's carefully plotted budget measures by voting to simultaneously raise tax returns and social security benefits outside the government's imposed cash limits on public spending. At the same time, the Commons Committee on Overseas Development released their report this week, which received vigorous support from left-wing Overseas Development Minister Judith Hart as well as top Commonwealth affairs spokesman for the Tory party Bernard Braine. While Hart pressed the united interest of industrialized and developing countries for strong economic growth in both sectors, Braine warned that the current gap between rich and poor was widening "and that frustration in many parts of the world was giving way to despair." Therefore, he said, "it is imperative for the survival of those in the industrialized West that that despair should be understood and an international strategy be devised to overcome it..."