

WORKERS' ACTION

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LAST TIME Michael Edwardes announced a plan for British Leyland, the convenors and union officials gave him a standing ovation. That plan has led to 18,000 jobs going in BL Cars in little more than a year.

Edwardes' new plan calls for 25,000 of BL's remaining 165,000 jobs to go over two years. The Canley assembly plant in Coventry and some smaller factories are to close.

This time the union leaders could do nothing but oppose the plan — at least in general terms. But they have offered no strategy for a struggle. The old rhetoric about working together to build a thriving national British car industry has become very thin, and they have no alternative.

The problem is one of replacement, not of British competition, most ruth-

Lessons from the counter-industry events of the last few years: the attacks on minorities, on marches, newspapers and left-wing bookshops, and on left-wing organisations. These attacks are carried out by government agencies.

has stagnated in the 1970s. They have been unable to get the expected rate of return on capital investment undertaken with the prospect of expanding markets and expanding market shares. The current recession will give a sharper twist to their sufferings.

In the USA, Chrysler has to have government aid to avoid going bust. Chrysler's Dodge Main plant is scheduled for closure, and thousands of US carworkers are on long-term layoff. In Europe, Peugeot-Citroën, having taken over Chrysler Europe (and renamed it Talbot) are planning big rationalisations.

People need more, better, cheaper transport. But we won't get it in the middle of capitalist crisis. And workers in the motor vehicle industries lose their jobs. Fitting production to needs, and sharing the work on the basis of jobs for everyone, is the answer: but that means socialist planning, and social planning means getting rid of capitalism.

The TUC passed a resolution last week calling for a 'minimum British con-

Unite and fight, or 25,000 car jobs go

tent' to be required of all cars sold in this country. This is an effort to export employment to workers in other countries, and a futile effort at that. Protectionist measures could only drag the world car industry down further, and BL, which depends heavily on exports, more than most.

Instead we must start a fightback now which can be generalised into an international strategy for car

workers.

- Cut hours, not jobs. No redundancies, voluntary or enforced. Work-sharing under workers' control and with no loss of pay.

- Occupation of plants threatened with closure.

- Plant struggles to be coordinated by a democratic, recallable combine committee. Links to be extended to other firms and internationally, for a concerted struggle.

Talbot workers in Coventry have been threatened with the closure of the Ryton plant if their pay strike continues. Meanwhile BL boss Edwardes wants another 25,000 victims for his jobs axe.



Engineering: Bosses up the stakes

THE Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions is to continue with the same action, weekly two-day strikes and an overtime ban, for its pay and hours claim in engineering.

But engineering bosses are moving to up the stakes. 30,000 workers in Rolls Royce have been told they will be laid off if the action continues. Some bosses have said they will try to keep their factories open for work — if enough scabs turn up — during future strikes, and then break the closed shop in order to keep the scabs after the strike.

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At the Longbridge works of BL Cars, 5,000 day shift workers on Mini and Allegro production were laid off for two days on 5th and 6th September, supposedly because of two small sectional disputes but in fact obviously in retaliation for the two-day strike.

Longbridge bosses also issued a statement saying that any 'unconstitutional action' (a meeting to discuss an issue, stopping work because of inadequate manning, not starting a new job until manning levels are agreed) will lead to immediate lay-offs. Longbridge stewards, meeting on Friday 7th, decided to resist this policy.

At GEC Rugby, the threat of mass lay-offs had an effect, and 1500 workers went in on September 10th and 11th.

Generally, however, the Confed action is still solid, and the bosses' aggressive attitude has even hardened support for it.

Some plants which failed to come out on the first two-day strike (September 3rd-4th) came out on the 10th-11th: Hoovers Merthyr Tydfil, BL Llanelli. 'Back to work' movements elsewhere flopped.

In the Manchester area the strike was solid. In Coventry, 3000 Dunlop workers went in (and Rolls Royce workers have decided to black Dunlops), but a strike moves at GEC Rugby out, with only 40 going through the picket lines at the Helen St plant, and those few being soon sent home again.

In Leicester a picket organised by Engineers Charter reduced numbers going in at Thorns to only 40 out of 500.

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This solid support provides the basis for escalation to meet the bosses' escalation. And without that escalation, sooner or later the workers' militancy will be worn out quicker than the bosses' resistance. Two-day strikes are expensive for the workers, but do not hit hard enough at bosses who have low order books and are determined to put up a stubborn resistance anyway.

Mass meetings should democratically discuss the best way forward to fight for the claim.

We say: all out strike.

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FUND DRIVE

This week — the first week for our new £200 monthly target — we have received only £6, from East London.

Send donations to Fund, WA, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD. Cheques etc payable to Workers' Action.

No Zimbabwe carve-up

A DEMONSTRATION on Monday 10th for majority rule in Zimbabwe drew the support of some 800 people outside Lancaster House, before marching to a rally at Westminster Central Hall.

Smith's first visit to London since UDI also drew a vocal response from over 100 people outside his hotel on Sunday. He was greeted with shouts of 'Smith murderer' and 'Victory to the Patriotic Front'.

Police quickly silenced demonstrators at 8am that morning, three hours before Smith's arrival, when they shouted, "Wake up Muzor-

ewa, your boss is coming", lest they waken other people in the luxurious Oppenheimer-owned hotel. Ten supporters of Smith also put in an appearance.

These actions were called by the Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign Committee.

ZECC has organised a 'Zimbabwe teach-in' on Saturday 15th, from 10.30am to 5pm, at the NUR headquarters in Euston Rd. A rally is planned for 19th September, and a mass demonstration for Sunday 11th November, assembling at 1.30 at Speakers Corner.



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Zimbabwe: the reality behind the talks

THE PRESENT talks on Zimbabwe follow in a long line of stalemated negotiations: talks between Wilson and Smith in 1965 and '68; talks with the Tories in 1971, leading to the Pearce Commission; in 1975, the Victoria Falls constitutional conference, organised by South Africa; in 1976, talks between Smith and Nkomo, and the first Anglo-American initiative, which led to the Geneva Constitutional Conference; the second Anglo-American initiative in 1977, producing proposals which Smith rejected in November of that year in favour of his Internal Settlement.

The Internal Settlement kept the key institutions, the army, police, judiciary and civil service, firmly under white control. In the 100-member parliament, 28 seats are reserved for the whites, a 4% minority of the population. Any change in the constitution supported by all the

black MPs would require the approval of at least six whites.

Entrenched clauses further ensure white domination: security of government employment is guaranteed; agricultural land cannot be expropriated unless proven not to have been used for a minimum of five years.

The social basis for white domination is illustrated by the following facts:

- The white 4 1/2% of the population own 47% of the land, including the best agricultural land and mineral deposits.
- The earnings of the whites are 7 1/2 times greater than blacks' in manufacturing industry, and 16 times greater in agriculture.
- Foreign capital dominates the Rhodesian economy. Since UDI, British stakes have doubled, South African stakes have quadrupled. Foreign investment amounts to £1000 million and foreign

corporations account for three quarters of all gross profit and investment.

These economic stakes and their political guarantees are at the centre of the conference at Lancaster House. They take place against the military background of a further raid by Rhodesia into Mozambique, destroying food stores, bridges, and houses and bombing a prison.

Martial law extends over 90% of Zimbabwe, and ranks of lieutenant and above have the power to make laws, to sentence people to imprisonment or death.

For all that, the pressures for a settlement are very strong. On the crucial issue of control and composition of the armed forces, Robert Mugabe of the Patriotic Front has now said he would agree to the involvement of 'desirable elements from the other side' during the run-up to elections.

Andrew Young, the erst-

while US ambassador to the UN, is convinced of Mugabe's willingness to reach a settlement agreeable to imperialist interests. He said in an interview in the 'Observer': "Because of Mugabe's Party's Marxist language, we always assume they want a Communist State. Yet in the conversations that I have had privately, I get the impression that their concept of socialism would be much more along the lines of Willy Brandt and the Social Democrats of West Germany".

Despite the petty-bourgeois nature of the Patriotic Front, socialists in Britain should give it full support insofar as it fights for black majority rule. Any imperialist-sponsored settlement can only be one way or another of preserving as much of white racist privilege as they think can be preserved.

LAWRENCE WELCH

Anti-terrorist squad swoops on house BOMB CACHE SEIZED IN LONDON RAID



SCOTLAND YARD anti-terrorist detectives trained today they had track a major blow against an anarchist planning attacks on establishment targets.

The raid, which lasted for hours, was a major success for the police. It was the first time since the 1970s that a major cache of explosives had been seized in London.

The raid was carried out by a team of anti-terrorist officers from the Metropolitan Police's Anti-Terrorist Branch. They were alerted to the location of the cache by a tip-off from a source within the anarchist movement.

The cache, which was hidden in a room in a house in North London, contained a large quantity of explosives, including dynamite, gelatin, and other materials used in the manufacture of bombs.

The raid was a major blow to the anarchist movement, which has been active in the UK since the 1970s. The police believe that the cache was intended for use in a series of attacks on government buildings and other targets.

The men in iron masks were seen in the raid, and are believed to be members of the anarchist group. They were seen wearing balaclavas and carrying equipment used in the raid.

The raid was a major success for the police, and is believed to have dealt a significant blow to the anarchist movement. The police are now looking for more information about the group and its activities.

How the press paved the way

'Unfortunately no explosions' in shock horror bomb case

ON MONDAY 17th six anarchists will go on trial at the Old Bailey charged with conspiracy to rob, possessing explosive substances, possessing firearms without firearms certificates, and handling stolen goods. They face possible life sentences.

The six, Trevor Dawkins, Digbeth, Alan Thornett, Vince Stevens, Ronan Bennett and Stewart Carr, have already spent months in prison on remand — 15 months in the case of Ronan Bennett, released less than a month ago — while bail was refused and people who stood surety were harassed and intimidated.

Although a number of the original charges, such as conspiracy to cause explosions, have been dropped for lack of evidence, the orchestrated press build-up of suspected bombing plots with targets such as nuclear power stations, of a 'terrorist gang' associated with the Red Army Faction, and the high-security court and prison arrangements has left its impression in the minds of the general public. And now the jury is to be vetted for its political sympathies.

The defendants and their support group, Persons Unknown, have produced a pamphlet in which they detail "how the State is using the Persons Unknown trial as an exemplar to define its security tactics. We believe that the State's tactics are indicative of what will be its response in future trials of the left and the organised working class. As in the trials of Irish men and women, the State is legitimising the use of criminal procedure to attack political activists".

Conspiracy charges are particularly useful to the State, since they rely much more on the police's imagination than on hard facts.

Flour, sugar and domestic weedkiller were found at Iris Mills' and Ronan Bennett's flat, and they were charged with conspiracy to cause explosions. When that was dropped (a fact that eluded the entire bourgeois press), Det-Supt Bradbury of the Anti-Terrorist Squad remarked that "Unfortunately... well, fortunately... there have been no explosions".

The attack is a motivated scrum.

I have also been repeating a question Alan Thornett put to the protesters at the Iris Mills, Vince Stevens, Digbeth Hall meeting: "Inals, raise fire and rounded in court, treated as top security prisoners, and repeatedly denied their rights to visitors, association, and reading matter. Courts have been ringed with police with submachine guns, and staffed by more arm police. This security, and the building up of unsubstantiated charges since dropped, have been staged for the press and public in order to establish the six as "ruthless terrorists" and a risk to national security.

A number of unusual measures have been introduced. One of the defence solicitors had his confidential papers searched by the police — the prosecuting force — on his way to court. The magistrate, asked to direct the police about this abuse of privilege, told the solicitor that "you shouldn't bring confidential papers to court if you object".

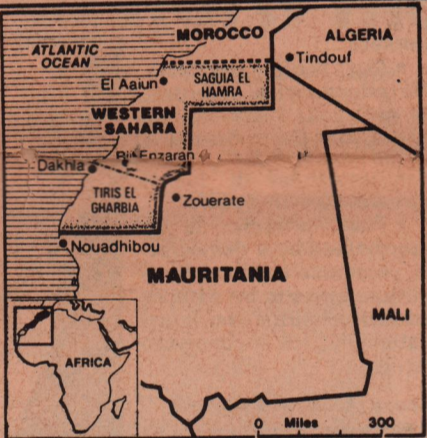
Iris Mills, like the others, was held as a Category A prisoner, but in Brixton, a men's prison, and thus in solitary confinement until the arrival there of Astrid Proll and Kholoud Mograbi.

The police vetting of the jury is not new (this practice first became public in the Aubrey-Berry-Campbell official secrets trial), but this is the first time that all three levels of vetting — the Criminal Records Office, the Special Branch, and CID records — are all being used, and in which the CID is authorised also to investigate the political leanings of associates of potential jurors.

There is a public meeting at 3pm on Saturday Sept. 15th, at Conway Hall, with the defendants speaking, and a picket for the first day of the trial, Monday 17th September, at the Old Bailey. The pamphlet, 'Persons Unknown', can be got from Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

MANDY WILLIAMS

Carter's ally grabs the rest of Sahara war



AFTER FOUR years of economically exhausting and politically disastrous war to keep hold of a part of the former Spanish colony of Rio d'Oro in the Western Sahara, the Mauretanian government has signed a peace treaty with the national liberation fighters of the Polisario Front.

Polisario did not actually gain any territory, for Morocco immediately intervened, snatching the region of Tiris el Gharbia and adding it to the region of Saguia el Hamra, the part of Western Sahara it has occupied for the past four years.

The Polisario Front responded immediately, attacking the Bir en Zara oasis with a force of some 2,500 fighters. The attack could only be beaten off by the Moroccan air force bombarding its own positions once they were about to be overwhelmed by the Front, thus further increasing the loss of life.

In this situation the United States, which was for a while reluctant to give King Hassan II the arms he was asking for to continue his war against the Western Sahara, has decided to step up its commitment to Morocco.

The present war was triggered off when King Hassan II launched the Green March. 350,000 unarmed Moroccans marched into what was then the Spanish colony of Rio d'Oro (or Spanish Sahara) to press Morocco's claim on the territory. Hassan's idea was

firstly to forestall a takeover by the Polisario Front when the Spanish departed later in 1975, and secondly to create a mood of intense national feeling to conceal the deep divisions in Moroccan society.

As Morocco annexed Saguia el Hamra as its 40th province, Mauretania annexed the southern section, Tiris el Gharbia. Hassan's ploy certainly worked for a while. All the main parties in Morocco united behind the national claims on Saguia.

But in Mauretania in 1978 Lieutenant Mustafa Ould Salek ousted president Mokhtar Ould-Daddah, the main plank in his programme being a promise to make peace with the Polisario Front. Slow progress with peace negotiations led to a further coup in April of this year, bringing Ahmad Ould-Bouceif to power in Mauritania.

For the Moroccan ruling class — and for imperialism — there was always more at stake than a ploy to shore up King Hassan a little longer. The Saguia region is rich in phosphates and is a source of uranium too. Although the Bou Craa phosphate operations have been brought almost to a standstill by guerilla activity, Morocco has also recently begun oil production in the Western Sahara.

French imperialism has a huge stake in the Bou Craa operation, as well as the incredibly rich ore deposits at Zouerate in the southern part of Western Sahara. It

is for this reason that France has kept troops in Mauritania and has strengthened its special airborne commando force, which in the last two years has intervened in Chad, Zaire and Mauritania.

The Soviet Union is cautious not to displease King Hassan too much, as it has important trade agreements with Morocco.

This month's snatching of the Tiris region — like the previous Green March into Saguia — has helped bolster up Hassan again. But this is unlikely to last long. Morocco is in serious economic difficulties, particularly because of the fall in phosphate prices and its rocketing military spending.

It is also wracked by strikes. The right wing trade union federation, the Union Marocaine de Travail, is rapidly losing members to the more militant (though politically no less nationalist) Confederation Democratique du Travail, set up under the auspices of the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires.

The CDT denounced the recent 40% pay increase for industrial and agricultural minimum wages, and the 15% rise in public employees' wages, as "derisory" in the face of Morocco's soaring inflation. Hassan's reply was to sack 500 teachers (the teachers are a militant section of the CDT) and 100 health workers. He put 130 workers on trial, and a 20-year old law banning pickets has been revived.



Polisario guerillas with captured Moroccan weapons

Despite the aggressiveness of Morocco's stance, King Hassan would obviously like to get off the hook if he can secure his own throne and ensure, through agreement with Algeria (Polisario's main backers) that an independent Western Sahara will not be radical. The course of the war so far suggests that the Moroccan regime cannot win outright short of unleashing a much wider conflagration, including at least open war with Algeria.

So long as Algeria remains (verbally) committed to the anti-Zionist camp, and so long as Hassan remains imperialism's sole explicitly pro-Sadat ally in the region, such war cannot be ruled out.

ANDREW HORNUNG

SOLIDARITY with the Kurdish struggle was one of the main points stressed at a London meeting on Friday 7th against the repression in Iran. Support for the 14 jailed members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party was the other main theme.

The meeting, called by the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, the Association of Kurdish Students Abroad, Workers' Action, the IMG, and the SWP, was attended by about 130 people.

The first speaker was Hoj-abr Khosravi, a member of the HKS (Socialist Workers Party of Iran), who described how 16 members of his party were arrested. Nine were jailed after distributing leaflets defending the rights of the Arab people in Iran, and calling on soldiers not to shoot them. They were charged with being "agents of imperialism" and with "conspiracy against the government".

Seven others, who went to Ahwaz to try to get the nine released, were arrested at their hotel.

Two, including Khosravi, were released as a result of national and international pressure on the government; two have been sentenced to life imprisonment and the other 12 to death. The Khomeini government has now denied the 12 were ever sentenced, but their lives remain in danger.

Defend

Khosravi also recounted the counter-revolutionary events of the last month in Iran: the attacks on national minorities, on marches, on newspapers and left-wing bookshops, and on left-wing organisations. These attacks are carried out by government forces in the name of the Islamic Republic.

Khomeini has stated that Iran needs only one party (echoing the Shah), and that democracy is a Western word he dislikes. He has branded the Kurds as 'agents of imperialism' and alleged they have links with America and the CIA, but it is Khomeini who has supplies of American arms and many Western-educated advisers.

And it is the landlords and capitalists, whom Khomeini ultimately represents, who can only survive with the repression of workers' rights and struggles which Khomeini is carrying out.

The task of revolutionaries now in Iran is to unite to defend the democratic rights of free speech, free press, free assembly and free association, under the slogans of abolition of the 'Experts' Assembly', for a democratic

Socialists rally against Khomeiny's repression

Constituent Assembly, and for a Workers' and Farmers' Government.

Fred Halliday spent the first two weeks of August in Iran, and he recounted some of his experiences and impressions. It is dangerous to underestimate the strength of Islamic ideology among the Iranian people: 80% cannot read, and so are exposed only to the propaganda of the state-controlled radio and television and of their religious leaders. For years the Shah built up anti-communism, and now these established lies are backed up by Islam and accusations that leftists are agents of the CIA and/or of Zionism.

It is simplistic to see Khomeini's policies just in class terms, said Halliday: it is the 200,000 mullahs and many more dependent offic-

ials and religious students who directly benefit from Khomeiny's rule and form his direct support. No class has gained economically, not even the pro-Khomeiny bazaar merchants.

Thugs

Although the number participating in the election for the Council of Experts was much smaller than in Khomeiny's referendum for the Islamic Republic, 8 million as against 20 million, Khomeini still has considerable support among the army, the petty bourgeoisie, and the religious. The movement which overthrew the Shah was a political and class coalition which has now broken up, and the events of the last month have demonstrat-

ed the nature of that coalition, how strong the mullahs and bazaaris were within it.

The left is weak, and the main defender of the freedom of the press in the recent months has been the National Democratic Front, a loose collection of bourgeois, lawyers, and others. The Tudeh (Moscow-line Communist) Party supported suppression of the left press, and the Fedayeen and Mujahedeen wavered.

The army is now being rebuilt with religious fanatics, assorted thugs, and even members of the old Imperial Guard, who continue 'business as usual under a change of uniform'. Some Islamic Committees, Halliday said, are run by ex-SAVAK agents.

The links with America are becoming ever more im-

portant. In February Halliday met the State Department official responsible for Iran, and found him surprisingly unconcerned. He reckoned that in a few months Khomeini would come into line and find that he had an 'objective coincidence of interests' with the American government.

This is borne out particularly by the arms deal between the two countries, and in the last fortnight, by the American airlift of diesel and other fuel which made the rapid invasion of Kurdistan possible.

Shirko Abid, of the Association of Kurdish Students Abroad, described how the Kurds and Kurdish struggles were widely misrepresented. The division of their territory meant that the Kurdish question is treated as a number of separate minority questions, not as a complex whole. The scale and brutality of the present repression in Iran makes it not just a matter of the principle of self-determination, but also one of human concern.

When the next speaker, Mary Corbishley, was invited to speak on behalf of Workers' Action, a member of the Spartacist League interrupted to demand the right to speak. Spartacist supporters refused to accept the chair's explanation that the committee organising the meeting had arranged only for set speakers from supporting organisations.

It is unusual (in Britain) for a meeting not to have speakers from the floor, but in no way essentially undemocratic if there are material reasons for the restriction. But having shouted down the chair and ignored the stewards' repeated requests to sit down and let the meeting continue, the Spartacists left with the maximum of noise and disruption, accusing the meeting's supporters of being supporters of Khomeini and of suppressing democratic rights like Khomeini. They held a well-prepared 'spontaneous' picket outside, continuing to concentrate on attacking other left groups rather than the Iranian government.

The WSL, while disso-

ciating themselves from the Spartacist League, also protested in a short statement against the 'lack of public speaking rights'.

Mary Corbishley's speech is reproduced here, and was followed by a message of solidarity from the SWP.

Andrew Hornung, for the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, described the history of the Kurds' struggle for national rights and the centuries of oppression they have suffered, and still suffer, at the hands of the Turkish, Iraqi and Iranian governments.

Brian Grogan of the IMG explained how Khomeini and his supporters cannot solve the accumulated economic problems of agriculture and industry which were the 'driving force' of the anti-Shah movement, but which were put aside for the sake of unity. In the long run, Khomeini will have to act on behalf of the capitalist class, and the economic problems will eat away his support.

Bleak

Grogan expressed considerable optimism about what the united left could achieve by a campaign in this country, and seemed to assume similar prospects in Iran, despite the bleak picture soberly described by Halliday.

Grogan called for a new political assessment of what is happening in Iran... something which Socialist Challenge itself seems to need badly, with last week's headline of 'Defend the Iranian Revolution' (presumably, the February one), while Khomeini is organising counter-revolution.

A representative of the Iranian Women's Solidarity Group in this country appealed for money to help send delegates to Iran in January, and emphasised that a step forward for women "would mean a step forward for everyone".

Further meetings round the country, demonstrations, and other activities are planned.

MANDY WILLIAMS



A MARCH on Saturday 8th protesting at the new wave of repression in Iran was supported by about 120 people.

The Association of Kurdish Students Abroad, which had called the demonstration, led the marchers past the Turkish, Iraqi and Iranian embassies in London calling for 'Troops out of Kurdistan', 'Self-determination for the Kurds', and 'Free the HKS prisoners'.

The march was supported

by the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, Workers Action, the SWP, the IMG, and Workers' Power. About 30 members of the Spartacist League tailed the demonstration, mainly chanting slogans against the IMG such as '2,4,6,8, does Grogan still think God's so great?'. 20 pro-Khomeini Iranian demonstrators also followed the march for a short while.

Although the demonstra-

tion was organised at short notice, the demonstration showed a very weak response from the British left to the new wave of repression in Iran. More support must be mobilised for future pickets and demonstrations.

Picket the Iranian Embassy
16 Princes Gate, SW7
Saturday 15 September
Noon-1pm.

Called by AKSA

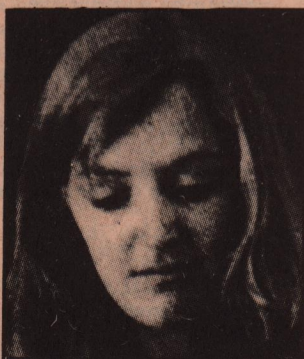
IRAN: THE ROOTS OF COUNTER REVOLUTION

IN IRAN today there is a counter-revolution taking place. The self-satisfied sectarians use this fact to prove falsely that the mobilisation against the Shah had nothing but a reactionary character.

Even if the present regime goes on to consolidate itself in the same way as the Shah's did, the movement of the Iranian people against the Shah was immensely progressive and it was the task of revolutionaries to base themselves upon it and lead it to establish a workers' state.

The Iranian people, having brought Khomeini to power, still threaten to insist on the satisfaction of those needs that drove them to bring down the Shah. Khomeini, fearing that movement and unable within the limits of the bourgeois order to promote the economic and social developments capable of meeting the needs of the masses, can offer only two

Mary Corbishley's speech on behalf of Workers' Action



solutions: beheading the movement, and thrusting into the hands of the masses the banner of Islam, much in the manner of fascism, despite the different context. These are not solutions that have been dreamt up

overnight. The Government has been putting them into practice systematically since the downfall of the Shah, by substituting Islamic committees, organisations and leaders for the more militant class-conscious organisations and leaders. As far back as February, on the eve of the Shah's fall, Bazargan was busy in Ahwaz trying to get the oil workers to end their strike. A strike coordinating committee was set up by Khomeini's supporters in a successful effort to destroy the existing more radical strike committee, which had welcomed students, teachers and socialists to its meetings.

In Sanandaj, while the left created peasant and worker organisations, the right under the leadership of Muftizade and the reactionary School of the Koran

set up parallel groups, adding the word 'Muslim', e.g. Muslim Workers' Union, Organisation of Muslim Youth, etc.

The substitution of Islamic leaders; the whipping up of Islamic hysteria; the silencing of less fanatical ayatollahs such as Taleghani; the censorship of the press in the name of Islam; and the pretence at democracy in the referendum and the elections to the Council of Experts — all this has led to the isolation of the more progressive elements and has paved the way for the more open repression that we are witnessing today, the banning of socialist organisations, attacks on women, the Fedayeen, and the HKS, and the massacre of the Kurds, in an attempt to behead the opposition movement completely.

In order to carry out this repression, the Government has for some time been reconstituting the official army by reshuffling the army leaders and, in addition, building up the Pastaran from an uncoordinated reactionary rabble into a disciplined counter-revolutionary force.

In Kurdistan, progressive elements have been able to achieve a considerable base, and this mass movement is fundamentally secular and in any case a non-Shi'ite movement. It is this socially radical and secular character that has made the Kurdish movement Khomeini's chief target.

Khomeini claims to be an anti-imperialist, but his present actions are carried out to protect capitalism in Iran. The moment the imperialists saw that this was the intent-

ion of Khomeini, they turned to support him. The imperialist so-called 'defender of human rights', President Carter, cannot therefore bring himself to condemn the massacre of the Kurds or the elimination of democratic rights in Iran.

In Britain it is easy for people to write off what is happening in Iran as peculiar to Islam or simply due to Muslim fanatics. Our task therefore is to make the British working class aware of the social content of the movement in Iran, aware of the role of imperialism in Iran, and aware of the national aspirations of the Kurdish people. And to mobilise a campaign of defence of the Kurds, of other national minorities, and of socialists and democrats, against the repression.

STOP THE CUTS NOW!

COVENTRY UNIONS SAY: NO COVER

"IT MUST be accepted that the scale of what is called for means that the proposals must be far from palatable and must imply a diminution of the level of service". So says a confidential report by Coventry's ruling Labour group about its package of cuts, to be presented on Tuesday September 11 to the full Council meeting.

It is now clear that this second round of cuts (the first, totalling some £900,000, came in soon after Labour took over the city hall in May) is smaller than the proposals leaked to Coventry NUPE. It totals around £1½ million, compared with the £3½ million quoted earlier. Although less severe, the Council's action is no less an act of treachery to the working class in Coventry who voted it into office on a Manifesto promising expanded services!

The debate which took place in the District Labour Party — dominated by the right wing — mandated the proposed cuts but referred back the section on social services. Even this reference

back appears to have been ignored, as the Group have announced to the local Tory rag the same cuts as they originally proposed — some £358,000 by next May, achieved partly through introducing charges of 50p a week for home helps and charging mentally handicapped adults for meals at day centres.

Rents at old people's homes will go up 19.5% from November, leaving the old people with just £4.65 a week spending money.

Rent rises of £1 a week — not included in this package — are already, it seems, on the way. The council's ideology is dominated by the logic, either cuts or rate increases. For instance, within education spending there is a 'mandatory sector', which includes student grants (£3½ million) and debt charges on school buildings (£3¼ million). These, the Council says, cannot be cut. The cuts imposed are in the 'non-mandatory' sector, and there they are much larger than the overall figures show.

In housing, committee

chairman Cllr David Cairns describes the problems as "alarming". Redundancies are threatened in the 900-strong direct labour workforce.

Unless Geoffrey Robinson, ex-Jaguar boss and Labour MP for Coventry North-West, comes up with a miracle shortly, the Meriden motorcycle factory workers' cooperative is on its last legs. Coventry Council has made quite sure of that. Up until now the 1978-9 rate payment has been deferred, but, under the threat of being surcharged personally for the £31,000 owing by the District Auditor, the Finance Committee has taken steps demanding immediate payment from the cooperative, where Robinson is the chief executive.

As for next year's Tory cuts: on 20th September there is to be a meeting of all Labour councils in Scarborough, organised by Coventry Council. This will be followed by a meeting of all Labour Groups (including Councils) in Coventry around the end of November. No

attempt is being made to develop a rank and file opposition to the cuts.

But the rank and file will fight despite the Council. Coventry NUPE branch has decided on a campaign of lightning strikes, no cover for unfilled vacancies or overtime to make up for them, and a strike if the Council refuses to fill vacancies or fills them by temporary non-union labour. Coventry NALGO has also voted for no cover.

Coventry Trades Council is holding a picket of the Council meeting announcing the cuts on Tuesday 11th September. And moves are underway for a labour movement conference against the Council's cuts. Coventry South East CLP and the Trades Council public services sub-committee have taken the initiative, and Coventry South West CLP has agreed to support it.

The isolated action which will break out over the next few months against the cuts has to be drawn together into a coordinated campaign.

RICHARD PAINE



Lambeth Council's workers march against cuts: their employers are still dithering

The time to fight is now

LAST Sunday (9th) saw the launching in Edinburgh of the latest branch of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

An enthusiastic meeting of over 30 Labour Party activists and others gathered in the Trades Hall to discuss the local cuts campaign and how to link up with other movements throughout the country.

The meeting had been sponsored by a number of local councillors, as well as MP Ron Brown. First to speak was Ian Christie, Treasurer of Lothian Regional Labour Party.

Explaining the recent decision of Lothian Regional Council not to impose any cuts, Christie called for discussion on the tactical options open to the council. But he emphasised that nothing would be achieved unless the broadest possible campaign was launched, uniting Labour Parties, trade unions, tenants' associations and old age pensioners in a common fight.

Tom Fenton, an executive member of the EIS (the Scottish teachers' union), outlined the coming effects of cuts in education. He pointed out that the TUC had just taken the decision not to launch a serious fight this year, but felt that a time lag was probably inevitable since people would not really

feel the cuts for some months to come.

James Ryan, editor of *Socialist Organiser*, disagreed, saying that the campaign must start now. Important, too, was the building of a rank and file organisation at national level.

'Under the last Tory government Clay Cross put up a magnificent fight, but they were isolated and eventually they lost. We are determined that won't happen again. Our paper *Socialist Organiser* aims to carry the widest debate in the movement on how to fight the Tory offensive, but also to learn from our experiences and to hammer out a strategy which will create the maximum effective unity among all sections of the movement'.

He described the discussion currently going on in London, and warned that rate rises offered no way forward.

General agreement greeted this point, and discussion focused on how to build the local campaign, in particular working for the anti-cuts demonstration and conference being organised by the Trades Council and Labour Parties.

Regular meetings of *Socialist Organiser* supporters are planned. The next one is on 18th September. Contact: Box 10, First of May Bookshop, 45 Niddrie St, Edinburgh.

Don't choke off the debate!

ON SEPTEMBER 22nd, the London Labour Party is calling a conference against the cuts. Soon after, on October 6th, there will be cuts conferences in two London boroughs, Islington and Haringey, where the Labour councils have put through the Tory cuts but local Labour Parties and trade unions have decided to oppose them. Another conference is coming up in Tory Hammersmith.

The campaigning guidelines for these conferences have been set by the Lambeth Labour Parties' meeting on July 29th, which decided on a fight against the cuts in that borough, and Lothian Regional Council's stand in Scotland.

- No cuts, no rent rises, no rate rises, but a fight for more central resources for public services.

- United mobilisation of local trade unions, Labour Parties, tenants' associations and community groups, up to and including strikes.

- A drive to make the bosses pay, with the demand for nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions without compensation and an end to interest payments.

For this fight, full democratic discussion is necessary — for people involved in the fight have to know what they are going in for. Details of procedure for the Haringey conference have not yet been decided, but, unfortunately,

for the London and Islington conferences, procedures have been decided that will make precise and open debate difficult.

At the London conference, a statement from the platform will be presented — and no other resolutions or amendments will be allowed. The statement confines itself to arguing that public spending is useful, giving some details on the cuts... and saying "Labour Councils should not shirk significant rate increases to protect essential services".

There is no class politics in the statement — the issue is presented as the Tories having the wrong 'philosophy'. There is no call for councils to refuse to make cuts. 'Direct action' is mentioned, but only in the form of 'picketing Tory council meetings and Tory headquarters'.

So all that can come out of the conference is a vague sentiment that the Tories are bad and cuts are bad — not any real plans for a fight.

In Islington, activists have not restricted themselves to picketing the Tories. The pro-cuts Labour council has been picketed several times. In August, a large meeting elected a committee with representatives from local Labour Parties, trade unions, tenants associations, other groups, and anti-cuts councillors, to organise a cuts conference.

At that meeting, Trades Council representatives (members of the Communist Party) argued vehemently that there should be no resolutions at the conference. Democracy and an effort to reach practical decisions could in their view only mean "splitting".

The matter was left up to the committee to decide. At a committee meeting on Thursday 6th September the Trades Council representatives argued again for no resolutions.

Pat Longman (a WA supporter and representative on the committee from North Islington CLP) objected,

Keith Veness was in the chair (though at the August meeting he was not even elected to the committee). Although Veness is a Socialist Organiser supporter, he helped out the CP by suggesting a statement from the platform. Could it be amended? Only by sponsoring organisations, said Veness.

After further objections by Pat Longman, Veness conceded the statement would be more generally open to amendments. But then a small Standing Orders sub-committee was elected to deal with the amendments. It is controlled by Veness and the CPers.

Then Veness got the committee to agree that the statement would be drawn up by the Standing Orders

sub-committee rather than the full committee. He proceeded to wind up the elected committee in favour of the smaller one.

At the SCLV London conference in June on Labour and the cuts, Workers' Action was denounced as irresponsibly ultra-left because of our opposition to rate rises. Keith Veness has been one of the strongest supporters of rate rises (see WA 146).

Since June, there have been several lessons in who was irresponsible and who was not. Lambeth Council — the shining model for many of how to avoid cuts by raising rates — collapsed at the first swing of the Tory axe.

Everywhere where the labour movement has really set out to fight cuts — in the Lambeth Labour Parties, who forced Lambeth Council to back down on their cuts; in the Lothian Regional Labour Party; in Coventry Trades Council — 'no cuts' has been coupled with 'no rate rises'.

These lessons need to be discussed and consciously learnt. The underlying strategic difference — between class-struggle politics and the politics of wheedling and dealing with the 'broad movement', based on fantasies of Labour councils being bastions of power for the left — must be brought out. For that, open and free debate is vital.

JAMES RYAN

Socialist Organiser launches campaign on Ireland

A WORKERS' Action proposal that Socialist Organiser should launch a campaign to build a labour movement conference on Ireland was unanimously agreed at SO's extended Editorial Board meeting on September 7th.

Delegates from ten local groups supported the proposal to launch the campaign with an appeal at the Labour Party conference. Labour Party and trade union bodies which supported SO's large labour movement 'Troops Out Now' contingent on the August 12th demonstration will be approached to back the campaign, as will campaign groups like the United Troops Out Movement.

At the LP conference, Socialist Organiser will also be holding a public meeting here activists in local cuts fights will speak. A proposal from Chartist supporter Mike Davis that Ted Knight, the leader of Lambeth Council, be invited to speak was dropped after debate.

Hackney councillor Ron Heisler pointed out that having Knight to speak on an anti-cuts platform after his recent actions in Lambeth would open SO to ridicule. Chris Knight of the Chartist ex-minority argued that we should have Ted Knight to speak in order to put pressure on him, but most EB delegates favoured having speakers who have been involved in cuts fights... on the right side!

SO itself will soon have its future discussed at the second Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory conference. The EB decided that the conference should take place on November 24th in London.

It was unanimously agreed it be a delegate-based conference, with representatives from local SO groups and from labour movement bodies, but with all SO supporters invited to attend.

The EB also decided to start a system of issuing SO supporters' cards at £1 per head. This will be used as part of a fund-raising drive as well as to consolidate the local SO supporters' groups and to define the active supporters.

The proposal was opposed by the comrades of the Chartist majority and ex-minority. While not opposing the move on principle, they said it would be undemocratic not to keep SCLV organisation as loose as possible until the conference.

The majority of the meeting felt that demanding the minimal commitment of a £1 annual sponsorship fee for people who are to have a say in the running of SO is not undemocratic, but — on the contrary — a precondition of democracy.

We also pointed out that the major decisions which have governed the SCLV's existence were not made at the July 1978 conference, but were the work of the Steering Committee (now incorporated into the extended EB) to which the July conference delegated its authority.

This includes the decisions to launch SO, to continue after the election, to build SO groups, to transform the Steering Committee into an extended Editorial Board.

The forthcoming conference will pronounce on these decisions; meanwhile the development and consolidation of the tendency around SO demands a definition of supporters, as distinct from passive semi-sympathisers, if the conference is to reflect the forces that have gathered round SO, that is, to be a truly democratic conference of the Socialist Organiser/SCLV tendency.

NIK BARSTOW

POLICE ATTACK BLACK YOUTHS

ON Tuesday night, 4th September, a full-scale riot developed in Moss Side, Manchester — as far as the police were concerned, anyway.

Riot shields, horses, dogs and a truncheon-wielding snatch squad were in operation against a group of 300 mainly black youths in Moss Side's Princess Road area.

The young people were returning from a fairground at Platt Lane, scene of last year's running battle with the Tactical Aid Group (Manchester's equivalent of London's SPG) when the police had their vans smashed up and some police were injured.

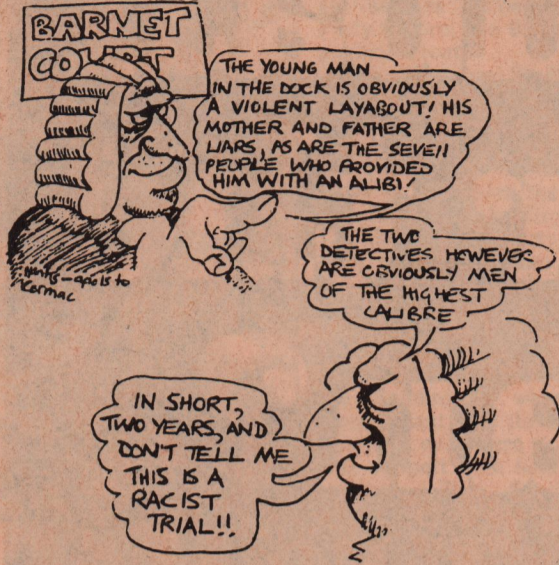
After that battle the TAG stepped up their use of stop-

and-search 'sus' laws against local black youth, so any police uniform in Moss side is likely to cause hostility. Unemployment among black youth in the area is at least 30%.

The riot tactics of the police on the 4th dispersed the youths, and a large number were arrested on a patch of waste ground opposite the

Reno Club. The charges are not yet known.

Moss Side Labour Party has a resolution to Labour Party conference calling for the disbanding of the SPG. Now is the time for it to show it means what it says, by throwing its weight behind a campaign to get the charges dropped and the TAG disbanded.



SOUTHALL IS INNOCENT!

THE SOUTHALL trials reopened on Monday 17th at Barnet Magistrates Court.

Previously 35 had come up before the court, and received fines varying from £50 to £500. Two have been sentenced to one and three months imprisonment (they are appealing). Altogether 342 people were arrested in Southall on April 23rd, and they face charges of assault, threatening behaviour, obstruction, and carrying offensive weapons. The Southall campaign committee fears as many as 80 people will get prison sentences.

No-one has been arrested for the murder of Blair Peach, and the Special Patrol Group, responsible for Peach's death in Southall that day, continues its operations.

The trials are being held in Barnet (where the Grunwick picket-line defendants were also tried), a long way from Southall, officially because the local courts are 'overloaded'. A spokesman for the campaign committee said "there are as many reasons for the transfer as there are demonstrators". "The trials are a farce", he said, "we can get no justice

in these courts".

A picket of about 100 marked the opening of the trials, calling for the charges to be dropped and for an end to state racism. Those represented included the Ford Langley Shop Stewards' Committee and the Leamington Anti-Racist Group.

Funds are urgently needed to cover the defendants' costs, likely to total £100,000. Send to IWA, Featherstone Rd, Southall, Middlesex. There will be an Open Door programme on the Southall trials on BBC2 on Saturday 22nd September.

LAWRENCE WELCH

RIGHT TO WORK MARCH Politics was an optional extra

TRADE UNION bureaucrats are nasty, but the Tories are even nastier. That was virtually the sum total of the political content of this year's Right to Work March. Nearly 500 unemployed left Liverpool, a city with some of the worst unemployment in the country, on Saturday 1st September, and arrived five days later in Blackpool, where this year's TUC was taking place. As in previous years the march had a dual purpose: to pressurise the TUC into taking action against unemployment, and to boost the membership of the Socialist Workers Party (the political organisation which dominates the Right to Work campaign).

For five days the marchers were fed on a diet of horror stories about the union bureaucracy and the Tories. The union leaders are 'traitors', 'scheming careerists'. They spend their time 'getting pissed up' on the union's expense account, they 'drive around in big cars and stay in posh hotels', and they put all their efforts into selling out the rank and file of the unions time and time again. What such people need is 'a real roughing up' and a 'good kick up the arse'. 'If we all spat together, we could drown the bastards'.

In comparison to the Tories, however, the union leaders seem to be fairly tame animals. The Tories too are 'bastards' and 'scum', led by 'Thatcher the mad axe-woman', 'Thatcher the job-snatcher'. At times the attacks on Thatcher were blatantly sexist: according to a number of the marchers, she is a 'whore' and a 'prostitute', who 'sucks big pricks'. According to the slogans written on marchers' jackets, 'Tories = Nazis'.

After such profound political analysis came the equally profound solutions of how to deal with the Tories: you have to 'smash' them, you 'kill' them, you 'fuck' Thatcher.

The SWP might say that they wanted to mobilise working class youth and educate them in the struggle, rather than primly waiting until the young militants had got rid of all their prejudices and confused ideas. Very good. But in fact there was little effort to educate. A couple of brief pieces in SW march bulletins opposed sexism in a bland and general way, but mostly the SWP just encouraged the idea that 'strong' language meant strong politics.

One of the most regular chants on the march was: 'The

Tories, the Tories, we've got to get rid of the Tories'. When asked what the Tories would be replaced by, the SWP were unable to give a serious answer. Some could give no answer at all, some claimed it would be the SWP, some, like SW journalist Alan Gibbons, claimed it would be a socialist republic. Others admitted hesitantly that it would be another Labour government ('because idiots like WA supporters will work for its return') which, they admitted, will lead to a decline in the SWP's membership because they will not be able to build upon people's gut hatred of the Tories.

The SWP claims that Labourism is more or less dead. Every so often (for example at election time) it has to recognise this claim is nonsense, but it has no idea how to prevent a repeat of the experience of the last Labour government. Given that the whole approach of the SWP to politics is based on the idea that the Labour Party can be driven

why a revolutionary party (which is what the SWP claims to be) is needed to overthrow capitalism were striking. They found their crudest expression in a leaflet distributed on the fourth day of the march. This bulletin is being printed in London and sent up by train. It goes to show what an organisation can do, that individuals can't. It's a small example of why we all need to get organised — to fight the Tories, fight the system, and build something better' (their emphasis).

In other words, the SWP sees its role as a technical, servicing one: its job is to provide militants with the facilities to make sure their shop-floor militancy is effective.

This sort of recruitment drive of course raises the question of just what the Right to Work campaign is all about. The answer to this question depended on whom you asked. Some members of the SWP claimed that it was an attempt to build a mass movement against unemployment. (Why

lem is that the SWP basically fails to politically educate the new militants beyond a few empty catch-phrases. In the evenings the central activity was always the disco. Politics was an optional extra for which there was never really much time. And such politics as there was consisted of saying in various ways that union leaders are nasty, the Tories are nastier, but the SWP is really nice so you should join it. Certainly the SWP recruited out of the march, but like thousands of others who have passed through the IS/SWP, most will not last six months in the SWP. The SWP may be successful in whipping up people's gut hatred of Tories and capitalism, but it fails to educate them. By failing to educate, it miseducates, and thus demoralises and disillusiones many potential revolutionaries.

A report of the march as it was is inevitably an analysis of the weaknesses of the SWP, for the march was a reflection



out of existence by curses, the idea of working within it met with violent opposition from SWP members. This found its sharpest expression on the march when a Socialist Organiser seller had papers ripped up and a member of the SWP had to be restrained by two of his comrades from physically attacking him.

'Join the SWP' was the cure all. The reasons put forward for joining the SWP and for

then is the SWP often unwilling to combine with other campaigns against unemployment? Others claimed it was a subsidiary part of the SWP, and yet other claimed that it was both, since 'only revolutionaries can fight unemployment'.

The problem is not that the SWP has used things like punk rock to attract people to the ANL, the Right to Work campaign, and the SWP: the prob-

lem is that the SWP basically fails to politically educate the new militants beyond a few empty catch-phrases. In the evenings the central activity was always the disco. Politics was an optional extra for which there was never really much time. And such politics as there was consisted of saying in various ways that union leaders are nasty, the Tories are nastier, but the SWP is really nice so you should join it. Certainly the SWP recruited out of the march, but like thousands of others who have passed through the IS/SWP, most will not last six months in the SWP. The SWP may be successful in whipping up people's gut hatred of Tories and capitalism, but it fails to educate them. By failing to educate, it miseducates, and thus demoralises and disillusiones many potential revolutionaries.

A report of the march as it was is inevitably an analysis of the weaknesses of the SWP, for the march was a reflection

STAN CROOKE

But making the tea comes naturally

'PERSONAL grooming', 'first aid in the office', and learning a pleasant telephone manner almost crowd out typing and other secretarial skills from the syllabus of the government Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS)-sponsored courses at the Sight and Sound colleges in London and other major cities. Unaccountably, tea-making is left out — perhaps it is assumed to come naturally to women.

That's what I found when I looked for a TOPS course to get me off the dole.

TOPS, a branch of the government's Manpower Services Commission, is being pruned by the Tory government, and the number of sponsored trainees drastically cut. The scheme was designed to encourage over-19s who have been out of full-time education for over two years, and who are unemployed, to train or retrain in a skill to get a better chance of employment.

It will sponsor you for some courses at the 'Sight and Sound' secretarial colleges. But the flexible-time intensive courses turn out to be for private pupils, paying upwards of £2.50 an hour. TOPS sponsorship is offered only for full-time 8 to 14 week courses, which take pupils to a barely employable minimum standard in actual work skills like typing and are based on a very backward concept of the secretary as a decorative dog-body who provides a range of stereotypically female services to the (male) boss.

Even the Equal Opportunities Commission, hardly a vanguard campaigner for women's rights, has criticised the Manpower Services Commission for its unimaginative attitude to retraining women.

What is more, the course suited none of the other women who applied at the same time as me. For the price of one of the full-time courses, four of us could have taken the refresher courses we wanted, achieved a higher standard, and avoided the lessons in servility.

M.W.

NICARAGUA's 'Government of National Salvation' has carried out widespread nationalisations during its first few weeks in power. All the country's banks, most major export concerns (coffee, cotton, sugar, and fish) and up to 70% of the country's arable land has been taken over.

The nationalised land and most of the nationalised industries were formerly the property of the deposed President Somoza, his family and their closest aides. The property of other landowners has been left untouched, however, and anti-Somoza sections of the bourgeoisie are heavily involved in the formal apparatus of the new government.

Private TV and radio stations have been given permission to reopen and 'La Prensa', a daily newspaper formerly controlled by leading bourgeois anti-Somoza figure Pedro Chamorro, has also reopened.

The British bosses' magazine, *The Economist*, views these developments with calm nonchalance. "Nothing very radical has happened to the economy; Nicaragua's empty banks have been nationalised, and President Somoza's huge industrial holdings have been taken over, but that was inevitable".

The seizure of Somoza's property was probably discounted as inevitable by the USA, who were forced to ditch him. Given Somoza's corruption, this nationalisation was probably even welcome to the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie in Nicaragua. But for the bourgeoisie internationally, and US imperialism in particular, the main issue at stake is whether their weakened class brothers in Nicaragua can actually keep a grip on the situation now.

The overthrow of Somoza has greatly increased working class expectations, and a major test for the new government is how it deals with the workers' demands. The government has, for example, promised that workers will be able to claim two months' back payment of wages from employers covering the period of civil war when industry and commerce were closed down. The bosses claim they are unable to pay.

When the 'Simon Bolivar Brigade' (a mainly Colombian group organised by one faction of the USFI, the international tendency of which the British IMG is part) helped organise a demonstration by over a thousand workers in Managua in August,

Nicaragua: The Cuban road or the Bolivian?

demanding to be paid, the Brigade's members were expelled from the country. The Minister of Agrarian Reform, Jaime Wheelock, denounced "... trotskysts... who seek to accelerate the evolution of the Nicaraguan regime".

Wheelock, a member of the 'Proletarian Tendency' of the Sandinistas, is one of the more apparently left-wing ministers of the Government. (The USFI quickly disavowed the Simon Bolivar Brigade as irresponsible adventurers, although up until then the USFI press had boosted the Brigade as a bold internationalist intervention).

There is little clue as to the future 'evolution of the regime' in the measures it has so far carried out. Its main decree, a 'Bill of Rights' promulgated on August 21st, goes nowhere beyond promising the sort of democratic rights of privacy, religious belief, freedom of expression, political association and the right to strike common to many bourgeois democratic constitutions.

The Bill deals with the question of private property by saying that property rights may be subject to 'restrictions' for 'reasons of security, public interest or utility, social interest, the national economy, national

emergency or disaster, or for the purpose of agrarian reform".

The attitude of the present government junta on just how to exercise those restrictions is unlikely to be radical, however. Of the five members of the Junta, four are prominent bourgeois



Cesar Sandino, Nicaragua's nationalist hero of the '30s

figures — a former director of the National University, a businessman, a politician in the 'Group of 12' which involves figures who split from Somoza's Liberal Party, and the widow of Pedro Chamorro. Only one member of the junta is a member of the Sandinista movement which led the fighting against the Somoza regime. (And the bourgeois ministers show no signs of disapproving the government's actions).

A number of radical ministers have been appointed by the junta, principally Tomas Borge, a veteran Sandinista leader and a leader of the 'Prolonged Popular War' faction, who is minister of the Interior, and Wheelock, a member of the 'Proletarian Tendency', the other minority faction inside the Sandinista movement which has been somewhat critical of links with bourgeois politicians in the past. However, the Minister of Defence is a former officer of Somoza's National Guard who only joined the Sandinista forces in 1978 after being accused of plotting a coup against Somoza within the Guard.

The junta and the ministers have not, however, taken over an existing state machinery. Somoza's rule was based on an extremely lim-

ited circle of associates and the National Guard, which he personally commanded. The Sandinistas' victory after Somoza's flight from the country left the National Guard completely destroyed and many of its members fled the country or had already deserted.

No National Guard units appear to have stayed functioning inside Nicaragua, and only isolated clashes with snipers are reported. The Sandinista forces have taken the place of any regular army.

For some socialist groups the Sandinistas' destruction of the old state machine and their military dominance clearly indicates that a Cuba-type evolution is likely, overthrowing capitalism.

The US Socialist Workers' Party (a sister organisation of the IMG) argues that "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".

The USFI majority has adopted a similar position.

In Cuba there were bourgeois ministers, too, but they



Nicaraguan workers celebrate revolutionary victory and the Sandinistas stand when workers demands.

were gradually eased out, or fled, after mid-1959, as the Castroite July 26th Movement secured increasing support from armed workers to expropriate American and local bourgeois property in response to the Americans' economic blockade of the country. In Cuba as in Nicaragua the old bourgeois order was in an advanced state of decay and parasitism, and the state military apparatus was controlled by a personal clique. This weakness of bourgeois power meant that when the old military power was destroyed, the overthrow of capitalism in Cuba became possible without the intervention of a strong working-class revolutionary party. A radicalising petty-bourgeois movement, basing itself on the armed workers, was able to lead the revolution.

However, the collapse of the existing military state machine does not have an automatic logic towards the overthrow of capitalism. As long as the bourgeoisie — or a substantial section of it — remains intact, a new bourgeois state machine can be fashioned, even out of former rebel forces or popular militias. The Cuban revolution was based on a far-from-automatic conscious evolution of the Castroites towards

revolutionary

tics. As well as the there the Bo Bolivia the National Mov on the urban eoisie, won a g

The Sandinistas but they remain

CP stifles left voice

EVERY EFFORT was made by the TUC General Council to ensure that as many votes as possible were unanimous.

On the key issue of 'Industrial Relations Legislation', Len Murray worked overtime on the Sunday night before Congress started to prevent the Bakers' Union from pulling out of the composite [as the CPSA delegation encouraged it to do] and putting its proposal for 'no talks with the Tories'. Murray succeeded.

Faced with the serious threat that the CPSA would oppose resolution 45 on 'Economic and Social Advance' from the General Council, thus spilling an unanimous vote, Murray was very relieved when the CPSA delegation overturned the union NEC's position.

This policy change was unconstitutional — the delegation has no right to overturn NEC decisions — but the fact that the Communist Party and Militant changed their attitude may ensure that any protest or censure motion will be voted down on the NEC.

The CP were organising to win support for FTAT's amendment to Motion 45, call-

by Ian Humster



Ken Thomas

ing for the TUC General Council to organise mass demonstrations in support of the policies in Motion 45. Although the amendment did not amount to much — the policies to be demonstrated for are

class-collaborationist, mixed-economy ones, on the Roy Hattersley political wavelength — the CP pushed as the major left-wing challenge to the General Council.

The CPSA NEC had previously, in a rather casual discussion, voted to oppose the amendment. After the AUEW and the TGWU had announced they would support FTAT, pressure was mounted for a CPSA delegation meeting to reconsider the union's stand.

General secretary Ken Thomas moved that the delegation should support the amendment — and coupled this with a switch from opposition to abstention on motion 45 itself and a decision that the CPSA would not speak in the debate. [WA supporter Stephen Corbishley had previously been chosen to speak for the CPSA against the General Council].

In a railroaded vote, the Communist Party, the Labour Lefts, and the Militant supporters fell into line, and thus extinguished the only voice of opposition to the General Council's economic and political perspectives.



TUC: tr

TWO SORTS of unity were themes at the Trades Union Congress on September 3-7.

One was the unity of doing as little as possible, of beating down any slightly radical proposal as a threat to unity. The other was national unity. The argument against the Tories' policies, again and again, was that they are 'bad for Britain' and 'divisive', that they threaten to cause class struggle.

So unity for a fight was certainly not a theme.

The TUC voted to oppose the Tory union law proposals, but committed itself to no action beyond a general education campaign. The same on the cuts, though that resolution proposed a possible national day of action.

Wage controls were rejected without much controversy. On unemployment, a resolution called yet again for a 'campaign' for the 35 hour week.

Nearly all the proposals that could cause any sharp

debate had

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But where will we go more radical?

...alist poli- in 1952 but was refused recognition by the army. In a popular uprising in which Bolivia's tin miners played a major part, the MNR was swept to power. It carried out land reform and nationalised the tin mines. The old mili-



Fighters have smashed Somoza's National Guard — in alliance with bourgeois figures

...ary coup. A number of factors suggest it is very far from automatic that Nicaragua will follow the Cuban rather than the Bolivian road. The Sandinistas' dominant faction, the Terceristas, had established close links with sections of the bourgeoisie prior to coming to power. They had closed links with the 'Group of 12' and supported Nicaragua's Moscow-oriented Socialist Party in its bloc with the bourgeois anti-Somoza Conservative Party to form the Broad Opposition Front. The other two Sandinista factions were more favourable towards the United People's Movement, led by the Nicaraguan Communist Party (a split from the SP). This fused with the 'Group of 12', the Socialist Party, and their right wing allies, into the National Patriotic Front at the start of 1979 as the three Sandinista factions drew closer together. In its international links, the Sandinistas were far more reliant than the Cuban guerillas ever were on outside support from bourgeois regimes. The Sandinista guerilla army was organised as a large scale operation which required at least tacit approval of regimes such as Costa Rica (where it was based). A unit from Panama led by a former Panama government minister also fought alongside the Sandinistas. The links with bourgeois regimes were of vital importance not simply in sustaining the Sandinista military campaign but eventually bringing them victory. Venezuela, Panama and Peru made it clear they wanted Somoza to go. The US finally forced Somoza to leave the country rather than risk a prolonged civil war which would have pushed the anti-Somoza forces into an even more radical stance. The USA today retains a practical method of pressure on the new regime: Nicaragua's need for aid. During the months of the civil war, industry and commerce were closed down, agriculture was disrupted, and the Somozists bombed flat large areas of working class housing in many cities. Food is still scarce, and much of the cities needs rebuilding. The Americans have sent some aid, \$5 million at the start of August but much less since — in order to be able to bargain. The EEC has given food and economic assistance to a value of \$8.62 million, while the International Monetary Fund has granted a loan of \$22 million with

...apparently no conditions attached. Such aid will strengthen the hand of the bourgeois members of the junta in limiting any reforms and preserving bourgeois interests, in order to keep aid coming. Unlike with Cuba, the USA is not in the position of finding itself 'taken by surprise', and is not likely to respond to the Nicaraguan regime by trying to cut it off or supporting a Bay of Pigs-type operation by Somozists. Diplomatic and economic pressure to make sure the Sandinistas do not go 'too far' is what the USA is banking on. One factor which could tip the balance very firmly the other way, in favour of Nicaragua following the 'Cuban road', is the attitude of Cuba itself. For the American SWP, who believe that the Castro regime is a 'revolutionary government', their overall optimism thus makes sense, but only at the expense of blindness to the fact that Cuba shows no interest in the Nicaraguan masses overthrowing capitalism. In a recent speech, Cuban leader Fidel Castro said "It is the circumstances in which the Nicaraguan victory was won that determine that the ways they adopt be different from ours. Furthermore, the fact that right now Nicaragua is in ruins, completely destroyed, calls for a national reconstruction programme with the participation of every sector of Nicaraguan society". Earlier he had put the issue more directly, saying bluntly that he did not want Nicaragua to be "another Cuba". In the years following their revolution, the Cuban leadership tried to spread the revolution through Latin America. Che Guevara sacrificed his life in this struggle. But since about 1968 the Cuban government has become pretty much aligned with the USSR's international policy. It has given heavy support to nationalist bourgeois regimes like Peru, Angola, and Ethiopia. The Cuban leadership has become seriously bureaucratised, lost its revolutionary drive, and accommodated itself to the pressures from the USSR. The Nicaraguan revolution was undoubtedly a great victory, and undoubtedly it is the duty of socialist everywhere to support the new regime against any imperialist pressure or intervention. But the new regime has neither done so much objectively, nor moved so much

...towards revolutionary socialism subjectively, as to give the revolution a working-class or anti-capitalist character. The Cubans did do so much, and did move so far leftwards. Even then the political self-cancelling-out practised by the USFI in relation to the leadership of the revolution was not justified: the completion of the permanent revolution and the programme of workers' councils remained to be fought for, and while Marxists need to be sensitive and open towards leftward-moving radical forces, we can never just substitute advice to those forces for our own intervention. (Especially when, as so often with the USFI, any notion of the advice having any serious weight is completely delusory). The USFI operates the same political self-cancelling-out for Nicaragua that it did for Cuba, and with far less justification. Just as the Cuban road was not automatic, neither was the Bolivian. Bolivia was one of the few countries where Trotskyism had a mass following, with a decisive ideological influence in the late '40s in the all-important miners' union. When the Trotskyists in 1952 renounced any serious independent action, and subordinated themselves to the MNR as being the actual revolutionary leadership, that was a factor in the survival of Bolivian capitalism. In Algeria after 1962, too, the old state apparatus — that of French colonialism — was destroyed. The most important capitalist interests — French colonial interests — were destroyed. Among the non-settler population there was hardly any bourgeoisie. Power was in the hands of the revolutionary fighters of the FLN, and the main leaders of the FLN were left-wing. The USFI said Algeria would follow the Cuban road — and continued to say that until 1965, when the FLN right wing organised a coup and set Algeria firmly on a road of capitalist, although heavily state-capitalist, development. In Algeria, as in Nicaragua, the USFI did not have any forces. But looking back on the experience, they were forced to the conclusion that their failure to try to build a Trotskyist party in Algeria was a failure in an elementary duty. Without such a party in Nicaragua, the overthrow of capitalism is at most a speculative possibility.

NIK BARSTOW

Trying to avoid a fight

...een weeded out before it reaches. No proposal with the Tories in laws, or to industrial action against government, got debate was on ment from the workers' union the TUC General Campaign for and Social Ad- on bland and sals for a better 'my') to be back- mass demonstra- ate TUC gener- Len Murray told es they should the amendment of unity, since it g (?) to the Gen- cil resolution. orkers' general n Rubner replied hat a better sort ld be a united mendment. dment was de- narrow margin

...of 61,000 votes out of a total of 12 million, with the two largest block votes, the AUEW's and the TGWU's, being cast against it. Miners' union delegates were angry that their vote was cast against the amendment without any discussion in the delegation. The unspoken fear among the union leaders was that the stormy anti-Tory struggles of 1972-4 could be repeated. Nothing frightens them more. On the one hand, the Tory government must be implored to be less provocative; on the other, nothing must be done which arouses the rank and file too much. The TUC's uneasy stance earned them nothing but contempt from the serious Tory press. "The notion that any government... could be brow-beaten into reversing its policies by a series of demonstrations is of course ludicrous", sneered the Financial Times. "But day-dreaming about a govern-

...ment rash enough to implement its 'alternative strategy' seems to be the TUC's only response to the squeeze on British industry" (read: British profits). The Economist tartly commented on the TUC's slogan, 'Forward to the 80s, not back to the 30s': "The trouble is that the unions are trying to apply the solutions of the '30s [i.e. Keynesianism — increased state spending to end unemployment] 50 years too late. And what is being sold as a forward-looking alternative is really a rearguard fight". The right wing press had a clearer understanding of what was going on than the supposedly left-wing Morning Star. Tailing behind the 'left' trade union leaders who were as deeply submerged in the TUC's no-fight unity as any right-wingers, the Star saw everything in rose tints. "Mood for action sweeps the TUC", it headlined on Thursday! It was even

COLIN FOSTER

workers' ACTION

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EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance.

FRIDAY 14 SEPTEMBER. London Workers' Action meeting: The fightback against the Tories. Speaker: Stephen Corbishley, CPSA NEC and TUC delegate, in personal capacity. 8pm at the 'Metropolitan', 95 Farringdon Rd, EC1.

FRIDAY 14 SEPTEMBER. 'Lambeth Fightback' anti-cuts picket of Lambeth Labour group meeting. 6.30pm, Town Hall, Acre Lane, Brixton.

SATURDAY 15 SEPTEMBER. Stop the cuts march and rally, organised by Haringey Campaign against the Cuts. Assembly 11am at Stuart Crescent, N22, march to Ducketts Common for rally at 12.30pm. Speakers: Tony Benn, Norman Atkinson, Ted Knight.

SUNDAY 16 SEPTEMBER. Chile solidarity demonstration. 1pm from Clerkenwell Green, London.

SUNDAY 16 SEPTEMBER. Coventry Socialist Organiser meeting: 'Organising against the cuts'. Speakers: Cllr Bill Bowring (Lambeth), Joe Little (Coventry NUPE branch secretary). 7.30pm at the Golden Cup, Far Gosford Street.

TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER. Six civil servants were arrested in February: after seeing another person forcibly arrested they tried to protest and were manhandled themselves. Their hearing starts on September 18th at Camberwell Green Court. A picket will be held. Please attend. Donations and messages to 'Legal Violence out of Brixton' campaign, 16 Knowlton House, Cowley Rd, London SW9. Richard Cleverley, a CPSA member at Brixton UBO, appeared in court on September 13 charged with obstruction during the Post Office strike in June. Messages of support etc to Gordon Blair, SCPS DPS Branch, Room 400, Docos House, 62 Commercial Rd, London E1.

WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER. Lambeth Fightback campaign meeting, 7.30pm, Lower Hall, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, London SW2. Further details: Chris Sutton, 675 1782

SATURDAY 22 SEPTEMBER. Edinburgh District Labour Party march and rally against the cuts, supported by the Scottish TUC. 10.30am from Waverley Bridge, Edinburgh.

WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER. Manchester Socialist Organiser meeting: Fight the cuts, fight the Tories. Speaker: John Douglas. 8pm at Hulme Labour Club, Bonsall St.

SATURDAY 29 SEPTEMBER. Demonstration against racist killings, against new Tory immigration curbs, and against the Southall trials. From Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park. Details: Sept. 29th Committee, c/o 247 Mare St., London E8.

SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER. Islington conference against the cuts. Sponsored by local Labour Parties, trade union branches, stewards' committees, tenants' associations, Islington Trades Council, and 14 councillors. Credentials £1 for delegates, 50p for visitors, from Rosie Dale, 38 Elton Place, King Henry St, Mayville Estate, London N16.

SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER, 10am to 1.30pm at the Glasgow Trades Union Centre, 81 Carlton Place;

SUNDAY 28 OCTOBER, 12.30pm to 4pm at the Trade Union Centre, 14 Picardy Pl., Edinburgh (sponsored by Edinburgh Trades Council) — Day Schools for men and women active in trade union work organised by the Scottish Homosexual Rights Group. Main speakers at both schools: Marilyn Costello (Scottish Education Secretary, NALGO), Ellen Galford (lesbian and feminist activist). Trade union branches in the central belt of Scotland are invited to appoint delegates to one of these schools. Details: Ian Dunn, 031-225 2424 x6298, or Bob Deacon, Livingston 38394.

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PRESENT-day society, like its predecessors for thousands of years, is hierarchical: we are classified into higher and lower orders of being. The fundamental distinction is drawn on the basis of class; but even within, and to a limited extent obscuring, these class distinctions, we are taught to discriminate between people according to their age and their sex.

The ways in which we signal and recognise these all-important ranks in the hierarchy are enormously complex and subtle. The ways we talk to each other, the ways we stand, sit and even walk are structured by the needs of the hierarchy, despite our feeling that we are acting in the most 'natural' fashion.

And the relations of dominance and subordination follow us even into the most private corners of our lives.

The sociologist Erving Goffman has been prying into the details of everyday life for many years, explaining the function of some of the most normal — and some of the most bizarre and apparently inexplicable — habits. In the latest of his books to be published in Britain, *Gender Advertisements* (Macmillan, £2.95), he turns his attention to the 'small behaviours' associated with the distinction between men and women in contemporary capitalist society, and in particular he looks at the different ways in which the sexes are presented in commercial advertisements.

With the aid of a large number of still photos he begins to educate the eye about how women are put in their place.

One obvious theme is the way in which men are normally portrayed as larger than women: 'what biology and social selection facilitate, picture posing, rigorously completes'. Then we are shown that men will be depicted as the active partner and women as passive, or as accessories to the action when both are present.

Women are enfolded in the embrace of men; when holding hands, the man will be leading or directing the woman. Women are often shown in childlike, 'puckish' poses, or in other ways as

acting in an unserious manner.

Women are smiling more than men, and often smiling at men (or us, the onlookers), since 'smiles, it can be argued, often function as ritualistic mollifiers' — ways

curtsey.

Men may be shown making mock assaults on women — as either parent may towards a child — and these displays, Goffman points out, may contain 'a suggestion of what he could do if

he got serious about it'.

Goffman is very cautious about drawing too many conclusions from what he shows us. In particular, he is wary of defining to what extent ads accurately reflect the ways in which we really act towards each other, rather than distorting or exaggerating them for their own purpose.

The generalisations he does make are telling: for example, he tells us that 'ritually speaking, females are equivalent to subordinate males and both are equivalent to children'. He is also quite definite that the ways in which we signal masculinity or femininity are by no means biologically determined: they are not to be taken as the way men and women 'really are' in abstraction from our social and human context.

Although he is aware of the political implications of his work, Goffman shies away from drawing conclusions. In fact, when he does pronounce, he is pessimistic.

'Nor should too easy a political lesson be drawn by those sympathetic to social change.

'The analysis of sexism can start with obviously unjust discriminations against persons of the female sex-class, but analysis as such cannot stop there. Gender stereotypes run in every direction, and almost as much inform what supporters of women's rights approve as what they disapprove.

'A principal means men in our society have for initiating or terminating an everyday encounter on a sympathetic note is to employ endearing terms of address and verbal expressions of concern that are (upon examination) parental in character and profoundly asymmetrical...'

At one level his point is well-taken: there is no way we can carve out an entirely non-sexist mode of behaving — even in the smallest things — within the weave of life under capitalism. (He could have made his point



'Women frequently, men very infrequently, are posed in a display of the "bashful knee bend"'



The 'puckish' pose: copying 'the subordinated and indulged position of children in relation to parents'

even stronger by noting that the category 'child' is itself historical, dating in its present form to the rise of bourgeois society. But this by no

means proves that fighting against the most offensive manifestations of oppression and exploitation is a waste of time.

Goffman's very method of analysis prevents him from breaking out of the vicious circle, and makes his book very frustrating to read. Some of the most obvious points are missing: for example, how women and not men are portrayed in ads as laying themselves sexually open to the viewer.

At one level, the reason advertisers do this is obvious enough; but surely the equation commodity=sex has its complement, that sex=commodity. In what ways does this affect our relations as human beings?

Again, it seems women in contemporary society must learn how they should look — acquire 'models' against which to compare their own bodies and selves — substantially from ads, where to look good is to look enticing to men is to look like a commodity.

Without analysing ads in the context of their own function in the reproduction of capital — without looking behind the appearances — Goffman can warn against too-easy, utopian versions of feminism, but he tends to relapse into resigned indifference.

The irony is that the English cover of his own book shows two scarcely clad women looking as if they were being driven into ecstasies of desire by the intrusion of the viewer. In the corner of my copy a sticker has been added which says: 'To attract sales this book has been published with a cover which is offensive: a woman's body has been used by the publisher to make money. This misrepresents the content of the book and is an insult to the reader...'

The Macmillan Publicity Office told me that the cover was chosen because it is 'striking' and 'we'll pick up some sales from that'.

Despite himself, Goffman is misrepresented by such a cover. He has at least helped to make us aware of what is done to our lives in the name of profit; but it will be up to others to bring about change.

JAMES RYAN

Advertising how to be a woman



'Boys, as it were, have to push their way into manhood'

Girls merely have to unfold'

of begging for favour. Women are shown standing in poses not seen among men: one of these, which Goffman calls the 'bashful knee bend', often looks to me like an abbreviated version of a



Israel's army goes hunting

THE CASE of Lieutenant P. has created a furore in Israel, with many left Zionists outraged by the attitude of the Israeli establishment.

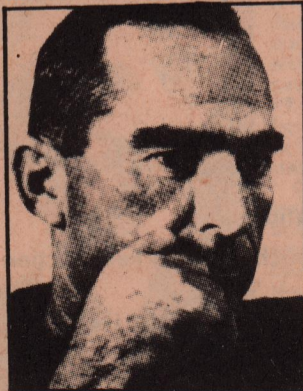
Lieutenant P's case was brought to wider attention when members of the left Zionist Shehli organisation distributed a leaflet carrying extracts of the court hearing, which was held in secret.

Lieutenant P was acting commander of a platoon billeted in the Lebanese village of Ein Baal. Some days after Israel's so-called Litan! offensive, when the Zionists carried out one of their biggest and most bloody raids into south Lebanon last April, P and two corporals decided to go out 'man-hunting' (according to the magazine *Middle East* this is the accepted military jargon in the Israeli army).

The man-hunt resulted in the 'capture' of four villagers, one a youth of 16. They were each put in separate rooms and bound with nylon cord. Lieutenant P then tortured them. They were each then strangled, and their bodies were thrown down a

well.

So proud was P of what he had done, and so confident in the context of official anti-Arab racism, that at a friend's party some time later, he could not resist bragging about his deeds to his commander. Despite the



General Eitan

commander's role in the invasion, he felt that such an incident should be reported... particularly as Lieutenant P was about to receive a commendation as a 'Distinguished Soldier'.

As *Middle East* reports,

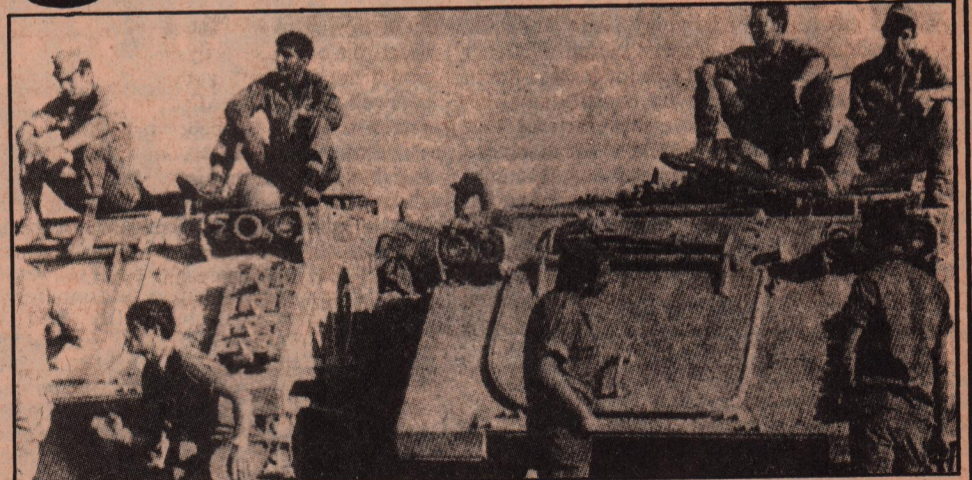
"Meanwhile, the replacement unit which had taken over the village discovered the rotting bodies in the well and removed two of them.

"The other two could not be lifted out as the well was in danger of collapsing. A post-mortem revealed death by strangulation. There was no trace of bullets but plenty of evidence of torture.

"The lieutenant vehemently denied torturing the Arabs and told the first military court he faced a story which has been repeated by his mother...

"He had burst into the house on his own, he said, to be confronted by two members of the Syrian Salqa guerilla group. He killed these with his sub-machine gun and threw them into the well. He did not feel it necessary to report the incident."

The story flew in the face of all the evidence. A lie detector test on the commander who reported the matter confirmed his side of the story, while one carried out on the lieutenant showed



Israeli soldiers in Lebanon

he had been lying. The court could do nothing but find him guilty. He was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment and decommissioned.

A higher military court to which Lieutenant P appealed confirmed the findings, though this time the judges, some civilian and some military, reduced the sentence to 8 years without any explanation.

Throughout, Israel's Chief

of Staff, General Raphael Eitan, made clear that he believed the Lieutenant's story, and Eitan and the Lieutenant's mother made sure that it was that story that got into the press. As the trial was in secret, the fact Lieutenant P's story had been found baseless by the courts was less widely known than his story itself.

Eitan's final act was to ignore the two courts and

reduce the Lieutenant's sentence to a mere two years.

Israel's establishment press has made its position clear: it is hypocritical to make a fuss over the fate of these Arabs, for the Zionist state could not have been established except by such methods in the past. Why suddenly start caring about Arabs now, they ask.

JAMES DAVIES

From Kautsky to Eurocommunism:

INTRODUCTION

by Bruce Robinson

THE contrast between the strong state in the advanced countries of western Europe and the weak and isolated state of backward Russia is fundamental to the strategy of attrition as advanced both by Kautsky and the Eurocommunists today. From this contrast both draw the same conclusion: the state cannot be overthrown by a direct attack as in Russia, it must be undermined by gradually capturing positions of strength within capitalist society.

Rosa Luxemburg here attacks both this fundamental picture of the strength of the German state in comparison with Russia and Kautsky's conclusion that this makes use of the mass strike undesirable in Germany. She starts by disputing Kautsky's view that the Russian mass strikes in 1905 had no clear aims and were simply a spontaneous explosion which could only take the form of strikes. Luxemburg gives a very clear description of how the strikes achieved their immediate aims by 'breaking the factory owners' right to rule' and how this workers' control necessarily had consequences in the political sphere — by creating new representative workers' organs, by necessitating defence of the economic gains against the counter revolution, and by fundamentally challenging the continued rule of Czarism. Luxemburg clearly understands that general strikes have a logic which goes beyond immediate aims to the creation of dual power. It is precisely the clear counterposition of the different forms and institutions of class rule which the Eurocommunists try to write out of their strategy in favour of a schema in which bourgeois democracy can be made to serve the rule of the working class.

Luxemburg then goes on to examine the reality of the German state which Kautsky presents as 'the strongest government of the present'. Kautsky had argued in his previous articles that the economic and political contradictions of the German state were increasing and bringing revolution closer. Yet, picking on a few superficial appearances, Kautsky argued that the state would be able to resist the 'strategy of overthrow' and that it could therefore only harm the social democracy.

Just as Kautsky believed that a guarantee of success was essential before the state could be overthrown, so he thought that strikes were only the correct method of struggle when they had a clear prospect of success and that, given the strength of the capitalists, they were thus becoming rarer. Luxemburg shows statistically that neither of these assertions is true. Defensive strikes might not necessarily be successful but they are often necessary to stem the bosses' attacks and build or consolidate union organisation. Equally she shows that the tendency was precisely for strikes to become increasingly political as they grew in scope and in the breadth of their aims.

Kautsky's assertions about the nature of the state in Germany and Russia and the mass strike as a weapon in Germany thus also fall down when Luxemburg subjects them to examination in the light of the reality of the class struggle. The Eurocommunists also build a huge theoretical edifice on a rejection of real experiences in the class struggle, such as that of Allende's fate in Chile. Both rest on an artificial rejection of the revolutionary experience of Russia — be it in 1905 or 1917 — for western Europe, a rejection based more on logical constructions than on a real analysis of the dynamics of the class struggle.



Chaotic Russia and stable Europe?

Rosa Luxemburg: THEORY AND PRACTICE

I (Continued)

This "completely new agitation" which could have "unforeseeable consequences" for the party had the following wording:

"Universal, equal, direct suffrage for all adults irrespective of their sex is the next goal which will certainly win the enthusiastic agreement of the broadest layers at the present moment. But this goal is not the only one which we must now preach. By proclaiming in answer to the infamous bungling of the electoral reform by the government and by the bourgeois parties the slogan of a truly democratic electoral system, we still find ourselves — taking the political situation as a whole — on the defensive. According to the good old principle of any real fighting tactic, that a violent blow is the best defence, we must answer the ever more insolent provocations of the ruling reaction by transforming our agitation and going on to attack sharply right along the line. This, however, can take place most clearly, most visibly, so to speak most concisely, if we clearly put forward in our agitation the political demand which constitutes the first point of our political programme: *the demand for the republic*. The republican slogan has hitherto played an insignificant role in our agitation. This was for good reasons, namely that our party wanted to protect the German working class from those bourgeois — or more precisely, petty-bourgeois — republican illusions which were, for example, so fateful for the history of French socialism, and which have remained until today. In Germany, the proletarian struggle was directed consistently and resolutely, not against this or that particular form or development of the class state, but against the class state as such. It did not fragment into anti-militarism, anti-monarchism, and other petty-bourgeois "isms", but always took the form of anti-capitalism, then the mortal enemy of the existing order in all its developments and forms, whether it be under monarchist or republican cover. As a result of forty years of this thorough educational work, we have succeeded in solidly winning over educated proletarians in Germany to the conviction that the best bourgeois republic is no less a bulwark of capitalist exploitation than an existing monarchy, and that only the abolition of the wages system and of class rule in any form, and not, however, the external appearance of the "popular rule" in a bourgeois republic, can significantly change the situation of the proletariat.

"But precisely because in Germany the dangers of republican-petty-bourgeois illusions have been so thoroughly prevented by the forty years of work by the social democracy, we can today in our agitation calmly grant to that highest principle of our political programme more of the space which rightfully belongs to it. By stressing the republican character of social democracy, we above all win another opportunity to illustrate in a tangible and popular way our principled opposition as a class party of the proletariat to the united camp of all bourgeois parties. The frightening decline of bourgeois liberalism in Germany expressed itself, among other things, particularly drastically in the Byzantine attitude towards the monarchy, in which the liberal bourgeoisie beats even the conservative thinkers.

"But even that is not enough. The whole situation, both of the domestic policies and of the foreign policies of Germany

in the last few years points to the monarchy as the centre of the prevailing reaction, or at least as its outward visible summit. Without doubt, the semi-absolute monarchy with its personal regime has formed, for a quarter of a century, and with every passing year increasingly forms, the basis of militarism, the driving force behind the naval policies, the leading spirit of the adventures in great power politics, just as it has formed the refuge of the Junkers in Prussia and the bulwark of the predominance of Prussian political reaction over the whole Empire. Lastly it is, so to speak, the personal sworn enemy of the working class and of social democracy. The slogan of the republic is thus infinitely more in Germany than just the expression of some pleasant dream about the democratic "people's state", or the expression of a doctrinaire political attitude cut off from reality, it is a practical war cry against the glorification of the army and navy, against colonial policies, against the international policies of the ruling class in general, the rule of the Junkers, the "Prussianisation" of Germany — it is simply a consequence and a drastic compression of our daily struggle against all these partial aspects of the ruling reaction. In particular, however, the particular developments of the most recent period point in the same direction: these are the threats of an absolute coup d'état which have been made in the Reichstag by the Junkers, and of the insolent attacks by the Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag suffrage which have been made in the Prussian state parliament, as well as the adoption of the "royal prerogative" in questions of the Prussian suffrage by the Bethmann bill of reform"

I am able to propose this "completely new agitation" here with an easier conscience because it has already appeared in print without the party having suffered the least damage to body or soul. In fact, after comrade Kautsky had finally returned the whole article about the mass strike to me — in spite of the fact that I agreed, with a shrug of the shoulders but nonetheless with resignation, to the cutting out of the chapter about the republic — I published the pages 29 to the end which he had denounced as an independent article, without changing a word and with an introduction and conclusion, in the Breslau *Volkswacht* of March 25th, under the title of "The time to sow the seed". It was then reprinted by a number of party newspapers — insofar as I can remember: in papers in Dortmund, Bremen, Halle, Elberfeld, Konisberg and Thuringia. All that was certainly not a heroic feat of mine, it is merely my misfortune that comrade Kautsky read the party press in that period as fleetingly as he considered the position of the party on the slogan of the republic. Had he in fact considered the problem more carefully, he would not possibly have been able to lead into battle against me on the question of the republic, Marx and Engels. The article by Engels to which comrade Kautsky refers is the critique of the plan of the Erfurt Programme of 1891, drawn up by the party executive. Here Engels states in chapter II, "Political demands":

"The political demands of the plan have one great error: that which actually ought to be said is *not there*. If all these ten demands were to be granted, then we would indeed have several more means to get the main political aim achieved, but by no means the main aim itself".

The pressing necessity of clearly stating this "main aim" of the political demands of social democracy is demonstrated by Engels in his reference to the "growing opportunism which exists in a large section of the social democratic press". He then continues:

"What then are these tricky but very important points? Firstly: if one thing is clear, then it is this: that our party and the working class can only come to power under the form of the democratic republic. This is even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the great French revolution has already shown. It is, after all, inconceivable that our best people should be ministers under an emperor, like Miquel. From a legal point of view it seems to be impossible to put the demand for the republic directly into the programme, although that was just as permissible even under Louis Philippe in France as it is now in Italy. But the fact that one cannot even put forward in Germany an openly republican party programme proves how colossal is the illusion that it is possible in that country to establish the republic in an easy-going peaceable fashion, and not only a republic but a communist society. However, it is possible in any case to get round the demand for the republic. What should be and can be included, in my opinion,



Leo Jogiches, Rosa Luxemburg's closest comrade-in-arms, worked with her in developing the activity of the Polish Marxists (SDKPił) in Russian Poland during the 1905 strikes

is the demand for the concentration of all political power in the hands of the popular assembly. And that would suffice for the time being if one cannot go further.

"Secondly: the reconstitution of Germany — thus of a unified republic — not much about all these matters should come into the programme. I mention this mainly to characterise the conditions in Germany where it is not possible to say such a thing, and thus to characterise at the same time the self-deception of imagining that such a state of affairs can pass over legally into communist society. And moreover, I mention this in order to remind the party executive that there are other political questions of importance apart from direct legislation by the people and the free administration of justice, without which we can, in the final analysis, get by in any case. In the general mood of uncertainty these questions can become of vital importance from one day to the next, and what happens then if we have not discussed them, if we have not reached agreement about them?"

It is evident that Engels sees "one great error" in the party programme in the fact that it does not contain the demand for the republic. Only with regard to the categorical conceptions coming from Germany that this "is not possible" for legal reasons, does he resolve with visible discomfort and some doubts to take the bull by the horns and "in any case to get round" the demand for the republic. What he however quite clearly declares to be necessary is *discussion of the slogan for the republic in the party press*:

"Whether it is otherwise still possible", he further states, "to formulate programmatic demands referring to the above points, you can judge in the ground better than I can here. But it would be desirable if these questions were to be debated inside the party before it is too late".

This "political testament" of Friedrich Engels is in any case interpreted in a strange manner by comrade Kautsky, since he banishes the discussion of the necessity of an agitation for the republic from the *Neue Zeit* on the grounds that it is a "completely new agitation" which was supposedly "always condemned by the party".

As far as Marx is concerned, he went so far in his criticism of the Gotha Programme that he declared: if one does not have the opportunity openly to put forward the republic as the highest political programmatic demand, then one should also not specify all the other democratic individual demands in the programme. He writes about the Gotha Programme:

"Its political demands contain nothing but the old, universally known, democratic litany: universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular rights, a people's militia, etc... But one thing has been forgotten. Since the German Workers' Party expressly declares it will operate within the "present day national state", hence within its own state,

the Prussian-German empire — then it should not forget the most important thing, namely, that all those pretty little pearls rest on the recognition of so-called popular sovereignty, and hence are appropriate only in a *democratic republic*. Since one is not in the position — and wisely so, for the situation demands caution [N.B. Marx wrote this 35 years ago, in the era of Tessendorf — when the Anti-Socialist Law cast its shadow] — to demand the democratic republic, as the French workers' programmes did under Louis Philippe and under Louis Napoleon, then one ought not to have resorted either to subterfuge [the dots replace a burlesque adjective of Marx] of demanding things which have a meaning only in a democratic republic from a state which is nothing but a police-guarded military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms and trimmed with feudal elements; already influenced by the bourgeoisie, and bureaucratically fashioned. Even vulgar democracy, which sees the millennium in the democratic republic, and has no suspicion that it is precisely in this final form of the state of bourgeois society that the class struggle is to be fought out to its definitive conclusion — even this stands mountains above this kind of democratism, existing within the boundaries of what the police permit and what logic refutes."

Thus Marx also spoke quite a different language on the point of the republic. Marx and Engels — because of assurances originating in Germany — accepted the proposition that it was perhaps not possible to put forward the demand for the republic in the programme in its complete form shortly before and immediately after the Anti-Socialist Law. That his demand, however, should be regarded today, a quarter of a century later, in the *agitation* — and indeed it was only this which was involved — as something "completely new" and unheard of — neither of them certainly ever allowed themselves to dream of such a thing.

Admittedly comrade Kautsky appeals to the fact that he has already put forward the idea of the republic in the *Neue Zeit*, "completely differently" from the harmless way in which I am now doing it. He must know this better than I; in this case my memory leaves me in the lurch to a certain extent. However, could one need a more convincing piece of proof than the events of the most recent period to show that in this respect, at every stage, *in practice* the necessary is not being done? The increases made in the Prussian Civil List again offered the best possible opportunity, and at the same time imposed the inescapable obligation on the party, to sharply and clearly present the slogan of the republic, and to push forward propaganda for it energetically. The insolent challenge which was contained in presenting this government bill immediately after the wretched end of the suffrage bill should have been answered unconditionally with propaganda about the political function of the monarchy, and the personal nature of the regime in Prussia-Germany, with stress on its connection

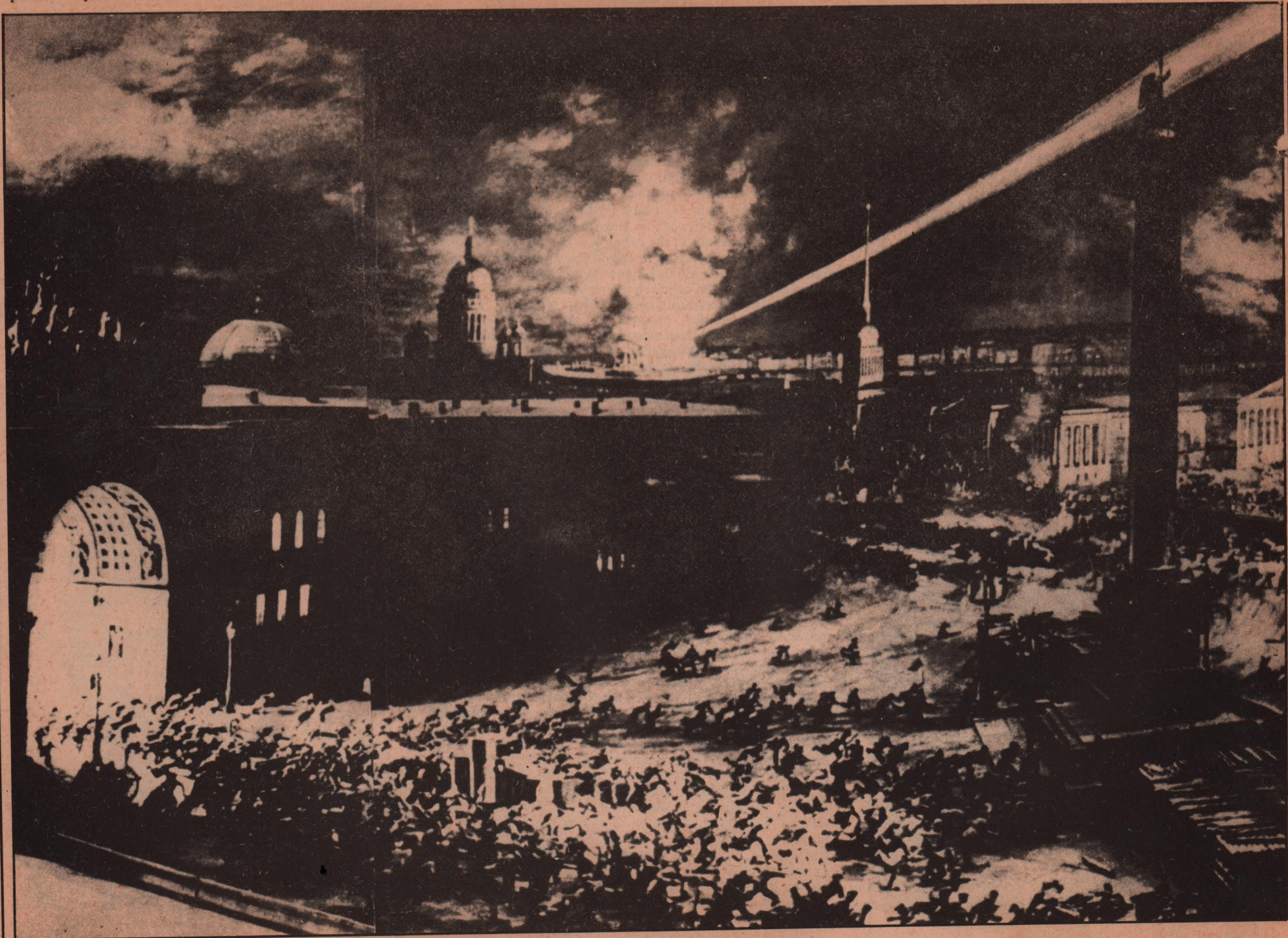
with the glorification of the army and the navy, and the social-political standstill, with reminders about the famous "speeches" and "expressions" about the "rabble", the "dish of stewed fruit", with reminders about the prison bill, with the elucidation of the monarchy as the visible expression of the whole imperial-German reaction. The touching unanimity of opinion among all the bourgeois parties in the Byzantine treatment of the bill drastically showed once again that the republican slogan in present-day Germany has become the phrase which determines on which side of the class divide one stands, has become the slogan of class struggle. Nothing of all this is contained in the *Neue Zeit* nor in *Vorwärts*. The increases in the Civil List have been treated not from the political standpoint, but in the main as a question of money, as a question of the income of the Hohenzollern family, and have been pompously discussed with more or less humour, but not one syllable has been used to put forward the republican slogan in our two leading organs.

Comrade Kautsky is a more qualified connoisseur of Marx than I am; he will know better with which pointed adjectives Marx would certainly provide this "artifice" and this type of republicanism "within the boundaries of what the police allows and what logic disallows".

Comrade Kautsky is mistaken in everything when he says that I am "complaining" about the "poor treatment" on the part of the editorial board of the *Neue Zeit*. I find that comrade Kautsky has treated only himself poorly.

II

AND NOW to the mass strike. In order to explain his unexpected position against the slogan of the mass strike in the latest Prussian suffrage campaign, comrade Kautsky had created a whole theory of the two strategies, the strategy of overthrow and the strategy of attrition. Comrade Kautsky now goes even further and again builds ad hoc a whole theory about the conditions of the political mass strike in Russia and Germany. Here we hear first of all general observations about how tricky historical examples are, about how one could find suitable proof in history for just about any strategy, method, tendency, institution or thing in the world if one is not careful enough — observations which in their generality and breadth are rather of a harmless nature, but the less harmless tendency and point of which are however formulated by saying that it "is particularly dangerous to appeal to revolutionary models". These warnings, which in their spirit are somewhat reminiscent of the paternal exhortations of comrade Frohme, are directed in particular at the Russian Revolution. Thereupon there follows a theory supposed to portray for us the complete contrast between Russia and Germany, and to show that the conditions for the mass strike are certainly present in Russia, but not in Germany.



Storming the Winter Palace: not for us in the civilised West...

In Russia we supposedly have the weakest government in the world, in Prussia the strongest. In Russia, an unsuccessful war against a small Asiatic country, in Germany the "glamour of constant victories, victories against the strongest Great Powers of the world for nearly a century". In Russia, economic backwardness and a peasantry which up to 1905 believed in the Tsar as if he were a god, in Germany the strongest economic development, in which the concentrated power of the industrialists' confederations hold down the working masses by sheer terrorism. In Russia, a complete absence of political liberties, in Germany political freedom which provides the workers with many kinds of forms for their protest and their struggle "without risk", so that "clubs, meetings, the press, elections of all kinds amply occupy them". And the result of this contrast is: in Russia, striking was the only possible form of proletarian struggle, therefore striking in itself was already a victory even if it were lacking in any plan and results, moreover every strike in itself was already a victory, a political deed, because strikes were banned. In Western Europe, however — the scheme of Germany is here extended to the whole of Western Europe — such "amorphous, primitive" strikes are a phenomenon long overcome. Here a strike takes place only when a positive victory is to be expected. The moral of all this is that the long revolutionary period of the mass strike, in which economic and political action, protest and combat strikes constantly alternated with one another and played into each other, represents a specific product of Russian backwardness. In Western Europe, and especially in Germany, even a protest mass strike in the manner of the Russians is extremely difficult, even impossible, "not in spite of, but because of, the half century of the socialist movement". The political mass strike can only be used here as a single, final 'life-and-death' struggle, when the only thing at stake for the proletariat is to be victorious or to meet its ruin.

Only in passing do I want to point out that the portrayal of Russian conditions provided by comrade Kautsky is almost completely wrong on the most important points. For example, the Russian peasantry did not just begin to rebel in 1905 on the spur of the moment. Since the so-called liberation of the serfs in 1861 — with just one pause, between 1885 and 1895 — its uprisings had run through the domestic history of Russia like a continuous chain, and they were to be exact both uprisings against the estate-owners and also physical resistance to the government. The well-known circular of the Minister of Interior which appeared in 1898 and which placed the whole Russian peasantry under martial law was caused by this.

What was new and special about the year 1905 was only that the chronic rebellion of the peasant masses achieved for the first time a political and revolutionary importance, as an accompanying phenomenon of, and complement to, a revolutionary class action with clear goals on the part of the urban proletariat. However, comrade Kautsky's conception is where possible even more wrong on the main issue: the strike action and mass strike action of the Russian proletariat. The picture of the chaotic, "amorphous, primitive" strikes of the Russian workers, who simply struck out of desperation, only in order to strike at all, with no goal or plan, without demands and "particular successes", is the product of a fertile imagination.

The Russian strikes of the revolutionary period, which achieved a very considerable increase in wages and above all an almost universal shortening of the working day to 10 or often 9 hours; which in Petersburg were able to preserve the eight-hour day for several weeks in the harshest of struggles; which successfully fought for the right of workers to form their own organisations, and not only workers but also state employees on the railways and in the post, and — as long as the counter-revolution had not gained the upper hand — defended this right against all attacks; which managed to break the right to rule of the factory owner and to establish workers' councils in many of the larger workplaces to settle all working conditions, setting as their task the abolition of piece-work, of home-work, of night-work, and of factory fines, and the strict enforcement of the Sunday rest day — these strikes, out of which there grew in a short period promising trade union organisations in almost all branches of industry, with the liveliest internal life, with strict leadership, funds, statutes and a respectable trade union press — these strikes out of which was born such a bold creation as the famous Petersburg Soviet of workers' delegates for the unified leadership of the whole movement in the huge empire — these Russian strikes and mass strikes were so far from being "amorphous and primitive" that, on the contrary, they may easily be compared with any "West European" trade union movement for their boldness, strength, class solidarity, tenacity, material gains, progressive goals and organisational successes. Admittedly the greatest part of the economic gains was gradually lost again, after the defeat of the revolution, together with the political gains. But that obviously does not change anything about the character of the strikes as long as the revolution was in existence.

What was not "intentional", what was "planless" and "spontaneous", was the way these economic, partial and local conflicts developed time and again into general, political and revolutionary mass strikes, just as they again grew out of the latter as a result of the high level of class solidarity in the proletarian masses and the revolutionary situation. Also "unplanned" and elemental was the course and the corresponding outcome of such a general political-revolutionary action, as will always and everywhere remain the case in mass movements and in tempestuous times. If however one wishes to measure the progressive character of the strikes and the "rational conduct of the strikes" by their direct successes, as comrade Kautsky does, then the great strike period in Russia in the few years of the revolution achieved more relatively speaking than the German trade union movement in the four decades of its existence, with regard to economic and socio-political successes. All this is certainly due neither to special heroism or special art on the part of the Russian proletariat, but simply to the advantages of the rapid rate of development of a revolutionary period in comparison to the slow course of peaceful development in the framework of bourgeois parliamentarism.

As in fact comrade Kautsky said in his "The Social Revolution", 2nd edition, p. 63:

"Against this 'revolutionary romanticism' there is only one further objection, which is indeed put forward all the more frequently, namely that the conditions in Russia prove nothing for us in Western Europe, since they are supposed to be thoroughly different from the latter. I am of course aware of the differences in conditions, but one must not exaggerate them. Our comrade Luxemburg's latest pamphlet proves clearly that the Russian working class does not lie so low and has not achieved so little as is commonly supposed. Just as the English proletarians must lose the habit of looking down on the German proletariat as a backward race, so we in Germany must lose the same habit with regard to the Russian proletariat". And further: "The English workers as a political factor today lie even lower than the workers of the economically most backward, politically most unfree European state: Russia. It is their living revolutionary consciousness which provides the latter with their great practical strength; it was the renunciation of the revolution, the limitation to the interests of the moment, so-called Realpolitik, which made the former a nonentity as far as real politics was concerned".

But let us leave aside Russian conditions for the time being and turn to comrade Kautsky's portrayal of Prussian-Germany conditions. Remarkably, we also see astonishing things here. Until now, for example, it has been the privilege of the Junkers on the Eastern side of the Elbe to live with the uplifting idea that Prussia possesses "the strongest government of the present day". How Social Democracy, however, could come to recognise a government in all seriousness as "the strongest" which "is nothing but a police-guarded military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, already influenced by the bourgeoisie and bureaucratically carpentered" — that is somewhat difficult for me to understand. Take the childish and pathetic picture of the Bethmann-Hollweg 'cabinet', a government which is reactionary through and through and yet has no overall plan, no guidelines whatever for its politics, staffed by lackeys and bureaucrats instead of statesmen, pursuing a whimsical zig-zag course, at home the plaything of a common Junker clique and insolent game of intrigue by the Court mob, in foreign policy the plaything of a feeble-minded personal regime, a few years ago the contemptible boot-licker of the "weakest government in the world", Russian Tsarism, based on an army which consists to a very great extent of Social-Democrats, with the most stupid drill, the most infamous ill-treatment of soldiers in the world — is this "the strongest government of the present day"!

Socialism will not be and cannot be inaugurated by decrees; it cannot be established by any government, however admirably socialistic. Where the chains of capitalism are forged, there must the chains be broken. What is the external form of the struggle for socialism? The strike...

Rosa Luxemburg: Speech on the Spartacus programme

A remarkable contribution, at any rate, to the materialist conception of history, which up until now has not derived the "strength" of a government from its backwardness and hostility to culture, from blind obedience and the police mentality. In passing comrade Kautsky has even done something else for this 'strongest government', and clothed it in the "glamour of constant victories, victories against the strongest Great Powers of the world for nearly a century". In the soldiers' clubs, they have hitherto only lived off the "glorious campaign" of 1870. In order to construct his "century" of Prussian glory, comrade Kautsky has obviously also included the battle of Jena, as well as the Hunnish China campaign with our Waldersee in the forefront, and the victory of Trotha over the Hottentot women and children in the Kalahari.

But what did comrade Kautsky's fine article, "The Situation of the Empire", say in December 1906, at the close of a long and detailed portrayal:

"Let one compare the outstanding position of the Empire abroad at its beginning with the present-day situation, and one will admit that a splendid inheritance of power and prestige was never more speedily squandered — never during the whole of its existence was the position of the German Empire in the world weaker, and never has a German government more thoughtlessly and more whimsically played with fire than in the most recent period" ("Die Neue Zeit", XXV, I, p. 427).

At that time, certainly, it was a matter of depicting the tremendous electoral victory which awaited us in the elections of 1907 and the violent catastrophes which were to arise out of it, according to comrade Kautsky, with the very same necessity with which he now makes them follow on from the next Reichstag elections.

On the other hand, comrade Kautsky constructs on the basis of his portrayal of the economic and political conditions of Germany and Western Europe a policy for strikes which — measured against reality — is a particularly amazing product of the imagination. Comrade Kautsky assures us that "in Germany — and in Western Europe in general — the worker turns to the strike only as a method of struggle when he has the prospect of thereby achieving particular successes. If these successes do not emerge, then the strike has not served its purpose". With this discovery comrade Kautsky has expressed a harsh verdict on the practice of the German and "West European" trade unions.

For what, for example, do the statistics of strikes in Germany show us? Of the 19,766 strikes and lock-outs which we have had altogether between 1890 and 1908, a full quarter of them (25.2%) were completely unsuccessful, almost a

further quarter (22.5%) only partially successful, and less than half (49.5%) fully successful. These statistics contradict just as crassly comrade Kautsky's theory whereby "the struggles between these organisations thereby become ever more centralised and concentrated" and therefore "rarer and rarer" as a result of the tremendous development of the workers' organisations and the bosses' organisations.

In the decade 1890-9 we had in Germany a total of 3,772 strikes and lock-outs, but in the nine years 1900-08, the period of the greatest growth of the bosses' confederations and the trade unions, 15,994. The strikes are so far from becoming "rarer and rarer" that they have actually become four times as numerous in the last decade. In the preceding decade a total of 425,142 workers were involved in strikes, compared with 1,709,415 in the last nine years, again four times as many, and thus approximately the same number on average per strike.

According to the scheme of comrade Kautsky, a quarter to a half of all these trade union struggles in Germany would have "failed to achieve their purpose". But any trade union agitator knows very well that the "particular success" in the form of material gains neither is nor should be the only purpose, or the only criterion in the economic struggle. He knows that on the contrary the trade union organisations "in Western Europe" are again and again forced to take up the struggle even when the prospects of "particular success" are slight, as is shown in particular by the statistics of purely defensive strikes, of which fully 32.5% in the last nineteen years in Germany took place without any success at all. That these are not just "unsuccessful" strikes which have merely "failed to achieve" their "purpose", but that they are a direct precondition for the defence of the standard of living of the workers, for the preservation of the fighting energy of the workers, and for the purpose of making new attacks by the bosses in the future more difficult — that does indeed belong to the most elementary principles of German trade union practice. It is further generally known that, besides "particular success" in material gains and even without this success, the strikes in Western Europe have the result, perhaps most importantly, that they serve as the starting point of trade union organisation, and that, particularly in backward places and in branches of work which are difficult to organise, it is mostly such "unsuccessful" and "unprepared" strikes which again and again give rise to the foundations of trade union organisation. The history of suffering and struggle of the textile workers in Vogtland, of which the most famous chapter is the great Crimmitschau strike, is one proof of this. With the "strategy" which comrade Kautsky has now figured out, it is not only impossible to lead a great political mass action, but even an ordinary trade union movement.

But the above scheme for "West European" strikes has yet another gaping inadequacy, and precisely on the very point where the economic struggle comes into consideration for the question of the mass strike, and thus for our actual theme. What this scheme does is completely exclude the fact that precisely in "Western Europe", powerful strikes are breaking out at greater length and in greater numbers, without very areas where a great exploited mass of proletarians confronts the concentrated superior strength of capital or of the capitalist state, strikes which do not become "rarer and rarer", but ever more frequent, which mostly take place completely without "particular success", but nonetheless or rather precisely because of this are of the greatest importance as explosions of a deep internal contradiction which spreads directly into the political sphere. To these strikes belong the mammoth strikes of the miners in Germany, in England, in France and in America, the spontaneous mass strikes of the farmworkers, such as in Italy and in Galicia, and also the mass strikes of railway workers which break out now in this state, now in that one. How was it put in comrade Kautsky's magnificent article on "The Lessons of the Miners' Strike in the Ruhr District", in 1905?

"Only thus can significant advances for the miners be made. The strike against the mine-owners has become hopeless; the strike must take place from the outset as a political one, its demands and its tactics must be calculated to place legislation in motion. This new trade union tactic", comrade Kautsky continues, "that of the political strike, of combining trade union and political action, is the only one which remains possible for the miners, it is in general the tactic which is destined to invigorate anew trade union and parliamentary action, and to provide both the one and the other with an increased force of aggression".

In case one should think that by "political action" perhaps only parliamentary action, and not political mass strikes, is to be understood here, comrade Kautsky dispels any doubt by explaining clearly and precisely:

"The great, decisive actions of the fighting proletariat will be increasingly fought out by the various types of political strike. And here the practice proceeds more speedily than the theory. For while we are discussing the political strike and seeking its theoretical formulation and basis, there spontaneously flares up, as a result of the self-combustion of the masses, one tremendous political mass strike after another — or, every mass strike becomes a political action, every great political test of strength reaches its climax in a mass strike, whether it be the miners, whether it be the proletarians of Russia, or the farmworkers and railway workers of Italy, etc." ("Die Neue Zeit", XXIII, i, p. 780).

Thus wrote comrade Kautsky on 11th March 1905. Here we have "the self-combustion of the masses" and the trade union leadership, economic struggles and political struggles, mass strikes and revolution, Russia and Western Europe all pleasantly jumbled together, all headings of the scheme dissolving into the living continuity of a great period of violent social storms.

It seems that "the theory" does not merely "proceed" more slowly than the practice, it also unfortunately does backwards somersaults now and again.

5. The 1907 elections were dominated by the issue of Germany's colonial policy and particularly the savage repression of native risings in the German colony of South West Africa. There was a major defeat for the SPD. Its percentage of the total vote dropped for the first time since the 1880s and the number of SPD deputies fell from 81 to 43. The SPD had taken a position against colonialism (one not based on a clear understanding of the nature of imperialism), but the results called forth an open pro-imperialist wing in the SPD.

NATSOPA leaders show their true colours

LAST WEEK at the *Financial Times* the NATSOPA bureaucrats really showed their true colours. They reached an agreement with the management which included the pledge by the union to employ its own scab labour!

The dispute which led to the FT not being printed for two days was caused by management refusing to discuss the copy-holders' house agreement. Both they and the linotype assistants — members of NATSOPA RIRMA — wanted deals similar to the engineers', who have won £25 for the new FT Frankfurt edition.

When management refused to discuss the copy-holders' house agreement, the linotype assistants decided to give them real support and solidarity. The linotype assistants are very important. They start the press. Without them the paper doesn't print. For a long time management, aware of this, have been trying to split the chapels.

For three days they operated a work-to-rule, with

very little effect. Then on Wednesday they decided not to turn up to work so that the paper could not come out.

The immediate reaction of managing director Cox was to sack all 67 workers in the chapel and then to get onto the phone to Owen O'Brien, general secretary of NATSOPA. He had little doubt that O'Brien would tell them to get back to work.

Cox was not disappointed. O'Brien also sent his hatchet man Hutchinson (known for his thuggery) to the FT. Hutchinson set about taking control of the chapel and negotiating a nasty little package with the FT bosses.

The agreement states that the FT refuses "to re-employ members of the chapel until a workable disputes procedure is agreed". To enable an immediate return to work they will put forward "a short and long term arrangement": that "the union will act as the company's agent to supply labour (which could be our ex-employees) on a contractual basis whereby the company

would pay the wages of those members to NATSOPA and NATSOPA would have the obligation to ensure that normal working took place".

In other words it is by no means certain that all the members will be re-employed. Some of them are likely to be sacked by the management with the complicity of the union. Then the union will supply scab labour!

The dispute has been taken completely out of the chapel's hands and into the hands of the full-time officials. And if the matter has not been agreed, it will be referred to the Newspaper Publishers Association disputes procedure, "the findings of which will be binding on both parties".

It was only after Hutchinson said that Cox had threatened to close the paper indefinitely that the men agreed to accept this rotten deal, and then only by 22 votes to 19. Hutchinson followed this up by red-baiting the leadership of the chapel and calling them 'dogs'.

If the union leadership and the FT bosses manage to get away with this package, it will be a disaster for every chapel in Fleet Street. For the bosses it is a dream come true: the union supplying its own scab labour free of charge.

It is up to the union activists to spread the word and to make sure that Hutchinson is thrown out and the bosses forced to retreat.

CLARE RUSSELL

WORKERS' ACTION

Talbot get support from Dublin docks

A DELEGATION to Dublin docks last week by strikes from the Talbot (Chrysler) Stoke engine plant in Coventry led to all Talbot parts from Ireland to the Birmingham Parts Department being blacked. A similar visit is being made to seal up the Holyhead end, as a progressive stranglehold grows on the movement of Talbot goods in and out of Britain.

At a mass meeting on Friday 7th, 1000 of the Stoke workers voted for an indefinite continuation of the strike (now in its 11th week), with only 50 against. The mood is militant, with workers knowing that the whole future of the plant is at stake, not just the company's 5½% offer supplemented by an unworkable productivity deal and an unacceptable grading structure.

Stoke is isolated, though, in its refusal to negotiate on the present terms. The nearby Ryton plant's leadership has been in talks with ACAS and seems much more likely to settle. Links between Stoke and Ryton have never been fully established in the strike, and the history of separate negotiations in each plant dominates.

□ □

Links with other Talbot factories, both in Britain and on the continent, are non-existent. With Linwood laid off but with Dunstable and Luton still working, it is vital that links are built up. The need for company-wide links is all the more vital with the risk of closure at Stoke. When the current Iran contract finishes (it may be fin-

ished in effect already) and the Poissy (France) factory gets moving, Stoke could be finished.

The Confed bureaucracy does not seem very interested in the dispute. When a Stoke delegation went to the TUC, they were promised financial support from the likes of Clive Jenkins (ASTMS) and Tom Jackson (UPW), but Terry Duffy (AUEW) was "too busy" to see them.

With the Canley BL plant facing shutdown and the loss of 8,000 jobs, Coventry will soon be a ghost town for jobs. The Talbot dispute is crucial not only to the workers directly involved but to all workers in the car industry, particularly in Coventry.

RICHARD PAINE

Northampton: where there's a lead, there's a fight

IN NORTHAMPTON, the most interesting lesson can be drawn from the action at Express Lift Co. (a subsidiary of GEC) where workers are so low that a claim is being considered under the Employment Protection Act section 11 to get pay comparable to other jobs in the area.

There the convenor succumbed to pressure for a mass meeting vote on the strike. The vote went 2-to-1 for the strike.

Then the convenor gave in to management demands for a secret ballot. Again the vote went 2-to-1 for the strike.

Express shows that a claim which is relevant will gain support and that workers will follow a union lead on such a claim even though that leadership is the likes of Duffy and Co. So a claim for a shorter week with across the board increases (protected against inflation) would undoubtedly rally an enthusiastic response from all the members if District Committees and stewards gave a lead.

But the current claim is weak, and in Northampton, preparation for the dispute has not been carried out in any sort of serious manner. The AUEW District Committee decided not to hold meetings of stewards and refused to organise any kind of leafletting of the membership to rally them behind the claim.

Despite that, the one day strikes were very well supported, with perhaps only three union firms working. However, in the week between the end of the one-day strikes and the start of the 2-day action, confusion reigned. The District Secretary gave the go-ahead for some firms to work overtime, and the District Committee gave exemption to some firms from the two-day strike.

Two of these exempted firms had not met the full claim. Already one branch has a resolution down criticising the District Secretary and District Committee for this, especially as the District Committee went against national Executive Committee rulings on giving exemptions.

More of this sort of leadership could ruin any action. Only escalation for an all-out strike can save the unions from defeat.

DAVE GREEN

Lucas steward tells:

Why the 'back to work' movement flopped

"LUCAS WOMEN have hit the headlines as the main supporters of the anti-ham. But the story is not as simple as that", a woman shop steward from the Lucas York Road factory told *Workers' Action*.

"For a start, only one Lucas factory, Girling West Bromwich, has actually broken the strike. There have been anti-strike demonstrations of 200 or so (in conjunction with Mike Savage and his tiny back-to-work group from Longbridge), but almost no-one from Lucas has been willing to cross the picket lines.

Blue

I think it is very important to distinguish between the leaders of the back-to-work movement and the majority of their supporters. The leaders are active right wingers, mainly from Lucas Great King Street. After the general election, some of these people painted their machines blue to celebrate the Tory victory. They have a long record of opposing any strike action, even after majority votes in favour at mass meetings.

But they have attracted

a lot of supporters who are not at all anti-union, a lot of widows, middle-aged like single parents, chin cases

The right wingers have been able to do this by avoiding talking about the rights and wrongs of the claim itself and concentrating solely on the demand for a vote at mass meetings (or sometimes they say a secret ballot). The slogans on their demonstrations reflect this feeling: 'Duffy's bully-boys'(!), 'Listen, Big Brother', 'Give us a vote', and 'We are the union'.

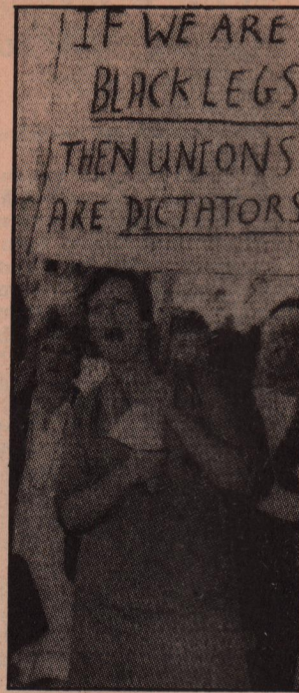
On the last day of the one-day strikes, August 20th, about 30 workers heckled the mass meeting at Digbeth Civic Hall. Molly Edwards, a steward from Great King Street, handed over a petition calling for an end to the strike. But another steward who had taken part in the demonstration, June Capewell, addressed the meeting, saying she was not against the strike but simply wanted to protest about the lack of information about the claim and the action.

Picket

She ended up calling for an all-out strike. On the same

day, Ms Savin and Ms Carter crossed the picket line at Lucas Marshall Lake Road and reported for work the next day their workmates, some of whom had been on the protest demonstration, refused to work with them.

I think this really illustrates the confusion that



They're not all scabs

exists within the back to work movement. There is no doubt that there is widespread resentment against the high-handed tactics of the Confed leaders, but most of the protesters are not scabs.

At York Road, the strike committee produced a bulletin after the first one-day strike, explaining what the claim was and why we were taking the action. It went down pretty well, and we have had no signs of a revolt at this factory.

Many of the workers were angered by a letter sent out to them individually by the Engineering Employers' Federation, by first class post, saying that the claim was extravagant. We all know that was rubbish.

Bastards

By the way, members of both the British Movement and the National Association for Freedom have been sniffing round strike meetings in Birmingham. At the TGWU meeting they were pointed out, and they left shouting "Commie bastards". I don't know whether they are mixed up with the back to work people, but it seems quite possible.

I have also been repeating a question Alan Thornett put to the protesters at the Digbeth Hall meeting: when we win the claim, are you going to be honourable enough to refuse to accept it?

Split

As more of them realise just what is at stake, they are beginning more and more to support the action despite their grievances against the Confed leaders, and I see a real split developing between the right wing scabs who are leading their revolt and their ordinary supporters.

Anyway, although there is still some resentment against the way the strikes have been called, there is no question of any serious scabbing, and many of the workers who took part in the early demonstrations now support the action. What we are trying to do now is to use this whole episode to drive home the importance of attending branch meetings and getting involved in the union.

I think our next branch meeting will be overflowing with members, and they won't be rabid right wingers either."

Kelloggs: a victory despite the union

THE DISPUTE at Kelloggs, Manchester, which began with a lock-out on July 2nd, has been settled. At a mass meeting on Sunday 9th, the USDAW member accepted a deal recommended by the union officials and the Branch Committee. The deal provides for an increase in shift payments of between £1.36 and £4.97, on top of the £8.50 originally offered by the Kelloggs bosses. It also gives one week's back pay for the lock-out. The meeting accepted by a large majority.

Chief shop steward Wally

Duncker said: "It is a victory in the sense that for 9½ weeks the company said there was no more money. Although day workers got nothing from the dispute, that was the big disappointment, the company tried to break the back of the union but the members were solid for 10 weeks.

"After the third week it was not just a dispute about money. They were out to break the strength of the Branch Committee, as Kelloggs have started that the introduction of new machinery will mean re-crewing and redundancies"

USDAW divisional organiser Gerry Callaghan, in his summing up after the vote was taken, praised the Branch Committee but said, "They would not have been so successful if it had not been for ACAS". No mention of flying pickets to the Wrexham factory, no mention of the £200 collected from Massey Ferguson workers, or the support lobbied from TUC delegates by the Dispute Committee.

USDAW's official contribution to the dispute, apart from phone calls to Kelloggs Geneva and the USA, was lim-

ited to behind-the-scenes meetings and £6 in dispute pay. In fact the union officials sent back donation cheques to other USDAW branches who sent them in, saying that the EC had not sanctioned donations. Collection sheets were distributed by the Dispute Committee and not by the union. The hire of Century House, costing £200, for a meeting, plus an advert in the pro-Kelloggs 'Evening News' costing £104, all had to be paid for by the Dispute Committee.

As Brian Macdonald, a rank

and file activist, said: "Everyone from the Branch Committee to the pickets realised from their own experience what needs to be done to USDAW".

The Broad Left in USDAW should not miss this opportunity to explain what the moderate image of USDAW really means: that is, refusing to support the fight of its members even when the bosses go in for a kill.

Donations still need to be sent to: Brian Turner, 38 Fircroft Ave, Urmston Manchester. JOHN DOUGLAS