

# Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM



Miners demand action against curbs on militants

## GENERAL STRIKE CALL TO FIGHT UNION LAWS

Socialist Worker Industrial Reporter

AS THE GOVERNMENT prepares to publish its proposals for attacking trade union liberties, a call for action has come from a militant branch of the labour movement.

The Scottish section of the National Union of Mineworkers voted this week for a one-day general strike throughout Britain if Mrs. Barbara Castle's White Paper plans are accepted by parliament. The NUM will attempt to discuss anti-union laws at the meeting of union executives in Croydon next month.

The demand for a general strike came from a local Scottish branch of the NUM. The resolution will now go to the full executive of the union next month.

The decision by the Scots miners to support the demand may reflect the impact of the new Left-wing secretary of the NUM, Lawrence Daly. He has called for guerrilla strikes to fight pit closures.

It is unlikely that the TUC executives' conference will back the NUM resolution.

But a section of the rank and file of the trade union movement is prepared to move into action against the Labour government.

### THROW BACK

If other sections join the miners—and socialists must encourage them to do so—they will throw back at the Tory press the stories that 'substantial' numbers of trade unionists support Mrs. Castle's plans.

The Labour government, urged on by the Tories, the employers and the international pawnbrokers, want to tie the trade union movement hand and foot in order to squeeze more profits from the workers.

The threat of new laws, including the right to jail militants, is expected to whip union officials into line and to lessen opposition to productivity deals, measured day work and other scientific methods of turning the screws on the workers.

### MEASURES

Mrs. Castle's main proposals will be:-

A cooling-off period before official or unofficial strikes.

A ballot of union members before a national strike.

A 'trouble-shooting' Commission for Industrial Relations to investigate labour disputes.

The bosses are already demanding tougher measures—which is why these plans have to be fought every inch of the way by the rank and file of the trade unions.

### Builders to march in direct works protest

MANCHESTER:-3000 building workers will stage a march on Monday in protest at the Tory council's moves to close sections of the Direct Works department.

The men are worried about their jobs and deterioration in the standard of work done by 'private enterprise'. They will discuss plans for future action after the march and a call may be made to link up with other militant workers in the area.



### 'One man, one gun' chant on anti-Smith march

BLACK AND WHITE united on Sunday when 5000 demonstrators from immigrant organisations and left-wing groups marched from Hyde Park to Rhodesia House. The demonstration was against racialism and the apartheid Smith regime. The marchers engaged in fierce battles with police and National Front fascists outside Rhodesia House. The Tory press, busily campaigning for tough laws against trade unionists, praised the police for defending Smith's London HQ. But if the Rhodesia regime is 'illegal' why are the London police ordered to defend it?

## Ireland - a correction

THE EDITORIAL on Ireland in our last issue (January 11) has given rise to some misunderstanding.

International Socialism gives unconditional, though not uncritical, support to the civil rights movement and to the Irish national movement generally.

At the same time we are firmly convinced of the need for Irish socialists to fight for a socialist workers' republic of Ireland.

Far from repudiating this slogan, we believe that it offers the only perspective for uniting Irish workers North and South.

We believe British socialists must emphasise, as the editorial correctly stated, the need to free Ireland from British imperialism.

Specifically, the demands

advanced last week are the correct ones to emphasise in Britain:

1. Withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland.
2. An end to the supply of British military equipment to

the Northern Ireland Tory Unionist Party and its B-specials.

3. Stop British subsidies to the Tory police state in Northern Ireland.
4. The right of self-determination for the people of Ireland.

### Rosa Luxemburg commemoration meeting

Saturday January 19 Spkrs Tony Cliff (IS) Bob Purdy (IMG) Africa Centre King St WC2. 3.30-6. 2s 6d. Followed by social at New Merlin's Caves, Margery St WC1. 8-12 with CAST 5s.

### Left's action keeps Enoch behind locked doors

From TREVOR CAVE

TEESSIDE:- Racialist MP Enoch Powell wanted to speak on Teesside. But Tories in the area knew there would be vigorous left-wing opposition to his views, and they made comical attempts to keep his visit secret.

Only a handful of Young Tories were supposed to know that Powell was coming. When news leaked out socialists on Teesside were quick to organise a protest demonstration.

Powell was originally to have spoken to Young Tories at Constantine College of Technology in Middlesbrough. The meeting was cancelled and no reason given.

The town's Conservative Party office arranged another meeting at Middlesbrough Town Hall. That was also cancelled without explanation.

### Ticket only

Finally they arranged for him to speak at Teesside College of Education's Debating Society. He was to speak there on Thursday.

Admission to the meeting was to be by ticket only. The debating society has never had to issue tickets for its meetings before.

College principal William Hudspeth told the local newspaper: 'The numbers attending have been restricted because of fears that trouble might start.'

Teesside socialists have shown that only by left-wing solidarity can Powellism be defeated.

They have shown that unified opposition to Powell forces him to shelter behind locked doors.

### Gunter's new job

RAY GUNTER, the former Minister of Labour, has joined the board of Securicor, the security firm. (Cartoon-back page.)

### CZECH WORKERS ON THE MOVE

#### EDITORIAL

THE SPECTRE of revolution is haunting the rulers of Czechoslovakia as massed working-class opposition emerges.

The reforming wing of the Czechoslovak Communist Party has all but caved in under pressure from Moscow. Their adherence to demands for freedom of discussion has been shown to be only skin-deep.

The slogans vaunted by the bourgeois press last August (e.g. 'Svoboda—that's Czech for freedom') have a hollow ring as one by one the liberals have capitulated to the Russians.

They objected particularly to three aspects of the regime's capitulation—the censorship of the press and television, the curbs on foreign travel and the curb on freedom of assembly.

#### OPPOSITION

But they helped call into being forces they can no longer control. Last November 60,000 students went on a three day strike.

Now the working class too has begun to stir in opposition. The Russians insisted on the demotion of the reformer Smrkovsky from the post of President of the Czech National Council.

Despite strike threats in his support, Smrkovsky himself called for non-resistance! His post has now gone to a Slovak, as the Russian strategy of dividing the rulers into national groupings is advanced.

The Metal Workers' Union, almost a million strong, has formally accepted this particular reshuffle but has insisted on being involved in the making of party decisions in future.

The Polygraphic Workers Union resolved on January 12 this year not to print material hostile to the democratisation started last year. It has called for the establishment of a workers' censor under which the print workers themselves would decide whether to print articles—workers' control in action.

#### INDEPENDENT

The central Trades Union Council is demanding recognition as an independent political body.

As one leader said: 'We have adopted a new role, and that is to be an independent organisation representing workers' interests. We will take political action when it is for the good of the workers, and we of course have the weapon of the strike at our disposal.' (Guardian, January 14).

To the shallowness of Dubcek's liberalism is being counterposed the self-activity of the workers. They will not easily give up the fight for genuine freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

For them such demands are not a mere liberal overlay—human emancipation is part of the working class's material interest, not a bonus thrown in if the economy expands.

The working class is on the move in Czechoslovakia. It is bound to have repercussions throughout Eastern Europe.

The Russians may have crushed the reformers in the Czech ruling groups. It is not so easy to crush the working class in action.

### Irish march postponed

THE IRISH demonstration planned for this Sunday has been postponed so that discussions can be held with other left-wing organisations. It is hoped to hold it within the next week or so.

### Iran socialists face stiff jail terms

From NAREEMAN

THE AMERICAN-INSTALLED government of the Shah of Iran is 'trying' 14 young Iranians before a military tribunal in Tehran.

The young men are charged with 'spreading socialist ideas'—which is regarded as a 'threat against the security of the state' and carries from three to ten years' imprisonment.

But until a few weeks ago, the group were charged with 'armed uprising', and the Military Prosecutor asked for the death sentence for eight of the members.

An international wave of protest, organised by Iranian students abroad and supported by many foreign socialists, was reflected in the liberal press of the West and the publicity forced the Shah to drop the second charge.

### Disappeared

The eight were 'arrested', that is, they disappeared, 11 months ago, and were savagely tortured in the notorious Ghezel Ghalah prison in Tehran.

The torture was so brutal at times that they had to be rushed to hospital. Ironically the ambulance had to pass by the Senate Palace in which the United Nations' International Conference on Human Rights was in session.

The 'confessions' the prisoners had to sign to save them from worse treatment were later used as evidence against them, but they have now denied responsibility for such confessions.

News comes from Tehran that another group of about 20 men have been missing for three months. These must then be the 'hell days' for them.

Readers should watch for news of any protest marches to demand humane treatment for them.

### Polish trial

THE TRIAL of Polish revolutionaries Kuron and Modzelewski has continued in Warsaw this week. There has been a complete blackout on news to the west and the outcome of the trial is not yet known. The International Socialists protested outside the Polish Embassy in London last week.

# Rosa Luxemburg & Karl Liebknecht

Born March 5, 1871 in Zamosc, Poland. 1886 joined socialist movement. 1889 left Poland for Zurich, Switzerland. 1894 formed the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland. 1898 moved to Germany. joined the SPD. 1898/9 attacked the revisionist ideas of Eduard Bernstein in her Reform or Revolution. 1904 jailed for three months for 'insulting the Kaiser'. 1905/6 returned to Russian Poland to take part in the first Russian Revolution. 1906 arrested in Poland, served four months in jail, released because of ill health and deported to Germany. 1905-1910 debate with Kautsky and the SPD centre on the parliamentary method of struggle. 1913 most important theoretical work *The Accumulation of Capital* published. 1914 sentenced but not immediately detained, to 12 months for 'inciting soldiers to mutiny'. February 1915-November 1918, held in prison. November 1918 released from prison by the revolution. December 1918 Communist Party of Germany formed. January 15, 1919, Luxemburg murdered.



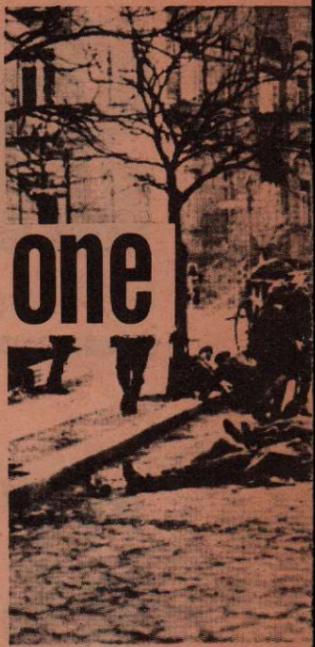
Born August 13, 1871. 1905 anti-war propaganda. 1907 sentenced to 18 months prison for anti-militarist agitation. While in prison elected to the Prussian Diet. 1912 elected to the Reichstag. December 1914 voted against the Kaiser's War Credits. 1915 Die Gruppe Internationale (The International Group) formed, later the Spartakusbund. January 1916 Liebknecht expelled from the SPD Reichstag group. February 1916 drafted into the army and posted to a punishment battalion. May Day 1916, calls on troops to 'oppose the imperialist war'. Imprisoned. September 1916, first Spartakus letters published. March 1917 German sailors mutiny. October 1918, released from prison. November 9, 1918 Liebknecht proclaims the German Socialist Republic. January 15, 1919 Liebknecht murdered.



## For them there was only one nation—the working class

by JIM HIGGINS

Berlin 1918: workers in street battle with troops



ROSA LUXEMBURG was born in Russian Poland and as a schoolgirl of 15 she joined the revolutionary organisation Proletariat.

Within a few years she was recognised as a leading theoretician of Polish socialism. In 1880, warned of impending arrest, she escaped to Switzerland hidden in a haystack.

In opposition to the largest section of the Polish movement, Luxemburg was a thoroughgoing internationalist. She despised the nationalism of Pilsudski and saw the national movement as a diversion at best and counter-revolutionary at worst.

Together with her friend Jogiches she mounted within the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) a campaign against any tendency to nationalism.

Basing herself on Marx and observable facts, she argued that with the development of industry and capitalist economy, the Polish aristocracy, which had once led the national movement, were losing ground socially and economically and were turning to the Russian Tsar for support.

### Massive markets

Polish industry found that it had a massive market in less developed Russia and was equally against the idea of national independence.

'Poland', Luxemburg said, 'is bound to Russia with chains of gold....Not the national state but the state of rapine corresponds to capitalist development.'

The working class, she claimed, also had no interest in national independence. Their interests were identical with the Russian workers and their future was indissolubly linked.

Under capitalism there was no possibility of national independence and under socialism there was no need for it.

This theory, although

neatly interlocking, makes a number of quite unwarranted assertions. The description of the attitude of the respective classes involved certainly represented tendencies within those classes and was a fair estimation of what the various class interests should be, but the ideas inside people's heads do not directly reflect their economic interest.

There was a Polish national sentiment and the PPS right-wing did have some support in the country.

To understand this uncompromising stand of the Luxemburgists it is necessary to see the context in which their ideas developed.

The mainstream of the PPS was devoted more to the national idea than to the struggle for socialism.

Pilsudski (later dictator of Poland) engaged in terror-

ist attacks, intrigues with foreign capitalist governments and the desire for war to fulfill the independence of Poland in the break up of the Russian Empire.

### Condemned

Daszinski, PPS leader in Galicia, even went so far as to condemn Polish mass strikes because they tended to identify the struggle of the Polish workers with that of the Russian workers and undermine the national unity of the Poles.

The opposition to the extreme nationalism of the PPS is understandable and perhaps merited, but the opposition to rights of self-determination is less so.

The Russian socialist position, as outlined by Lenin, was more in tune with realities of the situation.

The Polish socialists should avoid the establishment of a national state, the Russian socialists should fight for the right of the Poles to have their separate state if they so wished.

Under these conditions the question of self-determination is not incompatible with the class struggle, but becomes, in the Russian Empire, an adjunct to the overthrow of Tsarism.

As in her polemics with Lenin on the question of party organisation, Luxemburg was arguing from abstract principles derived from the experience of a particular set of circumstances and places.

But in all this there is magnificently principled consistency.

For her there was only one nation—the working class whose activity and struggle were the centre of socialism.

## Reform or revolution — the struggle in the SPD

THE LARGEST, the most influential and the most theoretically developed party of the Second International, was the SPD (German Socialist Party).

A million party members, 2½ million trade union members, over 100 Reichstag deputies gave the impression of a powerful and well-nigh invincible organisation.

Formed in 1875 as the result of a fusion between the followers of Lassalle and the followers of Marx, it displayed a formidable monolithic unity.

Its founder member and great organiser was Bebel and its theoretician, 'the Pope of Marxism', was Karl Kautsky.

But despite its formidable appearance, the SPD was in many ways an empty shell.

Its large Reichstag contingent and its dedicated mass following disguised the fact that the real power in Germany was held by the Bundesrat (the council of princes) that ruled with semi-feudal privilege.

### Rotten centre

The verbal adherence to Marx's formulations, exemplified by Kautsky's theoretical work, covered a profoundly reformist practice.

It was to this rotten centre of world socialism that Rosa Luxemburg came in 1898.

Her arrival coincided with the publication of a series of articles by Eduard Bernstein, who, under the influence of the British Fabians, produced a fundamental revision of marxism.

He suggested that continuing prosperity, trade union pressure and increasing Reichstag representation made unnecessary and irrelevant the revolutionary content of the party programme.

Luxemburg entered this struggle immediately and in a brilliant pamphlet *Reform or Revolution* she effectively answered Bernstein, demonstrating that the development of capitalism deepened its contradictions.

In her own words, 'Hardly had Bernstein rejected, in 1898, Marx's theory of crises, when a profound crisis broke out in 1900'.

The trade unions' attempt to increase the share of the

workers in society was doomed to failure because 'This share is being reduced with the fatality of a natural process, by the growth of the productivity of labour.'

Parliament, she said, was not the citadel of power that was stormed by the aggregation of votes and could in no way be described as a socialist institution: 'It is on the contrary, a specific form of the bourgeois class state.'

After the fashion of the SPD, the controversy was debated at the party congress and the ideas of Bernstein were rejected in theory but in practice the SPD continued as if he had been right.

### Mass strike

Rosa's researches into the Belgian general strikes of 1891 and 1893, together with her experiences of the Russian revolution of 1905 in Russian Poland, led her to develop her theory of the mass strike.

In brief, she saw the development of industry and the workers' organisations as making redundant the old revolutionary idea of direct confrontation with the state power at the barricades.

As the class became more mature and organised, its ability to participate en masse, breaking down the distinctions between unions and trades, became possible.

The mass strike is seen as the first stage in the mobilisation for a revolutionary seizure of power.

In this schema the party has a new role to play. It must develop the mass movement in demonstrations and strikes, 'not as a party government—not as rulers, but genuinely as leaders, as the "advance guard" of the proletariat.'

The economic struggle leads on to the political struggle and after every political struggle, 'there remains a fertile sediment from which sprout a thousand economic struggles'.

The movement is thus self-sustaining and self-regenerating, with the revolutionary goal built in to each action.

Not surprisingly, Luxemburg's thesis was not welcomed by the SPD's comfortable captains of controlled radicalism.

result of a parliamentary victory for the SPD (an incredibly poor joke in the light of H. Wilson).

Luxemburg replied with quotations from Kautsky's past verbal radicalism. The trade union bureaucracy, the SPD functionaries and the SPD centre sided with Kautsky in the argument.

The theoretical struggle opened by Reform and Revolution against Bernstein reached its fulfillment in the break with Kautsky and the centre.

The real dividing line was not only about who is really for the revolution but also whether the working class would occupy the centre of the analysis or be relegated to a stage army conjured up by the all-seeing, all-knowing leadership.

Luxemburg and her co-thinkers were to remain in the SPD until the split in 1916, but the break was really made in 1910.

Long before anyone else (including Lenin) Luxemburg saw the inadequacy and incapacity of classical social democracy.

## Rosa — th

FRANZ MEHRING said she was 'The finest brain among the scientific successors of Marx and Engels'.

Lenin thought of her as an eagle, Klara Zetkin saw her as the 'brightest star on the socialist horizon'.

There is no need to attempt to outdo them in praise of Rosa Luxemburg.

The correct tribute to a revolutionary thinker and writer is to read her work, to place it and her actions in the perspective of her time and to apply that which is appropriate to our own action today.

The task of reading and understanding her thought has been sadly neglected. In Stalin's Russia she was posthumously designated a Trotskyist, an unconscious tribute to her own and Trotsky's uncompromising revolutionism.

At various times she has been claimed by all manner

WHEN WAR in 1914, with exception of the Serbian Socialist Party sections of International support of the regimes.

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# Socialist Worker

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## WHERE WE STAND

SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production. International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the de-

mand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards organisations should strengthen and extend their in-

fluence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power and international socialism.

## 1918: the Red Flag flies over Berlin



## DOWN WITH THE IMPERIALIST WAR!

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**GUSTAV NOSKE**, Social Democratic 'Minister of Defence' in 1918. His Freikorps thugs who murdered Luxemburg and Liebknecht were the forerunners of Hitler's nazis.

against until December bknicht broke voted against its. Reichstag, as December as discontent particularly in metal work- strikes took ened by Lieb- burg, Clara ranz Mehring, SPD's war ed the oppos- the party. By the anti-war struck roots i Democratic trade unions. ure, it was res of Lieb- Luxemburg that on began to 1915 Luxem- to serve a e passed the

Democratic Reichstag caucus. The expulsion was followed in short order, by his induction into the army where he was posted to a punishment battalion. On May Day 1916, Liebknecht, in uniform, went to Berlin and posted himself near the main railway station, where troops were awaiting transport to the front. He shouted 'Down with the imperialist war', 'Get out of the army, long live socialism'.

**Not lost**  
At first sight this was a courageous but ridiculous action, but in fact the gesture was not lost on the growing numbers of workers who were rapidly tiring of the war.

At the time of Liebknecht's trial and his subsequent imprisonment there were large demonstrations and several strikes for his liberation.

In September 1916 the first of the Spartakus letters appeared and the Gruppe Internationale became known as the Spartakusbund. All the leading Spartakists were jailed and a number of their supporters in the trade unions were drafted to the front.

**Naval mutiny**  
Small secret committees were formed, particularly among the sailors, and in March 1917, after a naval mutiny, two sailors were condemned to death and hundreds to long prison sentences. In the factories, trade union officials set up an underground organisation, the Betriebsleute (shop stewards committees).

The ceaseless propaganda of Luxemburg and Liebknecht was having its effect and the impact of the Russian revolution was nowhere felt more strongly than in Germany. The ingredients for the German revolution of 1918/19 were coming to the boil.

IN FEBRUARY 1918 the Petrograd Soviet elected Karl Liebknecht as an honorary member, the symbol of German resistance.

Through Joffe and Bukharin at the Russian Embassy in Berlin, a deal of revolutionary propaganda was funnelled into Germany to add to the already swelling examples of the homegrown variety.

Unrest at home and difficulties at the front were causing dissension in the higher echelons of imperial power. A measure of the unease felt by the General Staff is seen in the poster that General von Groner caused to be prominently displayed in Berlin: 'Only a bastard would strike when Hindenburg calls for guns'. From then on he was known in the factories as 'Groner the Bastard'.

As a last despairing gesture the Naval High Command attempted to mount an offensive. On the eve of the sailing of the battle fleet (October 29 1918) the Kiel sailors mutinied. Within days the mutiny spread to other ports and army regiments followed suit.

**General uprising**  
In Kiel, Hamburg and Bremen, demonstrating soldiers and sailors were joined by thousands of striking workers. On November 7 the uprising was general in all the major towns.

As the result of mass pressure, Liebknecht had been released in October. Making his way to Berlin he made contact with the clandestine shop stewards committees. Two meetings of the committees rejected by small majorities Liebknecht's call for an uprising on November 2 and November 8.

But the indecision of the shop stewards was being overtaken by the spontaneous rising itself. At a mass meeting on November 9 held in the grounds of the Imperial Palace, Liebknecht, standing under an improvised red flag (made from an imperial blanket) declared for the German Socialist Republic and world revolution.

The right wing of the SPD who had been toying with the with the continuation of the monarchy under the Crown Prince were thrown into disarray by the speed of events.

**Mortally afraid**  
Caught in the midst of negotiating a caretaker government with Prince Max of Baden they were forced to declare for the republic and set up a provisional government with six Social Democratic 'People's Commissars'.

Mortally frightened of the revolutionary fervour in the streets, Ebert, the head of the government, hastened to make an accommodation with the army to quell the disorder. On the streets of Berlin newspaper offices were taken over, the Prussian police chief relinquished his office without a murmur to a Left-wing Social Democrat.

All over Germany, state governments were handing over the reins of office to the Social Democrats. Strong points (government buildings, newspaper offices, etc) were temporarily seized and the shop stewards' committees represented an increasingly substantial alternative focus of power.

The government recognised that unless they moved swiftly they would go the same way as Kerensky in Russia the year before. The army was called in. Consisting of contingents of officers and NCOs and any reactionary filth that could be mustered from the remnants of the imperial army, the Reichswehr represented the needs of Prussian Junkerdom, the industrialists and a section of the middle class against the spectre of social revolution.

On December 5 a mob of 2000 cavalry sergeants marched through Berlin calling for Ebert to assume dictatorial powers and for 'Death to Liebknecht and Luxemburg' and 'Death to the Jews'.

To the working class as a whole the reactionary plotting of the Social Democratic leaders was completely unknown.

For them the SPD still represented the party of Wilhelm Liebknecht and Bebel, the uncompromising opponents of capitalism.

At the first National Congress of the Workers and Soldiers Councils on December 16, the great majority of the delegates were trade union officials and party functionaries.

The debates of the congress were frequently interrupted by delegations from the 250,000 demonstrators outside the hall, calling for the transfer of power to the Workers and Soldiers Councils. But the congress reaffirmed its support for the Ebert government.

On December 30 the German Communist Party (KPD) was formed. Luxemburg, who had been released from prison in November, attempted to hold back the excessive enthusiasm of some of the delegates.

She held that despite the disorders and intermittent street fighting, the masses were still too firmly wedded to the SPD for them to follow the newly formed KPD.

The revolution was being slowly buried under the weight of war weariness and the Reichswehr.

Liebknecht and Luxemburg, foolishly disregarding the danger, stayed in the homes of party workers.

On January 15, 1919 they were arrested, taken to a hotel, beaten with rifle butts and shot.

Luxemburg's body was tossed into the Landswehr canal.

The Freikorps thugs who murdered Rosa and Karl at the instigation of Ebert and Noske were the direct forerunners of the Nazis who in 1933 smashed the remnants SPD.

It is our first duty as socialists to point out all that is weakening any struggle.

The most important lesson of the present times is that the old weapons—the union leaderships, the Labour Party and so on—are defunct and must be replaced. That is why IS and Socialist Worker are always calling for the building of rank-and-file movements and joint shop stewards' committees.

These are the lessons that I tried to draw out. There is as much discontent on Merseyside after all the strikes as there was before. For that reason I say that little has been solved.—**MARTIN BARKER, Liverpool 18.**

IT IS EXTREMELY gracious of Mr. Sid Bidwell MP to explain that Mrs. Renee Short cannot be accurately described as 'a Left-wing Labour MP' (January 4). But the big question is: can Mr. Bidwell?

Before he writes to Socialist Worker about the Honourable Lady Member for Wolverhampton, I think he should explain some of his own racialist effusions.

Was the Sid Bidwell who voted for the Bill excluding Kenyan Asians from Britain solely on grounds of colour the same person who wrote in Socialist Review of January 1956, arguing that people should be free to leave and enter Britain as they pleased?

In that article, he wrote: 'There are some trade unionists who actually argue that there should be a difference between the attitude to be taken to the black worker who comes from the 'Empire and Commonwealth' and the foreign worker. What kind of international trade union solidarity is this?'

Indeed, Mr. Bidwell! What 'solidarity' can you espouse today when you back the government's immigration policy, a policy that is based precisely on making the distinction between those with white and black skins.—**RAYMOND CHALLINOR Wigan**

## the 'brightest star'

reformists and mongers as a with which to and it is true roversies were d hard fought, so true, and of portance, that common revol- ist objective. for that objec- discarded and their different sm and reform- e other rubbish e way.

The Accumulation of Capital showed that imperialism, while stabilising capitalism for a time, also threatened mankind with war and barbarism.

Liebknecht, when compared with Luxemburg, seems to be a much lesser figure. His activity until 1914 was largely carried out in the youth and anti-war agitation and his association with the revolutionary Left around Luxemburg was virtually non-existent.

But during the war he completely dedicated himself to the whole Spartakist programme and activity.

While he was no theoretician, his courage and activity as an orator and propagandist were an indispensable element in the struggle.

Liebknecht was in incredibly brave and indomitable fighter. Luxemburg combined these qualities, with a genius for socialist theory and explanation. Their deaths robbed the

international movement of their talents at a time when they were most needed.

It is no exaggeration of their stature and importance to suggest that had they lived the whole of subsequent German and world history might have been very different.

This is the fiftieth anniversary of their death, but it is not in its martyrs that the movement seeks inspiration.

Death always wins in the end. The triumph and the inspiration is in the fight for the emancipation of the working class that filled the lives of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

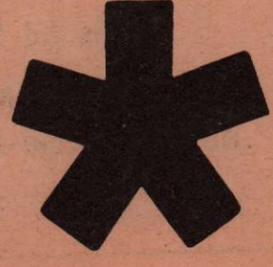
**POSTERS**  
of Luxemburg and Liebknecht: 13" x 13"  
Rosa: black on red 5s  
black on white 4s  
Karl: black on white 4s  
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# Fords wait for vital pay talks

By JIM LAMBORN

FORD MOTOR CO's 40,000 workers are anxiously waiting for the result of top-level pay talks this Friday (January 17). The meeting of the firm's joint negotiating committee includes officials of 21 trade unions and the shrewd members of the Ford labour relations team.

Friday's discussion follows a number of top level conferences of a 'working party' whose findings have been kept secret from the men on the shop floor.

The question being asked by Ford workers is: 'Will we get the chance to say yes or no to any new wage structure or will we be presented with an agreement sealed and delivered by national union officials?'

In July 1967, Ford introduced a new wage structure with a flourish of publicity. It was devised by a firm of consultants named Urwick, Orr and Co. for a six-figure fee.

Thousands of different jobs were graded. Clerks, foundrymen, gardeners and greasers were all lumped together for the purpose of the new structure.

When the consultants had finished, Ford insisted that productivity talks should be conducted before the new gradings were revealed.

## APPEALS

The national union officials accepted this 'pig in a poke' without reference to their members on the shop floor.

As soon as the gradings were known, the union officials were inundated with appeals against the arbitrary decisions of the consultants.

It was agreed that appeals against gradings should go to a review committee made up of equal numbers of management representatives and company-trained shop stewards with a labour relations manager as chairman with a casting vote.

After a few months of this charade, the stewards withdrew from the committee. They felt they were being used as a management 'rubber stamp'.

## TYPICAL

The plan to revise thousands of jobs and fit them into five grades is typical of the management's idea of divide and rule.

There have been many stoppages and overtime bans throughout the Ford empire by isolated groups of workers, ranging from 187 seamstresses to 12 metal pourers. None of them has been successful in smashing the new wage structure.

But when there was talk of a two-year package deal, Ford workers showed remarkable solidarity.

There was almost complete support for a one-day stoppage, which was only avoided when the management agreed to talk about wages and a guaranteed week's employment.

## FRAGMENTED

Now, in spite of efforts by progressive stewards and convenors, most Ford workers are not concerned with all-round rises, which would benefit everyone, but with upgrading jobs for small groups.

The fragmentation of a once mighty shop-floor organisation must bring joy to the employers' hearts.

The workers' weakness is behind the drive for 'job evaluation'—the scientific measurement of work to screw more profit from the men— which is sweeping engineering.

The wage structure tragedy— comedy at Ford has brought home to a growing number of workers that the aim of consultants like Urwick, Orr and Co. is to help the employers step up the rate of exploitation.

Control of job evaluation and comparison of work rates must be in the hands of the men on the shop floor.

Workers will accept decisions by other workers—their own elected representatives.

But the decisions by the Ford management, based on their own profit-hungry, self-interest, have caused resentment that will smoulder for a long time to come.

## Clerks to lobby

MEMBERS of the Clerical Workers Union employed by Rowntree's of York are to lobby their employers about the take-over bid from the US General Food Corporation.

## Nurses to vote on charter

By JACK SUTTON

BRITAIN'S NURSES have been asked by their union to draw up a list of demands for a nursing charter.

The National Union of Public Employees wants them to list 12 points on ballot paper in order of priority. The 12 points are:

1. A 38 hour week in common with other professional staff.
2. Adequate notice of off-duty time.
3. End of petty discipline and restrictions.
4. Payment for all overtime work.
5. Free meals on duty.
6. The right to live outside the hospital.
7. Abolition of split shifts.
8. Improved training arrangements.
9. Pay related to efficiency.
10. Effective joint consultative machinery.
11. Night duty and weekend payments for local authority nurses.
12. Adequate health and welfare facilities.

## Dangers

All socialists and trade unionists should welcome such a charter aimed at improving nurses' conditions, but the dangers contained in some of the clauses should be pointed out.

In clause 9 it is suggested that nurses should receive pay related to improvements in efficiency.

But how can nursing efficiency be increased? By slucing more bed-pans or giving more injections?

I suspect that this is a disguised attempt to introduce productivity deals, management's latest methods of attack on the working class, into the nursing sector of the health service.

The NHS is a vast organisation. It rates tenth in the scope of its financial operations on a world scale, surpassed only by such international giants as Ford, General Motors and Standard Oil.

As in all concerns of such size in a capitalist economy, there is inefficiency.

A few examples: a new extension to a hospital was built a few years ago, and now some bureaucrat, sitting on his brains, has decided it must come down again.

## Scapegoats

A new reception hall opened at another hospital was altered twice in three years at extra cost by outside labour because it was wrongly planned.

Nurses must not be made the scapegoats for the inefficiencies of hospital management.

Following an investigation by the Prices and Incomes Board pay increases for nurses ranging from 9 per cent to 14 per cent covering the period to March 1970 have been won.

'This now gives the union time,' said NUPE's General Secretary Alan Fisher, 'to direct its attention towards securing improvements in nurses' general conditions.'

But this does not mean that working conditions built up since the days of Florence Nightingale should be sacrificed for paltry pay increases by the introduction of productivity deals, flexibility and work study schemes.

Nurses should be backed to the hilt in their efforts to improve their conditions.

And top of the list should be 'Straight wage increases, with no strings.'

## call for strike

OVERSEAS TELEGRAPHISTS employed by the Post Office have voted overwhelmingly for strike action in support of a 5 per cent wage claim.



RAY GUNTER HAS JOINED THE BOARD OF 'SECURICOR' EVANS.

## ONE MAN SACKED - 100 WALK OUT

Socialist Worker Reporter

ONE HUNDRED skilled men walked out from the STC factory in East Kilbride last Friday when one man was sacked.

They refused to return to work until he is reinstated. The dispute began when a man on the night shift refused a job usually done by women on the day shift.

## Throw out

It had previously been agreed in a proposed productivity deal that the night shift on this section would carry out the work. But the factory unanimously voted to throw out the deal on January 7 when no settlement was reached on increased pay. A strike meeting was due to be held on Friday January 17.

## Union officials weaken ICI prod deal battle

By ROB CLAY

WHY IS THE GOVERNMENT pressing for anti-trade union legislation when right-wing trade union officials are so competent at disgracing, swindling and betraying the working class?

The ominous history of the proposed one-day national stoppage of ICI workers demands close attention from all those involved in the labour movement.

The ICI national shop stewards committee was instructed by a mass meeting in Middlesbrough to organise a 24-hour national token stoppage on January 8 in protest against a government decision to refer a recent productivity agreement, which included a wage rise, to the Prices and Incomes Board.

Both the Engineers' Union and the Boilermakers Association objected to the PIB interference.

## No chance

In spite of the entirely democratic nature of the rank and file decisions, the local full timers of the Transport Workers Union and the Electrical Trades Union on Teesside were determined that their members should have no chance to fight for their rights by striking.

The ETU, whose members on the national shop stewards committee had originally called for a seven-day stoppage and had supported the decision of the mass meeting, forbade its members and shop stewards from taking any part in the strike or its organisation.

It was the right-wing stewards of this union who

also opened up the inevitable 'Red' smear campaign. The shop stewards were 'politically motivated' (unlike Wilson, Castle and Les Cannon, the ETU president) the communists were behind it (three Communist Party members on a national shop stewards committee of 80).

Barny Ward, Teesside TGWU organiser, went one better. The stewards were 'fascists' using totalitarian methods to force the workers into striking he declared.

## Ranks split

Throughout Teesside, the heart of ICI's industrial empire, in the works and in the press, every attempt was made to turn the proposed strike into a battle between the craft unions and the ETU and the AEF. Every possible method of splitting the rank and file was attempted.

Although both the shop stewards committee and the strike were of a national nature, with organisation in every plant the length and breadth of Britain, every attempt was made to portray this as a local Teesside strike—and only involving craft unions at that.

On January 6, two days before the date set for the stoppage, the right-wingers in the AEF played their trump card. They demanded another mass meeting at Wilton, conveniently timed and situated for themselves.

They threatened to ask the management for company time if the shop stewards comm-

ittee refused—a request the management were only ready to answer.

Given the short notice, panic, confusion (even the loudspeaker equipment 'disappeared'), and demoralisation, the inevitable happened. By a very small majority—including inspectors and estimators—the strike was called off.

## Sigh of relief

On January 6, the Thomson-owned Evening Gazette chortled that union officials were heaving a sigh of relief at the defeat of the 'irresponsible and unofficial' shop stewards committee.

The Times the next day reported that 'members of craft unions at ICI Wilton had called off a one-day stoppage'. But ICI was not dominated by Wilton and on January 8, men came out at both Doncaster and Manchester.

The national shop stewards committee had agreed from the start to work as a united multi-union body with no individual unions. Due to the role of the engineers at Doncaster, AEF members took their case to the union district committee, who supported them and forwarded the matter to London.

The AEF national executive met on January 7, the day before the stoppage, and backed their members at Doncaster. They declared the protest stoppage an official strike.

## Ready to betray

The lessons are clear. Even union officials who enthusiastically support phoney productivity deals from which the workers gain little but redundancy, speed-up, work-study and so on, are only too ready to betray even these pathetic bargains.

As one senior shop steward at Wilton put it: 'Having talked to many shop stewards throughout the plant, the general view is that as far as prod deals are concerned, in the future ICI and Barbara Castle can stuff them wherever they fit.'

There is an increasing awareness that ICI would not have agreed to a rise unless they were sure the government would refer it to the PIB.

The bosses knew they could rely on certain union officials to do everything possible to suppress militant rank and file opposition.

The PIB must report by the end of February. ICI workers now have the urgent task of considering how to ensure that the officials who have proved so treacherous in the past do not sell them out again if, as seems likely, the PIB cuts or trims the rise.

## High speed profits from North Sea gas

By BRIAN WHITE

ENORMOUS BUBBLES of natural gas have lain untouched, 7,000 feet below the North Sea for the past 225 million years.

For the next 20-25 years, several enormous oil companies will tap this vast source of energy and for the privilege of doing so they will receive £2,000 millions.

Of course, the oil companies—Shell, Esso and Amoco—did make an investment in the project and naturally expect a good profit.

But at the very outside, the two consortiums involved in last month's price agreement could have spent little more than £180 millions.

So they get their money back after three years. After that it's pure profit—at the rate of more than £90 millions a year.

In the circumstances, statements from the oil chiefs about the Gas Council driving a 'hard bargain' seem almost amusing.

## Generous slice

Even after the oil companies have taken their generous slice of profits, natural gas is still a cheap source of energy, and Power Minister Roy Mason has enthusiastically used this new source of fuel as one of the final nails to knock into the coffin of the mining industry.

Plans for the closure of further pits have been rushed forward. Inevitably, little has been done to provide alternative jobs.

Back in the days of opposition, Labour Ministers condemned the Tories' decision to hand over North Sea prospecting to private companies.

But any plans for nationalisation were quickly shelved by a Labour government anxious to appease big business.

It is now easy to see the advantages that could have flown from nationalisation, with £90 millions a year to play around with, the government could have created jobs for all redundant miners.

The margin of profit is so great that gas prices could have been cut for the consumer.

## Vague promises

At the time of the first North Sea discoveries, there was much talk about the possibility of cheaper gas.

This has been forgotten and replaced by vague promises about no increases for 'some time to come'.

But nationalisation on its own is not enough. A Labour government would still be driven by a system of priorities in which there is no place for the welfare of countless villages where mines have closed.

What is needed is a society where the whole national fuel policy is determined by workers' representatives. Under socialism, the discovery of a vast source of easily usable wealth would mean tremendous benefits for all the population.

As it is High Speed Gas means nothing more than High Speed Profits and North Sea gas will bring little more than a glow of satisfaction in the boardrooms of the oil companies.

## MEETINGS

LSE I.S. group: Monday Jan 20 1 pm Chris Harman on Gramsci. Thurs Jan 23 1 pm Tony Cliff on Trotsky. MANCHESTER I.S. SW selling in city centre every Sat. afternoon. Meet 2.30 pm Albert Square. Revolutionary Rave-up in Crown and Anchor to raise cash for Irish comrades. Sunday Jan 19: Demonstration in support of civil rights in N. Ireland. 2.30 pm Platt Fields. Followed by meeting in Registry Office (all Saints). Spkrs. include Mike Farrell, organiser of march to Derry.

RANK AND FILE 4 Left wing Teachers' Journal. Out this week. Obtainable from: 87 Brooke Rd. London N16. Rates (including postage): 1 copy, 1/2, 2, 2/6, 6, 5/2, 12, 9/- post free. LONDON SQUATTERS stickers 10"x4", 30s per 1000, 15s per 500. From Joyce Rosser, 23 Hampstead Lane N6.

Published by the International Socialists, 857a High Road, London, N17. Printed by Socialist Review Publishing Co Ltd., Paxton Works, Paxton Road, London N17.

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