

# WORKERS' ACTION

8 pages  
10p

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## TUC AND THE TORIES

# Don't talk, organise!

AT THIS week's Trade Union Congress, the TUC leaders have done all they can to melt everything down into bland, passive "unity against the Tories". Instead of organising for a fight, they have been whining about how bad the Tories are for national unity.

The union leaders take this attitude because they are afraid of militant rank and file action of the sort that beat back the last Tory government.

Delegates and National Executive members of one union — the CPSA — voted to oppose the General Council's no-fight resolution on 'economic and social advance' and the similar composite moved by the EETPU and supported by TASS. Then the delegation unconstitutionally changed policy. But

this is the speech that CPSA delegate Stephen Corbishley was due to make.

Our movement faces a serious attack from the Tories. This attack is not motivated by dogma. It is not a misunderstanding. It is motivated by class interests and it reflects the need of the class the Tories represent to attack the working class at a time when the capitalist system world-wide is in its worst crisis for 40 years.

We need to mobilise the strength of the working class against this attack, a strength which exists in strikes, on picket lines, in demonstrations, in occupations, and not in talks at Downing Street.

We need to put forward our political answers on a class basis, with policies like cutting working time without

loss of pay to ensure full employment and, as an immediate step, fighting for a 35 hour week; like nationalisation without compensation; like workers' control — not advice on 'how to run a mixed economy.

The resolutions before you which we oppose do not recognise this. They accept the role of the trade union movement as a mediator between the classes, trying to achieve moderation on both sides so that there can be national unity. But the only national unity we will ever get under the present system is unity on the terms of the capitalist class and at the expense of working people.

The last Tory government tried the same sort of attack; they were beaten back, not by talks at Downing St, but by the miners' and builders'

flying secondary pickets, by the workers who struck to free the Pentonville Five, and by other rank and file action.

The problem now is that many of the leaders of our movement are frightened by the prospect of such action reappearing. Patching together a composite as in composite 8, with a phrase here for the right-wing and a phrase there for the left-wing, is not good enough. It won't help us to defend our members against the Tory attacks.

In the joint CPSA/SCPS pamphlet, 'The other half of the picture', the full details of the consequences of public expenditure cuts — particularly in the civil service, — are finely spelled out. Cuts

continued on page 2

## Engineers stay solid, Duffy gets panicky

WHILE the engineers' 2-day strike on September 3-4 was 'solid', according to the Engineering Employers' Federation's own account, AUEW president Terry Duffy has been denouncing any sign of left-wing militancy in his union.

Duffy was furious when the AUEW delegation at the TUC voted to back a call for mass demonstrations against Tory economic policy. He complained the delegation must be "communist-dominated", and swore he would change things for the Labour Party conference.

Duffy has no more respect for the members' interests over pay than he has on political issues. The two-day strike tactic is better calculated to wear down the strikers' militancy than the bosses' resistance.

The militancy is hard-wearing. As the pay battle continues, demands for an all-out strike are growing louder. Rallies or stewards' meetings in Leeds, Bradford, Edinburgh and Birmingham have called for all-out action. In Sheffield, AUEW district secretary George Caborn, a Communist Party member, has called for an all-out strike, though the CP's daily *Morning Star* still just backs the Confed official leadership.

Despite great efforts by the capitalist press, strike-breaking efforts on September 3rd came to very little. A much-publicised 'back to

work' move at BL Longbridge ended with a small band of workers disconsolately trailing round the picket lines.

In Coventry, the local Evening Telegraph had claimed that up to 600 workers would scab at GEC factories in the city. In fact only a few people crossed the picket lines, to go in to the transmission section at the Stoke plant — and they were soon sent home by the bosses. Another 25 workers stood outside the plant with placards saying they wanted a ballot before strike action.

The most important factories breaking the strike were the BL Cars assembly and body plants at Cowley, Oxford. But in Sheffield, Hadfields, a private steel firm employing over 5,000 workers, has settled on the full claim and been kicked out of the EEF as a result.

The claim — £80 minimum time rate for skilled workers, £60 for unskilled, a 39 hour week with progress to 35 hours by 1982, two days extra holiday, and a common implementation date on April 1st 1979 — is inadequate: no across-the-board pay rise, no inflation protection for wages, no immediate 35 hour week. But it can and must be won now.

• Mass meetings in every factory and district. Rank and file control of the struggle.

• All out strike.

## STOP THE REPRESSION IN IRAN

AFTER HOURS of aerial and artillery bombardment, the city of Mahabad, bastion of the Kurdish national movement, has fallen to the Iranian army backed up by Islamic Revolutionary Guards.

To avoid further destruction, Kurdish fighters decided against a further defence of the city. The inhabitants have left the town and taken to the mountains.

Sheikh Ezeddin Hosseini, the immensely popular Kurdish leader, and Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party — the top men on Khomeini's wanted list — have reportedly crossed the border into Iraq. Meanwhile in southern

Iran, the lives of the 12 Iranian Trotskyist members of the Socialist Workers Party are in danger. They are being hunted by a right-wing faction called the 'Revolutionary Guards'.

This is certainly a pack of lies. The published charges against the women were also lying, but did not include any reference to this act of sabotage, which was in any case

disputed by a right-wing faction called the 'Revolutionary Guards'.

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Victims of an earlier Tehran government offensive against the Kurds, in March, in the morgue at Sanandaj.



Free all democrats and  
determination for  
Kurdistan!

Meeting, Friday 7 September, 7.30pm, Assembly Room, Central Hall, Westminster. Sponsored by Association of Kurdish Students Abroad, Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, International Marxist Group, Socialist Workers Party, and Workers' Action.

Demonstration, Saturday 8th September, 1pm, from Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park.



# Why the IRA killed Mountbatten

by JOHN O'MAHONY

LORD LOUIS Mountbatten was 79 years old when the IRA blew him up last week — but he was nevertheless a member of the British Royal Family and had been a leading servant of the British Empire.

His 'liberal' image came from the fact that he was one who presided over the 'voluntary' dismantling of an Empire which Britain had ceased to have the strength to maintain. He was a fair target for those fighting to drive the British out of north-east Ireland. "These people think they can retire!", rhetorically asked a spokesman for the IRA, interviewed in the *Irish Times* (1st September).

The killing of Mountbatten on the same day that the IRA blew up 18 paratroopers hammered home the fact that the IRA remains a power capable of indefinitely continuing to make war on Britain — and that the war will go on until Britain withdraws. The same point was made earlier by the march of 10,000 in Belfast to demonstrate support for the IRA on the 10th anniversary of the entrance of the British Army onto the streets in 1969, during the fighting between Orange pogromists and Northern Ireland police on one side and Catholics in Derry and West Belfast on the other.

In the wake of Mountbatten's death, the British Government has demanded that the 26 County (Southern) government grant the right of 'hot pursuit' across the border between the North and South to the British Army, agree to extradite wanted Republicans to the Six Counties (North), and allow the Royal Ulster Constabulary to interrogate suspects held by 26 County police. The imperialist arrogance of these demands has spurred even the limp 'Fianna Fail' government of Jack Lynch to make objections.

Fianna Fail Minister for Finance and Tanaiste George Colley was asked in an interview by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation if he would have qualms of conscience about extraditing somebody to a police force or an army in Northern Ireland which had been the subject

of a European Court of Human Rights case, and he answered:

"Yes. This is another aspect of it. I have been dealing with the legal problems with which we are faced and which could not be solved without changing our constitution... But it is true that many people would have qualms about handing over suspects to a police force, some members of which — by no means all — but some members of which have been found guilty in an international court of ill-treatment of prisoners and of conduct

sympathy with the Six County Republicans and support their goal of destroying Partition.

In the early '40s repression by a Fianna Fail government which shattered and all but wiped out the IRA was triggered by a stunning IRA coup, when the IRA raided and completely ransacked the central Government arsenal in Dublin. Today the main argument for the Fianna Fail government against attempting to repeat that episode is the support for the IRA in the Six Counties, giving the IRA a more or

father of 10 children.

The *Irish Times* IRA interview (by Niall Kiely) gives a remarkably clear picture of the reasoning of those who killed Mountbatten, in direct quoted speech by an unnamed IRA spokesman. It is a voice that deserves to be heard in the British labour movement, though we can only give extracts here:

"We used a 50 lb bomb, all gelignite, detonated by remote control. It was not placed in a lobster-pot. It caused the political effects we wanted it to cause which were expected beforehand.

Terrorism Act]. What about the likes of Sammy Devener, beaten to death by the RUC? Did the Royal Family grieve over the likes of him?

"What about old Peter McGrath who ended up in Omagh mental hospital after seven days in RUC 'custody'?"

"English people had an affinity with the likes of Mountbatten which they don't have for Irish people. Some 2,000 dead Irish and it means nothing to them, and there's been dead Irish people down the centuries. English people just don't care — well, they're going to have to care.

"Mountbatten has been described as a father-figure of the Royal Family, a pillar of post-imperialist Britain; but Britain is still an imperialist power while it remains in occupation of the six counties.

□ □

"When they've finished cursing, of course, and damning us, they'll have to question the value of continuing with their occupation of Ireland. Because that's why he died.

"Young Maxwell [an Irish boat-boy who also died] shouldn't have been there. Latest intelligence before the attack said that there would be additional members of the Royal Family, not civilians, on the boat. Their presence would still not have inhibited the operation going ahead.

"But Paul Maxwell was not scheduled to be there: it should have been a more mature man, an older man who would have been able to weigh up the political company he was keeping and the repercussions of it.

"On occasion, we have killed innocent civilians during operations, but because they weren't prestige figures or members of the Royal Family, it didn't get the same publicity. We have postponed, and even cancelled, operations in the past because of danger to children and civilians.

"We're not out to kill civilians, but take this as an example. Saracen vehicles are known as targets: if the

British Army carried a 13 year old boy in a Saracen and we hit it, who's responsible for his death?

"Mountbatten did not represent any change in our legitimate targets. Judges, senior government officials, defence personnel were among our targets several months ago when we sent them letter bombs in England. We will continue to hit prestige targets, without apology, and we will hit the next one just as hard.

"Wait and see if Peter Jay and Jim Callaghan return to their holiday cottage in Co. Cork next summer... don't forget, we regard this country as one unit...

"The importance of Warrington was that after ten years, a full platoon was wiped out, the biggest Brit loss in this country for 58 years. Before that, there was the 18 auxiliaries wiped out by the IRA in November 1920.

"It also demolishes predictions that the IRA was finished, the Roy Mason tooth-paste-tube boast. In country areas, especially now that such huge quantities of explosives can be used, it's going to make the British Army very worried".

On September 3rd, in an incoherent editorial, the *Irish Times* coupled Mountbatten's name with that of the Irish nationalist hero, Sir Roger Casement, also at one time a prominent servant of the British Empire. (The point seemed to be that Republicans should have respect for Mountbatten...)

A maladroit comparison: Casement, an Antrim man, had been a prominent and celebrated liberal Imperialist figure. He retired and worked for Irish 'freedom'. Captured before the 1916 uprising, he was tried for High Treason after the Rising.

Pressure from Casement's many Establishment friends and admirers to save his life was deflated by the circulation of extracts from his alleged diaries concerning homosexual activities. Finally the humane British Empire dropped Roger Casement through a trapdoor with a rope around his neck.

"These people think they can retire?" Britain used not to think so.



When Irish Republicans strike down top people of the British State, there is a press outcry and the State mobilises for revenge. When the British State strikes down Irish people... no press outcry, no official funerals

which is, if not internationally defined as torture, the next best thing for it..."

Ministerial understatement, from a minister whose own state's police have behaved with notorious savagery (as for example in the well-documented recent case of the IRSP alleged train robbers).

The pressure from the Tory government continues, however, and Thatcher has tried to create the impression that a meeting with Lynch arranged weeks ago is in fact the result of a summons from her to the prime minister of Britain's smaller neighbour so that he can be reprimanded. The Tories are determined to insist that the 'problem' in the Six Counties is not a political problem — centred around the unviability and artificiality of the Six County state — but a problem of more effective police work on both sides of the border.

Jack Lynch's government knows better. Many of their supporters, Fianna Fail party members and voters, have

less stable base to retreat into.

The British couldn't exert the level of repression necessary to smash the IRA without extending it to perhaps a majority of the Six County Catholic population, who support the IRA actively or passively (that extension is just what the Orange demand for 'action' against the IRA in fact means). Any such attempts in the Six Counties would probably generate widespread dissatisfaction and resistance to any 26 County government seen to be helping Britain. These considerations inhibit Fianna Fail — but an increase in repression in the 26 Counties is nevertheless likely.

Meanwhile in the Six Counties a new round of sectarian assassinations has apparently been started by the 'Ulster Freedom Fighters', a name which is a flag of convenience for the legal Ulster Defence Association. There have already been two apparent sectarian killings, including the shooting of a

"That is, the British Government and a fair-sized majority of English people — they are living in a monarchy, after all — would react to the death of Mountbatten in a way they wouldn't react to the death of a 79-year old Irishman killed by the Brits or at the hands of the RUC. We would do exactly the same thing again against prestige targets.

"The man's age doesn't matter, it was what he represented. The English people would have seen him as very popular, very courageous... well, we've been burying people for years. Now they know how we feel.

"You had this guy acting like a tourist. What did he think about Ireland? What was he doing to influence Brit policy? By his silence — a man with his connections — he condoned the occupation and the torture, the SAS executions last year... These people think they can retire?"

"Take an old Republican from the 1920s. They can boot him out of England under the PTA [Prevention of

## TUC AND THE TORIES

continued from p.1

of £2.6 billion this year, and a proposed further £4½ billion by the end of 1982, could mean, throughout local and central government, loss of 300,000 jobs, and the Tories would have to sack workers to achieve their target.

What do resolution 45 and composite 8 say about this? In essence: talk to the Tories. Our potential members now on the dole queues or at school are not going to get jobs. What do the resolutions say? Talk to the government.

Our members already have to suffer from the run-down of the NHS. The Tories are going to make it worse. What do the resolutions say? Talk to the government. School, housing, transport, welfare services are to be cut, and talking to the government seems to be the General Council's answer.

Talking to the Government will not get us anywhere.

even when the Government was Labour. With the present Government, the only purpose of the chats at Downing St is to blunt our fight-back. The talks are not going to change the Tories' minds. They have said it themselves.

Tories' minds are only changed by direct action, as they were between 1972 and 1974. Their policies will only be reversed by socialist policies. Capitalism today just no longer has room for both the needs of the capitalist class — that is, profit and more profit — and the needs of the working class.

We must decide that the needs of the working class come first for us and fight on that basis.

These resolutions are as vague as possible. They do not give us any calls to action for the membership. The FTAT amendment to motion 45 is warmly welcomed by our union, with its call to action to be organised by the

General Council, but given our position on motion 45, procedure unfortunately ensures we have to vote against.

Composite 8 wants us to endorse the Concordat with the last Labour government. Our union is against the Concordat. In our conference's view, it was an exercise in tying one hand behind our backs when we needed both hands to defend our members' interests.

Composite 8 also wants import controls, while motion 45 calls for measures against import penetration. Both don't say anything definite about enforcing workers' interests against the Tories, but are very definite about enforcing Britain's supposed interests against the interests of workers abroad.

Mostly, however, these resolutions are concerned with defending the existing balance of the so-called mixed economy. This is not a policy that can mobilise our mem-

bership, and it is not a realistic policy.

Through the IMF, through the right-wing policies of the last Labour Government, and through the present Tory cuts, capitalism has served notice on us that the needs of profit are not longer consistent with providing decent public services and maintaining employment. We have to challenge the needs of profit and its system. When we are asked, where will the resources come from, they will come from seizing the wealth of the top 5% who at present own 50% of all private wealth in this country, and from the rational planning of the whole economy by the working class.

We must answer the Tories on a working class, socialist basis. If Congress passes these motions, we will be giving notice that we are willing to play the Tories' game, one we can only lose. That is why we should throw them out.

# WORKERS' ACTION

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## BAGNALLS, BASINGSTOKE

## WA bulletin defies bosses' threats

THE BOSSES at a Basingstoke fork lift truck factory, Lansing Bagnalls, are using sackings, intimidation, and open threats to try to shut down the Workers' Action factory bulletin, written and distributed by WA supporters inside the factory for two years. So far their hand has been considerably strengthened by help from the factory union leadership.

But the bulletin continues to function, with increased support among the 4,000 Bagnalls workers.

The bosses' efforts have included following workers around the factory and out to the gates at night, posting notices promising instant dismissal for anyone caught giving out the bulletin, and actual sackings.

Martin Timmins, WA supporter, Basingstoke Boiler-

makers' union branch secretary, and a deputy shop steward at Bagnalls, was sacked on March 1st. Supposedly it was for bad time-keeping. But Timmins had not been outside the normally allowed three minutes' grace since he last had a warning. Indeed his section manager had congratulated him on improved time-keeping.

Initially there was strong feeling for industrial action to support Timmins. But official talks over the sacking were dragged out over three weeks, and shop meetings were postponed again and again. Eventually the boiler-makers at Bagnalls held a secret ballot and decided by 71 votes to 34 not to strike.

Timmins took his case to an industrial tribunal, and, surprisingly enough, won a ruling of unfair dismissal. As

usual, instead of recommending reinstatement, the tribunal awarded compensation.

Then in July, EETPU convenor Mark Stoneman was sacked after being allegedly caught giving out bulletins. Other workers were also called in to see management. They were told that the bosses had a full list of bulletin distributors and threatened with the sack.

Workers who appeared as witnesses for Timmins at his tribunal hearing have also been harassed.

Bagnalls EETPU members struck for one day against Stoneman's sacking, but Bagnalls Joint Shop Stewards Committee leadership, which is sharply hostile to the WA bulletin, made no effort to extend the action.

A central figure in the story so far is Pat Farrelly,

Bagnalls Employee Relations Manager. Farrelly is a former AUEW full-timer. After Timmins' sacking, local WA supporters asked Basingstoke CP branch secretary Bernard Rawlins to check out report that Farrelly was still a member of the Communist Party.

Rawlins was informed, first by telephone and then by a letter from CP district secretary Jack Harrop, that Farrelly is a "respected member of the Reading branch", that he is or was until recently on the South Midlands district committee of the CP, and that anyway Timmins is a Trotskyist and reported to work with Tories and the NF! Any further questions about Farrelly, Rawlins was told, were out of order.

After resigning from the CP for other reasons, Bern-

ard Rawlins has written an open letter to the CP about the Farrelly affair.

There are no signs of shame from the CP. But despite this 'broad democratic' assistance, the Bagnalls bosses are not winning.

They thought they had identified the bulletin distributors and put them under close surveillance. But the bulletin still gets out.

Anger against the bureaucratic policy of the JSSC leadership is rising, and not just over the issue of sackings, as many letters sent in to the WA bulletin from Bagnalls workers testify. For example:

*"What a topsy turvy union we have at Lansing Bagnall — we hold mass meetings at all the factories to hear about Lansing Henley dispute [locked out by management] and vote on a levy. Let's*

*hope the union members at Henley win their struggle to get more than the 7.5% plus guaranteed bonus of £25 per month which management have offered so far.*

*"But what about our wage claim? No mass meeting, no union officials coming in, no enthusiasm. What can we expect? The chairman, P. Taylor, voted against going in for a 20% wage claim, and he controls the rest of the negotiating committee, so our wage claim will just die"*

As workers at Bagnalls become more and more convinced of the need to democratise their unions in order that they cease to be the bosses' stooges and become organisations which genuinely represent the rank and file, the WA bulletin will be there to help convince them and to help them to organise.

WITH the battle over democracy in the Labour Party coming to the centre of the political stage, the question of how we orient to the Labour Party is becoming more urgent for revolutionary socialists.

On Friday 24th August, Workers' Action and the IMG debated the issue at a meeting in London attended by about 70 people. Unfortunately, as in previous WA/IMG debates, attendance from the IMG was very small.

## Parallel

John O'Mahony, leading off for Workers' Action, focussed on the experience of the recent general election. Through the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV), WA was able to help organise a socialist parallel election campaign within the official labour movement.

"What we did was limited", he said. "But it was limited only by our forces, not by our tactic".

In contrast, the Socialist Workers' Party, after five years of syndicalist bluster about the Labour Party being irrelevant, collapsed at election time into being "good Labour supporters", passively arguing that Labour was a lesser evil than the Tories.

In effect the SWP just accepted the monopoly of working-class politics by liberal-Labour politicians like Callaghan. The SCLV found a way to combat that monopoly from inside the Labour Party.

The IMG stood ten token candidates (who got token votes) through "Socialist Unity" — and outside that had no more to say than the SWP.

Brian Grogan, replying for the IMG, said that Socialist Unity was no longer appropriate today. But it was right in its time.

Today (said Grogan) mass action is central to politics, whereas in the 1950s internal Labour Party struggles were central. Socialist Unity, on a programme "not dissimilar

# Marxists and Labour: debating the issues

from the SCLV", aimed to stimulate mass action. In contrast, the SCLV tended to channel militancy into Labour Party internal battles.

The logical conclusion of a dogmatic view that internal Labour Party struggle is central is the political degeneration suffered by the Militant tendency.

In the view of Workers' Action, replied Martin Thomas, mass action is *always* central. But Socialist Unity was not mass action. And in terms of getting large numbers of people (if not 'masses') onto the streets, the SCLV has been more successful than SU. The size of the SO/SCLV contingent on the August 12th Troops Out demonstration shows that.

Crucially, the SCLV was more effective in enabling Marxists to link mass action with political clarification and political organisation.

Jonathan Silberman of the IMG said that Workers' Action was being insular. Throughout Western Europe, "the radicalisation

through which powerful organisations of the far left have been able to build themselves has been largely outside the reformist parties". But it has not been outside the trade unions.

Thus it is wrong to talk in a general way about working in the labour movement. Relating to militant layers within the unions is central, with the aim of "transforming those organisations into fighting instruments in the struggle for socialism". But vis-à-vis the Labour Party the aim of revolutionaries is to "break it up".

## Support

John Bloxam of Workers' Action recalled Trotsky's analysis that "The Labour Party and the trade unions — these are not two principles, they are only a technical division of labour. Together they are the fundamental support of the domination of the English bourgeoisie".

By "boosting the class struggle potentialities of the



Socialist Unity at its conference in November 1977: a stimulus to mass action, or a gimmick cutting across an orientation to the labour movement?

trade unions as counterposed to the Labour Party", Silberman was failing to come to grips with the common problem of the reformist bureaucracy.

Valerie Coultas insisted that the IMG does have an attitude to the Labour Party: struggles outside the Labour Party which the IMG puts emphasis on have had a profound effect inside the Labour Party.

But "very large numbers of people over the last five years became so disillusioned that they didn't want to vote Labour". The SCLV failed to understand that and to put forward a "clear revolutionary alternative to what Labour was saying".

The debate was also opened up to comrades supporting neither WA nor the IMG. Alan Richardson argued a case for working in the Labour Party: "the IMG comrades", he said, "have not understood the difference between a revolutionary group and a party".

Keith Thompson of the Revolutionary Communist Ten-

dency argued a diametrically opposite position. "To make workers conscious of what had happened in 1974-79", "no vote" was the right slogan for the election. And today, rather than focusing on the fight against the Tories, we must see 'left reformism' as 'the biggest danger'.

## Issues

Mike Simpson, former Socialist Unity candidate in North Islington, argued: "A low vote does not reflect what we got across in terms of politics". SU raised issues like Ireland, women's rights, and gay rights, not raised by Labour.

John O'Mahony, summing up, said the point is that the SCLV work has shown it is possible to raise issues like Ireland through the labour movement. WA is not arguing that the Labour Party can be taken over wholesale for revolutionary politics. But the fact here and

now is that there is a relatively open structure within the existing labour movement where we can fight.

WA sees direct action as central; but we need to focus direct struggles politically. Otherwise we just repeat 1972-4. Work within the Labour Party gives us a way of focusing politically while relating to the mass labour movement.

O'Mahony agreed with Silberman on the need to relate to the vanguard. "We do that, too", he said. "But we also need to relate the vanguard to the masses".

## Tactical

Replying to the point made by all the IMG speakers, that the differences between the IMG and WA are only tactical and therefore WA should drop its characterisation of the IMG as centrist, O'Mahony said that the serious tactical differences are of great importance for the active work of revolutionaries and moreover reflect very significant general differences.

Brian Grogan in his summing-up came back to his initial points. "How is the united front posed today — that's the fundamental question. Is it just inside the Labour Party? That's the position of Militant — and it has taken them across class lines".

"We never imagined we could win the masses" to Socialist Unity, but "we could use our election campaign to stimulate mass action". "The masses will never be broken from the Labour Party before a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation — but we can win a coherent vanguard".

WA and IMG have agreed to continue discussions on orientation to the Labour Party. WA is proposing that one of these discussions should take place at or around the IMG 'Marxist Symposium' on 21-23 September so that the members and sympathisers of the IMG can be drawn into the debate.

COLIN FOSTER

## S. London Corrie protest wins support

A SILENT MARCH by about 100 'Life' supporters on Saturday 1st was the occasion for one of the first mobilisations in the campaign against the Corrie Bill.

The anti-abortionists were protesting against an abortion daycare unit to be opened soon at the South London Hospital to serve women in Lambeth

and Wandsworth. Despite their attempts to broaden their appeal with banners reading, 'Social help not killing', and 'Reopen casualty, not daycare unit', they attracted little interest from the public.

The hospital took a deputation from each side, but refused to allow 'Life' to lay wreaths

on the hospital steps. A member of the staff called this a 'disgusting publicity stunt'.

The Wandsworth against Corrie Campaign got support from about 150 men, women and children (some passers-by who joined in), and filled a large number of petitions. They had banners from the

Wandsworth and E.Merton Community Health Council, Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council, Streatham Labour Party, and a number of women's and left groups.

Chanting, "Every child a wanted child: Abortion on demand", and "Not the church, not the state, women must decide their fate", they stayed

until all the anti-abortionists had given up, and then held a short meeting to publicise their forthcoming meetings and lobbies.

For details of events planned by Wandsworth against Corrie campaign, contact Caroline Taylor, 58 Penworthum Rd, SW16 (677 9099).

MANDY WILLIAMS



# THE STRUGGLE OF THE KURDS

## What the Kurds want

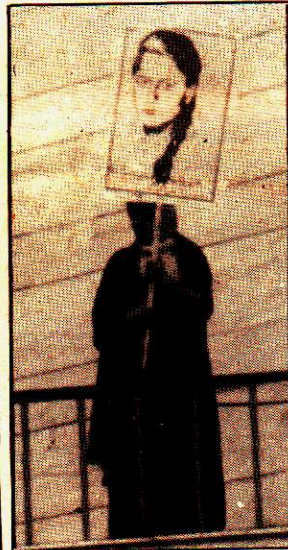
THE BASIC demand of the Iranian Kurds is for autonomy within a federal republic of Iran. To them this means control over Kurdistan's affairs through an autonomous council: a local police force, locally elected officials, an economic development council, local control over schooling and social services. The central government would be responsible for long-term economic policy and foreign affairs.

There are also cultural demands, above all for Kurdish to be used alongside Persian as an official language and as a medium of education.

The Kurds have always linked their demands for autonomy with the slogan for democracy in Iran as a whole.

Essentially this programme reflects the interests of the Kurdish merchants, professional classes, officials, and richer peasants, who undoubtedly would benefit from greater capitalist economic development and a local state apparatus.

But it is hardly a programme to solve the desperate situation of the masses of Iranian Kurdistan. Precise figures are not available, but unemployment is very high (particularly in winter); more than half the workers on the land are either landless peasants (sharecroppers of some sort) or rural labourers; the average working week for wage-workers is 54 hours; about 70% of the



Kurdish woman holds picture of Fedayeen martyr at rally in Mahabad

adult population is illiterate, and health and other social provisions are almost non-existent.

In 1975 average yearly income in Kurdistan was estimated by the KDP to be \$150, while the official (perhaps inflated) average for all Iran was \$1350.

The KDP's programme recognises the need to take up these questions — it calls for an eight-hour day, equality for women, better education and a radical land reform. But it is still within petty-bourgeois limits. In language which reflects the influence of Stalinism, the KDP calls for "a patriotic economic policy for the preservation of the people's interests".

In reality, the Kurdish masses need a workers' and peasants' government based on workers' and peasants' councils. Such a government would have to distribute the land to the landless peasants and develop a planned and nationalised economy. That perspective is incompatible with a capitalist Iran — even a democratic federal republic of Iran.

Given the economic and social backwardness of Iranian Kurdistan, the perspective becomes more possible the more the struggle is extended throughout Iran and to the neighbouring countries.

The fall of Mahabad does not mean the end of the Kurds' struggle in Iran. The Kurdish struggle has a long history, as Andrew Hornung explains below. In this article, written for Workers' Action 3 weeks ago, 'Simko', an Iranian Kurd active in Mahabad, describes the social and political struggles in Kurdistan.

THE TEHRAN government is at war with the Kurds. It piles slander upon slander, accusing the Kurds of being foreign agents, even of being in league with Satan. It denounces them as being bent on secession (though their actual demand is autonomy), as if it would be a crime for the Kurdish people to want independence.

These are not the pronouncements of someone who has been misled by unscrupulous associates, as the press, in defence of Khomeini, often claims. Khomeini is deliberately creating an atmosphere of political hysteria which he is exploiting to consolidate his regime, to attack his opponents and to confuse the masses who look to his government for real social improvement. Khomeini hopes he can smash his opponents before there is a social explosion.

Certainly the government is not worried by the political line of the Kurdistan Democratic Party led by Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou. This is a petty-bourgeois nationalist party, which has been eager not to offend the gov-

# Workers and peasants begin to mobilise



Peshmergas at a rally in Mahabad

ernment. Not long ago the KDP claimed that Khomeini was the ayatollah closest to their aspirations, apart from ayatollah Taleghani. The

protracted negotiations between the KDP and the government also meant that the KDP was even more reluctant than usual to take sides

in the armed conflicts which broke out in several parts of Kurdistan.

For instance, in the very violent clashes in Naqadeh

where the government tried to exploit tension between the Kurdish and Turkish population of the town, the KDP refused to fight the army.

More importantly, the KDP has tried to keep out of the battles between peasants and landlords and feudal nobles. Only under pressure from its more radical rank and file has the party been forced to take the peasants' side — no doubt to the alarm of the landowners and tribal notables in its organisation.

The KDP is not a homogeneous party at the top. There is a pro-Tudeh (Moscow oriented Communist) Part wing led by Kerim Hassanami, an anti-communist right-wing nationalist wing of Omar Ghazi and a group round Ghassemlou balancing between these. There is a lot of conflict too between the military units, the KDP's peshmergas; most of whom are poor peasants, and the more socially conservative leaders.

What does worry the government is the social radicalisation in Kurdistan, where the army has proved itself very unreliable. In other words, in Kurdistan more than elsewhere in Iran the government has lost its grip on power.

Generalisations about the level of consciousness are more dangerous than usual here, because there is a sharp difference between the northern Kurmanji-speaking areas and the southern Zorani-speaking areas.

The north-west of Lake Urmia — is a political domain of the right wing national movement. The south is dominated by sub-tribal leaders. In the north of the country, the tribal leaders of the region of Iraq ensure



The outlawed leader, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou

from the Kurds do not. This reaction does not go. In Urmia, the eviction of about 100 families. They have thrown their own. They were trying to limit the Shah's land reform. There is an organisation although the

## FROM FEUDAL REVOLT TO THE

THE EXPLOSION of social and national struggle in Iranian Kurdistan is only the latest — and most radical — in a long line of revolts by Kurds attempting to establish their autonomy or independence.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Kurdish feudal leaders led revolts against the Ottoman Sultan in order to protect their privileges from interference by the Sublime Porte, though Iranian Kurdistan was quiet. Despite the development of a modern anti-feudal nationalist movement paralleling the same trend in Turkey, the struggle remained very much dominated by the traditional leaders.

After the first world war, Sheikh Mahmoud fought to establish a Kurdish kingdom in Iraq after it became clear that the plan to establish a Kurdish state was being ditched by the Great Powers. This revolt made contact with the forces of Simko of the Shikak who was trying to create a Kurdish entity in the north of Iranian Kurdistan. By the time Sheikh Mahmoud's revolt had been suppressed, Sheikh Said was leading a big rising of the Kurds in eastern Turkey.

Two years after Sheikh Said's defeat in 1925, the organisation Hoyboun (Independence) was established. By 1930 Hoyboun had organised a vast insurrection in the region around Mount

Ararat, where for the first time a short-lived republic was established. In the same year as the Republic of Ararat was crushed, Simko of the Shikak was murdered by Reza Shah in Iran.

At this point, the struggle switched again to Iraq — first under the leadership of Sheikh Mahmoud again and then under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmed Barzani. The Barzanis continued their struggle in one form or another into the last years of the second world war. At the same time, several Kurdish political organisations fused to form the "Hewa" group whose left wing was openly "communist" by its own definition. This organisation had a base among the Kurdish oil and rail workers of Iraq and was based in Baghdad.

### Mahabad

Once again the locus of struggle shifted: this time to Iran. With the collapse of any central government there and with the approval (though not instigation!) of the Soviet Union, Kurdish nationalists were able to seize control of Mahabad and its surrounding area. The leading political organisation now was the Kurdis-

tan Democratic Party, a development out of the Komala i Zhiani Kurdistan (Committee for the Life of Kurdistan) that Hewa had helped set up. The leading figure of the Republic of Mahabad was Qazi Mohammad, a conservative nationalist with a broad base of support in Mahabad itself.

The Republic of Mahabad, which lasted from January to December 1946, was a very conservative affair. Its ministers were mostly from bourgeois or landowning backgrounds and there were no important social changes under its rule, except for the development of educational and cultural services. One of Mahabad's four generals was Mulla Mustafa Barzani, the younger brother of Sheikh Ahmed. Mulla Mustafa made his way to Mahabad after the Barzani's defeat in Iraq with some 2,000 warriors, while Sheikh Ahmed stayed in Naqadeh.

With the withdrawal from Iran of the Soviet Union, both the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan in Iran and the Republic of Mahabad fell to the Shah. Its leaders were hanged, though Barzani escaped, making his way with a small retinue finally to the Soviet Union.

He did not leave Russia until 1958, on the invitation of General Kassem who had just overthrown the Iraqi monarchy and the pro-imperialist Nouri Said government. Kassem started by showing friendship to the Kurds, but he was always firm in refusing any demands for autonomy within Iraq. By 1961 the repression against the Kurds had forced an open revolt under the leadership of Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the KDP of Iraq. For nearly another ten years the struggle was to focus on Iraq and around the figure of Barzani, though splits within the Kurdish ranks had led to the setting up of another group under the leadership of Ibrahim Ahmed and Jalal Talabani.

### Barzani

In 1970 the Iraqi regime granted the Kurds a large (though not adequate) measure of autonomy and a situation of neither peace nor war was established. This broke down in 1974 and a new and more ferocious war started between the Kurds and the Iraqi state, ending in the defeat of the Kurds in March 1975.

The Kurds' struggle against the Iraqi state had



Qasi Mohammed takes the salute as Mulla Mustafa Barzani

been supported by the Shah of Iran, the CIA and the Zionists. The price was not only dependence and finally defeat when the Shah removed his support for the Kurds, it was also the suppression of any anti-Shah movement

in Iran. When SAVAK hundreds of thousands of Kurds were killed.



# IN IRAN TODAY

# Peasants Lise

more or less of the north and West Azerbaijan under the domination of the Kurdish movement, while heavily influentially revolution-

of Ghassemlou could be interpreted as showing that if the reactionaries were not able to stop the party organising it would have a wide response. Only around Shahpur is the situation any different. Senar Mamadi, a tribal leader there, is a KDP member.

Right wing domination certainly helps the government, and until recently at least the Barzanis were still being paid by the Khomeini

the border town of Khaneh, for instance, where the local Sheikh had invited the much-hated Barzanis to stay, attacked the town council's office in protest at the invitation. They then attacked the home of Sheikh Gasgask, setting up barricades to stop the army interfering. The Barzanis and the Sheikh were actually saved by the army who fed them after the local population had refused, gave them arms, and offered to quarter them later at a nearby barracks.

In the south, the KDP is still the most influential party among the Kurds, though until its banning — it is not clear to what extent this might have increased the standing of the party and its leader — it was losing ground to the Left. On the Left there is the Fedayeen organisation and a clandestine organisation, the Kurdistan Toilers' Liberation League. The Tudeh Party recently announced the setting-up of a section in Kurdistan, though they have always had some activity there. Much of their influence is reflected through the KDP, in which they have members.

The principal feature of the Left in the south — in the southern part of West Azerbaijan province and in the provinces of Kurdistan and Kermanshah — is the development of united front committees, the Associations, in some fifteen towns and their development of the mass struggle of the workers and peasants.

The first of these Associations was the Association for the Defence of the Revolution and Freedom in Sanandaj. While the Shah was in power, the left in Sanandaj tended to line up with Mullah Muftizade. With Khomeini's return, Muftizade moved sharply to the right. Unless the Left moved, he would dominate the town council and become a conduit for government influence. In fact, while the left in Sanandaj created peasant and worker organisations, the right under the leadership of Muftizade and the reactionary School of the Koran organisation set up parallel groups, adding the word "Muslim".

And so there is, for instance, a Muslim Workers Union, the Organisation of Muslim Youth, the Muslim Equality Party, Kurdish Muslim Students Union and so on.

In a sense, the proliferation of these reactionary organisations aimed at the masses is an indication of the success of the Left in rousing the masses. It mirrors Khomeini's strategy elsewhere: to displace genuine workers' organisations by their Muslim counterparts.

Despite a rigged election for the town council and attempts at armed attacks on the Left, the Association in Sanandaj has remained a strong force. In Mahabad, the united front committee

is called the Association Supporting the Struggle of the Toilers, in Boker it is called the Association for the Defence of the Toilers, while in Oshno its name is Association for the Defence of the Rights of the Kurdish People.

In each of these places, the Associations have put the emphasis on the building of mass organisations of the peasants and workers. In Merivan the Peasants Union that was set up waged an armed struggle against the attempts of landowners and feudal notables allied with reactionary pro-government organisations to evict them. In Bane a Workers' Union was set up to unite the wage workers and artisans of the town — there is no factory there, but brickworks and building sites. That Workers' Union also had an armed militia.

These brickworkers were the vanguard of the small Kurdish working class. Recently they staged a four-day general strike throughout Kurdistan, demanding more pay, better social services, shorter hours. During this strike armed workers together with leftists drove off forces supporting an employer in Boker. Workers patrolled the works they had occupied with arms. In these struggles women were directly involved.

The Associations have set up a Joint Council of the

Associations linking them up, and have set their sights on the creation of local workers' and peasants' councils and linking them up in a joint council. The emphasis, of course, has been on the creation of a Peasants' Union.

The KDP is not generally accepted in these Associations, though individual rank and file members are if they are critical of the party's line. The KDP is seen as altogether too compromised — both socially in relation to the rich and in terms of its connections with the central government in the past and with the Ba'athist regime in Iraq.

In some places, the Fedayeen are an important influence in the Associations, but the dominant influence generally is that of the Kurdistan Toilers Liberation League or Revolutionary Organisation of Toilers, an organisation with some links with the Marxist-Leninist League in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The real danger about the present onslaught from a political point of view is that, in increasing the pressures for unity of the Kurds, and in increasing the relative importance of armed struggle, the reactionaries will emerge strengthened. Certainly they will not hesitate to attack the Left and do Khomeini's job for him if they can get away with it.

'SIMKO'

## 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.

**SATURDAY 8 SEPTEMBER.** Socialist Organiser Extended Editorial Board, with delegates from local SO groups. In London, 3.30pm. Details of venue from SO, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

**MONDAY 10 SEPTEMBER.** Picket Barnet Magistrates Court from 9.30am, in support of defendants arrested at Southall on April 23rd.

**WEDNESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER.** Meeting to protest against housing cuts, called by Old Estates Action Committee. 7.30pm Islington Town Hall.

**THURSDAY 13 SEPTEMBER.** Manchester Workers' Action meeting: Building a working-class women's movement. Speaker: Sue Arnall. 8pm, Packhorse pub, near Deansgate station.

**THURSDAY 13 SEPTEMBER.** Hackney day of action against cuts. Assemble 1pm outside St Leonards Hospital, Kingsland Rd, E2, for march to City & east London AHA meeting.

**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.

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

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

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

**TUESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER.** Lectures in Marxism: lecturer David Yaffe BA BSc. 30 lectures held on Tuesday evenings, 7.30pm-9.30pm, at Toynebee Hall, London E1. Dates: 25.9-11.12.79, 8.1-18.3.80, 15.4-27.5.80. Fees: 50p per lecture (minimum 5); 30 lectures £10. Apply to: RCG Publications, 49 Raiton Rd, London SE24 0LN (737 3922).

**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: 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. Conference starts 11am at Essex Rd Library, N1.

**FRIDAY-SATURDAY 12-13 OCTOBER.** 'Critique' conference on Bahro. At Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., London. Registration £5 for two days, £2.50 for one day, from Critique, 31 Clevedon Rd, Glasgow G12 0TH.

**SATURDAY 28 OCTOBER.** TUC demonstration against the Corrie Anti-Abortion Bill. 11.30am from Speakers Corner

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

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KDP [Iran] Rahman



Kurdistan's most popular leader, Sheikh Ezzeddin Hosseini

of Iran left to get a hearing. By domination unchanged. Peasants property hall against from their lands 1000 peasant families had off the land by leaders who use the fall back some gains of the

government just as they were by the Shah. That doesn't guarantee the government domination, however. In order to avoid the kind of collapse that occurred in Iraq in March 1975, these reactionaries are careful not to become too dependent on the Iranian government. For this reason they have raided gendarmerie posts, looting them of all their weapons. That was what happened at Serrow in mid-July.

Things are very different further south. The poor of



Kurdish youth wounded in fight with Guards in Sanandaj

## THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM



Republic of Mahabad is founded; below him,

an. late fifties, to arrest P activists part of its was able the KDP of P of Iran

through its leader Abdallah Isshaki (Ahmed Tawfiq). This domination of the KDP of Iran for the purposes of suppressing all anti-Shah activity went so far that when more radical elements insisted on reviving armed

struggle in Iran in 1967 and 1968, Barzani not only helped defeat them but personally had one of its leaders captured and executed, presenting his body to the Iranian authorities to exhibit in Mahabad as a way of buying further support from Iran.

From the early '70s the KDP of Iran, under the leadership of Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, shifted to the left. It also contracted friendly relations with the Ba'ath regime in Iraq. This soon led to a situation where there was a Ba'ath-KDP of Iran link-up against Iran fighting a Shah-KDP of Iran alliance against the government of Iraq.

The smashing of Barzani's forces in Iraq after the Shah dropped his support of the Kurds did not immediately destroy the influence of Barzani. That came much more with the Pike Report revelations of CIA backing for Barzani. His followers, living in Iran as refugees — those not fortunate enough, that is, to be able to live it up in Washington — now constitute a completely reactionary formation, hiring itself out to suppress fellow Kurds.

The place of the Barzanis at the centre of the struggle of the Kurds has been taken

by the KDP of Ghassemlou in Iran and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Talabani in Iraq, two verbally radical petty-bourgeois nationalist formations.

The course of these struggles reveals again and again the same problems. Their roots are social and geopolitical.

The Kurds are divided between five countries (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Soviet Union, in order of the size of their Kurdish population) who are often in conflict with one another. Kurdish nationalist forces therefore come under great pressure to accept military aid from one of these governments, or from imperialism, which has a keen interest in the area. This leads not only to military disasters like the collapse of the struggle in Iraq in March 1975, when the Shah signed the Algiers agreement with the Iraqi government, (and, to a lesser extent, the fall of the Ararat and Mahabad Republics), it also leads to Kurdish forces in one country discouraging — even brutally suppressing — the struggle in another.

The areas where the Kurds are the majority population are among the most backward regions of their respective countries. In addition,



Sheikh Said, leader of the Kurds' 1925 revolt in Turkey

partly by government design, the cities are often composed of mixed populations: in Iran, Azeris and other elements often form a substantial minority in the towns of the province of Kurdistan and a majority in many of the towns of West Azerbaijan. Consequently the working class is disproportionately small compared with the peasantry, and urban elements in general are disproportionately few.

### Maoist

This sociological formation strengthens the conservative and even tribal elements, permitting the

struggle to be largely determined and also disrupted by tribal allegiances and animosities. To the extent that the struggle is a military one too, the tribal leaders who sometimes command many thousands of warriors have often been able to suppress the more radical political trends.

While the PUK in Iraq and the KDP of Iran are modern political parties, they are not free of these weaknesses. The radical break in the situation has come with the emergence of the trends calling themselves Maoist — the Marxist-Leninist League in Iraq (which operates under the PUK umbrella), the Fedayeen and the Kurdistan Toilers' Liberation League or Revolutionary Organisation of Toilers in Iran.

Unfortunately these forces are both inexperienced and without a clear political framework. They have been unable to arm the masses politically against the central government.

They are still trapped in the framework of Stalinist conceptions which claim that the revolutionary movement in Iran should confine itself to so-called national, democratic, or patriotic and popular demands, instead of having the perspective of a struggle for a workers' and peasants' government and socialism.

ANDREW HORNUNG



# The truth inside us?

Lawrence Welch continues our series of articles discussing the recently published book, 'Beyond the Fragments', by Hillary Wainwright, Sheila Rowbotham, and Lynne Segal, which puts forward some of the ideas of the socialist-feminist current in the women's movement.\*

'BEYOND The Fragments' represents a major step backwards in the struggle to build an adequate theory for the women's movement. Its approach can only lead to the political disarming of women and will deliver them back into the shackles of the bourgeois ideology they fight against.

The general thrust of the book is revealed in its subtitle: Feminism in the making of socialism. Any conception of struggle is absent. Essentially, socialism is reduced to the improvement of 'personal' relationships in the present; love and creativity are substituted for the working class as the driving force for revolution; and feelings take the place of thought in defining the tasks of that revolution.

Thus the book disarms women intellectually and emotionally by teaching them to distrust intellectual conclusions, claiming along with

extreme subjective idealism that we can only know what we immediately experience. It disarms women politically by placing a primary importance on their personal feelings in the political struggle. It disarms women organisationally by claiming that the democratic centralist party is irrelevant to their present needs, and by substituting vague hopes for unity 'beyond the fragments' of small consciousness raising groups or self-help groups.

Sheila Rowbotham stops just one step short of religion: put your faith in love and fight the good fight against capitalist evils, and the world will change.

The central theme of all subjective idealism, expressed in a wide variety of forms, is that we cannot know that matter exists. All that we know is the existence of our own sensations and our own personal experience. To claim we know more than we

directly experience is to talk in empty abstractions.

In yet another sterile variant of idealism, Sheila Rowbotham places herself firmly in this tradition (perhaps it would be more correct to say, 'finds' herself within it). "Our views are valid because they come from within us". This is even one step back from most subjective idealism: it is in religion that we find the idea of the truth discovered within us, rather than conscious philosophy. Yet Sheila Rowbotham's constant refrain is that "knowledge is something felt and not just understood intellectually".

She castigates the intellectual for not being emotional, yet in her theorising about emotion she can find no space for the intellect. She venerates the New Left, for its "understandings flowed out of the actual movement of existence and dissolved back within it". To be more precise: their understandings were nothing but bourgeois theory dressed in a new garb, and when they came into contact with class struggle they were pushed aside by that struggle.

The fact is that if, as Sheila Rowbotham asserts, knowledge comes from within, we have no means of telling whether it is correct or not except by insisting that we

feel it to be so. The 'personal' necessarily becomes crucial when the starting point of an ideology is personal feelings on the subject. Within such a conception of feelings, the old division between intellect and emotion emerges in a different form, bringing with it the old question of how to judge an idea to be correct or false. Sheila Rowbotham tries to avoid this question by artificially separating and opposing the intellectual and the emotional, and by claiming that truth lies within the emotional.

However, within the emotional sphere there is always an intellectual side: every expression of feeling involves consciousness to some degree. What is at issue is whether or not these ideas are correct, and how to judge their correctness, an issue straightforwardly solved by the criterion of practice, of whether or not our ideas conform to the objective nature of things. And it is precisely this criterion of practice that enables Marxists to assert confidently that their ideas are correct.

This roundabout route brings us to the beginning of Sheila Rowbotham's article where she relates how, in her early encounters with Trotskyists, she was repelled precisely by their certainty, their understanding of the world:

she 'could never be quite so sure' somehow'. This is quite a common experience for people in their first encounters with Marxism, particularly after an education which makes the move to Marxism as difficult as possible.

Those who become Marxists must test out Marxist ideas to see whether or not they correspond to reality. Those who back off from Marxism fall back on bourgeois ideas to defend their lack of commitment. Though she finds herself unable to criticise Marxism, Rowbotham still cannot accept it, so it is convenient for her to argue that feelings are the source of knowledge and leave it at that.

On what does she base her belief in revolution? On people's feelings of oppression. She asserts that 'human beings could and would resist an unjust and inhuman society because it denied the possibilities of creativity and love.' Note, no mention of the organised strength of the working class. For science we are given religion. In place of the struggle against the capitalist state she calls for struggle against the inner oppression of capitalism. Essentially she expresses the time-worn religious adage 'change individuals and society will change'.

True, she hesitates before making the final leap of faith: 'I am not suggesting we can evolve to socialism through self-help or that all forms of self-help are necessarily radical or that self-help cannot co-exist within a new form of labour reformism.' But she suggests nothing else, except that she is confident of one thing: 'We have to shed completely the lurking assumption that Leninism provides the highest political form of organising'.

The new faith has an organising slogan: 'The Personal is Political'. The form of organisation through which this movement gains expression is the consciousness raising group. In these groups we can concentrate on our feelings — but which feelings? 'All those feelings of love and creativity, imagination and wisdom which are negated, jostled and bruised within the relationships which dominate in capitalism (and) are nonetheless there, our gifts to the new life'. What place have feelings of anger and hatred?

This emphasis on feelings restricts women to their immediate reactions against society; it does not organise those feelings, giving them direction and purpose.

Marxists seek through expanding their experience and knowledge to strengthen confidence in the correctness of their actions. Sheila Rowbotham argues for consciousness raising groups in which individuals explore their inadequacies. To confuse this act with politics, with the struggle for state power, is to provide an escape route. Trotskyist organisations are accused of believing personal feelings should be sacrificed. Here Rowbotham performs a sleight of hand — she transforms the limitations placed by capitalist society on revolutionary activity into restrictions demanded by Trotskyist organisations.

If the women's movement is to take as its focus the fight against oppression within the sphere of feelings, it will abandon the far more difficult, yet in the long run fulfilling, road of revolution for the easy one of reformism. It will join the middle classes, and ignore the working class women who still lack adequate housing, employment, education and the right to control their own bodies.

## INTRODUCTION by Bruce Robinson

BOTH ROSA Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky were concerned to show that their positions on the mass strike were rooted in the history and traditions of Marxism. In the last part of his article, 'A New Strategy', Kautsky argues — correctly — that his 'strategy of attrition' had been the practice of the SPD from the end of the 1860s onwards.

The SPD had concentrated on building up the organised strength of the proletariat through electoral and parliamentary work, wage struggles and street demonstrations. Kautsky argues that as long as this process can continue, it would be mad for the proletariat to provoke the bourgeoisie into battles on an unfavourable terrain.

Kautsky fails to realise that the routine he praises as 'attrition' masks an increasing adaptation of the SPD and the unions to the pressures of the German state. Though Kautsky had come into conflict with the conservatism of the union leaders and the class collaboration of the SPD right wing, he drew no general conclusions. The reason for this was that the SPD remained formally on positions of 'classical Marxism' which had often been formulated and fought for by Kautsky himself.

Rosa Luxemburg, in the first section of her final article, 'Theory and Practice', shows that the aspect of the SPD's tradition praised by Kautsky is part of a conservative, defensive mentality, correctly analysed by Engels as long before as 1891. She concentrates on the slogan of the republic. This slogan had been taboo in the SPD since the period of the Anti-Socialist Law, on the grounds that open propaganda for the Republic would (it was said) lead to the state attacking the SPD. Thus when Luxemburg tried to raise the question, arguing that propaganda for the republic should be the crowning pinnacle of all the other current demands of the SPD, Kautsky tried to prevent that part of her article appearing in *Die Neue Zeit*. It was eventually published under the title 'A Time to Sow the Seed' in the Breslau SPD paper.

Luxemburg points out that the demand for the republic is not a 'new agitation', that Marx had criticised the Gotha Programme in 1875 for downplaying it, and that Engels had pointed out that the 1891 Erfurt Programme, even if for reasons of legality it could not openly call for the Republic, should make it clear that its 'main aim' was the overthrow of the Imperial state, which could not occur peacefully.

In fact Engels had attacked in 1891 precisely the conceptions which formed the basis of Kautsky's 'strategy of attrition' (and which underlie the ideas of the Eurocommunists today). Engels realised that the unwilling-

# From Kautsky to Eurocommunism: The good old tactics?

ness to raise the slogan of the republic rested on a gradualist conception which sought to avoid any confrontation with the state. Those who continually quote or misquote Engels' 1895 Introduction to 'The Class Struggles in France', in which he praised the electoral activity of the SPD, choose to forget his attack on the illusions of a gradual transformation of capitalism in the 'Critique of the Erfurt Programme'.

## Karl Kautsky: A NEW STRATEGY

### 7. The strategy of attrition and the election campaign

And now a few more words about the strategy of attrition. The reader need not fear that I shall oppose a further 14 pages to the 14 pages written by comrade Luxemburg about

it. She mocks me for the fact that I — indeed just in passing — make a remark about the Roman strategy of attrition; but then she herself produces over a page of quotes from Mommsen which have nothing at all to prove with regard to our discussion, but certainly have for comrade Luxemburg the invaluable charm of providing an opportunity for a series of dismissive malicious remarks about the party executive, the General Commission (of the trade unions) and me. Should comrade Luxemburg have a real further factual interest in the question of the Roman strategy of temporisation then let her refer to the first volume of Delbrück's *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* (History of the Art of War) (3), which appeared in 1901 in which the strategy is justified on the basis of the most recent research as opposed to the out of date Mommsen.

It would be more important to take issue with comrade Luxemburg about our present tactics. But this too promises to be not very fruitful since from the outset she attempts to divert the discussion onto a false path by simply remarking that by 'strategy of attrition' I understand mere 'nothing-but-parliamentarism' as opposed to any mass action. How she comes to this conclusion I do not know; I have never said anything of the kind.

I defined as strategy of attrition the totality of the practice of the social-democratic proletariat from the end of the sixties to now. I believed that this was well enough known that it did not have to be explained in detail. This practice amounts to conducting the war against the existing state and the existing society in a way which constantly strength-



ous the proletariat, constantly weakens its opponents, without thereby allowing itself to be provoked into a deciding battle as long as we are the weaker party. Everything which disorganises our opponents and undermines their prestige and their awareness of their strength serves us, just as everything which organises the proletariat, raises its level of understanding and its awareness of its strength increases the faith of the masses in their organisations. This includes not merely working in parliament but also successful wage campaigns and street demonstrations.

The most recent campaign of demonstrations was itself a model of a successful strategy of attrition. If we had always to consider ourselves as a whip, then after the banning of the meeting in Treptow Park on the 6th March (4) we would have had to call upon the masses to defy the ban, to appear armed and to force the holding of the demonstration through violence. That would have been a strategy of overthrow. It was a strategy of attrition to dodge the enemy where he was expecting us, and to outwit him by a manoeuvre which showed very clearly the superiority of our organisation over that of the opponents. The self awareness of the masses, and the consternation of the enemy, was thereby raised.

I am thus far from preaching 'only-parliamentarism'. But that is no reason to underestimate the importance of working in parliament. Under the given political conditions there is hardly any means, apart from a successful mass strike, which has such a great effect on morale as a great victory at the elections.

One of the main tasks of our strategy consists in raising the proletariat's awareness of its strength, and increasing the trust of the masses in us. That is achieved by visible successes. Nothing succeeds like success, says an English proverb. The stronger our party appears to the masses, the more eagerly will they flow towards it, the greater will be their demands, the more will they finally not simply follow the party but push it forwards.

There are however few successes which show to the masses our growing strength so clearly as electoral successes, as the winning of new seats. The masses are not statisticians, they cannot always adequately follow economic and political developments. The party press is often inaccessible to them and the opponents' press dishonest. But however it may lie and distort, it cannot spin lies around seats that have been won.

Like any striving for success, that striving for seats also can indeed lead one astray, lead one to use methods which sacrifice success in the future to momentary success. One must always oppose such efforts but that does not prevent it being a fact that every seat honestly won by principled agitation is a great success which inspires the popular masses, drives them on and promotes our cause. We must certainly enter into election campaigns in order to propagate our principles and to refute those of the enemy, but no less also in order to gain constituencies and there try to document our growing influence on the masses and to further grow in influence.

The present situation is now such a one as to make it possible for us, if we do our duty, to battle our way to an electoral victory of such importance that it is made into a catastrophe for the ruling system of government.

This view of course again meets the violent scorn of comrade Luxemburg! She is of the opinion: 'If we are victorious, and to what extent we are victorious, we will find that out. To taste future victories in advance is not at all in the nature of serious revolutionary parties'. Such can happen only to people who are so lacking in seriousness and so devoid of any revolutionary feelings as people like us are.

And Luxemburg further asks what of importance would change if we were really to win 125 seats. We remain a minority and nothing is changed if our opponents do not allow themselves to be attracted to a coup d'état. Therefore it is possible for 'the question of whether we win more or less seats at the next election ... to leave us rather cool'.

That is a very severe moral sermon. But even the strictest moral preacher can sin once. In the article of the *Dortmund Arbeiterzeitung* which led to our discussion our serious revolutionary comrade explained that the masses could make a level of education and enthusiasm 'which will make the coming elections a stupefying Waterloo for the ruling system'. That is exactly the same 'tasting of future victories' for which I received my sermon of condemnation. Only my *Abraham a Santa Rosa* is expressed even more drastically.

This certainly doesn't mean we are completely at one in this question. Comrade Luxemburg expects the necessary level of education and enthusiasm of the 'broadest masses' which is to make the Reichstag elections a 'stupefying Waterloo' to come from a mass strike which is fought out before them. And I find that difficult to understand. Either the mass strike is victorious, and then this strike must be such a 'stupefying Waterloo' for our opponents that a Reichstag election can no longer outdo it. Or the mass strike is not victorious, and then it becomes a 'stupefying Waterloo' for us, and to 'taste' in advance the 'future victories' arising from such a defeat requires very much 'revolutionary seriousness'.

Thereby we have returned to the starting point of the discussion. It should be reiterated in a few words since it was lost in the wealth of details which emerged. Comrade Luxemburg explained at the beginning of March that street demonstrations were out of date and that sharper methods of struggle had to be brought into use. The time for the implementation of the Jena resolution had come. (5)

On this question I replied to her that the level of enthusiasm which doubtlessly existed in the masses had not yet reached that level which alone made likely a victorious mass strike under German conditions. If however such a strike were not to be expected in the given conditions, then there was only one means to push on the action past the present stage: the next Reichstag elections. These would take place with the best of prospects for us. We should already now turn our attention and energy to them. The new elections would create a completely new situation which today cannot yet be determined. Nonetheless a great electoral victory would produce such a heightened awareness by the masses of their strength, such a heightened nervousness on the part of the enemy that a mass action could sooner result from it, a mass action which ended in a mass strike, for the victor-

ious conclusion of which the preconditions would be present more favourably than today.

Since I regard the mass strike as an action which arises from the spontaneous pressure of the masses, I have of course not — as one might suppose from many an invective of comrade Luxemburg — put off the mass strike for now in order to announce it for the period after the elections. I regard it as an elemental event which cannot be introduced as desired, and which can be expected but not laid down for a particular time.

Comrade Luxemburg has dismissed my reference to the Reichstag elections with scorn. But however much she may say against it, I seek in vain a different tangible slogan which she today opposes to mine. In March she demanded of us a 'slogan' for the 'next step' which we have to undertake and which was to be the mass strike. Today she speaks only of the necessity of the discussion of the mass strike, which discussion 'becomes an excellent means of stirring in different layers of the proletariat, of winning over to our side proletarian supporters of the bourgeois parties, namely the Centre Party, of preparing the masses for all eventualities of the situation, and finally of carrying out preparations in the most effective way for the Reichstag elections also'.

That is, she no longer speaks of the necessity of action through the mass strike as the next step before the Reichstag elections, but of the necessity of agitation in preparation for the Reichstag elections, in which the mass strike also is to be a theme.

If that is the slogan which she now puts forward, then I ask how she justifies her contempt for my point of view?

Or does she now still want to adopt the viewpoint which she adopted in her article for *Neue Zeit* at the beginning of March, namely that the time for the implementation of the June resolution has come. Or does she want to maintain that that time, the beginning of March, had been the right moment for it and only the editor of *Die Neue Zeit* has stifled the revolution at birth by refusing 'to do his duty' and print the article of comrade Luxemburg?

In her reply we have not had any answer to all this. Just as little as to the question of how comrade Luxemburg envisages a mass strike in the German situation. As the result of her new strategy there remains nothing but a bundle of question marks.

## NOTES

3. Hans Delbrück was a military historian who originated the conception of the 'strategy of attrition' as opposed to the 'strategy of overthrow' in lectures given in 1881. The first three volumes of his 'History of the Art of War in the Framework of Political History' had appeared by 1910. Though Kautsky used Delbrück to justify his ideas on Roman military history, Delbrück took the 'war of overthrow' as characteristic of the modern period and his ideas formed the basis of von Schlieffen's attempt to use 'the war of overthrow' against France in 1914.

4. On 12th February there were mass demonstrations against the minimal changes proposed to the restricted three-class suffrage. Despite the statement of the Berlin police chief that, 'Streets only serve the traffic. Resistance to the forces of the state will result in shooting', over 200,000 people took part in Berlin, and there were demonstrations throughout Prussia.

On 6th March, the SPD called a mass demonstration in the Treptower Park in Berlin. This was banned by the police, who blocked all roads to the park. Instead the demonstration was led to the Zoological Gardens, where the 150,000 demonstrators held a rally outside the Reichstag. There were also large demonstrations in all the major towns in Prussia.

The 18th March was the anniversary of the start of the German Revolution of 1848 and of the establishment of the Paris Commune.

On 10th April there were again mass demonstrations throughout Prussia and other parts of Germany, which re-established the right to hold outdoor meetings and demonstrations.

5. At the Jena Congress of the SPD in 1905 a resolution was passed which allowed for the use of the mass strike for defensive purposes. This was an attempt by the SPD leaders to compromise with the trade union leaders, who were opposed to the mass strike. In practice the union leaders ignored the resolution.

## Rosa Luxemburg: THEORY AND PRACTICE

I (f)

The first question which the party should consider in our present discussion is whether or not obstacles have been placed in the way of the discussion about the mass strike in the party press, particularly in *Vorwärts* and in the *Neue Zeit*. Comrade Kautsky denies this by claiming that "it of course never occurred to him to want to 'ban' the discussion of the mass strike". Comrade Kautsky is intent on misunderstanding me here. It was of course not a matter of a ban by comrade Kautsky — a single editor cannot 'ban' anything — but a ban by the 'higher authorities' which comrade Kautsky followed in his sphere of influence, in the *Neue Zeit*, contrary to his original acceptance of my article. As for the other question — propaganda for the republic — comrade Kautsky also denied that he placed obstacles in my path. "That does not occur to him at all". It was merely a matter of a passage about the republic in my article which dealt with the mass strike "the form of which seemed inexpedient" to the editorial board of the *Neue Zeit*, supposedly, I myself had then printed my article in the *Dortmund Arbeiterzeitung*. "But we will seek in vain in that article that passage about the republic". Comrade Kautsky has also "not discovered" anywhere else where I might have published this passage. "The cowardly concealment of principles with which comrade Luxemburg reproaches us", he concludes, "is thus reduced to the fact that we objected to a passage in her article, the publication of which she herself has since then voluntarily given up. Such a strategy

is no heroic feat, Octavia!" In this portrayal of the facts, which is so damning for me, comrade Kautsky has fallen victim to strange mistakes. In reality it was not at all a matter of "a passage" and of the possible perils arising from its "form", it was a matter of the content, of the slogan of the republic and of the agitation for it. Comrade Kautsky must permit me, in the precarious position in which he has placed me with his portrayal of the facts of the case, to call himself as his own witness and to save me from distress. Comrade Kautsky in fact wrote to me after he had received my article on the mass strike:

"Your article is very fine and very important. I do not agree with everything and reserve the right to polemics against it. Today I have no time to do that by letter. Enough, I gladly accept the article if you take out pages 29 to the end. Under no circumstances can I accept those. Their very starting-point is wrong. Not a word about the republic is in our programme. Not by chance, not because of an editorial whim, but for well-considered reasons. The Gotha programme also did not speak of the republic, and Marx, however much he condemned this programme, acknowledged in his letter (*Neue Zeit*, IX, p.573) that it was not possible to demand the republic openly. Engels spoke about the same matter in the Erfurt Programme (*Neue Zeit*, XX, 1, p.11)

I do not have the time to explain to you the reasons which Marx, Engels, Bebel and Liebknecht recognised as valid. Enough, what you want is a completely new agitation which hitherto has always been refused. This new agitation, however, is of such a type that it is not a good thing to discuss it openly. With your article you would proclaim on your own responsibility, as an individual, a completely new agitation and actions which the party has always condemned. We cannot and should not proceed in this fashion. A single person, however he or she may stand, may not create a fait accompli which can have unforeseeable consequences for the party, on his or her own responsibility".

In a similar vein it continues for about another two sides.

### NOTE FROM DIE NEUE ZEIT

(f) The unexpected palace revolution in Baden (19) leads a number of party comrades — including ourselves — to postpone publishing anything in the *Neue Zeit* which appears as a quarrel in the camp of Marxism. We further feel that under the impact of the events in Baden our readers will hardly be interested in a discussion such as the present one. For these reasons we considered it advisable to postpone printing comrade Luxemburg's article and suggested to her that this be justified with the following declaration by the editorial board, to which the apology by Kautsky, given here after the explanation, should be appended:

To our readers! A detailed reply from comrade Luxemburg on the question of the mass strike has reached us. The first part was to appear in the present issue of the paper and had been set up in print. In agreement with comrade Luxemburg we are postponing this reply, since at the present time, in view of the unheard-of provocation of a section of the socialist state-parliamentary fraction in Baden, in view of its frivolous disregard of party discipline and its Byzantine element, it is the task of all revolutionary and really republican elements in our party to stand united and to put aside all differences in the face of an opportunism in which the good opinion of the National Liberals (29) is more important than the support and respect of the social democratic proletariat of Germany.

The Editorial Board. Following on from this I feel obliged urgently to correct an error which is clarified in the postponed article of comrade Luxemburg. My doubts about the republican agitation which aroused the passage did not, as I supposed, remain unpublished, but appeared with a new introduction and new conclusion as a separate article in the *Breslau Volkswacht*. The conclusions, which I drew from the assumed non-publication, thus became invalid.

But with regard to the essential differences between us, nothing has changed. But settling these differences must be postponed to a more favourable moment for the reasons given above. K. Kautsky.

Comrade Luxemburg refuses to agree to a postponement of her article. Her affair seems to her to be so desperately important that it cannot bear the slightest delay. If her opponent were not the editor of the *Neue Zeit* itself, then we would not allow comrade Luxemburg's refusal to hold us back from postponing an article which can only damage the cause of the proletariat at the present moment. If any attention at all were paid to it now then it could only be at the expense of distracting comrades' attention which at the moment should be completely focussed on the "insurgents" of Baden. And it has the effect of discrediting the party executive, Vorwärts, and those elements in general behind which we must now stand united against those who have broken the discipline of the party.

Yet speaking for ourselves, we also do not even want to decide to postpone the article. Comrades will understand, however, that Kautsky considered it a mistake to answer comrade Luxemburg now. It is now a matter of deciding on other questions. Comrade Luxemburg should not be allowed to get away without a thorough settling of accounts, rejection of her positions, and elucidation of her methods of quoting. For that, however, the suitable moment will not come until after the Baden attack has been rebuffed. At the moment there are more important things to do. The Editorial Board.

## NOTES

1. On 14th July 1910 the Social Democratic fraction in the Provincial Assembly in Baden voted for the Budget. This was the third time that the fraction had done this, and they had been condemned at the Lübeck Congress of 1901 and the Nürnberg Congress of 1908. The Magdeburg Congress in September 1909 was again to condemn them and to threaten expulsion for the deputies if they voted for the Budget again. But the question of the Budget in Baden shows clearly how the SPD leadership, while adhering formally to Marxist orthodoxy, did not take any strong action against the right wing.

2. The National Liberal Party was formed as a split from the Progressive Party in 1866. It represented the industrial bourgeoisie and was prepared to cooperate with Bismarck and his successors once they had shown themselves willing to act in support of industrial interests.



20,000 jobs under threat

## Seize the shipyards

ON WEDNESDAY and Friday, August 29th-31st, there were talks between the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, British Shipbuilders, and representatives of the yards affected by the proposed redundancies.

The only piece of information to come from these talks so far is a threat from British Shipbuilders chairman Sir Anthony Griffin that if the bans on launches, trials and overtime are not lifted, then a further 20,000 jobs stand to be lost. This in effect means the closure of all merchant shipbuilding in Britain.

BS have said that they expect the majority of jobs to go through natural wastage and voluntary redundancy, apart from at Cammell Lairds in Merseyside and Robb Caledon in Dundee, where other employment prospects are small to non-existent.

Yet Confed general secretary Alex Ferry says voluntary redundancies should be allowed to go, and then any enforced redundancies should be 'referred back to the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee'.

If the union leadership does not act soon to involve the rank and file in all-out action to save the jobs, BS

have a good chance to achieve their prediction. The action that is being taken at the moment is because of the rank and file pressure in the Scottish and north-eastern yards.

Lairds has been slow to react. An overtime ban has been put into effect, but without consultation with the membership, and some sections are trying to get the decision reversed.

At the beginning of this year, 800 workers left the yard under a voluntary redundancy scheme, without any action apart from an overtime ban being taken. A large proportion of those who went are still on the dole.

We have to realise that the fight against redundancies is not something that will be settled over the negotiating tables. The only way to stop these redundancies is by direct action on a national scale.

Joint actions must also be developed with supply industries and other workers threatened by redundancies, wherever they work. Two nationalised industries that it would be obvious to link up with are British Steel and British Leyland, who are also suffering massive job cuts.

To rely on union negotiators to save our jobs is to forget that these people have

already done very little to stop redundancies in the past. How many of them are on the board of British Shipbuilders and have kept their mouths shut until BS made its plans public? Surely the board had discussed these plans months ago.

We should fight for the following demands to be adopted in the yards and carried out (not just written down to show what good policies the stewards have adopted):

- No redundancies, voluntary or enforced. The stewards should take control over hiring and firing.

- Immediate reduction of the working week with no loss of pay.

- Share out all the available work with no job loss.

- 35 hours is already on the Confed books: now is the time to implement it.

- Contingency plans for occupations with support groups being set up in the local communities and industries.

- Public meetings to be organised by the stewards in all areas to gain support for a fight-back.

- Full and regular reporting back of any developments, locally and nationally, backed up by regular news-sheets.

LOL DUFFY

# WORKERS' ACTION

## Lambeth marches against the cuts

1,000 LAMBETH Council workers marched from Brixton to Vauxhall Bridge during the morning rush hour on Wednesday 29th August. The march, in protest against the cuts, was organised by the newly formed joint stewards' committee.

Given the short notice to members, the turnout was excellent, with contingents from NUPE, NALGO, AUEW, GMWU, EETPU, and UCATT, as well as the Trades Council.

The march stopped by at the Belgrave Hospital for children in Kennington and handed in a message of support — the hospital is one of those under threat of closure in the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Area Health Authority, recently taken over by commissioners imposed by the Tories.

In the evening, a meeting called by the Trades Council to launch the cuts campaign, Lambeth Fightback, was attended by over 60 delegates

from local unions, workplaces, tenants' associations and Labour Parties and other political groups. The meeting decided to produce a monthly cuts bulletin, and to lobby the Lambeth Council Labour Group meeting on September 14th to demand that the £3 million cuts imposed earlier be reversed.

The campaign will seek to link up the fight in the local council with other campaigns, including the AHA workers, civil service workers, and NUT members fighting against education cuts.

CHEUNG SIU MING

### CPSA joins the fight

UNITED ACTION with other public sector workers, and the need for a continued overtime ban and blacking on tempo-

ary promotions and substitutions, were the two main points raised at a rally of CPSA members outside the Department of Health and Social Security's Alexander Fleming House on 29th August.

Earlier that day 1,000 Lambeth council workers had demonstrated against the cuts in the same area, and the necessity of coordinating all such action was pointed out by Mike Healey, one of the speakers at the rally.

100 members of the CPSA walked out from offices all over London and the South-East to attend the rally, which was called by CPSA Area Committee no.1. National Executive member Norman Jacobs told Workers' Action that most other Area Committees up and down the country are organising rallies and meetings against the cuts, and that CPSA members have official NEC backing to walk out to attend these half-day meetings. The next one will be in Oxford on 26 September.

Two resolutions were passed by the rally, one calling on the government to reverse its policy on cuts, and the second to support the lobby of the TUC conference on 5 September.

A national cuts broadsheet has been issued jointly by CPSA and the civil service middle-management union SCPS (Society of Civil and Public Servants). But Roy Lewis, Chairman of London Area Committee no.1, agreed that the present 'informal liaison' with other public sector unions, especially NALGO and NUPE, had to be tightened up at the local level.

Most important is for members in the CPSA to keep up the overtime ban in the face of a mounting backlog of work which is building up because of the non-filling of vacancies in the Civil Service.

WENDY MUSTILL



## BLACKING URGENT FOR TALBOT STRIKE

COVENTRY's Lord Mayor intervened in the dispute at the Ryton and Stoke Talbot plants last week — not, as a Labour councillor, to support the strikers' wage claims, but to provide 'neutral territory' where 'both sides could discuss the dispute'. The talks would be in secret so as not to 'jeopardise the very, very delicate situation'.

Meanwhile, not too delicately, Peugeot-Citroën president Jacques Lombard underlined

the threat to jobs at Ryton and Stoke by saying, in an interview with a French paper, that since the take-over up to half of the Peugeot-Citroën-Talbot factories in Europe were 'surplus to requirements'.

The strike in Coventry, called after a walk-out over a 5 1/4% wage offer, is now in its 9th week — a week longer than the two months Peugeot-Citroën claim to have budgeted for. Despite the closure of the Linwood plant, Peugeot-Citroën-Talbot are maintaining car sales in Britain by means of

imports and accumulated stocks. The Birmingham parts department is still supplying service depots, and the Dunstable and Luton factories have maintained full production.

In answer to this, many shop stewards, both at Stoke and at Ryton, are calling for action to stop Peugeot-Citroën-Talbot operations throughout the country — ignoring the TGWU bureaucracy's pleas about the 'difficult legal situation' over the blacking of imported goods.

NICK LAWRENCE

## BL go ahead with new pay grades

BL are going ahead with their controversial new 5-grade pay structure, regardless of the wishes of the workforce or the unions.

They hope that the carrot of back-dated parity payments of up to £150 will be sufficient to buy off the widespread opposition to the regrading, which seriously increases differentials. Their scheme received a boost last month when the Confed officials persuaded the union side of the Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee to support the plan.

Since then, however, a national senior stewards' meeting has voted to reject the scheme and to boycott the proposed joint appeals procedure, suggested in order to legitimise the deal. The senior stewards' proposal was to di-

spute gradings (including the allocation of all production workers to grade 3) through the existing plant procedures.

However, production workers at the Cowley Body Plant and at Swindon, and the whole of the internal transport section at Longbridge (due for grade 4) have already threatened strike action.

These workers must be supported, though a generalised fight against the regrading at present looks unlikely. For the next BL Cars annual claim, the demands must be put forward for abolition of the bottom grade, telescoping of the five grades into four, and upgrading of production workers, with an across-the-board pay rise rather than a percentage increase. J.D.

## NEW EDWARDES PLAN, NEW FIGHT NEEDED

BL bosses are planning a big new attack on jobs throughout the company. The 1980 'Corporate Plan', due to be announced in a few weeks, will propose cutting the workforce by 20,000, closing down some plants altogether. This will be presented as the 'quid pro quo' for another cash injection of several hundred millions.

The Canley plant, employing 8,000 workers, seems the most likely candidate for the chop. The Dolomite and Spitfire models produced there are due to be phased out soon, and TR7 production is expected to

be transferred to Rover Solihull.

Rumours are also going round on Merseyside that the remaining plant at Speke may close.

Since Michael Edwardes took over 15 months ago, 17,000 jobs have been slashed in the BL Cars division with no serious opposition from the convenors and union officials. When the first stage of the Edwardes plan was announced in February 1978, the convenors and officials gave the BL chairman a standing ovation. Edwardes is obviously counting on that sort

of union leadership continuing.

But rank and file BL workers have consistently shown themselves willing to fight against cutbacks despite their leadership. They will not tolerate any more sell-outs. The central demands must be:

- No redundancies, voluntary or enforced

- Work-sharing on full pay

- Occupation of any plant faced with closure

- Every section struggle on manning to be generalised throughout the plant

- Plant struggles to be coordinated by a democratic, recallable combine committee.

## PRODUCTIVITY DEAL ROAD TO CLOSURE

SOUTH Wales miners have lost their fight to keep open the Deep Duffryn colliery in the Cynon valley.

The 109-year old pit was due to close last month, but in July the National Coal Board reconsidered its decision. The turn-around came after the National Union of Mine-workers Conference in Jersey, where Scottish, Yorkshire and Kent miners declared their willingness to join the South Wales area in a strike against the closure.

The Coal Board's reconsideration only postponed the decisive contest. The NCB refused to spend £5 million to drive through a geological fault to

new coal reserves which would have greatly extended the pit's life. They only agreed to spend £1 million to open a new face and work existing reserves.

The whole deal was dependent on increased productivity and was to be reviewed every three months.

The new face has already run into serious and unexpected geological problems, and new tunnels have had to be re-made almost immediately after being driven.

After hearing technical reports from the NCB, a mass meeting of the 480-strong workforce decided on Saturday 1st September to abandon the attempt to keep the pit

open, provided they were found jobs at other collieries within the valley.

The NCB has agreed to this and the pit is certain to close. Having been drawn into the productivity deal, the lodge has completely abandoned the original argument to open up the new reserves, and seems resigned to its fate.

Last July was the first time in the NUM's history that a united stand was made over the closure of a single colliery. The question now is which of the ten short-life pits in South Wales is next to face closure, and whether the lodge involved will accept a similar productivity deal.

MARTIN BARCLAY

## IWA militant sacked for organising Confed strikes

AT THE Delta Tubes factory, Birmingham, Narrinder Singh, a leading militant in the Indian Workers' Association, has been sacked for organising support for the national engineering strikes.

The vast majority of workers in the factory are black, but five of the six stewards are white. The stewards decided against taking any action when the one-day strikes were announced, but Narrinder Singh, who is not a steward, organis-

ed a mass meeting which voted by a 9-to-1 majority to support the strikes. No-one went in.

After the last one-day strike, Narrinder Singh again organised a meeting, and again a large majority voted to support the two-day strikes.

But on Tuesday 21st August, at the end of the night shift, the managing director called Narrinder to his office. He refused to go without a shop steward and the management sacked him.

Then foremen went round the workforce individually with questionnaires asking people if they wanted to strike, and of course then claimed a majority were against action. The shop stewards went along with this. The two-day strike was called off, and nothing was done in support of Narrinder Singh.

Narrinder Singh is now consulting AUEW officials and the IWA about fighting for reinstatement.

JIM DENHAM