

socialist

REVIEW

Monthly Analysis
and Discussion

October 1979
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LOCK EM' OUT!

THE EMPLOYERS OFFENSIVE

Also: The Provisionals and Socialism, Cuts-the Official Response, Palestine Lives! Kollontai and Socialist Feminism



News & analysis

THIS issue continues our analysis of the current ruling class offensive with a major article on the role of the Engineering Employers' Federation in the recent dispute. A settlement was reached just before we went to print, but the offensive continues on other fronts, notably in ITV (see Mike Paget's article).

Phil Marfleet discusses the feeble response of the union leaders to Tory (and Labour) cuts in public expenditure. Bennery may be riding high after Brighton, but John Molyneux shows that Labour lefts like Stuart Holland evade more problems than they solve.

As the Provisional IRA launches major military offensive, Eammon McCann asks: Are the Provos moving left? Readers may find it interesting to compare the situation in the North of Ireland with the national struggle in the Basque country (see Doug Andrews and Mary Reid's news article).

The debate on socialism and feminism continues with an article by Alix Holt in which she argues that Anna Paczusca's critique of the cult of Alexandra Kollontai (*Socialist Review* December 1978) distorted history.

Colin Sparks also discusses the history of the movement in an examination of the relation of Socialist political organisation and socialist culture in Weimar Germany.

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Engineers:



Striking Engineers in Sheffield

Raising the Stakes

The engineers' battle represents a significant turning point in the class struggle, whatever the outcome. As we discuss in detail elsewhere, it marks the appearance of a remarkable new political unity among the capitalist class.

We have also seen the massive basic loyalty of the AUEW's membership to trade union principle hold firm despite great strains. Neither of these two 'united fronts' was inevitable and the dispute itself is changing the picture.

Further, the engineers' traditional left wing has failed totally. To date there hasn't been a single discernible move by the AUEW broad left in *any* direction, let alone towards winning the strike.

The amazing irrelevance of the meeting in Eastbourne which broke up over the constitution of the Labour Party and failed to debate extending the strike must be something of a milestone in the history of sectarianism.

Meanwhile the Engineers' Charter — weak organisationally — has been the

only national body giving a lead, the only source of analysis of the employers' offensive, the only group trying to raise the stakes in response to the EEF and to understand the huge issues behind the struggle. The broad left's lack of initiative and understanding has been nothing short of tragic.

Below we examine some of the crucial issues which the dispute has raised. A dispute dominated by the way in which employers have been ready to raise the stakes in response to a weak-kneed union. But a dispute which also shows the fragility of class unity on the bosses' side; their fear of what might happen if a mass movement emerges.

Weinstock's way: Ending the national agreement?

Suddenly in the midst of their much vaunted unity, a gaping hole appeared in the ranks of the EEF. And it was the industry's largest private employer — GEC — which opened it up, with a 'secret' letter from Sir Arnold



Weinstock determined to go his own way

Weinstock saying that after the dispute GEC companies would 'quietly withdraw' from the Federation.

The reasons behind this move are complex. Briefly, GEC is almost an engineering federation on its own. It doesn't need outside solidarity. More important, the national agreement on pay has become a serious embarrassment in the light engineering and electronics industry where GEC especially wants to keep a mainly female workforce on very low wages. Finally, Weinstock wants to run his own company his own way.

Sir Arnold speaks

In a very revealing interview given to the local paper in Stafford, where GEC have fought for three months to smash across-site bargaining, Sir Arnold Weinstock outlined the GEC approach:

'We try in GEC to steer clear of involvements which have as their object to bring about solidarity, that is, to behave in common with others simply to exert pressures... There can be no settlements in Stafford on the basis of across-the-site negotiations... we have enough experience to know that this is not the way to get the most productive and most efficient working.'

Behind this statement of principle lies a serious dislike throughout GEC management of having to operate an outside agreement, above all on pay. Pay levels in GEC's electronics, medical, telecommunications and light assembly plants are abysmal. They are only made tolerable by bonus schemes, which would be entirely irrelevant if a decent semi-skilled minimum rate existed.

The EEF abandoned this years ago, but there is still a

formula which sets semi-skilled rates relative to the national levels. The last thing companies like GEC want is to have to apply the same higher basic rates to men working on heavy machinery, with a high profit per unit of output, as to women assembling components with a tiny profit per unit.

GEC's cold feet about the national agreement on pay correspond to the company's determination to break any combine-wide organisation — even at official level — between plants. The success of the operation depends on divide and rule; the EEF is endangering it.

The anti-productivity deal

Perhaps the main reason why the employers have been fighting the engineers so bitterly is that the national agreement has become a productivity deal in reverse.

By pushing up the national minimum time rates, Duffy & Co. have unknowingly been eroding local management control of payment systems and bonus schemes. For many employers — including Weinstock — this is of more importance than an hour off the working week.

To see why, look at the example of the wages advertised this month at GEC's Osram plant in Wembley.

Production Workers
Men and Women

Earn	
Daywork	Nightwork
40 Hour Week 5 Days £58	40 Hour Week 4 Nights £71
(The above earnings are inclusive of bonus) Some overtime may be available	
Canteen Parking	Social Club Pension Scheme
You are invited to apply NOW to Mrs. N. Williams OSRAM (GEC) LTD. East Lane, North Wembley Tel: 904 4321, Extension 27	

OSRAM

Pay for 40 hours including bonus is £58, 'for men and women'. In practice this means an all-female workforce, certainly in the London area. This level of pay could be repeated for plant after plant — in GEC, ITT, Plessey, Thorn, as well as in countless smallish light engineering firms who have to follow the national rates.

Just over two years ago — when the national rates were still at the 1975 level — such firms could extract quite a high level of productivity. If the minimum rate is around £38 for semi-skilled jobs — as it was till mid-1977 — then people will work for their £8 bonus.

Then suddenly, a year ago the skilled national rate rose to £60 a week. The semi-skilled rates followed it up: to between about £48 and £52 depending on the

local agreement. Some workers found their level of bonus reduced from £8 to 50p. Companies either faced a catastrophic fall in productivity or had to negotiate new bonuses or new prod deals.

This year the CSEU target figure would not only erode these prod deals, it would utterly destroy them. Again, look at the GEC advert: £58 including bonus. Almost £10 a week less than semi-skilled workers would get if the Confed pay claim were won in full — without any effort.

Next year's CSEU claim — already fixed — is £100 for craftsmen. Assuming this was won, a company like GEC Osram would be paying its workers an extra £22 a week or so next year — just for turning up to work!



Chapple waiting for his opportunity

Amalgamation: Watch your leaders

Frank Chapple must be glad he hasn't won his takeover bid yet. Duffy's fumbling and Boyd's complete absence from the scene could yet make him master of the new amalgamated engineering/electrical/sheetmetal workers' union of the 1980s. Behind the scenes Chapple has been trying to make sense of Duffy's nonsense — without much success.

Actually the likely amalgamation of the National Union of Sheetmetal Workers with the AUEW — which the CP has been making a bureaucratic success — could make Chapple's life a lot easier. He is quite ready to tolerate lifting bans on communists — and even Brother George Guy's guaranteed place on the TUC General Council (part of the NUSMW deal).

What the EETPU must have from the AUEW right-wing

before a merger is a change in structure: say, full timers as branch secretaries, a massive reduction in the number of branches and above all a complete emasculation or even abolition of the district committees.

One of the first steps towards changing the branch structure is about to take place, according to reports from the recent AUEW full timers meeting. The possibility of full-time branch secretaries is now openly being talked about.

The first step towards control of the districts was taken some time ago, when the new procedure agreement taking negotiation rights away from district level was signed with the EEF.

There are several suspect parts to the AUEW/NUSMW 'amalgamation' — in fact only a NUSMW transfer of engagements. One is that the size of new union's national committee is considerably enlarged: 23 delegates from the

NUSMW with 70,000 members in addition to the existing 52 delegates representing 1.2 million in the engineering section. What numbers would the EETPU (or the Boilermakers) want?

Another feature is that specific annual elections for TUC and Labour Party delegations have been abolished. A further development is the establishment of new national industrial committees, which devolve power from the (enlarged) national committee, even though subject to its decisions.

The impact of these changes — and others — is open to question. What is not in doubt however is that the structure of the AUEW can now be subtly changed without the AUEW's membership voting on it. This is of course the logic of the transfer of engagements method — it avoids the senior partner having to ballot the membership.

No doubt the CP is delighted with George Guy's place on the General Council, it being 'understood that the TUC seat is presently held by L.G. Guy the current general secretary . . . and as long as the Sheet Metal, Pipe and Heating section (of the new union) continue to nominate him for the seat, he shall be supported by the AUEW(E) section'.

No doubt the CP is delighted that the journal it controls will continue to be published for at least five years. No doubt the CP is happy with an enlarged block vote on the new national committee.

But the whole process is the very opposite of trade union democracy, and it is exactly the sort of manipulation the AUEW right wing will employ in the future.

AUEW: Factory branches?

With Duffy looking for a way out every day and the right wing determined to step up the fight against rank and file activists in the AUEW, there is a growing case for militants to campaign for a factory-based structure in the union. *Len Blood* outlines the arguments:

'To be realistic, our members look no further than the factory. And in the main they look to the shop steward to see they're all right. Those of us who are stewards know full well where the members go for help. The steward is a workmate, the guy on the next bench — a fellow trade unionist, because

they see each other daily.

'How many problems do we handle as stewards that a stranger at the branch couldn't do nearly as good? Divorce, flooding, sex problems, pensions, football, girl friends, boy friends, being absent from Day Release . . . to name just a few of the things that come to a steward hourly.

'Over the years I've envied the factory structure of the print industry, and to some extent the TGWU. When we have shop-floor meetings, that's the time I relate to my fellow members. We talk on all matters as a mass. Politics is almost top of the bill.

'Most of all, when elections take place, we read out the election addresses and discuss backgrounds and political positions of candidates. Those that argue that factory branches are isolated from the outside world couldn't be more wrong. We at Greenings are not yet a factory branch. But because we almost function as one, we debate the order of the day.

'It's almost certain that if the marriage with the EETPU takes place, some of the arguments I've used will be taken up by wright-wingers to destroy our branches. They will say our branches do not give a service, they are run by old men etc.

'But what they really mean is that they want to destroy District Committees and have full time officials in full control of our destinies. Factories will become even more isolated as full timers, hatched from the arsenals of Boyd and Duffy, take over. They will want full time branch secretaries.

'If elections are to be continued (although I suspect appointments are coming), what better argument than factory ballots in the same way as the miners and, I believe, some areas of our own Foundry Section?

'It beats the argument between branch and postal ballots. Far better to argue for ballot boxes in the factories (it's earned a semblance of respect even from the mass media) but better still in control of the shop stewards where the strength of our union lies.

'If we don't build and argue for factory branches now, where we see the union at its most active and democratic, the way will be positively wide open for Boyd and his cronies — with or without Franky — to smash us into a servile, centrally controlled, non-existent union.'

David Beecham



Lord Robens of Woldingham

The Life of Lord Robens

There used to be a Simon and Garfunkel song which began 'They say that Richard Cory owns one half of this whole town'. When Lord Robens of Woldingham became chairman of Vickers in 1971, he and his company owned a good deal more than half the town of Barrow — they owned the lot. And he proceeded to prove it by locking out first 1,200 boilermakers and then 8,000 other shipyard workers in a nine-week dispute the following year.

Vickers Shipbuilders has been nationalised since then but Lord Robens — former USDAW official and minister of labour — is still pursuing the government (or rather the people who pay tax) for more compensation — £100 million or so — for himself, his fellow directors and shareholders. Vickers, like Robens, is still a big fish though.

A multi-million multinational, the company has steadily moved away from its old manufacturing base — 'Heavy engineering, like shipbuilding, is finished in this country' says Robens — and into more lucrative fields — medical equipment, offshore work and the like. Areas where the pickings are big, the subsidies substantial and all the hard work is done by governments or the very largest giant firms.

Lord Robens is of course not beyond turning the odd penny or two himself. As chairman of two missions to Malta in 1967 he familiarised himself so well with the landscape that he was

later able to interest himself in a venture with fellow philanthropists Reginald Maudling and John Poulson.

As a younger man, chairman of the National Coal Board Alf Robens seemed more interested in nationalisation than compensation. But he showed his mettle by getting rid of some 300,000 jobs in the mining industry. Naturally the scope at Vickers is somewhat more limited. Nevertheless 15,000 jobs — 40 per cent — have gone in the last ten years, most in Robens' reign. One third of the company's assets have gone into property.

While at the NCB, Alf was the object of a disgraceful smear campaign connected with Coal Board contracts with a firm called Bonser Engineering, which benefited greatly from new orders as jobs were cut and mining work intensified. Uncharitable people suggested it was more than coincidence that Robens junior was a director of Bonser.

All this is long past. Alf's been ennobled and the former candidate for Labour leadership has presided over victimisations in several of his plants — three in the last year.

With four co-directors of Vickers on the engineering bosses' general council (as well as two former cronies from the shipbuilding side), Lord Robens clearly has a great interest in seeing the engineers put in their place. He made an impassioned speech to the assembled employers at February's EEF conference.

'Strikes' said he, 'are out of date because in the main personal ownership of businesses no longer exists.'

Alf should know. He is chairman of Johnson Matthey, a viciously anti-union firm which supports Apartheid in South Africa and the Economic League here. He has been a director of *The Times* since 1967, and thus has the distinction of being involved in three separate lock outs at once — *The Times*, the TV companies (in which the Times has a stake) and engineering.

He has been a director of

the Bank of England since 1966; he is on the board of Trust House Forte, 'the firm that smiles' — and shakes its workers warmly by the throat.

'There can be no question, in my view,' says this great man, 'that if everybody is going to behave as they have behaved particularly over these last months, in deciding that they will grab their piece of cake or withdraw their services, there will not be any cake left and we will finish up snarling over the crumbs.'

Bill George

International News & analysis



Ian Smith

Bishop Muzorewa

Joshua Nkomo

Zimbabwe:

All Change at Lancaster House

It seems that Lord Carrington may actually succeed in squaring the circle and persuade the different forces represented at the Lancaster House conference on the future of Zimbabwe to come to an agreement.

A few months ago such a situation would have been almost unthinkable. The Rhodesian regime, reinvigorated by the 63 per cent poll in the April elections, was pressing ahead with its own internal settlement with South African encouragement.

The new Tory government in London seemed ready to recognise Bishop Muzorewa's cabinet and end sanctions. The Patriotic Front, backed by the front-line African states (Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana, Angola, and Mozambique), was determined to continue the armed struggle.

Yet both delegations have made major concessions at the conference. The PF has agreed to concede substantial privileges to the white minority — notably the right to 24 out of the 120 seats in an independent parliament (whites are outnumbered by blacks in Zimbabwe by about 25 to 1). This means that Muzorewa could probably cobble together

a majority, thanks to settler votes, after new elections.

On the other hand, Ian Smith has found himself largely isolated on the Muzorewa delegation, which decided, against his sole dissenting vote, to drop the more obnoxious clauses of the present constitution — notably the white MPs' veto over constitutional changes and the preservation of white control over the army, police, judiciary and civil service.

Let us note also the changed position of the Tory government. Shortly after coming to power Thatcher told a press conference in Canberra that sanctions against the Rhodesian regime would not be renewed this November. Yet at the conference her foreign secretary, Lord Carrington, has put heavy pressure on the Muzorewa delegation to scrap the internal settlement and come to an agreement with the Patriotic Front.

This change in Tory policy, which has caused much outrage among the stupider Conservative back benchers and constituency activists, reflects to a significant degree pressure from British multinationals with interests in Africa. Trade with



Carrington showing the way for Patriotic Front leader Robert Mugabe

Factory Closures:

Park Royal's Cautionary Tale

In a sad and bewildered article on 28 September, the *Morning Star* concluded 'workers at Park Royal are out of breath — British Leyland has made sure of that'. The remnants of what was once a thriving Communist Party factory branch had failed in their effort to persuade an ageing skilled workforce that it was worth saving the jobs.

The closure of Park Royal Vehicle is in so many ways symbolic of what's gone wrong with the old-style factory leadership up and down the country that it's worth considering in some detail.

Quite a few of the workers have been there for upwards of 20 years and stand to get £7,000 — £10,000 in redundancy payments. Others came to PRV after the closure of North London's most militant plant — ENV — in 1968

Having won high wages and good shop organisation at ENV they jettisoned a lot of the outward-looking, political militancy. The decimation of employment in the area met with no resistance from one of the factories best placed to organise it. Some of the big surrounding factories were non-union — there was no attempt to build links.

With full order books, the work force was sitting pretty: they never bothered much that Leyland didn't invest a penny.

When the National Front launched a campaign against Asian refugees from Uganda, PRV was the one plant in the area they had any success in: a petition collected 200 signatures without the CP doing anything

about it. Eventually it was a leaflet from outside the plant which stopped the rot: but there was still hardly a black face to be seen inside.

They used to sell 50 copies of the star at PRV. Now Harry Tank, long-time CP parliamentary candidate for Acton and a T&G steward with 25 years' service at the plant, says 'There has to be a re-think in the movement if jobs are to be retained and closures opposed.'

He's right of course. But the same article in the *Star* goes on to note without comment that the initial Leyland 10-year plan in 1975 envisaged the closure of PRV and the expansion of AEC's in Southall. After the Park Royal workers threatened a fight BL changed tack and shut AEC's. Was there any solidarity from PRV? On the contrary, they grabbed the work. Which left Michael Edwardes with an easy job.

Now the *Morning Star* (like the *Guardian*) puts the blame on BL's bureaucracy. A somewhat comical position for people who've gone along with all the participation, joint consultation and incorporation of stewards into management structures that Lord Ryder, the NEB and Edwardes have been able to devise. All in the cause of what Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson described — again in the *Star* — on 22 September as a 'high-wage for high-productivity' company.

Oh, and one last thing. Local Labour MP, Laurie Pavitt is now proposing ... a workers' co-operative.

David Beecham

and investment in black Africa is of growing importance to British companies.

Since the Tory general election victory the Nigerian government, far and away the biggest economic power in black Africa, has been squeezing British business interests hard. BP was nationalised and tenders by British companies for federal government contracts systematically refused. The companies responded by desperate lobbies of Whitehall.

The message got through. Thatcher launched her new Zimbabwean initiative at the Commonwealth conference in August and Carrington played tough with Muzorewa and Smith at Lancaster House. The reward came a few days after the conference began, when the Nigerian government dropped its informal ban on British tenders and even began to suggest that BP would receive quite generous compensation terms.

In the case of the Muzorewa and PF delegations, both have more to lose than to gain by appearing obdurate at the conference. If the failure of the talks could be laid at Muzorewa's door, then it is unlikely that the Tories would feel able to drop sanctions and recognise the regime.

Muzorewa has other reasons for not fighting too hard in defence of white privileges. Despite considerable government intimidation during the April elections, these did reveal the existence of real popular support for Muzorewa, especially in the towns. His victory reflected, in part, the aspiration of the African masses

for their own government and, in part, a confused hope that this objective could be achieved without too much bloodshed.

In order to retain this support Muzorewa must show that his government has something to offer the black majority. So far little has changed. The first budget offered various goodies for the better-off (ie the whites), but nothing for the majority (whose real income has fallen by a quarter since 1974). The war continues, under the direction of General Peter Walls.

For Muzorewa to be seen by the people in the great black townships surrounding Salisbury—Harare, Highfield, etc—to be defending a constitution which entrenches considerable white privileges could benefit only his chief opponent, Robert Mugabe of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

Interestingly, at least sections of the settlers have gone along with Muzorewa. This, David Smith, Muzorewa's minister of finance and the man most likely to succeed Ian Smith as leader of the Rhodesian Front, supported the changes in the constitution agreed at Lancaster House.

More significantly, General Walls, the most powerful white in Rhodesia now that Ian Smith is no longer prime minister, went out of his way in recent statements to suggest that entrenched constitutional clauses may not be the best way to defend white privileges. Walls has also said on a number of occasions that the regime cannot win the war and that a political settlement with the Patriotic Front is necessary.

The Patriotic Front also have their reasons. The prospect of a major military breakthrough seems further away than it did a year ago (when Socialist Worker lost its cool enough to carry a front page head-line: 'The End of Rhodesia'). The regime controls the air and is receiving men and equipment from South Africa.

Moreover, the April elections were a set-back for the PF, if only in the sense that it showed that they controlled a comparatively small portion of the country. The initiative shifted to Muzorewa and Smith in the wake of the elections.

Finally, the PF is under very heavy pressure to reach agreement with Muzorewa. The source of this pressure is the front-line states. Zambia in particular is keen to end the war for economic reasons. The desperately weak Zambian economy is heavily dependent on South Africa and the Pretoria regime is prepared to use this situation to extract political concessions.

A good example was provided in late September when the opening of a new road-route connecting Zambia and Malawi with South Africa's ports was announced. This route is to replace a ferry destroyed by Rhodesian forces. The *quid pro pro?* Zambia is to close down some of the bases from which guerillas belonging to the Sought-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) operate against South African forces in Namibia.

Representatives of the front-line governments have never been far from the conference, ready to twist the arms of the

PF delegates if they prove too obdurate. In many cases it was probably pretty easy to persuade them.

The PF military chiefs, whose presence at the conference was supposed to harden up the political leaders, do not seem to have put up too much of a fight. Josiah Tongogara, chief of the ZANU military wing, chatted with Ian Smith over tea about Smith's farm in Selukwe, where Tongogara worked as a boy. Moreover, he told the BBC



General Peter Walls

Overseas Service that he would work under General Walls 'in any capacity'.

The question of the armed forces is one of the key issues which the conference still has to resolve. The Anglo-American proposals drawn up by the Carter administration and the Callaghan government envisaged the integration of the PF guerillas with the regime's armed forces. Both Walls and now Tongogara have endorsed such a solution.

But would it work? The ZANU guerillas have borne the brunt of the fighting. They were recruited on a programme which defined the goal not merely as the overthrow of the Smith regime but the creation of a socialist Zimbabwe. They have suffered terrible casualties at the hand of the regime's security forces. Are they likely to acquiesce quietly to their disbandment or integration into these same forces?

Moreover, Joshua Nkomo's wing of the Patriotic Front possesses a well-equipped, Cuban-trained force, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), based in Zambia. These troops have not yet been fully committed to the war and it seems unlikely that Nkomo would hand over control of them, his chief bargaining card, to General Walls.

Another important variable in the equation is the attitude of



Holding the line. The Rhodesian security forces

the South African regime. Under John Vorster Pretoria adopted a policy of concessions abroad (detente with black Africa) and confrontation at home. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the reverse has come to be true under Vorster's successor, PW Botha.

Botha is in the process of implementing major domestic reforms designed to pacify the black townships. Having agreed to offer trade union rights to African workers settled in urban areas, he has now extended this concession to migrant workers, who make up the bulk of the work-force in such crucial export industries as gold and coal-mining. He has even offered to drop that sacred cow of Afrikaner Nationalism, the Immorality Act, which bans sex between the races.

Meanwhile, abroad Botha has adopted a much tougher stance. He wishes to create a 'constellation' of black-ruled states in southern Africa subject to South African hegemony. The Muzorewa regime is candidate number one for membership of this 'constellation'. Pretoria has been fairly hostile towards the Thatcher initiative and the Lancaster House conference.

The reason appears to be fear that the result of a settlement would be to entrench forces hostile to South Africa in Zimbabwe. South African military strategists are reputed to have decided that they would prefer to have the Zambezi (along the Zambia-Zimbabwe frontier) as their frontline rather than the Limpopo, which separates South Africa from Zimbabwe.

Botha warned during the conference that South Africa would intervene in Zimbabwe if 'outside forces' (presumably the Cubans) became involved there. There is already rumoured to be a South African battalion in Zimbabwe. If the talks fail and Muzorewa comes under heavy military pressure, Botha will almost certainly commit more troops there.

The Lancaster House conference is, therefore, quite delicately balanced. There is a better chance than previously seemed possible of establishing a Kenya-style neo-colonial regime in Zimbabwe. But there are also powerful forces working against such a solution. The next few months may contain a number of surprises.

Alex Callinicos



Striking Workers in Guipuzcoa

Spain:

Barricades in the Basque Country

On Saturday 1 September, during one of many demonstrations over the continual harassment of Basque refugees in southern France, one 18-year-old bystander, Inaki Quijera Cidarain, was shot dead by the police. A familiar scenario followed: a general strike and more street battles with the police.

The weekend had begun when 60 *abertzale* (radical nationalist) and revolutionary councillors ended a three-day occupation of San Sebastian town hall. As they led the demonstration off they were charged by the police. Eight councillors were seriously injured.

It was during the following battles, as barricades were thrown up in the streets (an almost weekly event), that Inaki was killed. A Basque flag placed over the spot where he died was urinated on by policemen.

On Sunday barricades appeared in the streets of most major Basque towns. San Sebastian itself was totally covered by a cloud of tear gas. On Monday a general strike initiated by the *abertzales* and the far left paralysed the whole of Guipuzcoa province and seriously affected most other industrial centres. Only in some big firms in Vizcaya province did the socialist UGT and communist-led Workers' Commissions (CCOO) prevent the strike spreading.

Incidents of this sort are common. Euskadi (the Basque country) today lives under a permanent state of exception—restriction of liberties, banning of demonstrations and meetings, police-fascist collaboration, inhuman treatment of political prisoners, arbitrary arrests and torture, the murder of exiles in France. There is one policeman for every 280 Basques. On 8 June alone 200 people were detained.

Despite this it takes a few small bombs on the Costa del Sol for the British press to take notice or, more tragically, the weekend in late May when 17 people died. Of these eight died in a fashionable Madrid bar, victims of a bomb now believed to have been planted by fascists.

The 'beach bombs' were to be overshadowed by the death of five people in bomb explosions at the two main railway stations and the airport, for which ETA P-M (political-military wing) claimed responsibility. So far this year 108 people have died as a result of political violence in Spain, most of them in Euskadi.

On 25 October the people of Euskadi are to vote on the new statute of autonomy offered the Basques by the central government of Adolfo Suarez. The statute is based on proposals drawn up by the Basque National Party (PNV). Essentially it is a very mild package of regional reforms that confedes

various local controls over taxation and official equality for the Basque language.

Although a local police force is to be created, the hated National Police and Civil Guard will remain and the new force will be under the ultimate control of Madrid.

Navarra is not included in the statute. This province, often called the 'Basque Ulster', is fairly evenly split between a radical Basque north and a right-wing, pro-Spanish south. Its capital, Pamplona, has been the scene of frequent clashes between *abertzales* and fascist gangs, usually 'off-duty' policemen.

The PNV has skated round this sticky issue. Moreover, the right of self-determination for the Basque country is also not included in the statute—predictably enough, since the statute falls under the new Spanish constitution, which clearly upholds the 'inalienable unity of the Spanish nation'. Ironically the PNV, along with the overwhelming majority of Basques, opposed this constitution when it was approved last December.

Also backing the statute are the socialists (PSOE) and communist (PCE), and, further left, the not-so-radical nationalists of Euskadiko Ezkerra (Basque Left—EE).

Even though the statute will undoubtedly be approved in the referendum, Euskadi will re-

main a thorn in the side of the Spanish bourgeoisie. The *abertzale* coalition Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity—HB) won about 15 per cent of the vote in last March's general election, well over 30 per cent in some industrial centres. Their programme's main slogans are national independence and socialism.

The coalition has proved capable of mobilising large forces on the streets, as was proved by the huge contingents on the Basque National Day demonstrations last April shouting slogans like 'ETA, more machine-guns' and 'ETA, kill more police-men'.

HB draws its support especially from young workers. It won many of the 70,000 votes lost by the PSOE in March. The votes came, in the main, from non-Basque 'immigrants'. The coalition has become a focus for the deep discontent felt among large sections of the population about not only the continued repression but also the failure of the entire 'reform process' to break decisively with the Francoist past.

HB's intransigent stand—refusing to send their deputies to the central parliament, involvement of 'popular assemblies' in areas where they control town councils etc. has brought them much support. For many workers the class and national struggles are inseparable.

For example, during the street fighting in Pamplona following the murder of an anti-nuclear demonstrator by the Civil Guard last June striking building workers, who themselves had clashed repeatedly with the police during their three-week strike, joined demonstrators at the barricades.

Even though HB is a coalition of four parties (plus independents), 'anti-partyism' is very strong among their supporters. This attitude, often combined with opposition to organisation as such, means that the *abertzale* trade union (LAB) has a limited base in the workplaces. Many militants are not in unions.

LAB has about 500 shop-floor delegates, compared with 3,000 belonging to the Workers' Commissions in Euskadi, of whom over 700 are members or sympathisers of the largest revolutionary organisation MC (Communist Movement). The UGT and nationalist ECA-STV have over 2500 delegates

each.

HB have produced their own statute, which calls for the right of self-determination, complete withdrawal of Spanish security forces, amnesty for ETA prisoners and the incorporation of Navarra. But it also includes a clause denying automatic Basque nationality to those born outside Euskadi or with immigrant parents. A condition for acquiring Basque nationality is the ability to speak the language.

Meanwhile ETAM (military), with which HB is closely aligned, have launched a new autumn offensive to coincide with the referendum campaign. By the end of the September two high-ranking

main points of HB's programme, but say that they will keep their guns 'until the final victory of the socialist revolution'.

The other *abertzale* coalition, Euskadiko Eskerra, consists basically of one organisation, EIA (Party of the Basque Revolution), which in turn controls ETA p-m (ETA p-m, although supported by HB is independent of any party). EE have drifted further and further to the right in their efforts to become the respectable left wing of Basque nationalism.

ETA p-m had recently confined themselves to kidnappings, bank robberies and spectacular propaganda stunts. Its 'beach bombs' were part of a



officers and the military governor of San Sebastian had been killed. The latter's funeral was turned into a fascist demonstration in San Sebastian, with at least 5,000 armed policemen on duty.

ETAM have made it clear that they intend to increase attacks on military targets, even though the army is not yet directly involved in Euskadi. Obviously they believe that the provocation of any rush moves by the army would help their struggle.

Along with a steady 'kill rate' of policemen and known fascists much higher than during the Franco period, bombings of economic targets, kidnappings and bank robberies are daily occurrences. Most local firms are known to pay 'revolutionary taxes'.

Despite increased police repression and the harassment, and sometimes murder, of militants in France, the security forces seem totally unable to crack the efficient and highly militaristic organisation of ETAM. The latter have offered

the government a cease-fire on the basis of acceptance of the campaign to have the riot police removed from Soria prison and the 130 ETA prisoners there transferred to Basque gaols.

The government, fearful of the consequences of the 'beach bombs' on the tourist trade, offered concessions, on which it reneged once ETA p-m had called off its campaign. ETA p-m retaliated by planting 12 bombs in key targets throughout Madrid, killing five people.

This action was condemned by ETA p-m and HASI (People's Revolutionary Socialist Party), effectively its political wing and the most influential party within HB, as 'counter revolutionary' and 'extremely harmful to the necessary unity between the peoples of the Spanish state'. ETA p-m went into internal crisis and subsequently criticised the bombings as an error.

The central government's traditional response to the Basque struggle, more repression, only seems to feed militan-

cy and support for ETA and gives credence to traditional ETA analysis of 'action-repression-action'.

Even the killing of workers by bombs at the Lemoniz nuclear power station—two last year, one recently—has not led to any serious fall in ETA's support. However, such actions have deepened the gap between ETA's supporters and PSOE and PCE workers.

Meanwhile the police can only patrol the streets in heavily armed vans, their families aren't served in the shops and their children are driven from the local schools. Their only contact with 'the locals' is when they ply them with rubber (or lead) bullets, tear gas and truncheons.

The new statute's ability to pacify Euskadi is dubious. The creation of a Basque police force will create problems for ETA p-m, but the deepening economic crisis, which is now hitting the relatively better-off Basque working class, will guarantee that militant opposition to the central government will continue.

In fact, unlike the rest of Spain, which has seen a downturn in the class struggle over the last two or three years, Euskadi has been shaken by a number of very bitter and radical strikes. Moreover, Suarez is still under considerable pressure from the powerful fascist lobby in the army and police to make no concessions to the police.

The opportunities for the revolutionary left in this situation are obviously enormous. The disunity of the working class remains, however, a serious problem. Two increasingly antagonistic blocs have developed—on the one hand, the PNV-PSOE-PCE-EE, on the other, HB and the revolutionary left (MC and the LCR, Spanish section of the Fourth International). The trade-union movement is seriously fragmented and losing members. For example, only 45,000 of the Workers' Commissions' 100,000 members pay their dues.

The far left's advantage lies in their political coherence compared to the much larger *abertzale* organisations. This means that they can often play a key role, as they did in initiating and leading the general strikes of June and September.

Dough Andrews and Mary Reid.

Central America:

Selective Humanity

For forty years at least, the US has aided and supported the dictators of Central America. In 1954, John Foster Dulles was secretary of state as well as a director of the United Fruit Company. United Fruit had always seen the banana republics of Central America as a private estate. When, in that year, Jacobo Arbenz was elected to the Presidency of Guatemala on a radical programme, Dulles backed an invading army under Castillo Armas to overthrow him.

Castillo Armas' troops and bombers entered Guatemala from El Salvador, a tiny overcrowded republic ruled by 14 families. The rest of Central America looked on and did **nothing**. Nicaragua, under the Somozas, supplied arms and men for Castillo Armas. Panama was an American military zone. Costa Rica, with no army, and the impoverished enclave of Honduras were equally dependent on American power. And Cuba and the Dominican Republic, watching from the Caribbean, were in the most brutal phase of the dictatorships of Batista and Trujillo.

Today, the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua has turned the arrow the other way. Within Nicaragua itself, the conflicts within the new government are already becoming clear. The situation hangs in the balance. What will tip it may lie outside Nicaragua itself, in the banana republics of Central America.

One, two, three Nicaraguas

El Salvador is probably the key. The Romero government there is a government of military men, representing the 14 families who have shared the proceeds of Salvador's coffee between them. The army has retained power through the systematic massacre of peasant opposition, coupled with elections more openly fraudulent than anywhere else — in a continent that has always voted at the point of a gun.

Yet the struggle has grown in El Salvador. The (estimated 1000) guerrillas of the FARN



Carter now ordering caution amongst the Central America Dictatorships

have waged war in the countryside, while protests and demonstrations have grown more frequent in recent months — despite brutal repression. Now, with Nicaragua across the frontier, the US State Department is worried that their example will be followed. A few weeks ago Vakey, the US government envoy, began to talk of human rights in El Salvador, and Carter suspended military aid until human rights were restored.

Guatemala, after the fall of Arbenz, saw a developing guerilla struggle in the 60s under Yon Sosa and Turcios Lima. Despite real popular support it was destroyed, in its isolation in the countryside, by a systematic American-backed military assault. Since then the army has ruled through terror. Like the Argentines, anti-communist terrorist squads (called the ESA) roam freely in the streets of towns and villages. The new 'civilian' President Lucas Garcia continues the line. Yet the resistance continues, particularly among the peasants of the north — and Nicaragua is an example for them too.

So Carter has warned the Guatemalans about the dangers of ignoring human rights, and suspended military aid.

Human rights or revolution?

The press is always anxious to tell us that human rights are an issue above politics. Yet today,

after decades of direct support for animals like the Guatemalan military or Somoza, the US talks of human rights. It said nothing when Somoza took the international aid for the earthquake victims and invested it in the United States, leaving tens of thousands to starve.

That's not what they mean by human rights.

Human rights today in Latin America, and especially in Central America, are the name of an alternative policy, an antidote to socialism. If the US administration have remembered it now, it is because they have seen power taken from the dictator by mass action.

The issue now for the United States is to shore up the state, to ensure that it is government that makes changes, that it is the dependent local State that controls it. The State Department tour around Central America was designed to force reluctant vested interests to act before and instead of the masses, and to leave the leadership in the hands of a twitchy and unstable middle class.

In Nicaragua that will be achieved through aid pressure, loans, the reestablishment of a standing army through military aid etc. In the rest of Central America (and the Caribbean, now facing important changes — see *Socialist Review* September 1979) the bourgeoisie must be aided and supported —

and if necessary created.

Because the rights that Carter is talking about — political and economic freedom, freedom of the press etc — are bourgeois rights. It is not a moral issue; it is simply because to speak of freedom for a people without power, without control, without organisation, is just so much rhetoric. For socialists human rights *are* an issue — but one that is never separate from the struggle to create the means to achieve those freedoms and to protect them.

Carter *is* willing to provide those means and instruments — to a threatened bourgeoisie. That is exactly what John Kennedy's Alliance for Progress set out to do after the Cuban revolution — isolate the revolutionaries by presenting freedom as something that can be achieved through State action and the 'natural' progress of nations.

The Nicaraguan Communist Party has already stated its general agreement with that view — it has a minister in the new government. It was quick to denounce the International Brigade of Latin American revolutionaries that criticised Sandinismo for its readiness to give political leadership to its own bourgeois elements.

The alternative — the *socialist* alternative — is to build the organisations that can win and guarantee rights for the workers and peasants of Central America through their own *direct* control of a new, socialist, Central America, where human rights are not bargained for, but taken.

Mike Gonzalez

Nicaragua:

Life After Somoza

'The Carter administration has made a mistake in believing that here in Nicaragua I have no support. Now the Shah is gone but I remain here.'

President Somoza, January 1979.

The attempts of the bourgeois opposition to remove Somoza and Yankee manoeuvres for peaceful mediation came up against a brick wall. Somoza's stubbornness helped to radicalise the process of his going.

What now? The FSLN (Sandinistas) is a military organisa-

tion and not a political party. Once Somoza was gone the FSLN found itself in control of the country and with fantastic popular support but without clearly defined politics or a firm political organisation.

Right and left everyone seems to be a Sandinista. The Sandinista Social Democratic Party and the Nicaraguan Socialist (in fact the communist) Party seem to be the only other political organisations in the arena. Although the NSP has declared that its politics of 'marxism-leninism' don't differ from those of the FSLN and they will eventually merge, their relations with the FSLN remain obscure. The importance of the Social Democrats should not be underestimated, with the potential support of small farmers, coffee and cotton growers and, of course, US imperialism.

The anti-imperialist rhetoric of Sandinismo has not altered Nicaragua's situation as a dependent, export-oriented economy. It is precisely this dependence on the world capitalist powers that has significantly shaped the new government's politics, both internally and externally.

The National Reconstruction Government has been very cautious and tried to keep up appearances. Externally to secure finance and aid, internally to secure the normalisation of export production. Nicaragua will not be a 'second Cuba' but a 'first Nicaragua' the leadership emphatically declares.

The broad coalition that the FSLN formed with other bourgeois sectors must be seen in this light. Lawyers, cattle ranchers, landowners and the church have all been given a place in order to obtain help for the reconstruction of Nicaragua without the radical excesses that both yankee and national capitalists so dislike. Yes, we will respect private property! Now get the exports rolling.... Look, we have bank presidents in our government! Now get the loans flowing....

The expulsion of 40 Colombian trotskysts and other Latin American revolutionaries in the Simon Bolivar brigade gives a good insight into the current politics of the new government. The brigade was expelled for encouraging the seizure of land, the organisation of militias in Managua and Bluefields and the encouragement of factory takeovers.

An examination of the

government programme will explain why the expulsions occurred. Somoza and somocista sectors of the bourgeoisie owned around 60 per cent of farming land. In some areas this is being given to the peasantry, and in others the government intends to create state farms.

Jaime Wheelock, the head of the institute of Agrarian Reform has stated that 'a society of production where workers will participate in the management and fundamental decisions of the enterprise' will be established. He also declared that some large enterprises where the 'high technological level does not permit that we surrender management to the sectors of the countryside' will be managed by the state 'as a representative of the people'.

Private farms are being carefully protected. Peasants who seized farms in the Leon area were persuaded to leave because the land did not belong to Somoza. 'We don't want to let radicalism loose. We are realists,' Wheelock has said.

Trade unions have been given the right to organise and the government has called for the formation of a Sandinista central which will organise 'all the popular forces, previously organised by the sandinistas'. To gain firmer popular support the government ordered the payment of back wages for June and July and a rise in agricultural wages, bringing serious discontent among employers.

The government intends to have a 'mixed economy' in which a state sector, a private

sector and a third sector with both public and private investment coexist. Somoza's previous control of a great proportion of industry allows the state sector to become the dominant force in the economy, as the government is forced to assume their management.

What form worker participation in this will take is not yet clear. Although workers have taken over, for instance, sugar factories, the government seems to prefer to hand over management to capitalists returning from Miami after the blood has been spilt.

So far as the private sector is concerned, the government has declared that 'private property will have an effective social function in direct benefit to the Nicaraguan people'. Foreign investment will be allowed on condition that it 'contribute to national development and not hamper national sovereignty'.

In a recent interview sandinista leader, Daniel Ortega, has declared that 'the necessity of strengthening capitalism with national characteristics in some Latin American countries has come to coincide with the interests of the revolution.' He later added 'we cannot jump over stages. We cannot break processes.'

The government has also begun to create a new standing army and police force. Several militias in Managua have already been disarmed, as also in Paraisito and Las Americas. However disarming the militias outside the immediate area of Managua will not be an easy job.

The overthrow of Somoza

was a democratic objective, not a socialist one. It was precisely this that enabled the very broad coalition around the different sandinista tendencies to be formed. But the revolution did not deal with the question of exploitation nor did it propose any revolutionary transformation of the Nicaraguan economy.

One of the main objectives of the present government has been to apply a brake to the revolutionary process—the 'we cannot jump over stages' stalinist argument. Both the bourgeoisie and much of the Nicaraguan left are seeking to create the conditions necessary for a new phase of capitalist accumulation—either by means of a new form of state capitalism or perhaps a 'socially responsible' capitalism to the taste of the social democrats. Whichever variant is adopted, the workers will be told to tighten their belts in the name of 'national reconstruction'.

The new government has no intention of spreading the revolution beyond Nicaragua's borders and that in itself chokes off the possibilities of socialism. However the revolutionary process has gripped the great mass of Nicaraguan society, and the ultimate fate of the revolution will be determined by the development of the contradictions already present. But already the revolution represents not only a great gain for the Nicaraguan people but also the beginning of a new period for the whole continent, an upturn in the struggle against capitalism.

Paulo Rivera



Out with the Old. Sandinista fighters in Somoza's former Bunker Headquarters

Iran:

What Next for the Iranian Left

Socialist Review recently interviewed Samad Rahnavard about recent developments in Iran. Samad is a member of the Iranian revolutionary organisation Etchad Chap (Union of the Left).

Q *What change has there been since the Ayendogan demo.*

In general the change has been to the right and the policies which Khomeini wishes to establish in society.

The Ayendogan demo itself was a turning point which resulted from a split among the supporters of Khomeini. It contained leftist pressure groups from the cities, nationalities as in Kurdistan and movements which were going to take quite a root in Khuzestan and the oil area.

Ayendogan had been under question for several weeks before the demonstration. So when the demo occurred it triggered off the policy which the government had been thinking about. Consequently newspapers which were critical of the government, including Ayendogan, were harassed.

After that there was a move towards neglecting democratic rights and labelling all the movements and groups which were asking for them as anti-revolutionaries.

In order to do so Khomeini himself had to play the important role of head of the army and declare himself an autocrat. In this way he cut all the hands which were pulling the government towards the democratisation of society.

Overcoming the opposition in the army was his major problem. That is why he announced himself 'Supreme Commander.' That is also why he sent Chamran, the Vice-premier, to Kurdistan to take over the Military. We have now heard that Chamran is the new Defence Minister.

This was a kind of coup d'etat against the bourgeois liberal elements in the government. But they were unable to carry it to its end, so they pulled back for a while. There will be other attacks in the future. Only



Injured demonstrator following clash at Leftish Rally in Tehran August 12

recently we heard that Nazih had been sacked.

Throughout this period the politics of the left has frightened Khomeini. This is because people believe that Khomeini can satisfy their needs. In turn Khomeini has asked them to wait. They have now been waiting a long time. The left, for their part, are saying he can't deliver on these points.

Therefore, despite its small size, Khomeini is trying to crush the Left. He is trying to stop them organising and circulating material.

Q *What kind of mass support does Khomeini have at the moment?*

This question concerns the whole structure of society and it is thus difficult to give a short answer.

60-65% of Iranian society is composed of peasants. These have since played little part in the subsequent developments. That leaves us with the urban population and especially the urban poor. The urban poor, who are the larger part of the urban population, still solidly support Khomeini. There is also the petty-bourgeoisie, the small shopkeepers and their like, who also support Khomeini.

Then there is the military—some 500,000 who are, by and large, out of the picture at the moment. As for the 500,000 bureaucrats and white-collar workers, they are split between Khomeini and the secularist government. Of these, the vast majority have withdrawn from the present contest.

Now, having said all this, the supporters of Khomeini are expecting some structural change in the society that will enable them to meet their needs, such as cheaper commodities,

reduced rents, housing schemes and so on.

People remain convinced that Khomeini will give them these things. For them the revolution was for this purpose, but whether the government can meet even some of these needs is highly questionable.

If we look at industry we can see that it is almost at a position of standstill. There is not enough security for capital to resume production. That part which is owned by the government similarly lacks and investment and is, anyway, related to the private sector.

We can therefore see signs of a split. This will come because Khomeini is unable to comply with their demands and expectations. When that happens their will be great potential for the Left, and through hard work they could be oriented towards revolution.

Q *One group you missed out is the employed manual workers. Are they still backing Khomeini.*

Yes, they are still backing Khomeini. This is because Islamic ideology retains its strength and the morale remains high.

In connection with this, however, there is an important point. This concerns the character and position of the urban poor. Basically, many are rural migrants coming to the cities for seasonal jobs in the construction industry.

This is a result of the land reform. Agricultural revenues are too low these days to maintain a peasant family, so thousands flocked to the cities for temporary work. Now the construction industry has disintegrated and these people are not getting money. Come next

Spring they will have no savings left. That will make another serious problem for the government.

Q *Could you briefly describe the nature of the repression in Iran*

In some respects the repression is not much different from that under the Shah. Newspapers and periodicals are restricted to the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Information. If you look through them you will find that the content is much the same. I will give you an example: exactly the same phrases used on television and radio are used in the press.

Apart from that, the repression against the Left is quite different. In Tehran there is the possibility for free movement and open meetings, but elsewhere, especially in Khuzestan and Kurdistan, it is very difficult.

In Tehran, if someone is caught distributing leaflets, and they are not on a SAVAK file, they may spend a couple of nights in jail. But if they were caught doing this in Khuzestan or Kurdistan, they would be shot. It really depends on the situation.

In Isfahan incidents have happened. Some people arrested there have reported that the whole structure of SAVAK is intact. Indeed, many of the same people are employed by the present government.

In Evine prison in Tehran, many of the top interrogators have been kept on. Reports say they are being employed torturing leaders of Leftist groups. It is very similar to the repression under the Shah.

However, overall the repression is different in this sense

Previously, under the Shah, the repression came from the government. The police, SAVAK and all the organisation of repression belonged to the government.

Today, because of the ideology among the people, pupils and workers inform on socialists. Repression now has a mass base. It is structured among the people

Q *Where amongst the opposition do we locate the National Democratic Front?*

This is an organisation in which Leftist groups are trying to take part. They are hoping to recruit members from this source to build an independent communist force.

Q *Are you saying that this platform is part of the Leftist opposition to Khomeini?*

It is part of the secularist movement. But a part in which the Left dominates. There are some Leftist groups to the Left of the old National Front which are now taking part. Therefore, I would say, that on the whole, it is part of the Leftist opposition.

Q *How have the various Leftist groups responded to the situation?*

There are plenty of Leftist groups in Iran. These can be divided into three main sections.

One section is the old Tudeh Party (Communist Party) and its various sub-sections. The second is the Maoists. The other section I would term the independent Left.

Among the independent Left you have those groups which took part in guerrilla actions and those which didn't. The major force is the Fedayeen. Although they are not a big organisation, they have a lot of supporters and a long history of struggle.

Also in the independent Left is the Iranian section of the Fourth International—the Iranian SWP. This is a combination of two tendencies, one American, one British. They are based on student activists who studied in the West.

Then we come to the Union of the Left. This was organised in Iran after the revolution, composed of five groups, three from Germany and two that used to work in Iran. These were student based groups that have now returned.

On the Maoist side you have Unity Conference. This is made up of thirteen different groups. At the top is Paycar, the marxists who broke from the Mujahadeen-e-Khalk. Presently these groups are divided over the relationship to the Soviet Union and the 'three worlds theory.'

Q *How has the Left responded to these developments?*

From the beginning the CP supported Khomeini and everything he did. They never openly criticised him. The maoist groups are split. Some of them have always completely supported Khomeini.

One section which is quite active in Europe now as part of the Confederation of Iranian Students not only supports Khomeini, but is actually being payed by the government to support Khomeini. They are mainly centred on Germany. Another part of this maoist group is very critical of Khomeini. In many respects they are close to the independent Left.

As for the independent Left, I know of no groups which support Khomeini at the present. However, the Fedayais have been uncertain about their position. This is because they are a mixture of tendencies. They have no clear theoretical position and their organisation is fragmented.

The Fedayais were quite active in Turkmenistan and the north eastern part of Iran.

There, because of the decentralised type of organisation, their position was derived from local supporters. Therefore they made many mistakes.

The Fedayais were quite active in Turkmenistan and the north-eastern part of Iran. There, because of the decentralised type of organisation, their position was derived from local supporters. Therefore they made many mistakes.

When the Kurds rose in the west, the Turkomen planned to rise as well. Some reports said that 25,000 armed-men wanted to take part in a struggle. But the Fedayais prevented and dissolved the planned uprising. Now they are involved in struggles for the land.

In Kurdistan there is a group which can be associated with the maoists. They are actively agitating over the question of land. Their aim is to seize the land and form peasants councils in different areas. They are loosely organised in different villages where they have been active since the struggles against the Shah.

Q *What do you see as the perspectives for the Left?*

This is specifically related to the material conditions of Iran in the future. To what extent Khomeini is going to hold his ideological position and material position is very questionable. It depends on the developments of capitalism in the world.

When it comes to the ques-

tion of Iranian Society I think that the possibilities and perspectives of the Left are both dangerous and hopeful. This is because Khomeini will try to smash the Left to remove it as an alternative, especially since the Left are agitating over his failure to meet the demands of the masses.

The penetration of the masses by the Left will increase. It will become very important for the Left to try and develop the consciousness of the masses and then organise them.

Working among the workers directly remains difficult. Because the ruling ideology still dominates, workers are reluctant to be identified with Leftist slogans and groups. That is why I think the National Democratic Front is so important.

The National Democratic Front can act a medium through which we can work. Workers don't want to be anti-islamic but they do want their rights. The problem is Khomeini can't give them both. That is something from which we can take an advantage.

Q *What has happened to the Factory committees?*

These developments have been very interesting. At the moment they are being taken over one by one, by the clergy and islamic elements. But the very presence of the committee remains quite important and positive. In the future it can act a platform for the Labour movement



Happier times: A Fedayeen Rally at Tehran University June 29

THE EMPLOYERS OFFENSIVE

Dave Beecham



On 5th November, the Confederation of British Industry holds its third annual conference. Unlike the first two it has something to discuss and practical policy to formulate.

Resolutions will actually be put forward — something of a departure for the employers, who are normally scared of open dissent. The press will follow the conference in detail for the first time.

The fireworks are however likely to be on the second day. The CBI will then discuss publicly what it has been debating privately for the last nine months — setting up an insurance scheme to help companies resist strikes.

The proposal is more than just a single example of how employers aim to shift the balance of power in their favour: it is the focal point for an extensive revision of British capitalism's approach to the unions, and in particular the rank and file.

Alex Jarratt chairman of Reed International, is also chairman of the CBI's new policymaking committee, looking at ways in which employers can strengthen their position.

In a revealing comment, he remarked recently 'I wouldn't have taken the job if I thought it was a question of weeks. We have to think of the next five to ten years.'

Jarratt's thinking is not of course just along the lines of strike insurance — making it cheaper to resist long strikes — but takes in a whole battery of changes the CBI wants to see brought in. These include some of the Tory proposals for changes in the law; mainly those concerned with picketing.

The CBI also is committed to removing any state benefits from the families of those on strike. And it sees the concept of 'employer solidarity' which the Engineering Employers' Federation is championing, as vital for the future.

But Jarratt and other employers' leaders see this tougher strategy as only part of an overall approach. They are keen to build on the involvement of the TUC in controlling the rank and file as embodied in the 'concordat' earlier this year; they also intend to improve the process of 'involving' the rank and file — both through increased incorporation of full-time stewards into the management process and through various financial

'... we come back to the old question that every speaker has touched on, which is solidarity. Now, solidarity simply depends on members being ready to act together. Let us face it, in the past this has not been our strong suit, but if we are going to try and take the lead, try and exercise some leadership, which I believe this conference today has wanted us to do and is calling for, then we must have solidarity among the members to stand behind the initiatives and see them through.'

Sir Geoffrey Hawkins, closing speech to EEF conference, 27 February.

schemes such as profit-sharing.

It would be wrong to see the new employers' offensive and the use of increasingly class-conscious language as meaning that capitalism has once-and-for-all turned its back on the policies of the 1960s and 1970s — particularly over productivity bargaining.

Alex Jarratt is reported as saying 'our policies on the reform of collective bargaining i.e involvement of the TUC and having one main date for pay negotiations) and on worker involvement are as important, probably more impor-

tant, as our new policy on employer unity.'

All the same, recent developments — and most of all the attitude to the engineering strikes and lock outs — point to an enormous toughening of public policy on behalf of the very largest employers. Comments made by engineering management at their recent February 'study conference' could have been heard at any gathering of moderately militant employers over the past five years.

It is the confidence the employers now have to come out in the open which is new — exactly reflecting the lack of confidence felt by the majority of the shop floor leadership in the unions.

The EEF Deliberates

The EEF's deliberations in February have only recently been made available to the general public (£5 a copy seems a very reasonable price to pay for the insight into employers' thinking). The occasion was the first time such a large group of engineering bosses have been brought together, and the discussion centred on productivity, industrial relations, free collective bargaining and employer solidarity.

Key speeches were given by GKN's general manager for personnel, Dr James McFarlane and by the head of the German equivalent of the CBI, Dr Ernst-Gerhard Erdmann. There was a long intervention by Lord Robens and a lunchtime address by *Times* 'editor' William Rees-Mogg (to whom lock outs are somewhat familiar).

Running throughout the conference were the themes of employers' unity and restoring management power. The EEF used the occasion to launch its guidelines on disputes, which *Socialist Review* summarised last April (see box for details).

And Mr Anthony Frodsham referred to the new policy document — recommending lock outs as a way of solving disputes—as ‘a set of reasonable principles which companies will be expected to follow in the vast majority of circumstances in which they are applicable; and should not depart from, save in exceptional circumstances and with good reason.

‘We believe that the firm adoption by managements of these moderate principles (with the knowledge that other companies are doing the same) will contribute much to producing a more rational and stable industrial relations climate in the industry.

‘I hope, too, that from these modest beginnings we shall be able to encourage other employers’ organisations to create the conditions for greater solidarity within their own ranks.’



European Aspect

The presence of Germany’s top employer representative at the EEF conference was not merely decorative. In a long speech Dr Erdmann stressed the need for a common European approach as part of the overall moves towards economic and political interdependence:

‘Occasional attempts to find common standards so far have not been very successful. I am nevertheless convinced that as employers’ organisations in European countries, we all have reason

not only to continue but to improve and accelerate our collaboration in the field of labour policy.’

Nor is this just talk. The EEF’s reply to this year’s Confed claim included several references to the steelworkers’ lock out in Germany last year and the employers’ resulting victory.

The EEF’s resistance to the shorter working week is directly in line with Europe-wide policy decided in conjunction with the German employers’ federation — the BDA, of which Dr Erdmann is director — and the Italians in the Confindustria and Federmeccanica.

Back in November 1978 in fact the Italian employers’ leader, Paolo Savona, was declaring his determination to resist the unions’ 35-hour week claim, which was done successfully this summer in the face of two weeks’ strike action in the engineering industry.

Dr Erdmann’s contribution to the EEF debate was most instructive when he dealt with the employers’ problems over dealing with centralised bargaining. The right to strike he said corresponds to the right to lock out — above all where there is conflict at national level.

Leadership

The word ‘leadership’ cropped up so many times at the EEF’s conference that the audience might have thought itself at a Nuremberg rally. The need for a ‘lead’ has replaced the need for ‘moderation’ as the dominant slogan of such gatherings.

The new government is acting as a marvellous catalyst in this process; it has boosted the more hawkish employers immensely.

These employers are by and large the big boys. On the general council of the 6,000

member EEF, for example, there are six directors, of Vickers and six of Tube



Investments; five directors of Lloyds Bank and five of Rolls-Royce.

There is a tremendous concentration of power among the larger firms, who have been dominating the engineering dispute. Thus the first lock outs were in Rolls-Royce, Birmid, Delta Metal, TI, GEC, GKN — about a fifth of the EEF leadership has seats on the boards of these companies. Certainly this is something of a lead!

The other side of the coin is that the huge majority of the member firms have almost no part in the running of the EEF or the real policy of the federation. Which is why Confed officials have been able to win a few early pay victories against the lower rank companies.

Meanwhile the response to the lock-out policy from the rest of top management was very warm. The EEF is after all the largest single ‘member’ of the CBI, and its president, Sir Geoffrey Hawkins (Stone-Platt, Chloride and the Alliance Investment Company), is a member of the CBI council.

The CBI carried its approval of EEF policy by acclamation, and other leading employers — like ICI and other chemical firms — were quick to offer moral support.

But the CBI is also prepared to go further — as its strike insurance debate

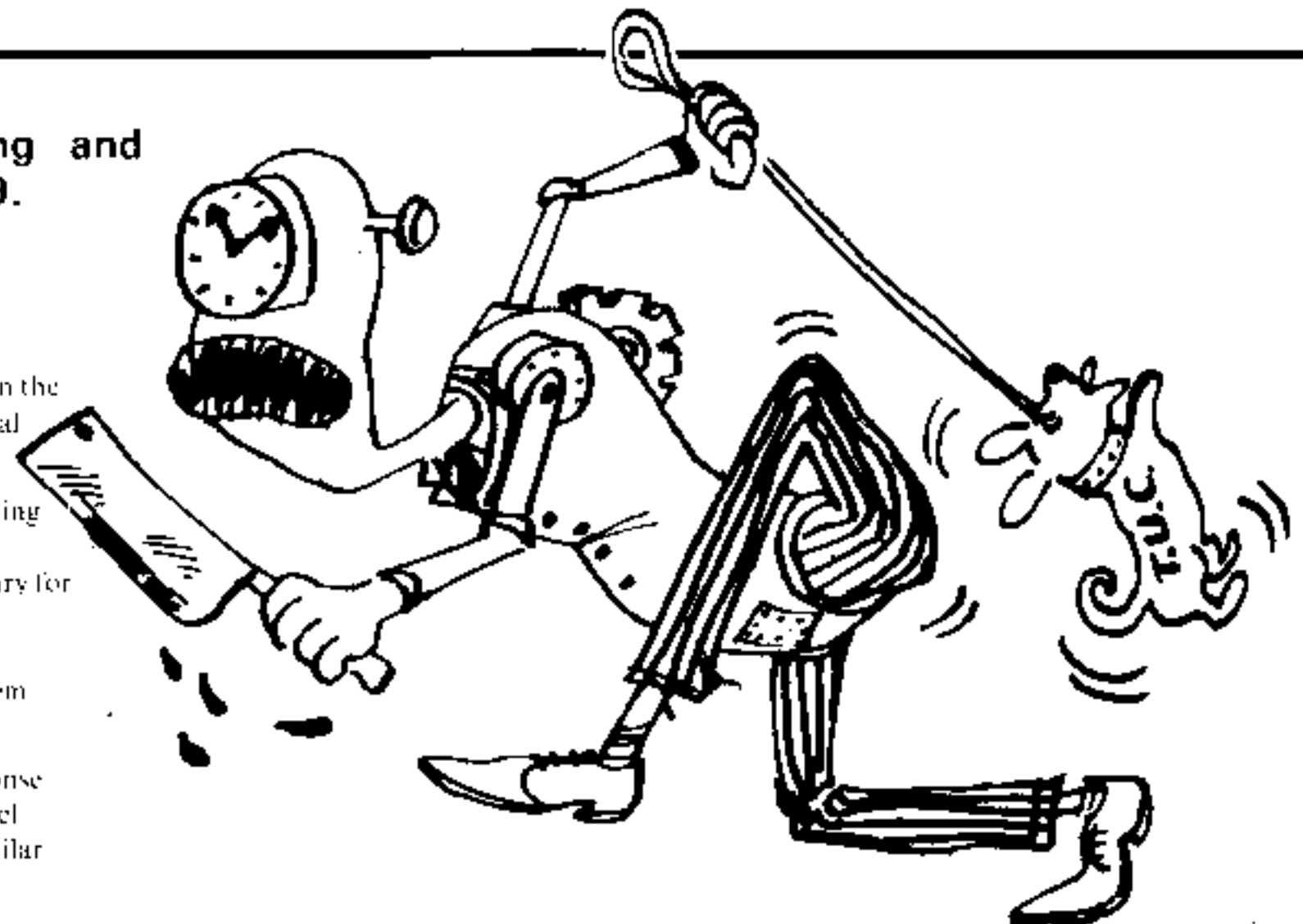
The EEF’s ‘Guidelines on Collective Bargaining and Response to Industrial Action’, issued March 1979.

Purpose of the guidelines

- 1 These guidelines aim to help employers achieve greater confidence and coherence in the practice of collective bargaining, and in responding to the threat or fact of industrial action.
- 2 The fragmented character of bargaining in engineering — with some bargaining taking place at national level, some at company level, and some at plant level — and the different approaches to bargaining of different unions, make it particularly necessary for employers to approach the bargaining process with clarity of objective and determination in its pursuit. However, it is also necessary for an employer to feel confident that the principles on which he acts and his methods of implementing them are generally accepted and shared by other employers.
- 3 These guidelines therefore aim to provide a basis of principled approach and response to aspects of collective bargaining, so that any employer following them will not feel isolated. Rather, he will appreciate that other employers would act similarly in similar circumstances and, indeed, themselves expect him so to act.

Collective bargaining

- a Collective bargaining should take place against the background of a continuous and positive programme of fostering employee involvement in the company through the best practice of communication of information and of consultation over possible change. It should be the employer’s objective to create conditions in which both sides engaged in the collective bargaining process work from the common premise of jointly wishing to further the prosperity of the company and the well-being and security of its employees.
- b Where an employer has rights under a national, local or domestic agreement, he must be vigilant to exercise and maintain them. The waiving of such rights damages the authority of other employers, and erodes the utility of collective bargaining and the value of agreements as a whole.
- c No concession should be entertained by employers at domestic level on an issue which is clearly reserved for national negotiation.



- d In the area of domestic negotiations, employers should seek to eliminate fragmented and disorderly bargaining. They should aim to achieve joint negotiations in a multi-union plant — except to the extent that separate negotiations with staff unions and manual unions are clearly more appropriate. They should also aim to synchronise settlement dates within a plant where that is clearly conducive to non-competitive bargaining. They should secure the inclusion of all substantive matters in a single agreement lasting for at least twelve months. Improvements or alterations to an agreed settlement or additional claims should be deferred until the resumption of negotiations on the agreed due date.
- e Employers should open and handle negotiations with the aim of reaching a settlement prior to the implementation date. Company negotiators should possess proper expertise and authority to prevent avoidable delay in reaching a settlement. Undue protraction of negotiations which are not attributable to the employer should not yield a back-dated settlement.

will show. Unlike the EEF and the German employers, the CBI does not envisage a central strike fund — it would cost too much and could be bled dry by endless 'small' disputes.

Instead there will be an insurance scheme, with the larger — and more strike-prone — firms contributing most. This would operate much as an ordinary insurance scheme does, incidentally relieving the CBI of the embarrassing job of deciding when and how much to pay out.

An outside body would decide such questions — which means workers will probably be able to see which firms are

contributing how much. The problem for the CBI really lies in cooking up a system which can survive the 'British' sort of strike as opposed to the 'German' sort, which tends to be centralised, official and controllable. The options should become clear in November.

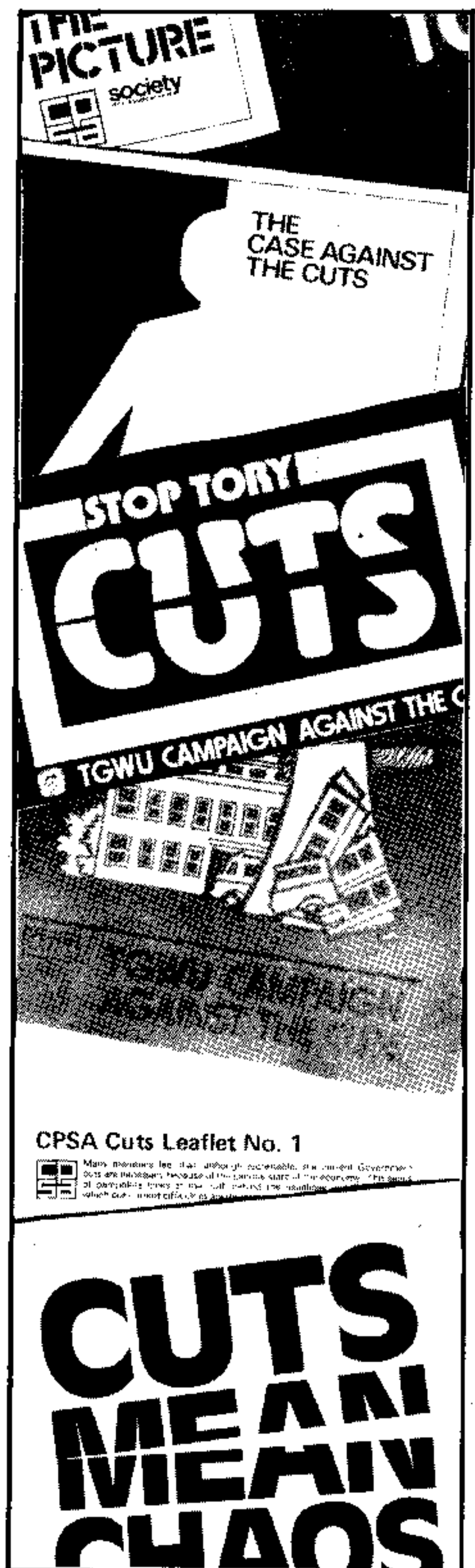
What is already clear, however, is the cockiness of employers in general, basking in the tough-talking atmosphere produced by the EEF. Their feeling now is that union leadership are in disarray, reduced to internal squabbles over the Labour Party, constitution or recruitment.

The TUC's non-response to the threat

of government changing the rules on strikes and picketing has also encouraged them as has the pathetic performance of Duffy & Co. in the dispute.

There's an excellent story surrounding the so-called 'six-hour' negotiations between the EEF and the unions on 18th September. The union side came in expecting to bargain — and were read a prepared statement.

The talks themselves lasted some 20 minutes out of the six hours. It's the sort of approach a lot of companies would love to be able to emulate in the months to come.



CUTS

THE OFFICIAL POLICY

Phil Marfleet

Speaking to members in Manchester in July, CPSA vice-president Len Lever announced that "we cannot promise support for any action against the cuts."

Within six weeks CPSA members in East London were told that their threatened stoppages would be backed at a national level, and in Hackney were encouraged to leave work to join a protest march directed at health and school cuts.

In the period after the announcement of the Budget cuts — £3.5 billion — the union leadership were silent. Over the last fortnight two of the key unions — NUPE and T&GWU have promised that *all* activity against the cuts will be endorsed as official.

The union leaderships have woken up with a jolt. Over the past two years most of them had hardly even squeaked as the Labour cuts took effect. In 1976, after the announcement of the Healey cuts (£2.5 billion), most public sector union leaders at least passively supported local activities, and then the national Day of Action and demonstration in London. What they saw silenced them for the remainder of Labour's term.

The 80,000 who came onto the streets suggested that any further encouragement given to the rank and file could produce a movement which would cause them huge embarrassment.

Suppressing anything other than a verbal response to the cuts, union leaders like Ken Thomas of CPSA went back to the more comfortable routine of negotiation, signature of the 'Gang of Twelve's' *A Better Way*, and sell-out of the membership in the strikes of April and May.

But under the Tories the officials will need a different set of policies. For the likes of Thomas, 'his' union could emerge from

three years of Tory government minus a third of the membership. The planned civil service cuts of 20% mean job losses of up to 150,000.

For all the unions in health, local government and services, education and civil service, there is a real *material interest* in putting up a show this time. Tens of thousands of members stand to be lost, *and with the tens of thousands of subscriptions*. No union leaders can afford to be seen putting up an unsatisfactory show especially where, as in health or council employment, there is already competition for members.

In addition the officials will already be receiving the first hints that they are going to be under severe pressure from the rank and file this time round. It is inconceivable that both NUPE and the CPSA would have backed the Hackney demonstration four or five months ago, but the rising anger in the East End hospitals and dole offices forced their hand.

This material interest linked to the pressure from below will be the main impulse for big national campaigns from the public sector leaderships. And the left Labour sympathies of numbers of the lower-level officials (and the odd top dogs) will give a sometimes quite radical flavour to the operation.

Though the trend is clear, the performance so far varies widely from union to union.

NALGO General Secretary Drain can only mouth generalities: 'NALGO members must make use of all the means open to a trade union to defend pay and conditions and jobs in its services'.

On fighting the cuts on the ground he is bankrupt: '(the cuts) mean a threat to the jobs of NALGO members and pressure on

them to undertake the extra work resulting from unfilled vacancies. I urge them not to do this, despite the loyalty I know many members feel towards their service and the public.' (Public Service September '79)

Even to begin to put up resistance NALGO members need an official policy of strikes, blacking, bans on overtime, job-sharing and flexibility. Drain can only 'urge' that extra work is not taken on. The official NALGO publication 'Public Expenditure into the '80s' is silent on even the most basic of measures.

Apart from formal denunciations the GMWU, COHSE and ASTMS have likewise produced no hint of a programme of action.

The CPSA has the bones of such a programme. Official circulars record that NEC policy includes:

- (a) a complete ban on overtime.
- (b) a complete ban on temporary promotion and substitution.
- (c) one person one job, and no working out of grade.
- (d) a ban on co-operation with staff inspections and work improvement programmes.

In reality, as Len Lever had pointed out the officials had no intention of campaigning for these policies — where the rank and file insist on pursuing them (as in East London), they get belated support. The floppiness of the CPSA position is well expressed by the pamphlet 'The Case Against the Cuts — The Other Half of the Picture' (jointly produced with SCPS). In 37 closely argued pages against both Labour and Tory cuts policies, the authors can find no room for the simplest reference to fighting back.

While the NUT are pledged to defend the education service, they have developed an interesting mechanism which allows the rank and file to let off steam and still avoids a real campaign against the prospect of 70,000 jobs lost by 1982.

The NUT 'Action Committee' will provide official support for no-cover and other actions when local associations apply for support. So far they backed most applications. Policy may be changing with the publication of two militant — sounding anti-cuts pamphlets, and the announcements of an official campaign against the cuts in Avon, where 406 teacher redundancies are threatened. Whether tis will really involve the membership remains to be seen.

On paper the T&GWU and NUPE have the most promising policy. The NUPE leaflet 'Plan for Action' circulated throughout the membership — includes a 'code' calling for meetings in each workplace to investigate proposed cuts; 'strong and effective' opposition to all AHA plans which threaten jobs, including token strikes, non-co-operation, rearrangement of schedules and blacking; and emphasising the importance of workplace organisation and shop stewards.

This is useful and can be the basis for organising activity which can build towards the sorts of tactics — widespread strikes, and demonstrations linked to the private sector, and occupations and work-ins,

which can achieve results.

The T&GWU's 'Stop the Tory Cuts' campaign — with tens of thousands of colourful posters, and masses of literature, is equally devoted to recruitment. With an apparently militant stand on the cuts, the T&G is looking to grow in areas traditionally organised by the health unions.

The officials' response, then, is so far pretty patchy. But the explosion of anti-cuts campaigns all round the country means that they will all be coming under pressure soon. Even the likes of Geoffrey Drain will have to do better.

National campaigns in the individual unions, with token strikes, days of action, blacking and some bans on overtime are likely to be general within a few months. And there are quite likely to be calls for a national mobilisation like that of 1976, — though it will need more bite than the official co-ordinating body, The National Steering Committee Against the Cuts, at present possesses, to pull it off.

The union leaderships will have to put up a fight this time round. We shall, of course, be ready to welcome each advance they make. But in the knowledge that they will have to be pushed to the limit to endorse really effective action, and that anyway we cannot wait for the official call. For the sake of hundreds of thousands of jobs we have to get on with it now.

*Official policy on the cuts is changing daily. As Socialist Review goes to press we learn that Geoffrey Drain of NALGO, has, indeed gone at least one better, with the statement that:

'NALGO will pursue with the utmost vigour its campaign at national and local levels to secure reversal of Government policy.'

This was interpreted by the *Financial Times* as meaning 'full support for members who fight public service cuts'. Just how much support this really means can only be tested in practice. Like the statements of Alan Fisher and Moss Evans, this may at least give the rank and file the chance to campaign on the ground with the enormous advantage that the endorsement 'official', can give.



Geoffrey Drain General Secretary NALGO

BEHIND THE BLANK SCREEN

Mark Paget ACTT

The dispute which blacked out ITV for most of August and all of September began as a simple hotting-up of the annual round of pay talks between the employers' organisation, ITCA, and the three main television unions, NATTKE, the EEPTU, and ACTT.

It rapidly escalated into a battle for control of the future of commercial television in Britain. With their eyes on renewal of the franchise, and the lush pastures of ITV 2, the independent companies deliberately forced a showdown with the aim of achieving, in the words of the ITCA Chairman, 'the total capitulation of the three main unions within ITV'. The weapon, as in other industries—new technology.

The ITV companies provoked the ACTT strike in the hopes of a quick knock-out during August when few programmes are made, and ad revenue is at its lowest. As the dispute lengthened into September, casting its shadow over the lucrative Autumn advertising campaigns (including happily Sir James Goldsmith's £750,000 splash on the launch of *Now!* magazine) the companies began to realise that they had underestimated the strength and determination of the union rank and file.

The nature of the claim differed between the unions, NATTKE and EEPTU went for 25 per cent, the ACTT for a 'substantial' increase, plus reactivation of a cost-of-living clause which had lain dormant throughout the period of Labour pay restraint. In July the rank and file of NATTKE and the electricians rejected an initial 'final' offer of 9 per cent despite the recommendation of their own negotiation teams. Already, as the *Financial Times* conceded, the rank and file was making the running. By the end of July a new 'final' offer of 15 per cent was made with fringe benefits amounting to a further 1½ per cent.



Alan Sapper ACTT General Secretary

The ACTT negotiators, having learned from the mistakes of the other two unions, were about to recommend rejection to their own shop stewards when the companies suddenly, and unexpectedly upped the ante. Ron Carrington, the ITCA chief negotiator withdrew the offer and threatened suspension of all ACTT members in ITV unless they resumed 'normal working'.

This meant working alongside management filling the jobs of members of other unions in dispute. A week of intensifying guerilla action followed leading up to Friday 10 August when Alan Sapper, ACTT General Secretary called out his members throughout the network. Within a few days the companies had locked out NATKE and the EPTU. Then they sat back and waited.

There followed a long period of silence punctuated by brief fruitless attempts to get round the table. With hindsight it seems the companies planned all along to hold out for most of August in the hopes of achieving a knock-out blow to a demoralised workforce, eager to get back to work, at the end of the month.

Accordingly while Sapper continued to insist that the dispute was about nothing more than pay, when the companies unveiled their demands at the ACAS meeting at a Preston motel on 3 September they included two bombshells: firstly, an undertaking to implement new technology and to end unspecified 'restrictive practices'; and secondly, no local deals. Both are explosive issues with implications way beyond simple questions of pay. However,

the companies had seriously miscalculated the mood of the membership. *Staff resistance was hardened by ham-fisted and arrogant management tactics, or what one executive referred to as: '...the Sportsnight school of industrial relations'.* The unions turned them down flat. From that point on, the tide began to run against the companies.

Pay in ITV averages £7,000 to £8,000. At the lower end production assistants may earn as little as £3,500, at the other some camera operators or directors may earn in excess of £15,000 per annum with overtime, or freelance work. However under Labour from 1975 while ITV companies' profits went up a staggering 189 per cent, and inflation rose by 73 per cent, ACTT members pay increased only 46 per cent.

As the ACTT entered the dispute it pointed out that an immediate 35 per cent increase for union members would have left them no better off by July 1980 than they were in July 1975. There existed a widespread feeling that with the ending of pay restraint it was time to make up for lost ground.

A television franchise is, notoriously, a licence to print money. Advertising revenue last year was £363 million, without the dispute it should have reached £420 million this year. The unions claim would have cost some £3 million to pay in full, the equivalent of the ITCA companies' losses in the first three days of the dispute.

This high-profit industry is however, bedevilled by production bottlenecks. The unions can produce blank screens at

the flick of a switch. Under Labour's years of pay policy this has resulted in an annual national agreement in line with Government guidelines, accompanied by lucrative local deals under rubrics which got round the pay code.

The companies bought industrial peace, so that they wouldn't lose a second of richly profitable airtime. Their ability to pay derives from their monopoly of the most effective means of advertising available. They do not exist by making programmes, but by selling time at rates up to £5,500 for a 30 second prime time slot in the London area.

1981 sees the allocation of the new franchises. Already the existing companies are discreetly jostling for a slice of some of the most profitable action to be had. What is more the Fourth Channel, promised by Tory home secretary Willie Whitelaw to commercial interests, is expected to bring in another £150-200 million ad revenue annually.

11 years ago when the current franchises were handed out, the unions, in particular the ACTT were important in their drafting, and succeeded in gaining a significant degree of control over hire and fire and staffing levels. Hence their relatively strong position.

The companies are eager, at all costs, to prevent this happening again. As in Fleet Street, they have at their disposal a new 'labour-saving' technology, electronic News-Gathering equipment, known here as ENG.

ENG consists of a video camera which records straight onto a tape machine carried on a backpack by the sound person. It is what Jane Fonda and Michael Douglas use in *The China Syndrome*, and if a TV station substitutes it for film it has an effect rather like the Black Death. Suddenly three quarters of the people aren't around any more.

However as eminent a figure as Sir Charles Curran, former Director General of the BBC, and now Managing Director of Britain's major TV news agency Visnews, told a conference in September that the experience in America, where ENG is in general use, is that it is neither as cheap, nor as high quality as was originally claimed.

Nonetheless the companies, who have been giving ENG a trial run on ITN clearly see it as a weapon with which to create docile unions, cut staff, and costs, and increase profits. The unions have allowed test runs of ENG to go ahead, and ahead, and are not opposed to its introduction in principle, provided there are adequate safeguards over pay, jobs and conditions.

Even so they have been portrayed in the press as overpaid, underworked luddites, anxious to stem the inevitable tide of progress. This attitude even finds an echo within the ACTT itself, particularly amongst those who most identify themselves with management. Indeed in recent years most ITV companies have promoted production staff into senior management positions.

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Gus MacDonald, a Granada producer, and former socialist spoke for many such in the *New Statesman* in mid-September. There he took up the usual 'overmanning' argument, wringing his hands at an industry conducted in 'ITV factories', where 'creative enthusiasm was no longer contagious' and the danger was 'a haemorrhage of creative talent'.

He sees himself somewhere outside and beyond the struggle between Capital and Labour ('it's only a fool who attempts to interpose himself between them.') Like many producers and directors, he is frankly appalled at shortsighted union members who will not let him play with the exciting new technology just because they want to hang on to their jobs.

In the same week the *economist*, less inclined to equivocate, said of the companies: 'They want to be able to introduce new technology and ordinary new equipment without paying staff extra to push different coloured buttons'.

The companies first set of demands, at Preston, included a generalised undertaking from the unions to lift unspecified 'restrictive practices'. Allied with the clause on new technology, it was a blatant attempt, from a presumed position of strength to smash the unions' hard-won degree of control over con-

ditions of production. The dispute had implications for the BBC too. The ABS will obviously use the settlement as an argument for a better deal for their own members. Moreover, by coincidence, the replay of the contested ACTT-ABS merger ballot took place in the middle of the dispute. Whatever the outcome, the two unions are drawing together.

The Thatcher government too, were no doubt watching the dispute with interest. The press, almost without exception, took the employers' part. This was scarcely surprising, for, as Paul Foot pointed out in the *New Statesman*, newspaper and magazine publishing groups are among the major shareholders of almost all the commercial television companies.

So it was that September saw a press campaign, fed by the employers, full of stories of union members bursting to get back to work but thwarted by the dictatorial union bosses. The *Financial Times*, however, spelled out the truth: 'August may be the companies' best time for a dispute, but September is arguably the worst'.

The ITCA had not bargained on a long seige. The companies' losses, which the *FT* had estimated at around £10-14 million during August, their slackest month for earnings, began to become serious as the deadlines for major time-bound Autumn advertising campaigns slipped by, lost forever.

Since wages account for two-thirds of the companies' bills, and a large slice of revenue goes to the ITV levy, they could ride out August with ease, but by mid-September outside pressures began to tell, particularly anguished cries from

increasingly desperate advertising agencies and specialist firms like K-Tel Records dependent upon ITV for their entire income. The smaller companies within ITCA began to show signs of breaking rank and hawks like Paul Fox of Yorkshire TV found themselves on the defensive.

Unlike Times Newspapers Ltd, the TV companies do not have other major sources of income to bolster them through the fight on new technology. Indeed a highly profitable company like Thames (profits of £8.65 million last year) is a major contributor to its ailing parent company, EMI.

The companies also learned from the events preceding the dispute that union negotiators can no longer safely deliver the rank and file in this industry. Labour's pay policy in an industry with rapidly increasing profits and highly skilled workers able to hold a gun to their employers' heads led swiftly to a situation where the annual pay round kept within government guidelines but was inevitably followed by local deals which kept real earnings rising fast. The effect has been to strengthen local shop stewards at the expense of the national union leadership.

An attempt to produce a settlement in late September collapsed. The sticking point was the introduction of new technology. Paul Fox floated the possibility of the companies operating an emergency service without the unions.

At the time of writing it is not clear how the ITV dispute will end. Whatever the outcome, it is clear that the employers will continue to seek the introduction of new technology in order to protect their profits and undermine shopfloor power.

PALESTINE! LIVES!

On their return from a visit to Lebanon, Vanessa Stilwell and Glyn Secker record their impressions, and their experiences with the comrades of the Palestinian Resistance.

Beirut

'What do you think about the Palestinians?' asks the soldier at the checkpoint. Our reply is diplomatic. To our relief it goes down well. The officer turns out to be a Palestinian serving in the Syrian PLA.

He wants us to know that the civil war was not about religion. It was about the rich and the poor. A glance through the stamps in our British passports, some more polite conversation, and he instructs the soldiers to let us go.

We walk back through the rubble and the desolate filth. These are the hollow and broken remains of the Bourj, the old city, now recognisable. A heritage gone. Pockets are still inhabited, people resisting grimly, there's no choice.

Barricades of earth and rubble divide the town — us here, the Phalangists on the other side. Syrian troops in the middle. We'd gone down to take photographs. From our flat on the hill we could see this area.

At night it is a target for the Phalange. Spent bullets would whistle past our window harmlessly. But for the people who live here the war has never stopped. Uninterrupted sleep is impossible. There is the occasional death, and all the time this endless seige.

On the sea road stand the cavernous shells of the Hilton and the Holiday Inn, massive and detested symbols of Israel's financiers. And perched on the edge of this desolation, like a grotesque joke, is the exclusive St Georges, now reduced to its restaurant and swimming pool, but still quietly buzzing with its elite crowd.

They are not the rightists — their resort is



The aftermath of an Israeli Air-raid

at Jounie, further north — but they are of another class. And as the officer said, 'It was a war between the poor and the rich.' Not far away are the grimy remains of the red-light district.

A terrible sadness grips one. It is all so barren. The camps of Sabra and Shatila are an absolute contrast. Here it is busy, noisy, there is a confidence and an anger. Around the PLO offices in town, Kalashnikovs everywhere, you can *feel* the determination. Early last year this was proved; the Israeli invaders, attempting to take Tyre, got a very bloody nose. It was a big morale boost, and morale has climbed ever since.

Then there is the water crisis. In the camps the pipes are everywhere, thin conduits which criss-cross the paths. But the supply is intermittent, sometimes just one day a week.

While Lebanon has an abundance of fresh water, people are forced to *buy* it in bottles. Sohah, Nada and Naas are hated names. Their litre bottles cost 15p each. The average weekly wage is about £20. These companies are in terrible league with the government. Hence the water shortage.

At the beginning of the civil war one of the popular slogans was, 'We want bread, we want wheat, we don't want Sohah water'. That officer was right. Yet he serves in an army which, during that very war, turned traitor to the Palestinians.

Just when the Phalange were on their knees, the Syrians changed sides, and led a bloody massacre of the Palestinian people. To be a Palestinian is to live with treachery.

Arnoun

The old crusader castle of Beaufort stands high above the Litani River — the front line. For centuries it has withstood all attacks but now the battlements lie crumbled, smashed by US shells fired by the Israelis and Haddad. Outside the inner fortification stands a deserted tin shack with a UN sign tacked to the wall. Norwegian UNIFIL troops had a post here for 3 months, till they ran from the fighting a few weeks ago.

We are led into a dark, cavernous dungeon, deep within the hillside. Around the walls hang Kalashnikovs bazookas and gas masks. On either side stands a narrow bed and at the far end a desk and chairs. On the desk stands a field telephone and a Tilley lamp dimly lighting up the smiling faces of young soldiers. The youngest is 15. He and his 16 year old brother have three sisters and four other brothers.

'All of us have joined the PLO', says Hassan. 'Our family has had to move 4 times now — since the war they've lived in Sidon. Our ten year old brother, he's a fighter too — he's learning to be a mechanic.' Molla, a 17 year old goes on. 'Here we work together. We are all brothers and call each other brother. We have no leader and are like a family. Every one has his duty'. (Few bases have any women soldiers).

Hassan explains how his best friend was killed — 'That's when I became a fighter'. The eldest, aged 37, remembers his childhood in a Palestinian village just across the border. Now he longs to take his own children there. Someone brings us sweet Arab tea. Everyone takes turn with the

cooking.

All their food and water has to be brought from Nabatiye by landrover along a narrow shell — packed road that winds between deserted farms and villages. There is an eerie silence in these villages as if the whole community had suddenly left for a day's outing. In some of the surrounding fields, a few remaining peasants hurry to harvest their crops with help from guerilla fighters under constant threat of attacks. Their families have already become refugees for this area is raided incessantly.

Yet the harvesters are the lucky ones. Other wheat and tobacco fields and citrus and banana plantations lie blackened, or hide so many unexploded shells that they are unsafe to work in.

Morale at the base is high. The castle is a key position from where they can see all the enemies' ground movements. Despite daily shelling, the cells beneath the castle are relatively safe and only five or six people have been killed for seriously wounded since 1975 when they first occupied it.

They know that not only have the Israelis failed to turn the local Lebanese against them but that many are fighting alongside them. Most important of all though, they said, was the view from the top. They led us up and out through a maze of passageways and craters. Peering out across the valley we can see the hills of Palestine. 'Look; our country.'

Saida — The Hospital

Dr Said Dajanay, Director of Education, Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

'I have just come from giving a lecture to some of my trainee nurses. You know, I am so old they look to me as a father. But today I feel very ashamed. We were on the top floor of the hospital at Saida Israel Phantoms started to attack the area. Their noise is terrifying. They go so fast you can hardly see them. They are well named.

'I suggested we should go to the ground floor for safety. They asked me, "Why are you frightened, Doctor? They will never frighten us." So we finished the session where we were. They are so young. I have given my life to the revolution, but they showed me up. I felt very ashamed.

'Can you tell me why the Israelis do it? They are bombing ordinary people. They are bombing our hospitals, and our children, day after day. Whats the sense. What are they doing. Why are they doing this to us. Can you tell me. It's totally inhuman. What do they gain.

'I have spent all my life as a doctor, dedicated to medicine, to nursing people. Often the work is long and difficult. But I tell you, we cannot keep up — they are destroying people faster than we can mend them. I've spent 30 years curing people.

'Our humanity — what's the point, it seems futile. All my life I have believed violence is wrong, but what is left, what can we do. Its inhuman, and they are making us inhuman. I cannot control my anger any more. They are turning us into animals. If I was young I would go and join the fedayeen. I would join them now if they would let me. That is all that is left to us.'

London

Back in London on a Sunday morning, 16th September, warm autumn sunshine. On the radio, a Rabbi is explaining the significance of the Jewish New Year a propitious year — 40 years since the Nazi Holocaust but a year of peace, of Camp David. He talks of a resurgence of Judaism — identification with Israel. He talks of a concern for human rights in South Africa, Rhodesia, Vietnam. Incredulously, we stop and listen.

'Forty years since the Holocaust', he said, 'Since Hitler's "Final Solution to the Jewish Problem", forty years since my grandparents died in the gas chambers'.

But it is also forty years since the Zionists began to actively implement their 'final solution' to the Palestinian 'problem', 40 years since the holocaust of the Palestinians began, marked out by such massacres as those of Deir Yassin and of Tel al Zaatar, and which continues to this day in southern Lebanon.

For we Jews the horror, if not the memory, of the Holocaust is over. For 3½ million Palestinians, it is their day to day life. While writing, an image flashes into my mind — the PLO Foreign Information Office in Beirut. On the wall a poster, 'Jews Yes, Zionism No'.

In an article on the Camp David agreement, Phil Marfleet reflected that, 'as a plan for Palestinian national rights the whole operation stinks. Not merely do the Israelis have an option on bottling up a small section of the Palestinian people on a mere fraction of their land, they have an agreement from Sadat that over an extended period *they can do as they wish with Palestinians*, both inside and outside Israel'

(Socialist Review November 1978).

He was right. Unhindered by economic pressures or western criticism, the Israelis



Nabatiye

are doing exactly what they want. You won't know it, because the western capitalist press has censored all but the most obscene attacks on Palestinian civilians, but Israeli raids by air and sea, together with land attacks by their ally, Major Haddad and his 500 strong right-wing Lebanese militia, are an almost daily occurrence in Lebanon.

One raid which was reported while they were there was directed at the already half-destroyed town of Nabatiye, where the neighbouring refugee camp was razed to the ground some months ago. The Guardian reported that 'heavy artillery from the Israeli border region pounded villages and Palestinian military positions around the southern market town of Nabatiye. The shelling damaged several buildings but nobody was injured'. In fact, the school was shelled and eleven children were killed that day.

The paper continues, 'The air raid was the first since a devastating attack against the coastal town of Damour on 22nd July'. Yet there had been several raids every day during the previous week, (ie. since 15 August), and attacks every other day throughout the summer.

Each day a few more are killed. But count up the numbers of dead and wounded, of homes demolished, of fields and livelihoods lost, and the accumulated hours of bombardment over a three month period and you come up with some horrifying statistics. 'Little and often' seems to be the Israeli motto in their war of annihilation — for there is no doubt that this is their aim.

Careful attention to these statistics shows that the Israelis are escalating their attacks. The frequency, length and intensity of raids is increasing and many Palestinians believe they are but a prelude to a massive offensive against them within the next few months.

The Israelis are attempting to expel the population, smash the economy, turn the people of south Lebanon against the Palestinians and scare the Syrians into putting pressure on them. Israeli tactics today are similar to those which they employed against the Palestinians and Jordanians in 1967/1970 — but this time the Palestinians have nowhere else to go.

Crudely, Carter's attitude seems to be 'Look, the Israelis are going to beat you to death unless you submit. So give in or this fierce police dog will keep savaging you. We're willing to do a Camp David for everyone'.

But the message is coming back loud and clear from every Palestinian. Umm Imad, mother of 15 in Sabra Camp who has lost a brother and two sisters in the fighting, whose every child bears a scar, whose husband was imprisoned by the Israelis for 3 years, who has 3 times become a refugee (to Gaza in '48, Jordan in '67 and finally to Lebanon in '70):

'We won't give up. There is one thing only in all our minds and that is Palestine. We want only our land, no other land. My children ask, "Mama, where is our country?", I tell them our country is Palestine. I have borne my children for Palestine and they will all be fighters for their country. We shall never give up fighting. PALESTINE LIVES'

MEMPHIS (AP) — IRAN: With three Iranian Army armored columns positioned less than 20 miles away, Kurdish guerrillas receive military training from an old fighter (C) on top of a tank in this rebel town. The Kurdish guerrillas are said to possess at least 7 tanks, heavy artillery, assault rifles and automatic rifles. AP



THE ENDURANCE OF KURDISTAN

Jon Bearman

The Ayotollah Khomeini has unleashed a wave of repression against the Kurdish nation. Day after night the hardware of modern warfare is pounding the Kurdish hills around Saqqez and Mahabad. Kurds not making for the hills have been hunted and rounded-up. Many have been shot as a public exhibition.

To the Kurds there is nothing new about this challenge. From the ancient Greek General, Xenophon, to the Ayotollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Kurdish people have courageously staved-off obliteration.

They have been trodden underfoot by czarist armies, massacred by forces of Turkish nationalism, strafed by Iraqi jets and blasted by Iranian helicopter gunships. But they have always endured.

So when Khomeini says that the Kurds must 'join Islam' or face harsh punishment, the statement should be seen in the light of their monumental struggle. For Khomeini himself is only too aware that the resilience of the Kurds, especially in the current

upswing of their fight for self-determination, can easily jeopardise the order he has planned for Iran.

That is why he has despatched troops and 'revolutionary guards' to Kurdistan. It is also why he has declared: 'There is no differences between the nationalities.' For any accommodation with the Kurds could cause the counter-revolution, which is now in full swing, to backfire or misfire.

Successful counter-revolution, by its very nature, entails the crushing of all opposition. If the regime failed to destroy the organised Kurdish resistance, it would be left with an uneven but dangerously destabilizing balance of forces. Hence the speed with which it has acted.

The Kurdish Nation

Of course Khomeini's claim that there is no difference between the nationalities is as bogus as it's purpose. The Kurds are a

distinct nation of people. They are united, but paradoxically also divided, by two factors: a common language and a common territory.

United by language because it is Kurdish, but divided because there are sharply-contrasting dialects; Zaza in the north, Kermaji in the centre and south and Gurani around Kermanshah.

Divided territorially because the mountainous country of Kurdistan straddles three states, Turkey, Iran and Iraq, and stretches to a fourth, Syria. Over the years the territorial partition, more than any other, has been the dilemma of the Kurds.

Altogether, Kurdistan covers approximately 409,000 kms. Judging the Kurdish population within this area is difficult, but it is somewhere between 14-22 million. The greatest concentration is in Turkey, where it is said to be over 7 million. Next comes Iran with over 4 million, then Iraq with 2.5 million and Syria with 500,000. In the Soviet Union there are also some 600,000 displaced Kurds.

Another unifying factor, but one that has frequently been overplayed, is that of religion. Except for some 60,000 Kurds who worship a peacock god, they are muslim. These muslims are overwhelmingly Sunni's of the Shafe'i sect, whereas in both Iran and Iraq (although not Turkey) it is Shia that dominates.

Religious organisation is important to the Kurds for the same reasons it is important to the Iranian petty bourgeoisie: it's capacity to galvanise and mobilise masses of people, often overnight.

As any genuine nation, the Kurdish nation has been made by a historical process; a process that has included it's own gruelling struggle. Their right to self-determination and a separate state is a *historical* right as against the 'legal right' of such artificial states as Pakistan.

Origins

Until the late 1920s the Kurdish struggle could not rightly be termed a national one. Locked away in their mountain strongholds the Kurds were able to repel successive invaders, but their over-riding object was always defence of a tribal territory rather than the assertion of a nation.

Descended from the Medes, who in the 7th century B.C. controlled a vast empire around Nineveh, the early Kurdish tribes, such as the Buhti and Bajani, trekked northwards when the empire fell under the Persian Conquest of 550 B.C. They settled just south of Lake Van. There the gestation of the Kurdish nation began.

Soon the area became a source of territorial conflict. Both Byzantium and the Sassanid Empire of Persia fought for suzerainty over Kurdistan. Later conquerors were the Arabs (644-656), Seljuk Turks (1051), Mongols (1231) and Tamerlane (1402). The Kurds, in turn, rebelled against these overlords because of the burdensome payment of tributes.

Before the 3rd century two forms of ownership existed in Kurdistan: tribal and village communal, both based on slave production. Afterwards, although some

communal ownership remained, the first signs of feudalism appeared.

But it was only with the coming of the Arab-moslem armies that the transition to feudalism was completed. Under the Arabs the Kurds rapidly succumbed to Islam and became staunch protagonists of the jihad-Holy war. The 'Notorious' Salah-ad-Din (Saladin) (1137-11), Sultan of Egypt and Syria, who led the muslim armies against the crusaders, storming Jerusalem in 1187, was a Kurd.

As Sunnis the Kurds joined with the Sunni Ottoman Sultan Selim, in the 16th century, to war against the Shia Safavid dynasty in Rian. Although their combined forces defeated the Iranians in 1514, the Sultan turned on the Kurds, dividing their land between Shah Abass and himself.

So it was, until the 1920s, that the Kurds remained in bondage to two empires. On the whole, they were loyal vassals to the Ottomans. There were outbreaks of nationalism but they were brief and isolated. Even during the First World War the Kurds remained loyal.

After the war, when the imperialist powers broke-up the Ottoman Empire, the idea of a separate Kurdish state was mooted in the Sevres Treaty of 1920. But the idea never lasted long. The Turkish nationalist leader, Kemal Ataturk, swiftly moved to prevent further dismemberment. The Kurds, now split three ways because of the British occupation of Mesopotamia, did not rise to force the issue. How, then, did the first stirrings of Kurdish nationalism come about?

Nationalism

If we look at rebellions before the First World War, during the period of imperialist expansion, we notice that they were fragmented and tribal like that of Sheikh Obeydollah in Iran in 1880.

What changed the nature of the struggle was capitalist penetration. Kurdistan is a striking case of the marxist law of combined and uneven development. It was united with the world market, but because the development of capitalism was delayed, this unity was uneven.

The result of the introduction of market relationships was a gradual transformation from primitive tribal rebellions to a more united, national struggle. Of course tribes still remained, but they formed the basis of a national movement.

The 1920s was the period of transition. In 1927 Kurds formed part of a religious rising in Turkey. In 1926 the Kurdish leader Simko tried to capture Shahpur from the Iranian army. And in the same year, Salah-ed-Dowleh mustered Kurdish tribes and marched them on Sanandaj.

After these uprisings, all of which petered out, the change in the nature of the struggle becomes definite. Already, as can be seen, the revolts were occurring in waves. But the problem was that they were unrelated and rarely nationalist. In the future, the demands became more nationalist and the struggles more synchronised.

This becomes most visible in the upsurge of 1930-31. It started in June, 1930, when

Jelali tribesmen, with the idea of establishing a separate state, attacked a Turkish outpost. Faced by superior forces they were pushed back onto Mount Ararat where they were aerially bombarded by the Turks. There they sent messages to the League of Nations and appeals to other Kurds for assistance.

Some assistance was given. An invasion of southern Turkey was organised from Syria but it was dispersed by the French. Sheikh Ahmad of Barzan organised 500 horsemen to attack Turkey from Iraq but these were repulsed with heavy casualties.

In Iran, too, there was similar solidarity actions. But the failure of any successful support meant the collapse of the revolt. However, besides proving that concerted cross-border action was possible, it for the first time seriously raised the banner of Kurdish self-determination.

The Kurdish Republic

The next turn of events was provided by the Second World War. As part of an agreement with Britain, Russia occupied northern Iran. This gave enormous impetus to the Kurdish struggle. Already in the area vacated by Iranian troops an outburst of Kurdish nationalism occurred under Hama Rashid.

Although technically committed to 'non-intervention' in internal affairs, Russia had important interests to pursue. Those interests included the secession of Iranian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, and their merger with Soviet Azerbaijan.

Soviet political officers set to work wooing Kurdish and Azeri (Azerbaijan) leaders. On two occasions these leaders were taken to Baku where they were assured of Soviet sympathy and support if they chose to secede from Iran. The Kurds, for their part, stated their wish to secede, but not on the basis of joining Soviet Azerbaijan.

To lead the struggle for succession from Iran the Komala, A Kurdish national party, was founded in September 1942. Composed of students and petty bourgeois members it spent the next few years winning the allegiances of the tribes.

By 1945 the conditions for a revolt seemed ripe. So when the Azeris rose in late 1945 the Kurds took advantage of the situation to seize control in the area around Mahabad. Thus, on 22 January 1948, the Kurdish flag was raised about the town and Qazi Mohammed, the Kurds religious leader, proclaimed President of the new state.

In response, the Iranian army was mobilised against the Kurds, but as it was ill-equipped and disorganised it was a year before the territory was recovered. Mahabad eventually fell in December that year.

The Kurds had put up a valiant resistance. Their morale was boosted by the arrival of Kurdish guerrillas under Molla Mustapha Bazani from Iraq. These guerrillas, or Peshmerga as they were called, who had fought the British and Iraqis on several occasions during the war, became the backbone of the Mahabad army.

When Mahabad fell, leaving 10,000 Kurds dead, Bazani and his Peshmarga fled

from the pursuing armies, fighting battle after skirmish for all of the 300 kms to the Soviet Union where they sought refuge. They only returned after the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958.

Iraq

There was no further resurgence of Kurdish nationalism in Iran until the present upsurge. But the situation of the Kurds in Iraq changed quite dramatically in 1958. In that year General Qassem and the urban middle class overthrew the Monarchy and landowners.

To the Kurds, the coming to power of a government dependent upon the Soviet Union seemed to open up new vistas. Bazani arrived back from Tashkent and formed the Kurdish Democratic Party. A list of demands, including autonomy, was put to the government. But these were later rejected. Apart from anything else, their implementation would have meant the loss of total control over the oil reserves.

This triggered-off a rebellion. Kurds captured the strategic positions throughout Kurdistan. From December 1961 the Iraqi airforce started to bomb them. In the space of just two weeks, 167 villages were razed and thousands killed.

But the rebellion wasn't so easily put down. As a guerrilla war it continued until the Bazzaz government concluded a treaty with the Kurds in 1966. But the truce didn't last long and fighting continued to break-out sporadically until 1970, when Bazani

formally, though with misgivings, accepted the Ba'th regimes autonomy plan.

Fighting resumed with ferocious intensity in 1974 after the Ba'thists had failed to introduce the clauses of the autonomy law. Eventually, because of an agreement between Iraqi vice-president Saddam Hussain and the Shah which cut their supply routes, they were beaten. In the process Bazani was discredited. He had turned to the Shah and USA for help and they had later turned on him for his troubles.

Since then the Kurds in Iraq have paid heavily. There has been massive deportations and a phoney National Front between the Ba'thists, the CP and a Kurdish faction that opposed Bazani — the Kurdish National Party. Now six Iraqi divisions have been mobilised against the Kurds because of the increase in the resistance that has been inspired by events in Iran.

Iran 1979

Which brings us to those events in Iran. The revolution gave way to a flourishing of nationalist fervour whether Turkomen, Arab, Baluchi or Kurd. Indeed, for a time there seemed a possibility of self-determination.

All that has now changed. Khomeini is cracking down on the opposition. Urged on by US trained advisors such as Bani Sdar and Ghotbzadeh he has turned on the most organised and militant opposition force — the Kurds.

But his attempt to buy off the Kurds with

oil money shows his apprehension. To add to his problems the Chief of Staff and Defence Minister have recently resigned. Now he is forced back upon US arms shipments to stiffen the resolve of his army.

In these circumstances the problem of the Kurds is their own disunity. The Kurdish Democratic Party is divided between the official section under Shith Ezzeair Houssaini and Abdul Ghassem lou in Iran and the Provisional leadership under Massouad Bazani in Iraq. Also in Iraq is Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Some kind of unity has been patched together in the regroupment around the Kurdistan Action Committee.

The Kurdish forces have retired to the mountains. From here they can organise the sort of guerilla war which they are uniquely well organised to conduct — which will engage Khomeini's army in a prolonged and damaging conflict. For the Kurds this is nothing new. Iraq's well-disciplined forces could not subdue them. Khomeini's are even less likely to succeed.

The upheaval in Iran is by no means over. Revolutions and counter-revolutions are composed of changing positions and a shifting balance of forces. In that process oppressed nations have a crucial part of play.

This is because the right to succession of nations like the Kurds removes the obstacles between workers of different countries and therefore the barriers to international revolution. It is for that reason we support the struggle of the Kurds.



Iranian Revolutionary Guards hard pressed in Nagbeth

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her endowments of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiles in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indisputable. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has never extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years, they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences which an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority.

Until our arms have brought the oppressive moment to a permanent National Government, representative of the whole, elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of those blessings we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that our cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. It can only be won by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its leaders and its soldiers to sacrifice for the common good. Above all we must be true to ourselves and to the cause we have made ourselves worthy to undertake.

Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government
THOMAS J. CLAY
SEAN P. DIARMADA
P. H. FRANK
JAMES G. CONNELLY

The P

Standard Left assessment of the Provisional IRA:
'Of course we must support the Provos because they are fighting imperialism. But they have no understanding of the need for class politics: their terrorist tactics stem from that'.
Now hear this:

'The Congress (of Trade Unions) leaders will try to act as a buffer between the bosses and the rank and file ... The rank and file must itself take the leadership of the struggle'.

'Rebuilding (Nicaragua) can take two directions—either call back the old bosses, the bankers and the foreign advisors, or turn over a new leaf and build a society for the workers, the small farmers and the poor ...

'The Sandinistas seem to be risking the future of the struggle by not declaring openly that it is a socialist republic they are after. They appear prepared to hand over the new government to the 'respectable' academic and business leaders who are proponents of a liberal form of capitalist rule'.

'We must be actively involved with the working class in building a front of economic resistance against capitalism in the 26 Counties'.

All these statements are from recent Provisional publications. They make the point that, whatever the Provos are, they are not the unreconstructed nationalist gunmen of popular imagining.

This will become clearer before the end of the year, by which time the Provos can be expected to have ditched formally their present political programme and substituted for it a commitment to building a mass movement fighting on economic issues as well as on the national question.

All this is a long way from the Provisionals' beginnings. When they split from the Official IRA in 1970 it was explained by one of their leaders that the new movement would 'fight communism and atheism'. Early polemics against the Officials concentrated on the Officials' alleged adherence to socialism and weakness for 'alien ideologies'.

The phrase 'faith and fatherland' did not go unused. Trade-union struggles — indeed trade unions themselves — were dismissed as at best irrelevant, at worst downright dangerous deviations from the fight to 'free Ireland'.

One of the reasons this has changed is that



Provisionals and Socialism

Eammon McCann

the Provisionals are overwhelmingly working-class. This might not seem of blinding significance. But the Provos are the first working-class Republican fighters in Irish history.

Irish Republicanism has traditionally been a largely-rural phenomenon. In this century the Easter rising of 1916 took place in Dublin city. But the war of independence which erupted in its aftermath from 1919-1922 — and which 'freed' the 26 Counties from British rule — was for the most part fought in the countryside by men from the countryside.

Republicans since have tended to see their task as the completion of that war, using the same well-tryed tactics—sporadic bombing

the cities was of merely marginal interest. The movement might sympathise. Individual Republicans might actively participate. But the movement itself had higher things on its mind, and could include in its ranks both the unemployed activist and the businessman with a penchant for patriotic perorations.

In the 1950s one eighth of the population of the 26 Counties emigrated in itself an awesome statistic while the bravest and the best of the Republican fighters were flinging themselves futilely at the border. There are grounds for believing that the Dublin government was not displeased to see them so divert their energies.

The Republicans' ideology was bourgeois

their arms — a very unrepublican thing to do. They sold off their weapons to a comic opera faction of the 'Free Wales Army' which promptly lost them.

Thus when the trauma of August 1969 transfigured the Catholic ghettos in the North and sent the youth out raging into the streets, it was those who had kept the faith pure who spoke most directly to the immediate emotional and practical necessities. 'Leftism' had, literally, disarmed the people. Nothing more natural than that the youth should pour into the Provos, which they did.

Politics weren't all that relevant. The Provisionals struck the right note, matched by the mood of the moment, provided a putative link between the struggle on the streets and the chronicle of campaigns past. The immediate motivation of the first recruits was simply a hearty hatred of the cops and the Brits, for which there was no want of fuel.

But it couldn't go on like that. A sustained campaign demands a realistic perspective and the old guard were, and are, incapable of providing it. The rank and file were not starry-eyed idealists aglow for a great cause, but young workers from grim ghettos, eventually battle-hardened.

The notion — still prevalent in unexpected places — that they cannot and do not analyse their own situation and draw conclusions from it, is offensively patronising — apart from being wrong.

No group of workers anywhere fights for almost a full decade without drawing conclusions about the class nature of the society they live in and the class content of what they hope eventually to build.

Many have had ample time for analyses, in Long Kesh or Portlaoise prison, and to ask what 'Brits Out' actually entails. The Brits, after all, have been out of the 26 Counties for half a century which doesn't seem to have resolved all the contradictions in its society ...

And if the Provisionals are the inheritors of long tradition of similar struggles, how come the previous struggles didn't fully succeed?

In more practical terms, any struggle needs support. And while there have been mass mobilisations at times of great emotion in the South after Bloody Sunday for example — these have never been sustained. The support and the emotion would subside together. How to make the struggle relevant on a continuing basis to tens of thousands of workers?

As well: to a greater extent than any



Republican Prisoners of the Dublin Rising of Easter 1916. The war that was to follow was to be fought very differently.

campaigns in Britain, guerrilla sorties in the border areas.

While there were occasional splits and openings to the left — most importantly in the 1930s — the movement as a whole held firm to its faith that the continued British presence in part of the country was the never-ending source of all our political ills, that all else must wait until that presence was removed.

All of which was of course grist to the slow-grinding mills of the 26 County ruling class and middle-class Nationalist leaders in the North. The IRA might occasionally shame them ('A Republican is a Fianna Failer with guts and gun' ran one relevant aphorism). But it never really threatened them, at least not directly.

The ebb and flow of economic struggle in

nationalism — the bourgeois nationalism first articulated in Ireland by Wolfe Tone in the last decade of the 18th century and which did have relevance in the first two decades of the 20th — not least to the national bourgeoisie, which wanted a state of its 'own'. But it had steadily diminishing appeal to urban workers.

It was realisation of this which caused the Officials to make a left turn in the 1960s and seek to involve themselves in the trade union and tenant struggles — a turn which alienated the Old Guard who believed the 'Cause' was being sullied by sordid considerations, that all this chat about class served only to 'split the people'.

The chagrin of the traditionalists was all the deeper when the Officials, in line with their new orientation, decided to get rid of



Dublin 1920: If the war could be won by courage alone it would have been won long ago.

previous generation of Republicans, the Provos are aware of, and have a sense of solidarity with, anti-imperialist fighters elsewhere. Up to a point, this may simply be a reflection of the fact that people are generally more aware of the world: television has something to do with it.

Republicans in the 1940s and 1950s found their inspiration almost exclusively in their own past, and depended for solidarity on their own kind — on Irish Americans, for example. But the Provos cannot avoid — not that they wish to — feeling a sense of kinship with, for example, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Zimbabwean Patriotic Front, neither of which is pure, marxist, but each certainly carriers of 'alien ideologies'.

All this — here put very simplistically — naturally impelled the Provos towards the Left. But as important as any of it is the simple fact that the old archetypal image of 'A Republican' just didn't fit the people doing the fighting.

They are products of a modern, purely-urban culture. As likely to be into soccer as Gaelic football, rock concerts as much as ceilis. It would be easy impressionistically to make too much of this. There is certainly a genuine love for Gaelic culture among many of them. (That can, just, co-exist with appreciation of more metropolitan things). And nothing wrong with a love of Gaelic culture.

But at an Ian Dury concert, earlier this year I was bumped into by a pogo-ing IRA man. He was, to be sure, a particular case, and exception, and it would be silly to read anything of significance into his presence. Except that, 15 years ago, there was no such thing as a Republican rocker. It would have been a contradiction in terms.

The archetypal Republican of campaigns past would, on the other hand, have fitted very neatly indeed into what has been the Provos' political programme. This is contained in the document *Eire Nua* (new

Ireland). It envisages, through the encouragement of self-help initiatives and community effort, the establishment of 'local power': people in their own areas gradually taking control of local affairs, and forming local councils. And all classes in each area being entitled to 'fair' representation of each council.

As far as national politics was concerned, there would be four provincial parliaments, one each for Leinster, Munster, Connacht and the nine counties of Ulster, each having a federal relationship with each other through a national parliament. The class nature of the Ireland so organised would, Provisional leaders explained, be 'a matter for the people'. If 'the people' wanted a socialist Munster and a capitalist Leinster, so be it ...

It was a hare-brained scheme which related not at all to the realities of the situation and which, despite energetic promotion, excited little enthusiasm among rank and file Provisionals. And none at all among workers in general, Catholic or Protestant, North or South.

In keeping with developments within the movement, *Eire Nua* will, I understand, be ditched in the next few months. A new statement of perspective — in line with the quotes at the beginning of this article — will be adopted. And all who are avid for a sign of a left-wing breakthrough in Ireland will, understandably, cheer. And quite right, too — up to a point.

Things will not of course, be quite as they appear.

It will be noted in the first instance that this fairly radical change of direction will not be preceded by any appearance of wide-ranging debate. There will be no spirited polemics by leftist Provisionals against those, still in the movement, who have denounced class struggle as unnecessarily divisive. Nor will the latter mount any sturdy defence of their position.

The main reason — there are others — for this is that the Republican Movement is, firstly, a military organisation. The military wing, the IRA, takes precedence in all things over the political wing, Sinn Fein. It could hardly be otherwise.

A clandestine army cannot have its tactics and strategy dictated to it by an open organisation. It would be literally suicidal. And since strategy and tactics flow directly from political perspectives, the military wing must also decide what that perspective is to be.

There is a form of democracy within the IRA, but it is, in the nature of things, very limited. Members accept a line and implement it, not because they have necessarily become convinced of its correctness, but because they have been ordered to. There is nothing terribly sinister about this. It is just the way with armies.

The left turn which the Provisionals are now making certainly results from a deal of thought about the society they are dealing with, and it reflects the changed class composition of the movement. It does not mean — or at least it does not *have to mean* — that there has been a simple, uniform shift in the direction of revolutionary socialism.

Moreover: the shift will not be represented as, and is not seen by the Provos themselves as, a definitive break with the past. They are not into definitive breaks with the past. On the contrary, they depend for most of their political sustenance not on demonstrable public support — although that edicts — but on their ability to trace back a direct link between themselves and the founding fathers of Republicanism.

It is that fiercely-felt sense of their own historic inheritance which sustained the Movement through thick and thin — sometimes thin and thin — in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. And it is still very real.

The new line must be presented — and understood internally — not as a break from, but merely an updating of, traditional Republican teaching. And traditional Republican teaching is irredeemably bourgeois, dating from the era when bourgeois nationalism was a revolutionary ideology.

There is an acute contradiction here, which cannot be resolved *within* the Republican movement. It can only be resolved within the context of building a marxist party, which the movement cannot become. If it became marxist, it would, by definition, cease to be Irish Republican.

The Provos — it should go without saying in a socialist journal — have never been the rabid sectarians or zombie gunmen of British press caricature. Anyone who has moved among them will know that if the war in Ireland could be won by dogged determination, careless courage and unconcern for self-aggrandisement, they would have won it long ago.

There will be no revolutionary party built in Ireland which does not include them in great numbers. And the increasing socialist content of their programme cannot lightly be dismissed.

But the contradictions remain and should not be underestimated either.



SOCIALIST HISTORY WARTS & ALL

Alix Holt

The December/January issue of *Socialist Review* carried an article 'The Cult of Kollontai', by Anna Paczuska, which was mostly an attack on the way I had presented Kollontai's life and work in my commentaries to her *Selected Writings* (Allison and Busby, 1977). I read the article with a sinking feeling: the left, I thought was supposed to have learned from the women's movement, and here was someone repeating the same old clichés and delivering them in that unnecessarily aggressive polemical style. Some of my ideas are summarily dismissed as 'rubbish' and I am said to have deliberately set out to hide and distort the truth. I sighed and shoved the article under a pile of notes.

Finally I plucked up enough courage and concentration to retrieve it and go through it sentence by sentence. The sinking feeling changed to indignation: the article misrepresented my arguments and Kollontai's writings at every step. I complained bitterly to a number of sympathetic friends and talked of typing out an angry response. But in the end I shrugged it off; after all, it happens all the time that people write reviews of books that their own prejudices and preconceptions have altered beyond recognition.

However, rereading the article a few months later I have decided to write a belated reply because the way it is written and the attitudes it expresses seem to me to raise questions about the relationship between women and politics and about our general approach to the history of the socialist and communist movements that are of crucial importance to the left and its development.

I am accused by Anna Paczuska of glamourising Kollontai and setting her up as

some heroine for the admiration of modern feminists. Since I was at pains throughout my commentaries to take critical distance from Kollontai and show her limitations from the standpoint of the contemporary women's movement this criticism at first totally mystified me.

Then I realised that her claim that I was building a cult of Kollontai could make sense to those who work with a selective and censored version of the history of socialism, a version peopled by technicolor heroes who always, against all the odds, make the correct decisions. To those who carry this picture of the glorious marxist tradition Kollontai cannot but seem disappointingly frail and insignificant and any suggestion that she made a large and original contribution to the development of the socialist

movement an heretical exaggeration.

The criticisms levelled at me in the article fall under three main headings. First, my treatment of Kollontai's later career as a diplomat and of her failure to join any Stalinist opposition or speak out during the 1930s. Secondly my claim that Kollontai's writings on women were outstanding for their time and deserve the attention of feminists and socialists today, and thirdly, my exposition of the relation between class and gender in Kollontai's work, and her views on the organisation of women, and the relationship between the party and the women's organisations.

I want to look at these three areas in turn to suggest how the criticisms reflect the common but damaging tendency of socialists have rewriting of history.

person and her passivity in the 1920s stemmed from this rather than from a positive decision to support Stalin. There is very little hard evidence about Kollontai's activities in Scandinavia or about her attitudes to what was happening in Soviet Russia. We can only hypothesise. And I could be wrong. But to dismiss any speculation as 'rubbish', as Anna Paczuska does, is to ignore our own experience.

I know lots of women who have passed through socialist groups and have left frustrated at the indifference or hostility shown their ideas. I thought it was generally recognised that women often dropped out of organised left-wing politics not because they were 'petty bourgeois' but because there are real problems about the way the left organises.

These arguments apparently do not wash with Anna Paczuska who sees my interpretation of Kollontai's political course in the 1920s as smacking of unacceptable psychologism and feminism. I have, in her opinion, merely tried to find excuses for Kollontai and copped out of making judgements. For her the old equation stands between survival under Stalin and abject capitulation and permanent exclusion from the pantheon of left-wing heroines. As a matter of act survival in the 1930s did not depend on how loud one proclaimed one's loyalty.

At the rank-and-file level the purges were to a certain extent arbitrary while at the level of the highest echelons of the party they were based on Stalin's grotesque brand of political realism. The Old Bolsheviks were shot in 1937 and 1939 not because they were unwilling to praise the great leader—they were willing—but because they were seen by Stalin as a potential threat. So Germaine Greer's remark that Kollontai survived because she was a woman is not so naive as the article makes out. Stalin did not see women as a threat.

The article, I suspect, would only have been satisfied with Kollontai had she joined the Left Opposition. But this organisation was by no means the perfect vehicle of opposition that some western socialists like to imagine. Certainly it did not offer a sympathetic milieu within which women could fight for their liberation. It showed little sensitivity to the problems either of the mass of women or of those within its ranks. Anyway the point I am trying to make is that whatever disagreements we might have with the choices and actions of this or that person it is essential that we show some understanding of the dilemmas facing communists in those difficult years.

We have to approach socialists of the past as men and women who knew hesitation and confusion, joy and sorrow, who made mistakes and lived to regret past actions, instead of measuring them against some abstract model of impossible perfection. Surely we have all of us sometimes been in two minds about a political problem and defended positions we have later recognised as being wrong. Unless we can show some understanding of the difficult choices revolutionaries have faced in the past we shall never be capable of making the right choices ourselves.



Kollontai as Stalinist

Kollontai as Stalinist: In 1922, when Kollontai ended her association with the Workers' Opposition, a faction critical of party policies, she was given a job in the diplomatic corps in Norway and spent the rest of her active career in various diplomatic posts in Mexico and Scandinavia. She kept a low political profile and was not as far as we know connected with any of the party oppositions of the period.

It used to be a very common assumption on the trotskyst left that the Bolsheviks who sold out to Stalin were not worth talking about. I have heard Kollontai—who what's more had been involved in the 'anarcho-syndicalist' Workers' Opposition and was even interested in the 'women question'—dismissed scathingly on a number of occasions as a rather silly woman with little political sense (which after all was very much Trotsky's opinion).

Myself, I worried for some time over Kollontai's compromise with stalinism, wondering whether it did not reflect some general political immaturity and so whether it was not really worth investigating her life and work. Now I am convinced that this type of attitude to Kollontai or any other of the Bolsheviks is absolutely unproductive. If we start to disregard those who contravene some imaginary line of exemplary anti-stalinism we will be left like the Soviet government (though for different reasons) with a revolution that was made by one or two leading Bolsheviks.

Plekhanov, one important Russian marxist, was not even a supporter of the October revolution; nearly all the major Trotskyists—Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rakovsky capitulated in the end; Bukharin formed his opposition late and not for long.

From our distance in time the most important thing is not criticising individuals for the actions they took or failed to take but understanding why the party as a whole was unable to preserve internal democracy and lost contact with the mass movement. The explanations for events are ultimately to be found not in the heads of individual Bolsheviks, but in the drift of more general social and political developments.

Nevertheless the paths that different Bolsheviks chose are important indications of how general developments were experienced at the individual level. Kollontai's political career, her reactions to the changes of the 1920s and 30s, raise a series of questions about the position of women in the Bolshevik party that have not been asked before. Doing my research I have become conscious of the fact that women Bolsheviks rarely held positions of responsibility in the party or contributed to its theoretical and strategic debates.

Kollontai was something of an exception but this does not mean that she was not inhibited in her political life by the fact that she was a woman. Her support for the Workers' Opposition took her right to the centre of a very bitter party debate and it is not hard to appreciate (surely) how demoralising she must have found the 'hammering' she received. Though we might not agree with the economic policies she was advocating many of her criticisms of undemocratic practices in the party were very penetrating. In the heat of the debate this was not acknowledged and she was attacked in a very uncomradely (to say the least) and unprincipled manner.

I suggested in my commentaries that this experience had a lasting effect on Kollontai's confidence in herself as a political



Kollontai as socialist feminist

Kollontai as socialist feminist: Kollontai has become well known over the last few years for her writings on women and the selections of her work which I translated mostly dealt with women's oppression. I argued that Kollontai's importance was two-fold: as an organiser of the women's movement within the Bolshevik party and secondly as a theorist. I wrote that hers was 'the most important contribution of its period to the development of the women's movement and the socialist programme'. Anna Paczuska considers these claims false and 'extravagant'.

On the first point she argues that Kollontai was the product and not the 'instigator' of the women's movement and that the image created by me and others of Kollontai as a 'lone defender of women's rights ... in the midst of baying Bolsheviks' has no basis in reality. The evidence she gives to back up her point is taken however from the history of the German social democratic party and not the Bolshevik party.

Within Russia, Kollontai did play a central role in the development of the women's movement and both before the revolution and in the years immediately after was the most prominent and active of a very small group struggling—against indifference and hostility—for the implementation of German social-democratic practices i.e. a special women's organisation within the party. To those people who idealise the Bolshevik party this may come as a shock but it happens to be the truth.

For Anna Paczuska the truth is a 'feminist calumny'. Though she recognises at one point that no one yet has 'understood the dialectic between oppression and exploitation', she is clearly unhappy with criticism of the marxist tradition and is quick to defend its banner. 'It is fashionable to believe,' she writes, 'that marxism has always ignored the women question. Reality is rather different'. As proof of this different reality she describes the SPD at the beginning of the century which had 140,000 women members and a women's paper *Gleichheit* with a circulation of over 100,000.

In view of this fact, she argues, it is strange that I accuse German social democracy of proving incapable of integrating the fight for women's liberation into its struggle. But it is not strange at all. Since when have numbers been a clinching argument of political correctness? The SPD had an even larger number of male members and several mass circulation papers and journals but that did not prevent it voting for war credits in 1914.

Though social democracy recognised in principle the oppression of women and the need for liberation, conference resolutions

and official documents of the period show that these ideas were rarely discussed even on paper and the comments of leaders and rank and file are eloquent indication of the low opinion they had of women and the peripheral place they allocated to their problems.

Perhaps I should emphasise, in case I am being misunderstood that being critical of the socialist past is not the same as believing socialism and feminism to be incompatible. On the contrary it is precisely because we want to discover the connections that we cannot afford to whitewash the past, to skip over uncomfortable facts or construct fantasy golden ages. To go on talking blithely about marxists from the 1860s having argued and fought for women's rights and integrated this struggle into their programme when our own experience and the mounting historical research shows otherwise—is to borrow the historical methods practised with such unnerving aplomb in the Soviet Union.

To assume that a complete analysis of women's oppression sprang fully clothed from 19th century marxism is absurd, obscuring the painful process of development and the contributions that women like Kollontai made. This shows in the criticisms the article makes of Kollontai's theoretical writing.

In my commentaries I discussed Kollontai's ideas on maternity, abortion and sexuality trying to place them in their historical period and assess their importance and their limitations. Anna Paczuska thinks I have not been critical enough and to say, as I did, that 'many of her formulations jar on the modern ear' is being much too kind, that in fact many of Kollontai's views 'would cause "shock-horror" reactions in the straightest revolutionary circles today'.

It is nice to know that revolutionaries have come a long way, at least in their reactions, but their memories seem to have been impaired in the process. I remember when you could find any number of socialists who were, for example, half-hearted in their support for women's right to abortion. Wouldn't it alienate working-class women?

People have short memories, apparently, and also know little about their history and are badly served by articles like 'The Cult of Kollontai'. For only revolutionaries fed on the revised version of their past could react with 'shock horror'. The Pre-war SPD -- the model for social democracy everywhere rarely discussed birth control and never campaigned around either contraception or abortion. Clara Zetkin disapproved of contraception, for fear that people would use it to hide extra-marital affairs.

The logic of any support for abortion

from the organised socialist and communist movements was that women should have this right because capitalism did not provide favourable material conditions for the upbringing of children (this was the justification written into the decree that legalised abortion in Soviet Russia in 1920). There were individual women, particularly in America and France, who fought for a woman's right to control her body, but these women were usually on the edge or outside of the organised socialist and communist movements.

If we recognise the truth about the socialist tradition we can appreciate the contribution Kollontai made and set about explaining the limitations of both. It is not always easy to see how people came to have ideas that seem so bizarre to us or missed things that seem so obvious. But there is no excuse for arrogance and self-complacency. It is the smug assumption underlying Anna Paczuska's article that she knows all the answers and would never have made these mistakes and her total lack of sympathy for the way ideas are developed that upset me most of all.

Socialist ideas do not come pre-packaged, neatly labelled. They are built up from tentative insights, half-phrases, the everyday struggles of thousands of individual men and women. Free love does not necessarily seem progressive when there is no contraception: traditional morality can appear to offer better protection: the importance of control over reproduction is not so obvious when people have little control over anything and abortion is a dangerous operation. We do not have to approve of what socialists have thought but sifting through the past we must try to comprehend the process by which individuals take from their own experience and build up explanations of their world, the way in other words that people come to socialist ideas, the way socialist theory has been developed and the socialist movement created.

We must be sympathetic to the material conditions influencing intellectual and political decisions and convey a sense of the dignity and bravery of those who have participated in past struggles. Unless we can show an understanding of the way human beings are locked within the circumstances of their times and yet strive to extend the limits of their freedom we can learn nothing from our history.

Kollontai struggled to extend the understanding of women's oppression and in her writing on the family and sexual morality succeeded in challenging socialist thinking of the time. She argued that changes in these areas had to be a part of the revolutionary struggle and could not be left until later, on the assumption that they would happen then of their own accord: she insisted that personal life was an area of political struggle.

Today most of us have begun to pay lipservice to the idea of the 'personal is political' but 50 years ago it appeared dangerously revolutionary or even counterrevolutionary. Her short stories, which Anna Paczuska sees as her 'only sympathetic writings about sexuality' were

bitterly attacked at the time as so much feminist crap and Kollontai was branded as an irresponsible advocate of free love and a petty bourgeois decadent. (This was in the early 1920s please note). Aware of the hostile atmosphere that Kollontai worked in we can appreciate the daring it took her to put these ideas together and the scale of her achievement.

Extension of this sympathy is not cult

building — it seems to me to be just the opposite. Because it is trying to bring the past closer — to demystify it, show that it was peopled by individuals who like ourselves could be petty and prejudiced, had doubts and made mistakes. It is obviously important to make a critique of Kollontai's ideas but it is dishonest to attempt this without admitting the inadequacies of the socialist tradition.

While the initial comments of Marx and Engels on the connections between women's position and class relations were very perceptive the way these insights were woven into socialist theory and practice served often to hinder rather than further theoretical work. Class and class struggle were male-defined and the insistence upon their all importance reflected the suspicion and neglect of women's experience and needs. Very often the label 'feminist', 'bourgeois' was an excuse to ignore and pass over issues that were of crucial importance for working class women. So the rigid insistence on class was the corollary of the subordination of women's issues, which both derived from the underestimation of gender divisions and the consequences for society of the sexual division of labour.

The Spartacist review wants to 'claim' Alexandra Kollontai the proletarian fighter and internationalist and discard the feminist chaff, and approves of her line on class and organisation but of very little else. This may be mighty convenient in terms of its political analysis but it misses the whole point. Which is precisely why internationalism and a fierce belief in proletarian revolution have so commonly been linked with an insensitivity to women's problems and how even in the case of Kollontai the same theoretical premises tripped her up whichever way she turned.

Just as Kollontai went further than most to push back the limits of the socialist approach so did her organisational activities sometimes go beyond the orthodoxy she preached. In the years before the revolution Kollontai brought women together in working women's clubs outside the confines of the party and during 1917 recognised the importance of soldiers' wives organising.

A few years later she expressed approval of the suggestion that special rank-and-file groups to fight for the new life styles should be formed and warned that while there were so few women in the government structure the needs of women would be ignored. But she never theorised these actions or views. She was cramped by the underestimation of the importance of gender divisions for personal experience at all levels of society just as she had been in her discussions of maternity and sexuality.

Anna Paczuska wants an 'honest appraisal of the contribution of women like Kollontai'. This is a worthy aim, but unrealisable whilst the left clings to its glamourised version of the past, whilst it deals in superman stereo-types and is defensive about the socialist treatment of the woman question.

It is the story of how working-class culture and the socialist tradition have absorbed the social subordination of women — and of how individuals and groups of women and men have resisted and raised alternatives — that we must set out to discover and it is this picture of the socialist movement, warts and all, that will give us a basis for appraising Kollontai.

I am working with Juliet Ash on a book (to be published by Pluto Press when it is finished) which pursues these arguments in much more detail in relation to the communist women's movement of the 3rd International.



Class, gender, organisation

Class, gender, organisation: The article's third criticism is of the treatment of Kollontai's views on class, gender and organisation. At various stages Anna Paczuska refers to these very topical issues but her arguments remain scattered and difficult to piece together. She appears to think that over the question of class and organisation Kollontai's views were in line with orthodox marxism and therefore to be agreed with. I got the impression though that she is not very clear in her own mind how women should be organised and her exposition of Kollontai's views is very vague: she was in favour of 'separate organisation'. Separate organisation evidently has the writer's seal of approval while independent and autonomous organisations are mentioned to be rejected. However the differences between these three types of organisation are not explained.

The article does make it clear that Kollontai was right to see class as the overriding factor in determining the position of women and implicitly endorses the organisational distinction between bourgeois and proletarian women that is said to follow from this analysis. Anna Paczuska is also sure that these correct positions are quite unlike the ones taken by myself, Sheila Rowbotham and other nameless cultists. We are 'feminists', 'autonomous feminists', and members of a women's movement who have an 'unbalanced preoccupation with oppression to the neglect of exploitation.'

We are accused of having hidden Kollontai's belief in class struggle and class differences in order to make her more palatable to modern tastes: her emphasis on class is 'an aspect conveniently ignored by her translator and commentators'. Because we are supposed to have hidden the class dimension we are also accused of distorting her ideas of organisation. I allegedly posed 'Kollontai as a feminist who fought the party and worked for independent women's organisations'.

At the factual level it is inaccurate to say I 'hid' Kollontai's ideas on class — I translated a piece from her polemic with the

bourgeois feminists which clearly states her ideas on this subject. I also explained Kollontai's ideas on organisation, showing how she fought in the Bolshevik party for separate agitation and organisation *within the party structure*. In other words, for structures similar to those developed by the SPD. Like Clara Zetkin, she was opposed to any alliance with bourgeois feminists and suspicious of autonomous women's organisations outside social democracy.

At the level of interpretation Anna Paczuska appears to misunderstand socialist feminist. She seems to think that its advocates ignore or deny class divisions in society, when as far as I understand it the socialist feminist project is to discover how class and gender divisions interact and draw attention to the importance of the latter which have been very much neglected by socialists in the past.

In my assessment of Kollontai's ideas on class and organisation I was quite tentative. I was not sure how to deal with a time when problems of strategy and class alliances were posed differently. I could see that in this period when middle class women went home from suffrage meetings to give orders to their maids, class affiliations were experienced differently from today and that the strategy adopted by the Second International was much too inflexible.

Now I think that the whole question of the overriding emphasis on class that characterised Kollontai's work, and to an even greater extent that of Zetkin and of the socialist movement in general, needs to be examined very carefully. Far from being the worthwhile kernel of Kollontai's ideas which must be preserved, as Anna Paczuska and some others on the left, most particularly the Spartacists have argued, (the review 'Alexandra Kollontai and the Russian Revolution' that appeared in *Australian Spartacist*, April 1979 makes almost the same criticisms as 'The Cult of Kollontai'), the emphasis on class is intimately connected with the limitations of Kollontai's views on reproduction and morality which they have seized upon to illustrate how backward and incorrect she is.



BEFORE THE DARKNESS

Weimar Culture

Colin
Sparks

John Willett Erwin Piscator Eyre Mettuen £8.95
John Willet The New Sobriety Thames & Hudson £9.95
Klaus Volker Brecht Marian Boyars £12.00.

The Weimar Republic was born in 1919 and survived to the victory of the Nazis in 1933. Our knowledge of it tends to be very uneven. Most revolutionary socialists have a knowledge of the political history: the murder of Luxemburg and Liebknecht the series of missed revolutionary opportunities of the early twenties, the great inflation of 1923 and the massive crisis of 1929, the suicidal ultra-left policies of the German Communist Party (KPD) and the rise of Hitler.

We also know one or two other, much more disjointed, things: that Brecht was writing revolutionary plays, Heartfield was developing the art of photomontage, and that Christopher Isherwood wrote the novel which forms the basis of *Cabaret*. A number of new books have gone some way to giving us a clearer idea of the political culture of the doomed bourgeois republic.

The question of the cultural politics of the Weimar epoch are of more than academic interest for us. Germany was a highly developed industrial country with a large working class, an established trade-union movement and a mass Communist Party. Although it was in very many ways different from modern Britain, it was a society in which some of the problems we face today were worked out at a far higher level. We can learn from that experience.

The relations between art and politics, the nature of revolutionary art if, indeed there can be such a thing — in a

bourgeois democracy, the problems of communist organisation and artistic production, are some of the most difficult questions to answer. In particular, the development of ideas about the need, in bourgeois democracies, to carry on a 'counter-hegemonic' struggle and contest the ruling class at all levels has posed very clearly the problems of revolutionary work in areas other than the class struggle at the point of production.

The most consistent proponents of this idea have been reformists, and we have very often done little to counter their case than to scream abuse. The answers given by communist militants in Germany fifty years ago will not solve all the problems and, in many cases, may have been wrong but they represent a possible starting point.

The impact of the first world war was a watershed for artists in most belligerent countries. A few opposed it outright: a young man called Herzfelde was so outraged by the wave of anti-British nationalism that he changed his name to John Heartfield as a gesture of internationalism. Others, for example the Italian futurist Marinetti, welcomed it as a consummation. Others still welcomed it and rushed into the forces only to discover that this was no grand affair of bands and marches but a bloody, murderous slog.

Gradually, that latter mood came to dominate and a generation tried to make sense of the horrors they saw around

them. For many, the Bolshevik revolution and the peace of Brest-Litovsk threw the origins of this fantastic spectacle of human suffering into sharp relief: the motor force of the war was not some innate evil in man but the drive to imperialist expansion. The soviets were the only hope for the future.

For the German artists, there was an added education when the leaders of the SPD allied with reaction to crush the flowering of soviet power in Germany. From then on, any artist moving to the left would sooner or later encounter the cause of international socialism embodied however imperfectly, in the KPD.

John Willett's book *The New Sobriety* attempts to sketch some of the history of that engagement. It strives to take into account the whole range of art from architecture to modern music and, as a consequence, is often a confusing list of names. Added to this, the author is an avowed opponent of 'extremism' in politics. Consequently, while some of the connections are surprising — Gropius designing a monument to victims of the Kapp *putsch* and El Lissitzky designing advertisements for carbon paper, for example — his final argument that the flowering of Weimar culture was only possible as a result of the 'shadow of the the future' hanging over the fragile state must strike us as unsupportable.

Thus he tends to devote a great deal of attention to 'recognised' artists and their relationship to the world of bourgeois art and hence effectively to depoliticise the very experience of which he is writing. It is only in passing that the real problems of the development of a revolutionary working class culture are taken up:

'For the German Communists lived in a world of their own, where the party catered for every interest. Once committed to the movement you not only read *AIZ* and the party political press: your literary tastes were catered for by the Buchergilde Gutenberg and the Malik-Verlag and corrected by *Die Linkcurve*; your entertainment was provided by Piscator's and other collectives, by the agitprop groups, the Soviet cinema, the Lehrstück and the music of Eisler and Weill; your ideology was formed in Radvanyi's MASch or Marxist Workers' School (which at the start of 1931 claimed 2400 students); your visual standards by Grosz and Kollwitz and the CIAM; your view of Russia by the IAH. If you were a photographer, you joined a Workers-Photographers' group; if a sportsman, some kind of Workers' Sports Association; whatever your special interests Munzenberg has a journal for them.'

Willett writes that in criticism but for us it must seem a considerable achievement. It is that sort of context that makes sense of arguments about hegemony.

In part, of course, this KPD apparatus was built upon an older tradition of the social-democratic movement — what Max Weber called a 'state within a state' — which had penetrated vast areas of working class life which we are accustomed in modern Britain to thinking of as non-political leisure activities. What the KPD was trying to do was to build up a political culture which provided more than meetings about the latest betrayal of the Social Democrats and which

catered for many aspects of the life of revolutionary militants.

It is customary to see all of this as tarred and tarnished by the brush of the ultra-left period and to join Willett in condemning the whole project as sectarian, but we can easily demonstrate that this view is oversimplified. Much of this cultural effort preceded the ultra-leftism which got under way in 1928-29 — the workers' photography groups, for example, were founded in 1926 — and their relationship to the 'third period' was rather more complex than one might think.

The key figure in all this was Willi Munzenberg and the organisation International Workers' Aid (IAH). Although this was an organisation dominated by Communists (Munzenberg was a member of the central committee of the KPD) it was formally independent and it seems that Munzenberg used this independence both to involve non party militants and to avoid some of the worst excesses of the KPD line. In 1931, for example, the KPD called for a vote with Nazis against the SPD dominated Prussian state government. The major organ of the IAH, the *AIZ* — which was by far the largest selling workers' paper in Germany — systematically ignored this issue.

This neglect of Munzenberg and the organising role of the IAH is one of the major shortcomings of Willett's work and it particularly odd in that the IAH played a major part of the life of the subject of another of his recent books. *The Theatre of Erwin Piscator*.

Piscator, one of the masters of German experimental theatre, wrote in 1930



that:

'Never before was it more essential than now to take sides: the side of the proletariat. More than ever the theatre must nail its flag fanatically to the mast of politics: the politics of the proletariat. More and more insistent grows the demand; theatre is action, the action of the proletariat. The stage and the masses, a creative unity... in the militant theatre of the proletariat.'

But the tensions in this piece of writing are more interesting than the political statement of fact: it must be read against a background both of Piscator's commitment to the established theatre and the development of a much larger number of agit-prop theatrical groups in the working class movement itself. Piscator was unable to resolve that dilemma of the gap between a revolution in the theatre and a revolutionary theatre. In that sense, the decision of the IAH to ship him off to Moscow in 1931 removed him from a situation in which it was particularly difficult for him to work.

In fact, the dilemma of the radicalised artist in Weimar Germany was accurately reflected in this experience. While a large section of the artistic community underwent similar experiences, the nature of their activity forced different strategies upon them. For the novelist or poet, there were indeed directly revolutionary publishing houses but for the theatre director and, still more, the architect, there was the continued need to work inside the organisations of the Weimar state.

This, particularly in Prussia, was



And soon the Darkness. The Communist Party in militant mood 1926

dominated by the SPD and increasingly under pressure from the forces of reaction. Thus artistic workers in fields like these seemed to have negotiated a series of compromises with the existing order. Unfortunately, I do not know enough about the history of architecture to see how these were worked out in the building boom which followed the Dawes plan of 1924 and the temporary expansion of the economy, but this would clearly be the limit.

It is this problem which makes the figure of Brecht, the subject of a newly translated biography by Klaus Volker, extremely interesting. He was very much a product of that trajectory and can be taken as exemplifying its problems. On the one hand, he attempted in his plays and polemics to develop a new form for the existing theatre and, during the period when he was a close sympathiser of the KPD after 1929, also worked in close contact with militant workers.

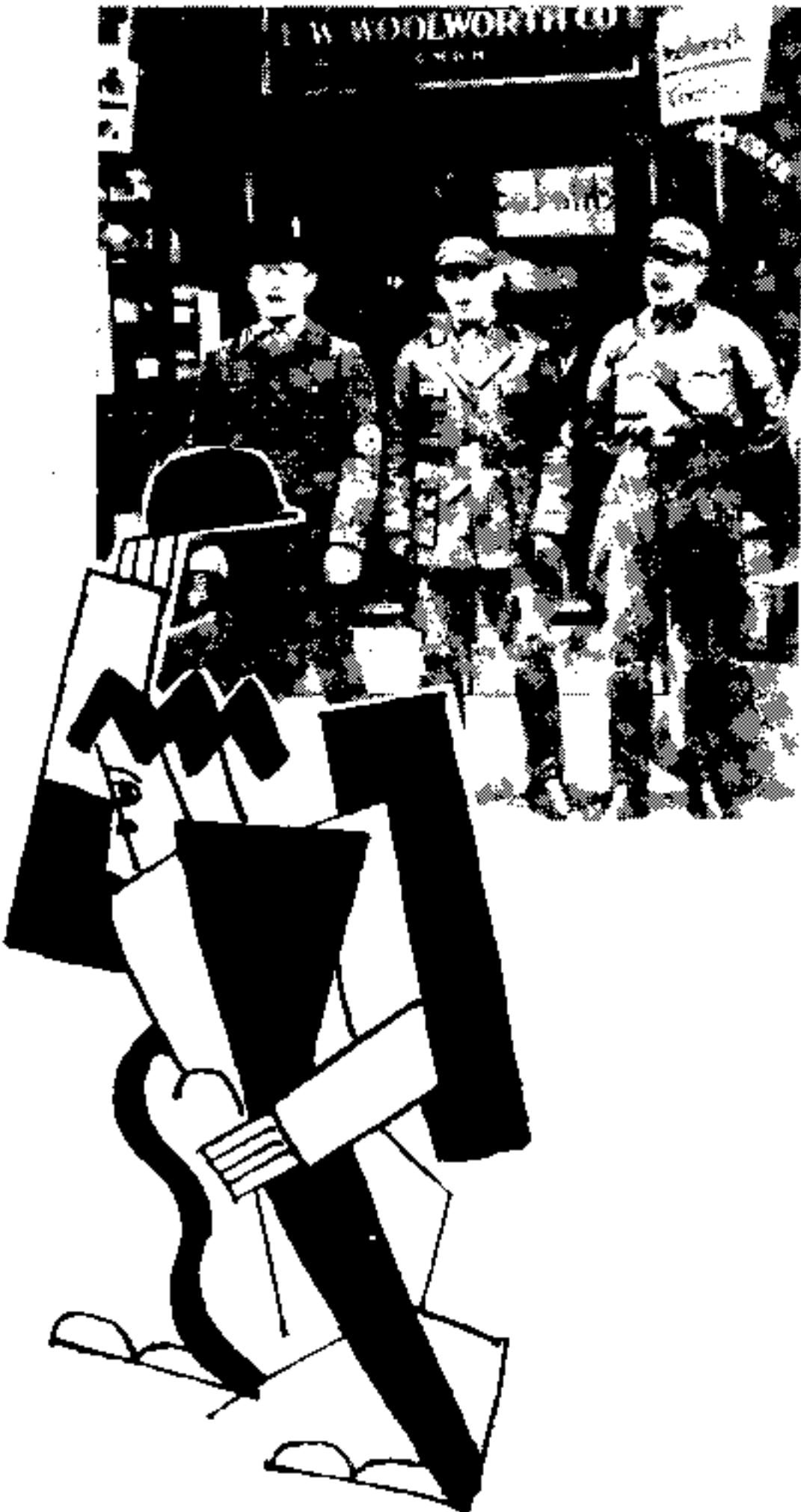
Unfortunately, Volker's biography is not a very good book in that it is riddled with a number of contradictions — some of them endemic to the biography form itself. Thus, when faced with his own evidence that, in his personal relations, Brecht was a sink of petty bourgeois egotism and male chauvinism, the writer falls back in to defending Brecht by way of his artistic greatness'. More seriously, the same abivalences are present in his handling of Brecht's attitude towards stalinism.

Ultimately none of these books are at all satisfactory. From the point of view of the development of a revolutionary culture today they remain trapped within the official definitions of art and thus, at best, sterilise even the most determined revolutionaries among their subjects. This, of course, is an exact intellectual parallel to the way in which Brecht in particular is being 'recuperated' by the official British theatre at the present moment. My most embarrassing experience at the theatre in the past few years has been watching the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Days of the Commune* — a play which Brecht designed to teach workers the need for armed insurrection.

A very interesting and profitable book remains to be written about Weimar culture. It would take as its subject Munzenberg and the IAH. From that, we could begin to get some ideas about the detailed methods by which a genuinely revolutionary working class culture can be developed.

It seems to me that, when Gramsci began to develop his famous ideas about the need for the party to struggle for hegemony in areas outside the immediate economic struggle, he was influenced by exactly these types of organisation, which had earlier existed in a less developed form in Italy as well as Germany. The reformist interpreters of Gramsci have neglected that dimension and thus turned him into the harmless figure of a prophet for their own reformist burrowings within an existing state machine.

For us, the case is rather that there is a need to develop an alternative cultural apparatus which is itself a weapon in the struggle against the hegemony of the ruling class. Of course, such an apparatus cannot hope to totally replace that of the bourgeoisie short of the seizure of state power by the working class and the dilemmas which faced the Weimar intellegentsia will repeat themselves with modern variations. But the conditions even for the winning of those spaces inside the established norms of the official culture depends to a large extent on the creation of a sufficiently powerful alternative apparatus which can give concrete form to the hopes and wishes of the radicalised artists.



A Womans' Place

**Women Take Issue—
Aspects of Women's
Subordination**
*Women's Studies Group,
Centre for Contemporary
Cultural Studies*
Hutchinson £6.50

**Feminism and
Materialism—Women and
Modes of Production**
*Annette Kuhn and Ann-
Marie Wolpeeds*
RKP £3.95

These two books are of the same ilk. Both are products of the now not so new area of women's studies, both crow self-consciously about the hazards of academic respectability, sterile theory and the priorities of advancing the 'practice' of the womens' movement.

These essays flock to 'resolve' the 'crisis in theory' concerning women's oppression about which some feminists are so concerned. Yes, we need to discuss our theory more. But this does not mean there is a 'vacuum', 'lacuna' or anything else.

We have a powerful tradition of historical materialist analysis of women, the family and class society dating back to Marx and Engels (see Joan Smith's article in *International Socialism*, old series, 100). What we need to do is develop this, not in disappearing spirals of abstraction, but rooted in material reality — in what real women and men are doing and thinking.

It is indicative of the total divorce of this type of writing from any concrete struggles (other than those of purely 'personal' politics) that both books are exactly what they claim to avoid — barren of life and inspiration.

Of the two collections of articles *Women Take Issue* is



Department of Employment leaflet circa 1978

the more reasonable and honest. It is at least explicitly feminist, and, while primarily theoretical and often difficult, its 'cultural' orientation does at least bring in the real world, if not of factories and offices, at least the mass media and the 'feminine' commodity market of romance. And these are important elements of our oppression.

Feminism and Materialism is far more pretentious — and infuriatingly esoteric. It claims to seek a new 'marxist feminism', using the familiar ploy of first setting up and then knocking down that paper tiger, a distorted 'orthodox marxism'. In its



place is offered a 'materialist' analysis of patriarchy, although you search in vain for it.

By way of the prolific routes of 'reviews of the literature' you enter the mysterious world of 'Modes of appropriation and the sexual

division of labour', 'structures of patriarchy and capital in the family', and (yet again) 'domestic labour and Marx's theory of value'. Typical of some of the authors' academic parsitism is the fact that they condemn the stuff they are writing about by the time they reach the end of the article, but offer nothing new.

While the individual contributors to each volume (and they're all women, apart from two men in *Women Take Issue*) would doubtless proclaim their independence, they're all bound together by a common allegiance to the theories of Louis Althusser. Leaving aside the dreadfully pretentious terminology this gives rise to, what is important is the 'theorisation' (sic) of that catch-phrase 'relative autonomy' which underpins the approach of both books.

According to Althusser each 'social formation' is a structure consisting of a number of 'instances' (eg the economy, politics, ideology) each 'relatively autonomous' of the others. The crucial interaction between the material base of society — the forces and relations of production — and the superstructural forms and practices — beliefs, ideologies, cultures — is lost. And with it the heart of marxist analysis.

This leads, in these two books, to both vulgar

materialism and idealism. The first is expressed in the contributors' preoccupation with 'structures' separated from consciousness and history. Far worse is the idealist side of the coin.

It insidiously smuggles in 'patriarchy' as a 'relative autonomous' ideology 'material force', 'system of social relations' or whatever, and slides between using patriarchy as an *explanation* of women's oppression (like the bourgeois feminists) and as a concept itself requiring explanation.

Patriarchy is used to explain 'the sexual division of labour in nursing' and is itself explained, not in terms of the mode of production, but through 'a conceptualisation of the subject as the site of the representation in ideology in relations of production and reproduction'.

What this means is not, as you might think, an analysis of experience and consciousness (too simple),



but an immersion in the unconscious and psychoanalysis on the assumption that Marx and Freud can easily be reconciled.

To be fair, there are two chapters in *Feminism and Materialism* which argue explicitly against this sort of idealism. One, 'The state and the oppression of women', shows how the capitalist state defines women's dependency in marriage and reinforces their low pay and status in the work-force. It also includes a very useful bibliography on the relevant research on this subject.

The other, 'Patriarchy and relations of production', shows how male dominance varies historically and cannot be reduced to a single concept. But it is as turgid as the rest and comes

uncomfortably close to idealism at the end when the author argues that 'patriarchy as an ideology ... must be an important feature of the complex mechanisms that underlie the perpetuation of patriarchal relations'. True, but so what? Where do we go from here?

Another off-shoot of the 'relative autonomy of ideas' theory is the concentration, to the exclusion of all else, on 'culture', broadly defined as a 'peculiar and distinctive way of life'. This is the focus of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, whose Women's Studies Group produced *Women Take Issue*.

Now there's a lot to be said for the study of cultures, both in their oppressive role, from 'above', and in their creative aspect, from 'below'. *Women Take Issue* adopts both approaches, with articles on romantic literature, female images in the media, and the everyday lives and attitudes of working-class girls and women.

The problem is that 'culture' comes to be treated as an absolutely autonomous system, a self-enclosed, self-perpetuating world with its own dynamic, with no relationship to the economic logic of capitalism. This comes across only in what this approach omits, the workplace.

There is no room in this analysis to expose the crucial interweaving of exploitation at work and oppression in the family. Relations of production are once again left out.

The political message of both books is the same: consciousness-raising through women's studies, articles, more reviews, more lectures. It is an alliance between althusserian 'theoretical practice' and bourgeois feminism.

Some of *Women Take Issue* deserves reading because it gives a few working-class women a 'voice' in interviews and accounts. As for *Feminism and Materialism*, expose it, then leave it to moulder with what EP Thomson called 'those barrels of enclosed marxisms which stand, row upon row, in the corridors of polytechnics and universities'.

Anna Pollert



Kautsky The Fallible Pope

Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution 1880-1938

Massimo Salvadori
New Left Books £9.50

Massimo Salvadori is the author of this first full-length study of the work of Karl Kautsky to appear in English. The blurb on the cover claims that it is 'one of the most serious and searching clarifications of the terms of the debate over socialist strategy in the West'—such a claim must surely be examined.

Karl Kautsky lived during a period which saw the defeat of the Paris Commune, both Russian Revolutions, the defeat of the German Revolution, and the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany and Spain. Known to millions of communists as the 'Pope of Marxism', his experiences and writings merit critical assessment if only because of the area they cover.

So great was his reputation that when Lenin discovered that he had offered 'critical support' to Germany's war effort, he declared that his

copy of *Vorwärts* carrying the news was a forgery.

With the bulk of Kautsky's works untranslated, including the huge number of articles he wrote for *Die Neue Zeit* (which he edited from 1883-1917), Salvadori's book is very welcome. A systematic exposition of Kautsky's views has long been required—he tends to be dismissed summarily as a badly with little or no understanding of his arguments.

Because of the peculiar conditions of the development of German capitalism, the German workers movement and specifically the SPD were overwhelmingly parliamentary in their approach to the class struggle. The reality of the class struggle was universally accepted, but the crucial concern of the socialists of the 1890s was representation in the parliamentary bodies.

In this context, the emphasis was placed on democratic rights and representation, and

parliament was seen as the natural arena of the class struggle. The notion of self-activity of the working class was interpreted out of marxism by Bernstein and Kautsky in the belief that they were adapting the theory to specifically German conditions.

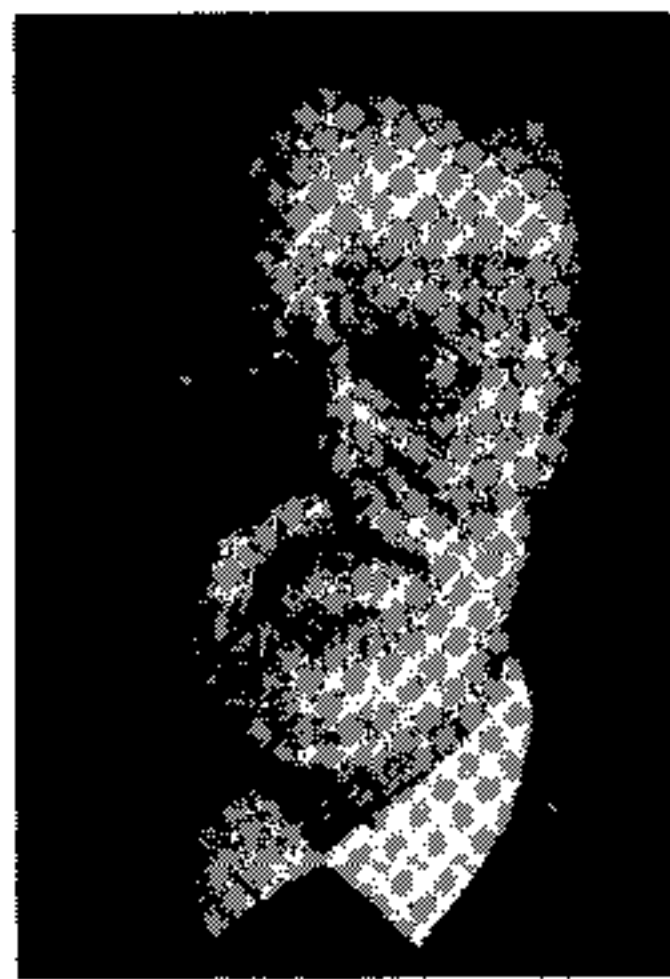
Kautsky's writings abound in the language of Marxism: 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', 'socialisation of the means of production', and so on. But in the context of parliamentary struggle these ideas referred to winning a majority, to nationalising industry, to securing legal rights for workers. And this fact has very many repercussions.

Kautsky was devoted to 'democracy' (ballot box style), and to 'unity' (of the workers movement). He believed that capitalism would eventually run out of steam and with it, the ability of the ruling class to rule. Indeed, he entered into a polemic against Bernstein's economic revisionism on this basis.

Because of this approach he was led to the following tactical argument: since capitalism naturally leads to the development of the proletariat, and since it also inevitably collapses, the essential task is to maintain the unity of the workers' movement, to prevent premature confrontation with the ruling class, to plod away patiently and make whatever gains can be made on the way. In that way, come the crunch, the working class will be the only class able to lead society forward, and it will therefore take power democratically, without violence (since the ruling class will be in disarray).

Kautsky was entirely consistent throughout his life in this argument. When Kautsky was confronted with the fact of war, he first vacillated and then came out with a critical defence of the war effort 'to retain the unity of the movement'—since the movement was patriotic, you go along with it rather than split it!

As the trade union wing of the SPD became more and more patriotic, Kautsky was arguing for an early peace to return to pre-war democratic struggle, what he considered to be the 'normal' development of capitalism—a



path which secured the socialist future by maturation.

Kautsky was overjoyed when the February revolution installed the Constituent Assembly in Russia—it was a parliamentary body and Kautsky declared that the path had been cleared for the development of socialism by smooth evolution. When the Bolsheviks seized power in October he immediately declared it as undemocratic, anti-working class, and charged the Bolsheviks with trying to speed up history.

Since Russia had only a minority working class, he said, socialism at that stage was impossible and the result would be state capitalism. Instead of concluding that revolution had to be international if socialism was to be established in Russia, he retreated back to bourgeois democratic politics. Without the ballot box, no socialism—because no democracy!

All this theory was terrible rubbish. It reduced the working class to spectators, it made them subject to the exigencies of history, it prevented them from taking part in the very actions which would develop their class-consciousness—and that is why Kautsky's ideas should be condemned! They have their roots in bourgeois liberalism and not in marxism; they are opposed to marxism.

Salvadori gives us a meticulous exposition of Kautsky's ideas which is illustrated by so copious an array of extracts that the reader is often confused: is Kautsky writing an exposition of Salvadori? But with so much scope for criticism, Salvadori avoids any criticism whatsoever. Nowhere in the

book does he so much as hint that Kautsky might be wrong in his central theses!

But this kind of book is timely: as Eurocommunism is becoming the respectable form of marxism with the class struggle removed, it is only right that the real mentor should be acknowledged. If we are to view capitalism fatalistically, if we are to view revolution as a parliamentary process, then let's give credit where credit's due.

Of course, Salvadori doesn't actually say this; he doesn't say very much at all because Kautsky does all the talking. Salvadori (to be charitable) may be pursuing a course of detached exposition, but if that's the case, NLB would be well-advised to look at the Trade Descriptions Act.
Bob Lloyd.

They only want the Earth

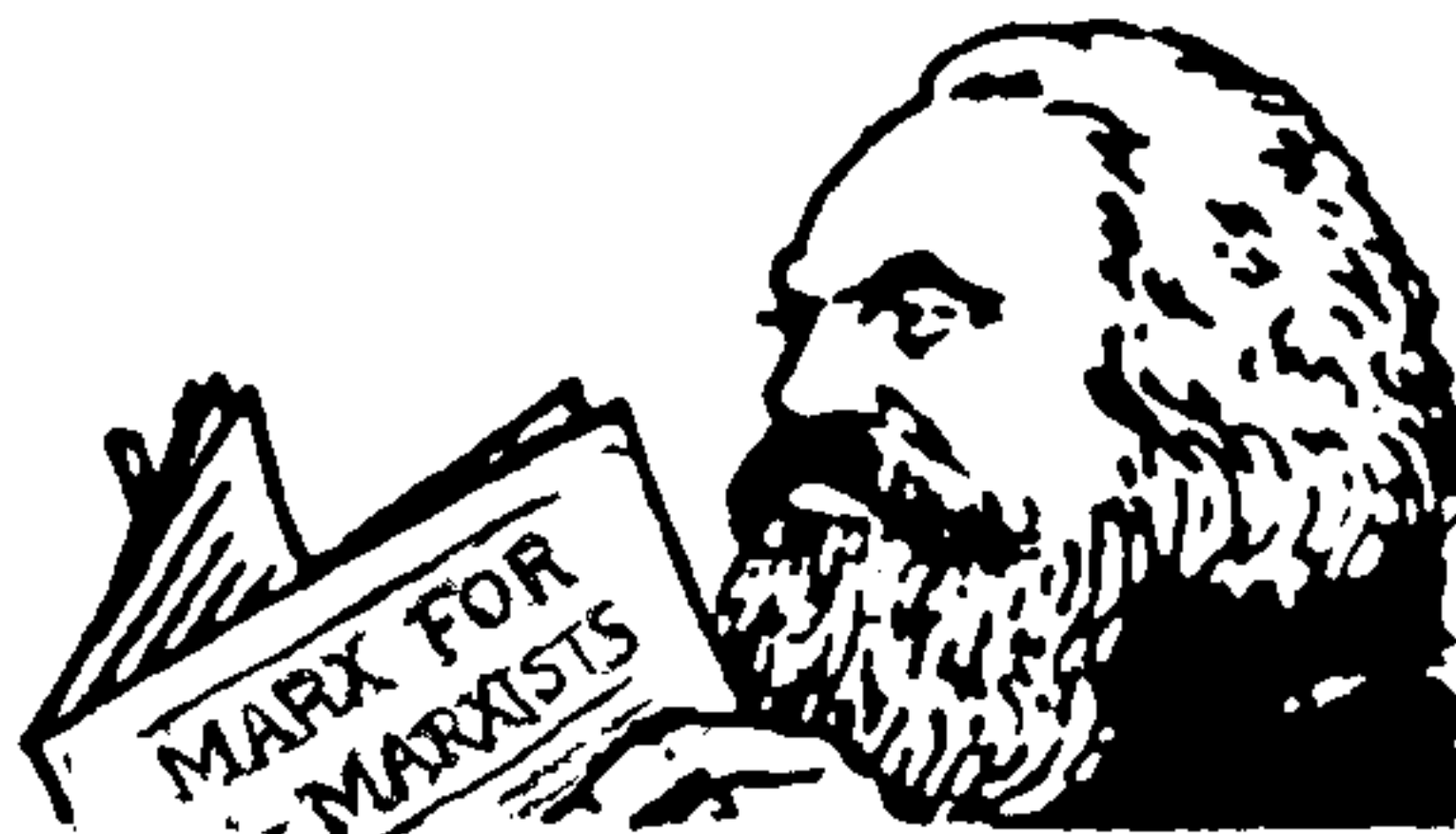
Land And Power N South America
Sven Lindqvist
Penguin Books 1979
£2.25

To understand Latin American politics it is essential to understand the distribution of land and the sorts of power that go with this. Sven Lindqvist, a Swedish journalist, has compiled a tapestry about land reform, about huge-scale agriculture and cattle-ranching, peasant revolts and cooperatives, in the different countries of South America, which is clear, illuminating and easy to read.

Comparisons with the Peoples' Republic of China are also interesting, and he sets the issues in a wide historical and economic context.

My main complaint is the complacency with which he, a European supported by European wealth, makes the rich landowners out to be the biggest villains. A moralistic simplification which evades the wider issues of how power and wealth are reproduced.

Olivia Harris



More on Marx's Method

Re-reading Capital
Fine and Harris
MacMillan £3.50

With the recent proliferation of books on Marx's methodology, a book on Marx's economics which keeps such questions in perspective is very welcome. Together with the fact that the authors have been involved in the current debates in marxist economics circles, this context is very reassuring.

Re-reading Capital is an attempt to come to terms with the relatively recent appreciation of the use of abstraction in Marx's *Capital* and at the same time apply this lesson to the modern context. The result is both difficult and rewarding: not a book for beginners, nor indeed can it be read complacently by anyone.

Starting with a chapter on the levels of abstraction involved in value theory, the authors deal in turn with the transformation problem, reproduction of capital, accumulation and the dreaded tendency of the rate of profit to fall. The second half of the book deals with the current debates on imperialism, state monopoly capitalism, the periodisation of capitalism, etc.

Since the whole discussion takes place in the context of a polemic against two equally reductive schools of thought, the neo-Ricardians and the Fundamentalists, the book provides an excellent introduction to these viewpoints.

Following the neo-Ricardians from their divorce of value theory from the

determination of profit rate, the authors demonstrate the political conclusions which have to follow: the view that every wage claim is a fundamental attack on the rate of profit and hence accumulation. The result is a thorough economism.

The Fundamentalists, epitomised by the work of David Yaffe, are given summary treatment. Their intense emphasis on the reduction of all political levels to the economic leads to serious underestimation both of the ability of capitalism to respond to new situations and also implicitly, of the working class's ability to overthrow it.

Supporters of either camp are likely to find this book irritating though in my view the strong arguments advanced by the authors will take quite a bit of beating. Both authors have already been involved in polemics on the topics covered by this book in the Conference of Socialist Economists Bulletin *Capital and Class* and anyone interested will find many of the original articles there.

Just one reservation about this book. The language at times make the arguments a bit harder to follow than is really necessary. This is particularly the case in their discussion of nationalisation (which I found confusing even after a second reading!). But since marxist economics these days is full of people revising (or re-emphasising) chunks of Marx, it is useful to familiarise oneself with the modern debates. This book succeeds admirably in what it sets out to do and deserves a wide readership.

Bob Lloyd

A Long Way Yet

The Fourth International: the Long March of the Trotskyists

Pierre Frank
*Ink Links, hardback £6,
paperback £3.50*

Memo to myself: 'You have been given a short introduction to the history of the Trotskyist movement to review. It is the only such book in the English language. The early history of that movement is a vital part of our heritage. As for the latter part, of course you have political differences, but the Fourth International is an important current in the world revolutionary left who should be approached in a comradely way.

'You may not agree with everything Pierre Frank has argued in his political life, but he has stood on basically the right side of the barricades for over half a century and that deserves some respect. You may not be very happy about Ink Links pricing policy, but they are a new left-wing publisher producing some interesting books.

'So for god's sake review the book on its merits, and don't end up producing something that looks like a centre page spread from the *Newsline*.'

Point taken. And I really would like to say that despite a number of political deviations (the author, by the way, is a veteran leader of the Fourth International and its French section) this is a useful introduction to an important subject which all comrades would benefit from reading.

Unfortunately, I can't.

For a start its fairly scappily written, with a lot of padding. And in a book on 50 years of a world movement, whose main text is effectively only 127 pages, you just can't afford that.

Now the reason for this scappiness is probably that the book originated as a course delivered in 1948 with updating material subsequently (and I suspect rather hastily) added. Sometimes something that originates as a series of talks can make up

in anecdote what it loses in rigour. (on that score I can thoroughly recommend James P Cannon's *History of American Trotskyism*.)

But Frank's book loses out here, because, for reasons of length he has 'limited this book to the history of the international movement and...not treated the history of its sections'. The result is not only lifeless, but I suspect makes the international movement a succession of congresses which make very little sense to the uninitiated.

As for the politics, I certainly don't expect to agree with all Frank's judgements, but I do expect him to look the problem areas in the face. Unfortunately he doesn't.

just dissolve. Let me give two examples.

First, the decision to found the Fourth International. Frank says 'Trotsky was acutely aware that the workers movement in general, and our movement in particular, was about to enter an extremely difficult period—the imperialist war—in the course of which we would be subjected to extraordinary pressures by the class enemy and by powerful centrifugal forces. These pressures could well disintegrate and destroy an organisation as weak in numbers as our own.'

With hindsight Frank is entitled to put forward that argument for the beneficial

Capitalism in Russia 38 times as a penance, but is the following really an adequate treatment of the question?

Page 69 (on the Third World Congress of 1948) 'A good part of the document was devoted to the study of the 'Soviet buffer states'ie those Eastern European countries occupied by Soviet troops, and it concluded that these countries had retained the structure and function of a bourgeois state'.

Then nothing until.... Page 72 (and this is Frank commenting with hindsight) 'In 1947 the Communist Information Bureau was created. At the same time, the 'cold war' led the Soviet Union (in order to protect its buffer



Hungary 1956. Progressive social change brought about by tanks?

Its not that he completely absolves the Fourth International from error. For example 'the theses of the Third Congress were in error on the prospects for war and on the economic situation. Too true! For (in Frank's words) 'they projected...a new world war in the relatively near future. They added that...this war would be a 'war-revolution' in which an imperialist victory would be problematical. Linked to this perspective was the point of view that the arms race economy would have catastrophic consequences on the economic situation: inflation, lowering of the workers' standard of living etc.' Put forward in 1951 that's some error, and it's a bit lame merely to say 'nobody at that time imagined that we were about to enter a period of economic prosperity in the capitalist world ...'

But other problem areas

results of the founding of the Fourth International (though I, for one, am not very convinced by it). He's entitled to put it forward as his own argument, *but not as Trotsky's*.

For Trotsky, after all, was saying 'During the next ten years the programme of the Fourth International will become the guide of millions and these revolutionary millions will know how to storm earth and heaven'. Not quite the backs against the wall perspective that Frank attributes to him.

Second, (and I know no-one will believe me, but honestly I really don't see this as the necessary touchstone of a good book) the Fourth International's response to Russian expansion into Eastern Europe. Now again believe me, I don't expect Frank to wear sack cloth and ashes and recite Cliff's 'State

states) to effect a social change—by military—bureaucratic means—in the Eastern European countries. Its armies had entered during the war. Despite a few measures aimed at those members of the propertied classes who had collaborated with the Germans, the army had left the bourgeois social structures of these countries intact. The 'cold war' forced the Kremlin to liquidate the bases of capitalism in these countries and to transform them into workers states.'

Then nothing until Page 83 (on the Third World Congress of 1951) Restating a document adopted by a session of the International Executive Committee held in April 1949, the resolution characterised the East European states as 'bureaucratically deformed workers states'.

And that's your lot.

After it I now appreciate why the courts make you swear to tell the truth, *the whole truth*, and nothing but the truth!

(By the way, the middle passage just quoted, follows on a passage which begins 'important events and totally unexpected developments occurred *immediately after* the Second Congress and for some years thereafter'. It's the sort of statement Frank makes just a little too often for comfort. But in this case observant readers of the above three passages will also detect the interesting phenomenon of time-warp arising in the history of the Fourth International).

Well, I better stop before I really do start to disobey my memo. I'm sorry, but it really isn't a very good book. Still, as the memo said, it is the only book in the English language on the subject.....

Pete Goodwin.

Back in the USSR

Politics and Society In The USSR

David Lane

Martin Robertson 1978
(second edition)

This is a rather belated review of a very useful book. If you want to know about any aspect of Soviet society, this is the place to start. David Lane's information is well-balanced and carefully collected and completely up to date. As a basic encyclopedia of the Soviet Union, it is excellent and there is nothing around to better it.

It also has the advantage of being written neither by a reactionary nor by a Stalinist, extremely rare in studies of the Soviet Union. In a very interesting chapter on 'Critical Theories of Soviet society', Lane undertakes a serious study of the Marxist, as well as the bourgeois theories. In doing so, he reveals his own, which comes closest to the degenerated workers' state analysis. He accepts the idea that the relations of production are socialist, but the means of distribution

aren't (as yet), because of the backward nature of the Russian economy. However, Lane has a soft spot for Stalinism. He blames Trotsky for ignoring 'the degree of public participation in the Soviet regime'!!!

His belief in the comparatively 'democratic' nature of soviet society influences his analysis throughout the book. According to him the vast majority of the intelligentsia are perfectly happy with the present state of the Soviet Union, its only a perverted and insignificant minority who are not. He cites as indisputable proof of this the fact that over half of the candidates and doctors of science and over 60% of creative writers are CP members. He overlooks the fact that these people very rarely join the party because they are ardent communists, — they join it because they want to get on, get good jobs and live in comfort. In private, like the dissidents, they condemn the abuses and cruelty that any educated person cannot but see in the Soviet Union. The dissidents are a typical only in that they dare to risk their jobs and speak out against them.

I also have the impression that, consciously or unconsciously, David Lane is influenced in his selection of facts by the wish not to paint too black a picture of the Soviet Union. He tells us for example that the average pension in the Soviet Union is 40 roubles a month — appallingly low, but he doesn't mention that the average pension for collective farm workers (about a third of the population) is 20 roubles.

Again, in discussing the role played by private plots in Soviet agriculture, he gives us the figures for market produce according to which private farmers produce 12% of the total — 37% of the potatoes, 9% of the eggs, 13% of the vegetables, 17% of the meat and 5% of the milk. These figures may be correct, but they seem to me misleading. If you take the role of private plots as a percentage of consumption — the figures normally quoted — the picture is rather different: 64% of potatoes, 45% of eggs, 40% of vegetables, 31% of meat, and 33% of milk (1971 figures)

Lane's slightly oversympathetic attitude must thus be kept in mind when using his book.

The other major problem with it is — its very much a textbook. If you're a student studying political institutions — wonderful. If not — you may be bored with the everlasting diagrams of 'Levels of Soviet administrative units' and yearn for chapters dealing in more detail with how the Russians actually live — what

living conditions are like, what Russians do in their spare time. Its also rather a static picture of Soviet life — if you want to know where Soviet society is going, how it has changed since Stalin, what will happen when Brezhnev at long last collapses and dies — and this is not the place to look.

These are reservations, not bitter criticisms. *Politics and Society in the USSR is a book to buy and to use.*

Claire Herschfeld



The centenary of Trotsky's birth in 1879 is being celebrated by meetings, articles and books. A number of Trotsky's own works are to be relaunched and a few new biographies are being published. Of the bunch, by far the most stimulating and relevant is Duncan Hallas's *Trotsky's Marxism* to be published in November by Pluto Press at £2.50. It is the lead choice in the Bookmarx Club.

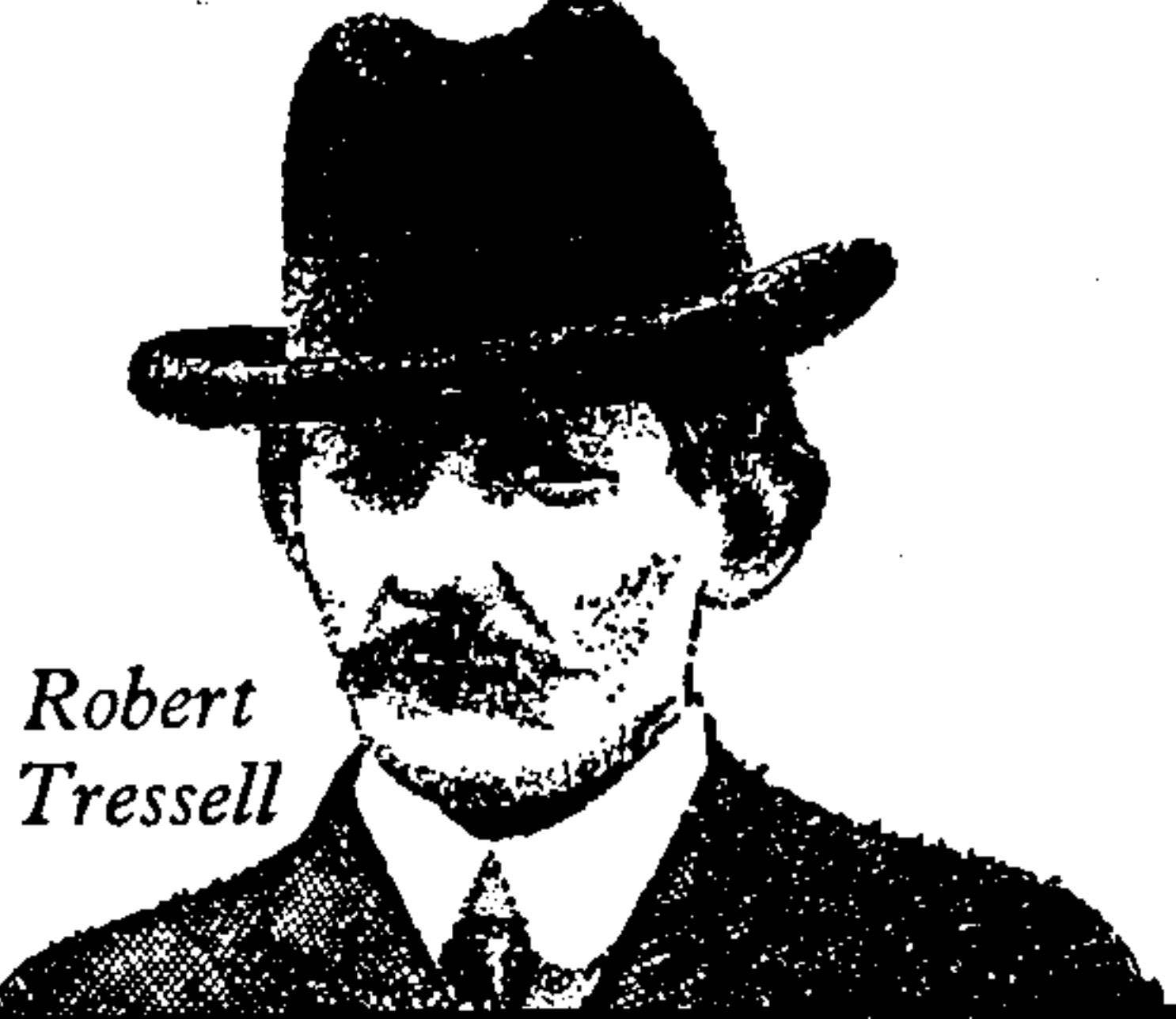
Everyone who has enjoyed reading Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* will be interested to know that Fred Ball's biography of *Tressell, One of the Damned*, is now in paperback, published by Lawrence and Wishart at £3.25. Volume 12 of the Marx Cathy Porter's biography of Alexandrai Kollontai is to be

published by Virago this autumn at £4.95. A well produced women's song book is published this month by Kathy Henderson, Frankie Armstrong and Sandra Kerr, *My Song is My Own*, Pluto, £3.95

New autumn titles to look out for in libraries include Roy Medvedev's *On Stalin and Stalinism* (OUP, £6.50), Philip Rees's *Fascism in Britain*, an annotated bibliography (Harvester Press, £12.50), Tony Benn's *Arguments for Socialism* (Cape, £5.95), Ann and Samuel Charters *I Love: The Story of Mayakovsky and Lili Brik* (Andre Deutsch, £6.95), Harbury and Hitchens *Inheritance and Wealth Inequality in Britain* (Allen and Unwin, £10).

Penguin are about to publish a mammoth study of *Poverty in the United Kingdom* by Peter Townsend at £7.95 for 1300 pages. Penguin have just brought out a paperback of Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (£2.95) and Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (£2.95).

Alistair Hatchett



Robert
Tressell

Response to Stuart Holland

by John Molyneux

As a marxist I found something to disagree with in virtually every paragraph of Stuart Holland's interview ('Harnessing and Transforming Capital' *Socialist Review* September 1979), but of the numerous criticisms that could be made I would like to stress the following:

1. Throughout the interview Holland blurs the crucial distinction between transforming capitalism into socialism (ie. overthrowing it) and transforming capitalism to make it work better as capitalism.

For example: 'If we'd had even an active state-capitalist policy for a company like British Leyland, if we'd been as active with them as Volkswagen under substantial public ownership were... then it might have been that we could have stemmed the import penetration in motor vehicles'.

The experience of the last 100 years of the working-class movement demonstrates that those who blur this distinction, from Bernstein to Benn, end up, if they achieve power, as the defenders of capitalism against the working class.

2. This fundamental confusion is most dangerous when it comes to the question of state capitalism. Holland cites Lenin as referring to state capitalism as the 'antechamber to socialism', but he must know that Lenin was speaking of state capitalism as a transitional economic form in the context of a workers' state — a state based on the armed power of the revolutionary working class.

State capitalism in the sense of the enlargement of the power of the capitalist state is indeed the antechamber to socialism in the sense that it is the ultimate expression of the concentration of capital and thus the highest (last) form of capitalist development, but it is also the extreme opposite of socialism, in that the working class remains an exploited class.

3. Stuart Holland is sanguine to the point of blindness about the resistance of the capitalist class to a reform programme which seriously threatens its vital interests. He completely ignores the use that would be made by the bourgeoisie of its enormous economic power.

Faced with a challenge from a left reformist government the ruling class would respond with a planned combination of investment strike, flight of capital abroad,

provocation of strikes and victimisations in the factories, lock-outs and redundancies, designed to reduce the government to impotence and sabotage any 'alternative economic strategy'.

The only way out of that situation would be the mobilisation of the mass of the working class actually to take that economic power out of the hands of the capitalists. At the same time the various branches of the capitalist state — the House of Lords, the bureaucracy, the judges, the military, the police etc. — would be set in motion to frustrate the will of the government and to crush the working-class movement. A left reformist government wedded to the constitution and non-violence would be powerless to resist this concerted attack.

Holland seems to believe that 'our' ruling class is insufficiently 'brutal' or 'sophisticated' to mount such an onslaught. In fact it has an unparalleled record over several centuries and throughout the world (from Judge Jeffries to Lord Denning, from Malaya to Northern Ireland) of brutal and sophisticated repression of popular movements. Once again, nothing short of revolutionary action by the mass of workers would be capable of repelling and overcoming this resistance.

It was one of the many ironies of Trotsky's life that, as one of the major architects of the October revolution of 1917 and organiser of the Red Army, it fell to him to analyse and chronicle the degeneration of the new regime.

No serious attempt to understand the tragedy of that revolution and its relevance to the building of socialism in the world today can afford to ignore the unique contribution which Trotsky made.

In this introduction to the politics of Leon Trotsky, Duncan Hallas has selected four major strands in Trotsky's writings:

* The theory of 'permanent revolution' in which Trotsky elaborated a scenario for the Russian revolution of 1917 and for understanding subsequent developments in the 'Third World';

* the consequences of the October revolution in Russia and the development of stalinism in which Trotsky made the first sustained attempt at a materialist analysis;

* The strategy and tactics of mass revolutionary parties in a wide variety of situations.

* the relationship between the revolutionary party and the working class in periods of mass upheaval and decline.

As far as possible Trotsky's ideas are presented in his own words—as a handbook and guide to his work.

Copies from Pluto Press, Unit 10 Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Rd, London NW1 8LH.



4. Holland presents his strategy as 'gramscian'. This identification is fashionable but false to the core. That Gramsci was not a reformist has been effectively demonstrated by Chris Harman ('Gramsci versus Eurocommunism' *International Socialism*, old series, 98 and 99), but for the record: Gramsci argued that the bourgeoisie rule, not by consent *rather* than force, but by a combination of consent *and* force and advocated a working-class movement that was capable of responding at *both* levels.

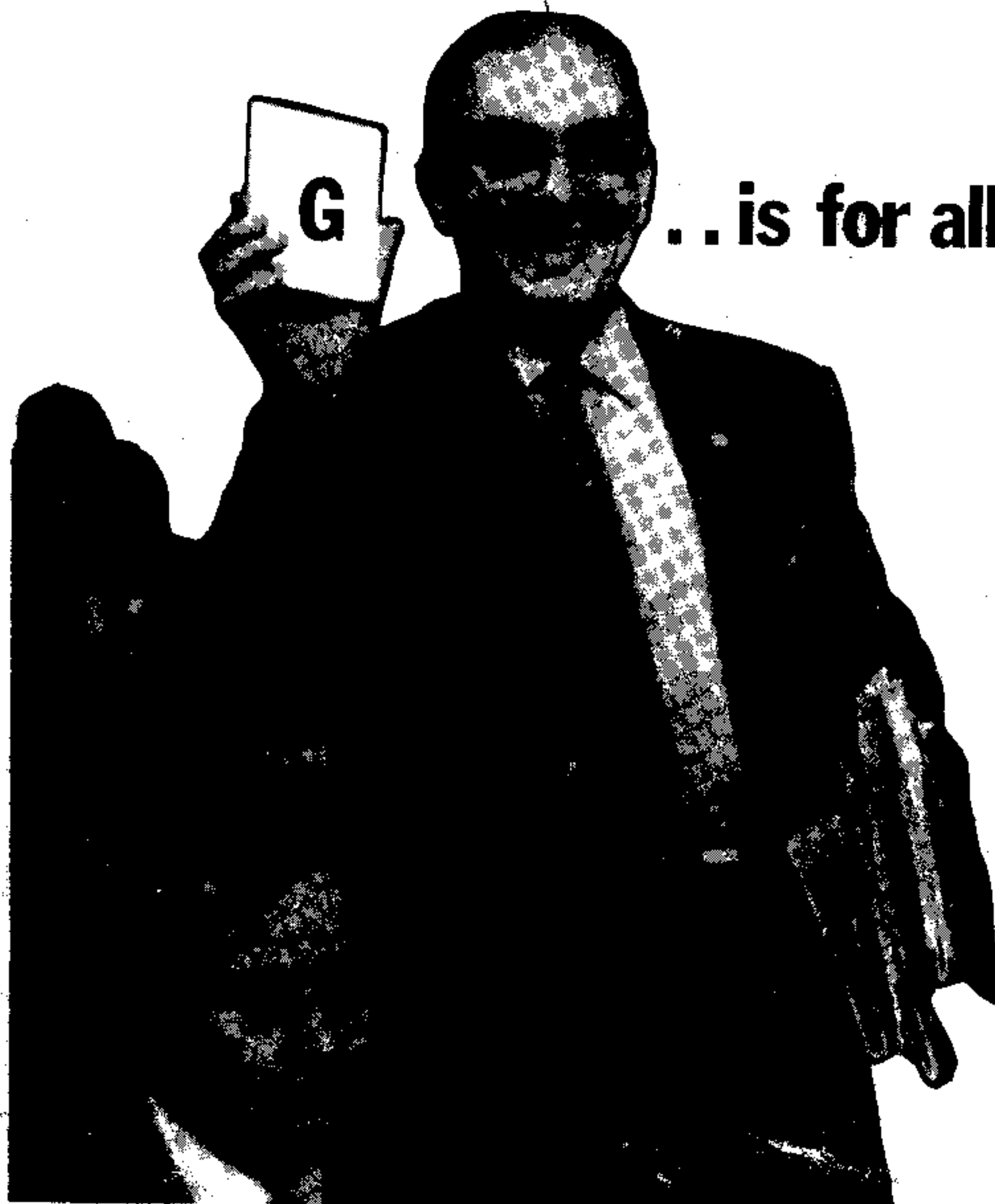
5. When it comes to the pressing problem of how to fight the Tories now, Holland makes the familiar mistake of erecting his own 'ideal' strategy (regular mass demonstrations called by Labour ayatollahs) and counter-posing it to the industrial and strike struggles that are actually taking place.

This error is either ultra-left sectarianism or, more frequently, an opportunist device to avoid commitment to specific struggles and to shelve the real task of socialists, which is to participate in these struggles, raising them to a higher level, showing what must be done for them to win, and explaining their political implications.

6. For all these reasons it is clear that the ideas of Stuart Holland, far from constituting a new way forward for the working class, suffer from all the defects of the 'old' left reformism that has failed so often in the past.

What gives these ideas a certain credibility is that, stripped of their leftist rhetoric, they do indeed represent an 'alternative economic strategy' — not for the working class, but for British capital seeking to modernise and protect itself against international capital, if and when Thatcher-Joseph monetarism proves disastrous. But it is precisely for this reason that these ideas must be energetically criticised and combated by marxists in the coming period.

Duncan Hallas Trotsky's Marxism



... is for all Gerrymanders

'Gerry Mander?' said my mate Al the other day down the pub. 'Isn't he the head of that nutty left-wing group that supports Idi Amin?'

'Very droll', I riposted. 'But, funnily enough the origin of the word gerrymander, meaning to rearrange voting districts in the interests of a particular party or candidate, does come from a bloke called Gerry. Governor Elbridge Gerry, actually, from Massachusetts.'

'So rigged was the Massachusetts electoral map in 1811 that the good people of the state decided to commemorate the achievement with the Governor's name. And since the map made the state look a little like a salamander, they hit on a lovely new word. The Governor died three years later.'

'What a shame,' says Al. 'But anyway, those times are long past. After all in the Alex Glasgow song it says 'G is for all Gerrymanderers like Lord Muck and Sir What's-'is-name'—the people responsible for the fact that the parliamentary seat of Old Sarum only had two electors in the 18th century, or those clergymen who fixed local elections before the 1832 Reform Act.'

'And what about Northern Ireland?' someone chipped in. 'With more

catholics than protestants in Derry, but a larger number of protestant voters. Vote early—vote often, you know. But of course all that's changed now...'

'Listen,' I said. 'I wanna tell you a story. Picture to yourself a happy seaside town—could be Eastbourne. Inside the conference hall, Harold is chairing the union meeting. He's a little worried, because it's the first time he's done it and John and Terry are away.'

But they get together in the bar the previous night. And there's Lord Muck and Sir What's-'is-name and they say to Harold that this is his big chance to make friends and influence people and earn his pension. And Sir W does his imitation of Tubby the Tuba and Lord M says: 'Look, Harold, I never advocated industrial action for political ends.'

Then Harold says, 'I know what I'll do. I'll ask them to withdraw the motion and be co-operative for the sake of this Great Movement of Ours'. And Lord M says: 'You do that and you'll be the second Harold to get something in the eye on the South Coast since our Norman first'

('Get to the point,' says someone).

'So the next day, Harold gets up: 'I don't care what the Standing Orders Committee says, this resolution is not an

emergency and if it is an emergency it's not constitutional'.

This note gets passed up which says: 'I don't think you're being entirely fair with regard to this one'—signed 'Ron of King Street'. Now Harold knows that Ron is a *foreign agent*, because Terry told him so. Besides, he's always wearing that funny fur hat with a red star on the front.

So that afternoon he brings out his agenda—and it hasn't got the emergency motion on it. Ron and his friends are most upset. They vote against Harold's agenda. And Harold says: 'That's a good idea, let's close the meeting and all collect pebbles instead'. And so they did. And they all lived scarpily ever after.'

'Very interesting, but what's it got to do with Massachusetts?' said Al.

'I'll tell you,' I reply, taking another swig. 'It could open up entirely new horizons for the trade union movement. Imagine. Len Murray stands up at the 1980 TUC, fighting his way through a few orange jackets and says: 'Right, who's challenging this order paper? All those in favour. All those against. OK, see you next year'.

'You can imagine how much money union leaders could save over the years. Almost enough to pay Lord Denning'.

'Yeah', he said enthusiastically, 'like the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation. They didn't have a conference for 60 years. No conference, no steel workers. Simple. No more uicers for the General Council. No more worries about 'what will the members say?' from Moss the Mouse. More TV appearances for Alan Fisher. No more worries about what Lord Citrine's book says for David Basnett'.

'Could be the making of the trade union movement,' I agreed. 'All those dues. The T&G collected £19½ million last year. It had to spend over £6 million on the bloody members, leaving less than £14 million for the members. Dreadful.'

'Unions like NALGO run it better. I see they spent over £5 million on administration out of £9.8 million members' contributions—and only had to pay out £85,000 in benefits during 1978. Now that's a *real* public sector cut. And the lads in ASTMS are even more fly. They spent two-thirds of the £6 million on admin and £145,000 on benefits.'

'Wait a second,' he said, reaching for the telephone.

'What are you doing? Phoning your stockbroker—'

'No, No... Hellow? Is that Mr C? Listen, I gotta proposition for you? You want to do business?'