

Workers Power

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THE LATEST round of cuts introduced by Environment Secretary Heseltine poses point blank the necessity of defend - ing jobs and local services by defeating the Tories' proposals. The £200 million cut in the Rate Support Grant is to be accompanied by a series of sanctions against councils that have not been sufficiently vicious in their cutting of services.

This comes after what Heseltine has described as, "the largest ever reduction in local authority man - power in one year"!

Having declared in January that he intended to use sanctions against any authorities which, "set out to challenge the Government", Heseltine has kept his word with a vengeance. Fourteen councils will suffer extra cuts and Hackney, Islington and Lambeth have all had aid withdrawn under the Inner City Partnership scheme.

The response of the Labour leaders to these dramatic cuts has been predictably pitiful. Fearful of a repetition of Clay Cross, where a Labour Council defied the law in order to maintain services, these leaders, led by Roy Hattersley, the Shadow Environment Secretary, have stressed all along the need to stay within the law - which in fact means toeing the Tory line.

Hattersley and Jack Smart, leader of the Labour controlled Association of Metropolitan Councils, decided to concentrate their attacks on on the, "unconstitutionality" of the cuts, since they were still to be approved by the House of Lords. The sight of Hattersley appealing to the Tory peers to decide whether they are the, "watchdog of the constitution or Heseltine's poodle" would have been laughable if it did not represent the only strategy put forward by these 'leaders' in Parliament. At the Labour Party Conference the NEC made it clear that it was only in favour of attacking the cuts if it was done, "within the law and in a democratic way".

The results of such a strategy were clearly evident in the last round of Tory cuts. Those councils which did not cave in immediately, ended up implementing massive rate rises and increasing council rents in order to make up the lost revenue. In other words they implemented the cuts in living standards but in a different form. In so doing they played into the hands of the Tory 'yellow' press who whipped up, "outraged" ratepayers.

Lambeth Labour Group, which was forced to reverse its initial decision to implement a 4½% cut by opposition within the constituency parties, followed this path. The massive Lambeth demonstration of November 7th, 1979 showed the enormous potential support which could be drawn on in a struggle with the Government. But this mass support was dissipated as Ted Knight and the Lambeth Labour Group manoeuvred against the position of "No Rent or Rates Increases". The result was a £1.50 a week rent rise for council tenants and a 48.4% rate increase.

The response to Heseltine's latest cuts is likely to be the same - a supplementary rates increase to make up the loss of government funding. This is already being considered by Islington, Camden Tower Hamlets and Sheffield Councils. A recent Birmingham Trades Council anti-cuts conference passed a resolution which declared, "In order to meet the cost of maintaining services, local authorities should raise the rates accordingly." But even this way out of avoiding

ALL OUT AGAINST THE CUTS



The November 1979 anti-cuts demonstration called by Lambeth Council Labour Group.

PHOTO: Mark Rusher (IFL)

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The Local Government Bill, being pushed through for November, will allow the Tories to claw back any revenue raised by, "excessive" rate increases by reducing the Rate Support Grant. The same

Bill allows Heseltine's department to close the Direct Labour departments if they are not making a "satisfactory" profit and makes housing subsidies dependent on rent rises. This will remove the last legal road open to councils who want to avoid making cuts in services.

This attack has prompted the calling of the November 1st

The Gulf War

THE WAR between Iran and Iraq, pitting the Bonapartist tyrant Hussein against the clerical bigot Khomeini, underlines the chronic instability that exists in the Middle East. The Gulf region, imperialism's main source of oil, is a powder keg of tensions and contradictions between and within the various states. This arises directly out if imperialism's carve up of the area.

Iraq's desire to secure a bigger access to the Gulf has led Hussein to invade Iran in a bid to seize its key oil producing area and outlets to the Gulf. Dressing up his aggression in the costume of pan-Arabism, Hussein has attempted to appeal to the Iranian arabs of Khuzestan. His crusade for, 'liberation', however, has cut little or no ice and the population of Khuzestan, Arab and Persian, appears to be mounting a stubborn resistance to the Iraqi invasion.

For Khomeini, the war has given him an opportunity to again rally the whole population around the banner of Shi'a Islam. Bani-Sadr, who has been busily calming the fears of imperialism about Hormuz, and rebuilding the Iranian army into a stable weapon of the state, has echoed Khomeini's calls for national unity in the face of the, 'Satanic' enemy. Both leaders, intent on ending Iran's, 'Nation without a state' situation, will undoubtedly utilise the war to create the conditions for the establishment of abonapartist Islamic government guaranteeing bourgeois rule in Iran.

However, despite their repeated efforts, Khomeini and Bani-Sadr have not yet been able to roll back all the gains won by the Iranian masses in the revolution that brought down the Shah. Those mobilisations expressed a combination of Islamic revivalism with genuine democratic aspirations amongst a population fed up to the teeth with years of bloody dictatorship under the Shah. The direct agent of the world's leading imperialist power, the US, was toppled as a result of this revolution.

Reaction, internal and external, has not yet been able to establish a new imperialist puppet in Iran and this remains the key gain of the revolution. Nor has Khomeini, despite his repeated attacks on the Kurds, on women and on the organisations of the left, been able to consolidate his reactionary regime into one capable of finally destroying the remaining democratic rights - crucially the right to form Shoras - won during the revolution.

While we do not support either regime in the present war and stand strategically for the overthrow of both, we are not neutral as to the outcome of the war. An Iraqi defeat would lead to the destabilisation of Hussein's regime and open up the possibility of the Iraqi masses, Sunni and Shi'a, overthrowing the, 'butcher of Baghdad'. For this reason we call on the Iraqi soldiers to immediately turn their

guns on their officers and to set up their own committees. We call on the workers and peasant masses, including the Kurds, to turn the present war into a civil war aimed at the establishment of a workers' state in Iraq.

In Iran the tactics aimed at securing the same goal, a workers' state, need to be applied in a different manner. The defeat of Iran, at the hands of the Iraqi invaders, is not a lesser evil as compared with the masses' own successful defence of the remaining gains of the Iranian revolution. The maintenance of imperialist dislocation in the area, a plus for the workers of the region, is best served by the defence of Iran's territorial integrity, where that integrity is threatened, not by a genuine national liberation movement or a proletarian uprising, but by a rival bonapartist dictator with an appetite for establishing good credentials with world imperialism.

For this reason we call for a military united front, based on the maintenance of full independence of revolutionaries' and workers' organisations, with the Iranian army, the Pasdaran, and the unorganised masses, only in the struggle to drive the Iraqi troops from Iran. We would still argue for the continuation of the struggle of the Kurds against the Iranian army, even if this threatened the war effort. The defence of Kurdish national rights stands above the defence of the gains of the Iranian revolution. Likewise, we would continue to support strikes and other forms of working class struggles against the Khomeini regime, arguing however, for workers control of military supply shipments - yes to arms and supplies for the Iraqi front! No to any supplies to the Iranian army for use against the Kurds!

We would indefatigably argue for the overthrow of Khomeini and Bani-Sadr, without making that a condition of the united front in the struggle against the Iraqi invaders. At the front, we would attempt, military conditions allowing, to fraternise with the Iraqi troops inciting them to mutiny. We would struggle to build soldiers' committees in the Iranian army with the power to elect all officers. We would not yet advise Iranian troops to turn their guns on their officers but we would encourage them to be ready to do so as soon as the Iraqi invaders are repelled.

We would argue for the building and extension of Shoras and the arming of the workers' militia for defence against the Iraqis, Khomeini Khomeini's black hundreds and Bani-Sadr's soon to be reconstituted army. The Trotskyist Party, that needs to be built in Iran, as the crowning point of its programme in the present war, would call for a national congress of shora delegates to take the power, establish a workers state and, thereby, provide the best possible defence of Iran against internal and external reaction and the designs of imperialism.

National 'Local Government in Crisis' conference by Lambeth's Labour Group and local trade unions. This has the declared intention of debating out a strategy which can allow Labour councils to resist the cuts with the backing of the trade unions.

The organising committee for the conference has put forward a resolution which falls far short of advancing a strategy to do this. While the resolution calls for, "no cuts in jobs or services, no redundancies, maintain and develop services, no running down of direct labour" and, "no rent rises or supplementary rate increases this financial year", it is deliberately evasive about when and

how such a policy should be introduced. For such a tactic to have any success, it is suggested, "would require a similar decision by a number of councils throughout the country with the full support of local authority trade unions". Of course the more councils defy the government

and are backed by industrial action the more chance there will be of defeating the government but the danger is that the "Left" are in fact going to use this to cover their retreat. We must say clearly that no labour council should do the Tories' dirty work for them - even if this means standing alone and being defeated. In fact, such a stand by even one council would generate widespread support in the labour and trade union movement and could be used to force other councils to do the same. On the other hand local labour councils decimating the public services, the education system and causing widespread redundancies will lead to demoralisation amongst their working class supporters and pave the way for Tory victories. Better to have Tory-appointed receivers facing a militant fightback than to have Labour councils doing the work of their Tory paymasters.

(Continued on Back Page)

FIGHT FOR A WORKERS GOVERNMENT?

PART 2

THE DUST has settled on the 'epic struggles' that gripped Labour's Blackpool conference. At the centre of the debates was not the development of strategy and tactics to destroy the Thatcher Government but three issues concerning the structure and constitution of the Party.

The three issues, mandatory re-selection, NEC control over the manifesto and taking the election of the Party leader out of the hands of the Parliamentary Party, remain the key issues in the running dispute between the Right and the Left. What would these changes mean if they were carried through?

Mandatory reselection, passed by the conference, will mean that the MP's will experience a measure of pressure on them from their constituency parties and that, over a longish period, the present right wing majority in the PLP might be shifted to a situation favouring the left. This procedure will be long and cumbersome and ineffective for ensuring day to day control over the MP's.

The proposal to give the NEC more control over the election manifesto was lost at this conference. If passed it would certainly have tied the parliamentarians to advocating conference-approved policies at election time, but it would not stop the PLP renegeing on its promise. Labour Governments have, invariably, renegeed on the pledges in the manifestos the party leaders have drawn up. Nothing in these proposals would enable the rank and file of the Labour Party to prevent that.

If the election of the Party leader was conducted by constituency, union and PLP delegates this would still not control what the elected leader did — especially once they were prime minister. The prime minister, constitutionally, can tender the resignation of the entire government, thus precipitating a general election.

Moreover, all these reforms are standard practice in European Social Democracy. So why all the fuss? What motivates the contending sides in this 'epic' contest?

Firstly, the parliamentarians. Isolated and integrated into the, 'finest club in the world' on decent salaries with endless opportunities for perks (consultancies, directorships, holidays and trips abroad) these people, in the main, think they own the labour movement. Thorough paced careerists, like Rogers, Williams and Owen, they climb up to the House of Commons on the money subscribed by millions of trade union members and the work of tens of thousands of party activists. Once there, like the bourgeois they really are, they ignore and flout the democratic wishes of the party and the labour movement on the insolent pretext that they, 'represent the voters'. (Although the voters actually voted for the party as is usually shown if any of these office-seekers attempt to stand as individuals.)

The leaders of the parliamentary party, those, 'entrusted with high office' (by the bourgeoisie) are open and conscious agents of the ruling class — witness their links with NATO and the CIA.

It is, therefore, no surprise that these people should be bitterly opposed to anything that will subordinate them to their party rank and file. Any act of sabotage can be expected from these 'leaders'. Ramsey MacDonald and the whole inner circle of the cabinet decamped to an open alliance with the bosses in order to carry out a brutal anti-working class austerity plan when there were over three million unemployed. Callaghan, Healey and Co. would desert too rather than see their privileges diminished or be forced to act for one minute against the direct interests of their friends in the City or the White House.

UNION LEADERS

Secondly, the trade union leaders. They are more evenly divided. What lay behind their posturings at Blackpool? The big bureaucrats who run the unions are no friends of rank and file democracy but, during the 1974-79 government they had good reason to be resentful. After two years of imposing falling real wages on their members, Healey and Callaghan attempted to force a 5% limit on them at the same time as collecting large financial contributions for an Autumn election. To add insult to injury Callaghan then called off the election without so much as a by your leave. He then tried to impose the 5% limit unilaterally, hoping to gain a reputation as the man who could control the unions with or without the TUC's assistance.

Evans, Basnett and Murray were indignant at this treatment and determined on a greater measure of the trade union control over the parliamentarians. However, they have not the slightest interest in the rank and file of the constituencies controlling the party. They merely want a temporary alliance with the rank and file to teach Callaghan a lesson and to block Healey's assumption of farmer Jim's mantle.

They want an electoral college system so structured that they will have decisive sway over the PLP. The 40% TUC, 30% PLP and 30% Constituency electoral college system, for example, would allow the TUC to put the squeeze on the PLP without allowing real power into the hands of the constituency



Picture: A. Ward (Report).

LABOUR AFTER BLACKPOOL

The concluding section of a "Fight For a Workers' Government?" which appeared in Workers Power 15.

By Charlie Shell

activists. But, to date, the TUC have failed to stamp this mould on the party.

What they have achieved, by reimposing the three year rule against the wishes of the NEC, is that the constitutional debate in the Labour Party can be snuffed out by the union bureaucrats whenever they decide the time is ripe. At present they have no clear alternative candidate that they can counterpose to Callaghan and Healey as their own. But they urgently need an electorally credible Labour Party to which they can point as the alternative to Thatcher and as the reason for holding back on industrial struggles in order to make sure a 'real' Labour government replaces the Tories in 1984.

In their own terms this now means that the constitutional debate in the Labour Party is entering its final round. There will be an emergency conference, a constitutional amendment next autumn and then three years of silence on the big three issues.

On the other hand the right wing bureaucrats Chapple, Murray, Wheighell, set on a course of total collaboration and capitulation to Thatcher and Prior and, emboldened by the rightward shift in their own unions, are vehement supporters of the PLP.

The future of the reforms depends, almost entirely, on the direction of the block vote. This in turn depends on the pressure the militant rank and file of the unions bring to bear on its leaders. There can be no doubt that there is a groundswell within the constituencies and unions in favour of reforms that are believed to make another Callaghan type government an impossibility or at least more unlikely. Accountability and responsibility are seriously desired by numbers of advanced workers as a means of ensuring that a future Labour government would be responsive to the demands and needs of workers.

But these aspirations rarely push blue-collar unionists into individual membership of the Party which remains overwhelmingly a white-collar and lower middle-class preserve. The bulk of any influx this year has come from this stratum, many of the most vocal of whom are moving rightwards, from (or with) ostensibly revolutionary organisations towards left reformism.

The disillusion amongst working class voters was vividly demonstrated by the declining percentage Labour won of the trade union votes (51% in 1979 compared to 55% in 1974 according to ITN/Opinion Research Centre election day polls cited in Labour Weekly, 18th May 1979). The same poll demonstrates a swing to Labour in 'social classes AB, 'professional middle class' of 5% and likewise in C1 - white collar workers of 3%.

In the skilled working class (C2) however, there was a loss of 7% and a swing to the Tories of 10%. In the unskilled and the poor (DE) things were scarcely better. Labour down 6% and a swing to the Tories of 9%. This loss of working class support is reflected

even more dramatically in the ranks of Labour's constituency activists.

Firstly the number of activists has dropped drastically and is concealed by the artificially high official figures. The NEC report to this years conference showed a drop in individual membership between 1978 and 1979 of close on 10000. The New Statesman estimated (29-9-78) "total individual membership would be more like 300000 than 680000" and even then "Generally, only 10% of any constituencies membership is in any way active with the remaining 90% simply paying their £1.20 or 20p if they are pensioners - and rarely if ever, attending any ward meeting or party function".

Labour Weekly (28-9-79) puts these figures a bit higher (23% of real membership active, ie 55000 activists). As for social composition the New Statesman survey of the 1979 Conference found "70% were white collar and only 30% blue collar" and of the latter figure 27% were skilled workers.

DECLINE

The decline in involvement of the affiliated trade unions is also a cause for alarm to the 'left' leaders. Ernie Roberts, MP, reports "So although seven million trade unionists are affiliated members of the Labour Party by virtue of their trade union membership, few of these are individual party members and fewer still are active within their constituency. Furthermore, while manual union branches affiliate to one or more constituency Labour Parties (CLP's), the level of trade union activity in the party is low, because few trade union branches elect the delegates to the CLP's which they are entitled to have.

For example, the AUEW has about 2400 affiliated branches, but only about 240 of these elect delegates to their CLP's... (Labour Monthly, October 1980). As for the affiliated members the situation is even worse. A survey of Post Office workers (Moran 1975) indicated that 49% were totally unaware that they were paying the political levy.

At all levels and in all ways Labour has lost ground within the working class. The majority of shop-floor militants are deeply cynical and disillusioned with the Labour Party but are necessarily in the front line of resistance to unemployment, the cuts and the assault on real wages. Callaghan's recipe of a new wage restraint deal with the TUC to ensure a Labour Government in 1984 is certainly a blind alley for them. Their prime concern is how to mount a successful counter-attack to the Tories, how to drive the Tories from office.

But the Bennite Labour Left hardly address this problem. The debate on unemployment at the conference was pathetic and flat. Benn is explicitly opposed to the use of industrial action for political ends. He made that clear in an interview with Socialist Challenge: "To come back to the question about how you get rid of the Thatcher Government — after 20 years of silence on socialism you can't cut it short by industrial muscle."

"You've got to tackle the real argument, which is that these arguments have to be injected into the public consciousness and then you have to build support".

Benn has never made any attempt to hide the fact that his campaign to refurbish the sagging credibility of the Labour Party is, for him, a campaign to restore the credibility of parliamentary democracy itself.

"Unless this problem is dealt with by a greater

party democracy, there is a risk that the pent up pressure for real economic, industrial and social change, now so evident in the Labour Movement may seek expression outside the Labour Party and outside Parliament and thus damage the role of the Labour Party as the main democratic instrument of working people and their families, and its capacity to win elections to advance those interests.

"Indeed, I can visualise an even greater danger. If the perspective of peaceful change, by democratic means, were to get blocked within the Labour Party, it would not just be the Labour Party but Parliamentary Democracy itself that might be undermined." (Case for a Constitutional Premiership — Tony Benn, p 20, IWC speech in Bristol, 14th July 1979)

Benn's programme is aimed precisely at preventing the struggle against the effects of British capitalism's long term decline developing outside the confines of Parliament. He has advanced a number of measures to specifically strengthen the powers of Parliament — parliamentary confirmation of major public appointments, the development of Commons Select Committee procedure, freedom of information, the return of Law making powers from Brussels. Despite his reputation in the CLPs, he intends to further increase the power of the PLP itself. Within Benn's scheme the election of cabinet ministers and the confirmation of the allocation of folios will be the prerogative of Labour MPs. He opposes the election of the leader by the Conference because this would exclude the PLP. He envisages no real control of the PLP by the Labour Party and the Labour Movement. With Eric Heffer he has proposed that,

"The Party meeting made up of all Labour MPs should be seen as the main forum of debate within the PLP and the final authority in all matters concerning the day to day work of the Party in the House of Commons, within the framework of Conference Policy." (Joint statement in Bulletin for Workers' Control No.5 1979) Not even the NEC would have control over the PLP.

Benn, like Callaghan, believes that the only option open to workers is to work to re-elect a Labour Government. True it must do more to win and maintain the confidence of workers than within Callaghan's scheme, but the recipe means the same.

Benn calculates that without rejuvenating the grass roots of the Party its vote catching apparatus will wither and decay. Hence his perspective of increasing the say of the CLP's within the Party without challenging the hold of the TUC and PLP. He knows that without support from within the CLPs his own chance for winning the Party leadership will be blocked by the PLP.

Benn has likewise never made any secret of his plans to reform capitalism. He acknowledges that this will mean standing up to key vested interest true enough. He is adamant that the media, for example, is set on blocking the presentation of socialist ideas — hence their relative unpopularity.

"The trouble is at the moment that the media won't allow an alternative to be presented because they're afraid it would be too popular...because they know in their hearts that if we could get this across there would be support for us, and there would be."

But the resistance to the vested interests is only seen in terms of Parliament asserting itself. Nowhere does Benn address the powerlessness of Parliament against big business, the judiciary, army and police. He lightly dismisses the ability of the IMF to force its way on a confident sovereign British Parliament.

"When we look back on 1976, if we had told the IMF to go away, I don't think it

continued on page 7

SLUMP AND STAGNATION

BY
STUART
KING
AND
KEITH
HASSELL

As Britain slides ever deeper into recession, with over two million workers idle, three quarters of all manufacturers working below capacity and with the C.B.I. predicting that investment will fall by a further 10% next year, trade unionists are being assailed with a growing chorus not to "price themselves out of a job." This has a familiar ring. Wilson and Healy made similar demands during the last recession of 1974/75—then we were told we would have to "tighten our belts" and "improve productivity" (i.e. accept speed ups) if we were to get Britain back on the road to economic recovery. Although Thatcher's catch phrase is different the argument remains the same—it is the workers who cause the crisis through their high wage demands and low productivity.

We are not however just talking about a "British crisis". There are over 20 million unemployed in the OECD countries, while the US economy has been in a severe recession since the winter of 1979. This is the third world recession since the early 70s.

In 1970 the "long boom" came to an end. Between 1952 and 1968 world capitalist output had doubled—GNP growing at over 5% per year. After the second world war capitalism appeared to have stabilised itself indefinitely. Social Democrats were quick to argue that capitalism had changed its spots—gone were the days of boom/slump cycles that had characterised pre-war capitalism. This impressionist response came unstuck in the seventies with the return of the very features of capitalism (recurring recessions) that many Labourites such as Anthony Crosland, had sought to write out of existence. What happened after the war was that the massive destruction of capital in the slump before the war and during the war itself, had created room for renewed investment on the basis of American imperialism's political and economic hegemony. This dominance was characterised by the pumping of aid into devastated economies such as West Germany and Japan, and the policing of the world via U.S. nuclear firepower and the maintenance of vicious dictatorships (the Shah of Iran, South Korea, Brazil etc). But this did not eradicate the fundamental contradictions of capitalism—it merely offset them for a limited, if relatively extensive period. In the 1970s these contradictions again became dominant as America's balance of trade began to move into deficit, and as its gendarme image became tarnished in Vietnam. The boom period was over. A new period of recurring and sharpening capitalist crises had opened up.

The recession of 1970-71 saw industrial production growth rates declining to ¼% while unemployment rose by a third to 3½%. The "mini-boom" of 1971-73 gave way in 1974/75 to a major slump. Between the last quarter of 1974 and the first quarter of 1975 industrial production fell by 20%. Unemployment rose from eight million at the end of 1973 to 15 million by the spring of 1975. World wide inflation had jumped from 5% in 1969 to an unprecedented 15% by the spring of 1974.

CREDIT

That this slump was relatively short lived was solely due to the massive injection of money (mainly credit) that was pumped into the world economy through the world banks—the I.M.F. Several hundreds of billions of dollars were poured into the imperialist economies (particular G.B. and Italy) in an attempt to stimulate spending and hence demand and eventually production. The resulting recovery was superficial and shallow. With the partial exception of West Germany and Japan the GNP growth rates in the period 1976-79 have stuck in the 1-3% mark. Unemployment has remained at 5½%—an average 10 million

are workers to blame?

more people are out of work than was the case in the 1960s. Inflation has continued to run at 7-8%.

These crises, far from being the result of "greedy" or "lazy" workers as Thatcher, Joseph and Callaghan, would have us believe, are in fact fundamental to capitalist economies. For a capitalist to survive competition from other capitalists he must sell his commodities as cheaply as possible. To do this he must raise the productivity of labour i.e. he must produce more commodities with the same (or a smaller) workforce. This means investing in new machinery, automating output to the highest degree possible. But the problem for the capitalist is that it is only the worker that produces profit—because the worker is paid less than the value of his labour power. Therefore the greater the proportion of machinery employed to labour the lower will be the rate of profit—the return on the capital invested. This will be true even if the capitalist sells more i.e. even if his mass of profit rises. This tendency for the rate of profit to fall will lead the capitalist to postpone investment. Rather than re-investing in industry the capitalist will hold on to his money.

This action itself will set off a crisis situation as it will disrupt the circulation process—the crisis will appear as a crisis of over production, as unsold stocks pile up. Firms will collapse sending shock waves through the credit system thus exacerbating the crisis.

Of course these crises affect different capitals—different countries—to differing degrees. It will depend on the strength and efficiency of particular economies. The economies equipped with the latest machinery will undercut their rivals—increasing the mass of profits accruing to them and enabling them to finance new rounds of investment which will give them further competitive advantages. The weak and stagnant capitals will be pushed nearer and nearer to bankruptcy and decline.

While these boom/slump cycles existed even in the 50s and 60s (they have of course existed throughout capitalism's history) in individual economies what has characterised them in the 1970s is the fact that they have been "synchronised" on a world scale. The underlying tendency of falling profit rates has meant that these crises are increasingly severe while the booms are fleeting and superficial.

It is these problems which have faced the imperialist economies with increasing severity from the 1970s onwards. The U.K. with its ageing and uncompetitive industrial infrastructure was one of the weakest of the capitalist economies. Whereas between 1950-1954 the rate of return on capital invested, (before tax) stood at 16.5%, today it is down to 4%. Britain's increasingly uncompetitive goods were driven out of their traditional markets by more efficient economies. Between 1947 and 1980 Britain's share of world exports has fallen from 12.2% to 6% and it is still falling. This decline and the fall in profit rates has meant that the vast sums of capital necessary

to restructure the economy—to raise investment levels (and therefore productivity) to those of the German and Japanese economies—have not been available.

This problem does not just afflict the weaker capitalist economies like Britain and Italy but is increasingly obvious in the most powerful capitalist economy—the U.S.A. American economists and politicians now talk of the urgent need to "re-industrialise" America. American business journals like "US News" declare "on one thing all factions can agree: the economy is aging and tired. Something has to be done or the U.S. is likely to wind down into a second class industrial power." (U.S. News 22/9/80). Between 1967 and 1979 productivity in manufacturing in the U.S. increased by only 29% whereas in Japan it increased by 130%. At the same time the U.S. share of world manufacturing exports tumbled from 21.6% in 1960 to 14.6% in 1979. Neither is the "trillions of dollars" necessary to finance this investment programme forthcoming as the pre-tax profit rates in the U.S. have plummeted from 16.2% in the 1948-50 period to 6.9% by 1975.

It is these underlying factors afflicting the major imperialist economies which have given rise to the reappearance of major crises and stagnation on a world scale. This economic decline has been accompanied by an increasing political instability, world wide—Nicaragua and Iran, were both major losses for imperialism. The toppling of U.S. backed dictators in both of these countries through the intervention of the masses has led to severe disruption in the imperialist chain of command in the surrounding areas. The upheavals in El Salvador and the Iran/Iraq war are clear examples of this. As the crises intensify, as the imperialists lose more ground, so their remedies will get more desperate. The establishment of massive "Rapid Deployment force" designed to intervene militarily where U.S. imperialist interests are threatened, the threats to use a naval task force to take control of the Straits of Hormuz are just two examples of this.

SHORT TERM

The short term solutions being searched for by various sections of national ruling classes are necessarily similar. In America the Carter administration has set up the "Economic Revitalisation Board", a pale reflection of Labour's National Enterprise Board, which aims to use state funding to direct investment to hopeful "capitalist winners". On the other side are the demands to cut the "tax burden" on industry, to restore incentives and cut social welfare, to let the weak industries go to the wall and to "shake out" surplus labour. All this is accompanied by the familiar arguments that high wage settlements and "featherbedding" by the Trade Unions are the root causes of recession. It is only by taking these measures, pushing down real wages, increasing unemployment to undercut trade union bargaining power, introducing speed ups to increase productivity, that the capitalists will be able to improve their profit rates and become competitive again.

This is why crises are not only the result of the incessant drive for accumulation but also the "solution" to the problems this produces for the capitalists in declining profit rates. A crisis if it is severe enough—will do all these things— including destroying and devaluing capital. Such a crisis will be followed by an upturn as the boom/slump cycle starts again at a higher level. This is why the ending of the 74/75 crisis through expansionary credit measures solved none of the fundamental problems of the ailing imperialist economies—but only fueled inflation. It also explains the gloomy response in the U.S.A. to the first tentative signs of an upturn in the economy, itself partially engineered in the pre-election period by

the Federal Reserve cutting interest rates from 20% to 11% in three months. The recession hasn't been allowed to do its job. As the New York Times woefully admitted "In other words, and predictably the recession has failed to perform the one positive mission for which it was created. It has failed to arrest inflation." 18th September 1980.

This explains the determination with which the present Tory Government is pushing through its slump policies, Margaret Thatcher is not a "mad axewoman" but rather represents the intention of the ruling class to solve the crises of British capitalism at the expense of the working class. One of the major obstacles to upping profit rates for British capitalism and thus hopefully allowing it to restructure through increased investment, has been the size and organisation of the trade unions in Britain and their ability to resist attacks on wages and conditions.

The present Tory Government, recognising the depth of the crisis, has decided to force the capitalist class to face up to its class responsibility to take on and defeat the working class. Thus it intervenes to use and promote various aspects of the crises to this end. The rise in interest rates in November 1978 to 17% is designed to make borrowing extremely expensive for the capitalists. This way the Tories hope to strengthen the resolve of the capitalists to stand up against "high" wage demands. It is also designed to weed out the "weak capitalists"—so far this year there have been over 6000 bankruptcies—a rate higher even than during the 74/75 slump. Thus it is hoped that a massive programme of centralisation of capital will take place, leaving manufacturing leaner and more productive at the cost of human misery for the millions thrown onto the dole queues. The resulting "reserve army of labour" and the threat of unemployment will be used to undermine the bargaining strength of the trade unions, while the Employment Act, a central part of the Tories armoury in this strategy, will be used to strangle and isolate any working class resistance to these plans. These attacks are further augmented by the onslaught on public expenditure—the cuts in social services designed to reduce "unproductive" government expenditure at the expense of working class living standards. All this has been accompanied, of course, by a massive ideological campaign—in the media—aimed at showing that it is because the workers and their trade unions have become "too powerful" that the economy is in crisis.

RISKS

However, while Thatcher is feted and admired by her fellow ruling class warriors abroad, all recognise the risks involved in such a policy. The British working class has yet to suffer a serious defeat, despite the various setbacks that have taken place during the 70s. The Tories know they run the risk of provoking a massive confrontation which could destroy their government. Even within their own class there is growing uncertainty. As the recession deepens cries of anguish are being heard from sections of the capitalist class—the C.B.I. pushed by its rank and file of small and medium firms implores Thatcher to reduce interest rates by 4% or more, while demands for import controls increasingly come from the weaker capitalists and their camp followers in the labour movement.

Neither does a "success" in making the working class pay for the crisis necessarily guarantee a restructured British economy. The high interest rates, resulting in hundreds of millions of extra profits for the banks and finance houses, merely strengthens the dominance of finance capital, which is expected to play a crucial role in financing the necessary investment programmes. But finance capital will invest where the profits are highest which is likely to remain in the areas of super exploitation in the imperialised countries.

SOCIALISM

Finally and most importantly there is no purely "British solution" available. The British economy is integrally linked to the other imperialist economies. All the indications are that there will be no quick recovery from the present world recession. Despite a pre-election mini-boom in the U.S. both the I.M.F. and the O.E.C.D. predict a 4% drop in the G.N.P. of the American economy this year. In both Germany and Japan industrial indicators show a marked slowing down in manufacturing as the recession begins to pull down even the strongest economies, while the oil price increases and disruption of supplies from Iran and Iraq will undoubtedly give another deflationary twist to the cycle.

The working class has only one way of ending the vicious cycle of crisis, insecurity and unemployment which is inherent in capitalism. That is by overthrowing this anarchic and wasteful system and replacing it with a planned economy—socialism—where production for use not profit—will eliminate once and for all poverty and unemployment from the face of the planet. A central task of revolutionaries is to build a revolutionary communist party and international that can lead the working class to achieving this goal.

TURKEY

When Bulent Ecevit, the leader of Turkey's main Opposition party in Parliament, the Republican People's Party, prevented the Parliament calling a general election this autumn, he got more than he bargained for. The Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel, leader of the right wing Justice Party, had hoped that a speedy election would secure him a parliamentary majority. Instead the leaders of all the main parliamentary parties received visits from army officers in the early hours of September 12th informing them that they were under 'protective custody', that Demirel's coalition government had been ousted and that all political and trade union activity had been banned. Only the fascist leader Turkes, who had been tipped off by a friend in the army escaped immediate arrest. For the third time in two decades the Turkish generals had staged a coup. Following their takeover, described in the West as 'gentle', the generals have implemented martial law throughout Turkey and have set up a ruling seven man junta, comprising the heads of all sections of the security forces.

The military coup has occurred within a context of permanent economic and political crisis within Turkey. The latest world recession has bitten deep into an already beleaguered economy (120% inflation and 20% unemployment). The collapse of the Turkish economy has been the subject of speculation in western financial circles for over two years now. The prevention of that collapse has been a major concern of those same circles. The International Monetary Fund, for example, has pumped one billion dollars this year into Turkey, and has re-scheduled many of the country's outstanding debts. The net effect of keeping Turkey afloat through credit has been to leave the country with a total foreign debt of over 16 billion dollars. This has had the inevitable effect of making life a misery for Turkey's masses, who bear the brunt of the measures demanded by the IMF. Food and fuel shortages are accompanied by repeated attempts to drive down living standards of the workers and peasants. Constant devaluations of the Turkish Lira and savage cuts in public spending, both dictates of the IMF, combined with internal attacks on workers' wages by organisations like the metal bosses' federation, the MESS, were all features of Demirel's economic policies.

This economic turmoil has polarised Turkish society sharply. The parliamentary crisis, cited by the bourgeois journals as the main factor behind the coup, was in fact only a reflection of a much deeper crisis throughout Turkish society. Neither the RPP nor the Justice Party have been able to provide a stable rule for the Turkish bourgeoisie. The parliament has been paralysed for months. Despite having staged over 100 ballots it has not been able to elect a President; the shifting alliances of the smaller parties, Erbakan's Islamic fundamentalist National Salvation Party and Turkes fascist Nationalist Action Party, has thwarted Demirel's attempts to establish a stable coalition; even a package of measures designed to curb political violence on which the main parties agreed fell foul of parliamentary

horse-trading. The generals looked on with ever greater disapproval at the politicians paralysis. They repeatedly issued warnings and then, in the interest of stabilising Turkey, for the bourgeoisie and world imperialism that is, they acted.

But the parliamentary paralysis stemmed from a situation of near civil war. On the one side there was the military (martial law existed in 19 Turkish provinces before the coup) and the fascist gangs of Turkes NAP, the Grey Wolves, who have been engaged in systematic terror campaigns against the working class. It has been the activity of the 'Grey Wolves' that has led to the majority of the 5000 plus political murders over the last two years (216 a day in the first ten days of this September). For example, last summer after they had moved into the town of Corum they launched attacks on the working class districts. In weeks the death toll had risen to 58—most of those killed, dying at the hands of the fascists who mutilated their victims in order to frighten the rest of the townspeople. In the face of attacks like these the army has been slow to react. In fact the army is heavily influenced by fascists. When the army did take action it was invariably to smash down working class resistance to the fascists, or to break strikes that were being waged against the bosses' austerity policies.

However, Turkey's militant working class was not letting the fascists have it all their own way. Their refusal to passively accept the combined attacks of the bosses, the state and the fascists was the major factor in preventing the politicians from resolving Turkey's problems in the interests of the bourgeoisie and world imperialism. It was this stubborn militancy despite extensive repression that prompted the generals to move in and thereby gain a free hand to wage a concerted attack on the working class, the peasantry and the Kurds. The working class were prepared to strike to defend their standard of living against attempts to reduce their real wages. Before the coup 50,000 metal workers had been involved in a major strike, while another 300,000 workers from various industries were due to come out on strike. Furthermore the fighting in Izmir last January and February and Corum in the summer, where workers erected barricades and took up arms, demonstrated that workers were more than willing to actively resist the physical attacks of the military and police on their areas. A witness of the Corum events wrote: "Soon the entire town was divided into two armed camps. The fighting between them continued for five days, despite the imposition of first a 17 and then a 12 hour curfew." (Turkey Today).

These assaults on working class districts could not stamp out militancy. On the contrary they often encouraged it. This led to a situation of permanent crisis, of 'anarchy' as the bourgeois press always calls it. The failure to control this situation within a parliamentary framework was increasingly evident. Commentators began to ask when the coup would be, and not if it would take place. On September 12th General Kenan Evren ended their speculation.

The western press has displayed a barely dis-



The 'gentle' generals exhibit the weapons which they have pledged to use to break "Any resistance . . . in the severest manner, instantaneously".

guised glee at the events in Turkey. The descriptions of the coup as 'gentle', 'bloodless' and 'reluctant' have all been used to distinguish Turkey's generals from those of Bolivia for example. An editorial in the Economist just after the coup commented: "Yet it is hard not to concede that Turkey's armed forces, led by the Chief of Staff General Evren, acted as they had to when they took power on September 12th." Quite obviously then, the parliamentary democracy usually so beloved of the western journalists, is an expendable item when imperialist interests, and that means investments, are at risk. Erstwhile 'human rights' campaigner Jimmy Carter has calmly announced that the \$83 million US aid to Turkey will keep on flowing. The State Department has welcomed the coup, expressing its trust in the generals, and one US official commented: "If there had to be a coup this is probably as good a coup as any."

The imperialists' relief at the coup is well founded. The junta has vowed to restore order in Turkey—i.e. repress the working class. This way it hopes to create a safer sphere of investments for the world banks. Evren has promised to carry through the IMF's austerity package, begun by both Ecevit and Demirel. He has named as deputy prime minister Demirel's chief economic adviser, Turgut Ozal, a former world bank official much admired by the west's leading bankers.

The other factor in the imperialists' interest in Turkey is military. Sharing a long border with the Soviet Union and situated at NATO's vital southern flank, Turkey is of central strategic importance to imperialism in terms of the Middle East and the USSR. No wonder then that the US military and government consider stability, i.e. a pro-imperialist government, essential to the West.

This attitude was summed up in an editorial in the Financial Times: "It (Turkey) occupies a crucial position in NATO. Only from Turkish soil can the Americans keep a regular watch on Soviet missile launches. . . In this context the initial news from Ankara is encouraging." 15th September 1980). Encouraging indeed! Evren has promised to strengthen links with NATO and to allow the US to have more bases in Turkey. He has also granted the US the right to fly its U2 spy planes over Turkey into the Soviet Union.

With this sort of stake in Turkey there is very

little doubt that the US had a hand in the coup. In the week previous to the coup one of its agents, Tahsin Sahinkay the Air Force chief to Washington for top level talks with US military commanders. Furthermore the New York Times reported: "Officials in Turkish military circles privately suggested that the armed forces would not intervene unless they received prior approval from Washington." (13.9.80). Clearly then, the Turkish tanks got the green light from US imperialism before they rolled onto the streets of Ankara and Istanbul.

The coup will undoubtedly be followed by massive repression in Turkey, western apologists notwithstanding. The working class and the Turkish nationalists in particular, will be targets of repression. Although the NAP have been their open supporters in the security forces they have not been purged, and in many places they are the executors of the martial law provisions against the working class.

The 450,000 strong left wing trade union organisation, DISK, has been closed down, its offices ransacked and its leaders all arrested. Although blanket censorship has not been imposed on Turkey's left-wing newspapers have been banned. A news black out has ensured that the newspapers have not reported the army's doing. The resistance to the coup that has been meted. Strikes have been prohibited and, although workers have been given a 70% wage rise, it may sound a lot, the fact that this is still 50% below the inflation rates means that workers are no better off in real terms. They are still being forced to pay for Turkish capitalism's debts to the IMF.

Martial law throughout Turkey has given the army a free hand to do what it likes. All local mayors have been sacked and replaced by coup officials. The army has the power to take on sight anyone who refuses to obey their orders. Powers of detention without trial have enabled the army to move into the working class suburbs and round up the young militants who were in the forefront of the fight against fascism. Already the real meaning of these powers has made itself felt. Zeki Yumurtaci, the leader of a small left wing group, was gunned down by the army in the streets of Istanbul, while another leftist has been sentenced to death even though the authorities admit that he is not guilty of

The Popular Front dream - A nightmare for Turkey

The forces of the left in Turkey, despite many displays of heroism in particular battles with the state and the fascists, never developed a strategy that could have prevented the generals coming to power. The absence of a Trotskyist party meant that, in the face of a growing danger of a coup and of extensive fascist terror, no section of the left raised the call for a workers united front to smash fascism and military reaction. In fact the disarray on the left spilled over into violent internal conflict. Describing the conflict between left wing Kurdish groups, for example, 'Turkey Today' points out: "Among these four movements there is a clash which extends as far as bloody confrontations." Such conflicts have also occurred between Maoists and pro-Moscow Stalinists.

The Turkish Communist Party (TKP), disastrously wrong in its strategy and tactics in the period leading up to the coup, was a major force in misleading the working class. It disarmed it politically, in a period when the crisis in Turkish society required a strong working class armed with revolutionary answers, if victory for reaction was to be avoided.

The TKP has a major influence on the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DISK), Turkey's main independent trade union organisation. The record of this leadership during a period of determined rank and file militancy, has been one of chronic vacillation. Thus, while affiliate unions such as Maden-Is (metal workers) have been involved in prolonged and bitter struggles with their employers, the DISK has pursued a policy of complying with the limitations imposed on its activities by both Ecevit and Demirel. This year's May Day march was a case in point. Traditionally the Turkish workers stage a major demonstration in Istanbul on May Day. This year Demirel banned the march and instructed DISK to hold a non-political march in Mersin (to the south of Istanbul). The DISK vice-president, Riza Guven was quick to submit: "Political organisations will not carry bann-

ers nor will Kurdish slogans be shouted on May Day. The rally we are organising is legal. Therefore only organisations which accept the conditions laid down may participate." (Turkey Today).

The TKP assented proclaiming their slogan for the day to be "Let us not cause any provocation". DISK, in league with the TKP thereby prevented a major mobilisation of workers from being directed against the anti-working class policies of the Demirel government.

The same wavering was evident earlier this year when DISK called off a general strike in Izmir and Istanbul, which had been staged in support of the TARIS workers factory occupation in Izmir, after only one day. The end result was to allow 10,000 troops to move into Izmir, smash the occupation and terrorise the working class districts, where barricades had gone up and street fighting had occurred. DISK was unwilling to move beyond a passive protest that did little to hold back the army's attacks, even before the coup, on entire working class communities.

At the root of the TKP's failure to give a clear lead to the Turkish and Kurdish working masses, is its insistence on wooing the left wing of Ecevit's RPP, i.e. on wooing the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie. To pursue its programme of establishing a cross class popular front, it is prepared to sacrifice the independent interests of the workers. If it allowed militancy to go too far, its bourgeois allies, or rather hoped for allies, would be scared off. Thus despite the fact that it was the RPP that originally introduced martial law in many of Turkey's provinces, the TKP confined its criticism to Ecevit, maintained electoral support for the RPP and stepped up its orientation to the left wing. The working class was to rely on the good will of the liberal wing of its class enemy, rather than on its own strength in the battle with fascism and military reaction. Now, in the aftermath of the coup, it is the working class and the TKP, not its liberal class

enemies, who are suffering the consequences of that policy.

To prevent internal criticism of its policies, the TKP leaders have not called a party congress since 1932, and they have expelled any voices of opposition that were raised against the pro-RPP policy. Their record of irresolution in DISK undoubtedly gave the generals confidence that they could close down the union and attack the working class with relative impunity. Tragically, thanks to the misleadership of the TKP, they were right.

While the leadership of the TKP have stuck fast to their class collaborationist strategy a section of the membership have organised themselves into an open faction called the 'Leninists'. This faction is represented in Britain by the leadership of the Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain. These comrades have displayed a greater willingness, before and since the coup, to engage in militant opposition to the bosses, the state and the fascists, than the TKP leadership, dubbed the 'opportunists' by the Leninists'.

However, they remain wedded to the Stalinist notion of 'stageism' - that is, the splitting up of a revolution into distinct stages, a democratic revolution of all the people first, and only after that a socialist revolution which, on the basis of democracy can develop peacefully, can grow over from democracy. Revolutionary developments are forced to fit into these rigid stages. The revolution in Turkey is to be democratic and can therefore embrace all the people, i.e. all the classes. Just as with the TKP leadership, the 'Leninists' have a strategy that fails to develop the independence of the proletariat, that fails to place its interests, its revolutionary tasks, (the establishment of socialism, before all else. This leads to class collaboration. 'Leninist' leader R. Yurukoglu has written:

"The Republican People's Party is opposing the National Democratic Front, the hope of our people,

with phrase mongering. It is rejecting the Communist Party of Turkey's countless calls for unity. (The Weak Link of Imperialism, p122)

It was the RPP's refusal to engage in a popular front that led to the 'Leninists' break from a TKP that wanted to continue orienting to the RPP's left wing. They were not however, opposed to the strategy of subordinating working class interests. Thus when Ecevit first came to power all sections of the TKP supported him. All that the 'Leninists' have done since then is to revise their formula for achieving the democratic revolution, they have not altered its stageist cross class content. A resolution passed at a recent conference of the 'Leninists' declared: "The TKP's Leninist forces emphasise the necessity of creating opportunities of unity of action directed towards the advanced democratic people's revolution with revolutionary representatives of the petty bourgeoisie without interrupting the ideological struggle."

The strategy of both sections of the TKP is to pave the way for the coup and it will do nothing to break the hold of the junta. This strategy cleared the way for Ecevit's attacks on the working class, helped spread confusion inside a militant working class that had illusions in a bourgeois party. The failure to break those illusions was a major factor in weakening the working class, politically, in the face of the growing dangers of a coup. The defeat of the revolution in Turkey, and of its imperialist backers, requires the destruction of Turkish capitalism by the working class. A revolution - yes! But one that does not limit its goal to achieving democracy (which will only be another name for capitalist rule) but advances beyond that and establishes the direct rule of the working class, a workers state.

M. HOSKISSON

POLAND: The bureaucracy strikes back

Gdansk
workers observe
new trade
union officials
at work through
union hall windows.



By D. HUGHES

Signed agreement between the strike leaders and the Government has not put an end to the mounting social and political crisis that confronts the Polish bureaucracy. The Kania regime has failed to stem a mass exodus out of the official Trade Unions. The attempts of management and party officials to use intimidation and a press black out to keep workers in the old state run industries have failed.

In a bid to prevent the complete disintegration of the official trade union structures, union boss Jankowski has promised workers that, in future, "the old unions will resort to strikes." Officials of the 148,000 strong dockers and seamen's union voted to quit the Central Council of Trade Unions in a vain attempt to stop a new union being formed. But already the 'Solidarity' network of 'Free Trade Unions' claims to organise one quarter of the work force in Poland. Key battalions of the Polish working class—in the shipyards, the mines and the engineering industry—have now broken with the old party dominated unions.

Nor is there any evidence that Kania will be able to restore the credibility of the Stalinist party. The strikers of July and August showed the weakness of the party in the face of a concerted drive by the working class. It could rely on no significant sections of society to give it full backing against the workers. Its authority has been even further compromised by mounting evidence about the scale of corruption and careerism rife in its ranks.

PURGE

The new Politburo has announced a purge of the party's ranks in order to ensure the "clearing from the party ranks those individuals who have given in to the temptations of an easier life and corruption". This purge has to be made if the regime is to have a chance of dampening down popular demands for the rooting out of corruption and privilege. But Kania cannot go too far in opening the workings and lifestyle of the bureaucracy before the working class without the risk of provoking a new round of strikes and demonstrations against corruption and inequality. Investigations are underway into allegations of wide scale embezzlement among officials of the state import/export agency. Proceedings have started against Maciej Szczepanski—ex media boss and one time speech writer for Gierk—on charges of corruption. He is rumoured to own ten lavish homes in Poland (including a 40 bedroom palace in Warsaw) as well as a Greek island retreat. He is also alleged to have pocketed fees paid for Polish TV films sold to western TV networks. The Stalinists will have to read carefully in their investigations of Szczepanski for fear of revealing the degree of luxury and corruption that exists throughout the bureaucratic caste that runs Poland.

Kania has promised that a new Party Congress will be convened at the end of this year charged with presenting a programme of political and economic reforms and strengthening the ties between the working class and the party. In his first speech he stated that "our most important task is to restore confidence of the working class and all working people." The fear that must haunt Kania, and the Kremlin bureaucracy, is that the preparation of such

a Congress could precipitate sharp divisions and fractures within the party serving only to further weaken its ability to reassert itself after the defeats it suffered this summer. An open struggle for power by a reforming Stalinist faction around Olszowski could serve to further embolden the working class whatever the real intentions of the reformists may be.

The destabilisation of the political rule of the bureaucracy is set against a background of deteriorating economic prospects. The 2 month strike wave served to add to the nightmare debts that the bureaucracy has accumulated. Planning Chief Kiseil has claimed that the strikes caused a \$667 drop in the national income and that the pay rises won by the strikers will add \$3 billion a year to the bureaucracy's wage bill. In an economy that is already weighed down by a \$20 billion hard currency debt this means that the Kania regime will, of necessity, attempt to force down living standards in the next months.

The regime has already announced a £200m cut in public expenditure and an intended generalised price increase since the return to work. It is considering plans to ration meat distribution this autumn and winter in a bid to force the workers to bear the burden of Poland's debts and deal with the distribution of inadequate supplies of food. That this is the case is shown by the obvious reluctance of the bureaucracy to pay up the full wage increases agreed to in August.

The Kania regime must ensure, for its own survival, that the new Trade Unions are not capable of mounting serious resistance to the bureaucracy's plans or launching an all out struggle against corruption and inequality. It means that the Stalinists must claw back as many as possible of the concessions they were forced to grant in the face of the August strike wave, and as they do so they will doubtless provoke the widespread resistance from the Polish workers. Friday 3rd of October's hour long token strike showed that the will to fight remains alive amongst large sections of Poland's workforce.

In their attempt to turn the tide against the working class and their new unions, the Polish bureaucrats will be under heavy pressure from the Kremlin leaders, who fear that the contagion of independent unions threatening their parasitic rule, could spread throughout Eastern Europe and inside the Soviet Union itself.

The methods used by the bureaucrats to emasculate the new Trade Unions have already had some effect. Most of the new unions exist within the umbrella 'solidarity' framework. As of the 25th September only 13 unions were attempting to register with the Warsaw courts separate from that solidarity group.

REGIONAL

The bureaucracy has always made it clear that its intention is that the new unions should be operative only as regional bodies representing particular industries on a local level. The leaders of the 'solidarity' framework—Walesa in particular, have, in essence, been prepared to comply with this demand. At their national delegate congress called in Gdansk in mid September they explicitly rejected calls (mainly coming from workers in smaller towns and industries) to form a national centralised Trade Union movement. Instead they opted for a loosely based federation of local unions with an informal central coordinating committee. The fear of centralism, born of decades of experience of the Stalinist unions, doubtless led many workers delegates to embrace a model of organisation that could, paradoxically fit the plans of the embattled bureaucrats. Kania hopes to play off the stronger groups of workers against the weaker as he presses forward with his austerity plans.

Vital to the bureaucracy's entire strategy is its attempt to use the Catholic church to dampen down workers militancy. During the strike wave, despite the religious symbols and pro-Church demands, serious divisions began to emerge between the ostensibly faithful militant workers and the Church hierarchy. The workers did not heed calls to return to work from their priests and bishops. Much displeasure was expressed at Cardinal Wyszynski's televised appeals for order and restraint. As the strike wave has subsided so not only has the hierarchy set out to refurbish its following and credibility with the workers—hence Wyszynski's private meeting and mass for Walesa—but they have been consciously aided in this by the Stalinists. It is no accident that Kania had allowed the Church access to the media time for its services while denying similar access to the new Trade Unions. The new unions in Warsaw had to threaten renewed strike action before the regime conceded press coverage for them to explain their intentions and location. The Stalinists are more afraid of the contagion of the new trade unions than they are of the effects of televised masses.

There can be no doubt that, with the lull in class struggle, the Church has been able to strengthen its hold over large numbers of the new union activists and, on their backs, its bargaining strength with the Stalinists.

Assured of a period of peaceful co-existence with the bureaucracy, the cardinals and bishops will use their hold over the masses to block any further moves that could lead in the direction of the overthrow of the Stalinists by the working class. It will use its hold to undermine any militant resistance that the workers movement mount to the inevitable attempts by the Stalinists to snatch back the concessions they have made on living standards and workers rights.

The very nature of the new unions plays into the hands of the Catholic church and the reformist intelli-

actuals who have been called in to give practical and political guidance to the unions. Many workers do not see the unions as simple mechanisms whereby wage levels and conditions can be more effectively negotiated. They are seen as a political challenge to the regime and their strengthening or decay depends on the political ideas that will dominate the new movement. There is no evidence at present that the unions are dominated by those who wish to break up state property and reintroduce capitalism in Poland. To government allegations that the strikes were being orchestrated by anti-socialist elements the Gdansk unions officially declared:

"the inter factory committee states that it knows nothing about anti-socialist forces trying now or at any time before to penetrate the independent Trade Union movement. . . But we know. . . that a group of old discredited union leaders are trying to stop the development of the movement by means of lies and provocations."

Walesa has himself declared "We don't want to change the socialist ownership of the means of production but we want to be the real masters of the factories."

In a confused and contradictory way the fact that the new unions represent a potential political challenge to the rule of the bureaucracy is recognised by many of the free union activists. A Silesian strike leader told Le Monde "We want to change things for the better. The Free Unions will play the role of an opposition party, since one doesn't exist in Poland. There will be an open competition between two groups to show which best represents the people."

DECISIVE

But these bodies are led by activists—from the workers themselves and from the Catholic and reformist intelligentsia—who are set on ensuring that the new union network does not lay the basis for a decisive struggle for power against the Stalinist bureaucracy at present, only the energy to force partial reforms from the state apparatus.

Advisor to the new unions and prominent KOR activist Jacek Kuron made this quite clear when he declared to the world press that in his view the workers would swallow bitter economic medicine from the bureaucracy this autumn and winter so long as they did so in exchange for political liberalisation—a statement that finds an echo among sections of the bureaucracy itself. Walesa and the Catholic hierarchy have worked overtime to defuse the potential of the workers organisations to smash the political rule of the Stalinists.

In the immediate period ahead, either the new organisations of the workers will be stamped in the mould of a localised federation under the sway of the reformist intelligentsia and the church and will, therefore be powerless to face a concerted offensive on the part of the Stalinist bureaucracy, or they will have to be transformed by a new leadership to confront the Kania regime and break with the designs of KOR and the Catholic church. The central question facing revolutionary marxists is how these new organisations can be freed from the grip of Catholic and social democratic leaders, and turned into organs for the struggle to take direct political power into the hands of the working class.

The only answer that can guarantee this outcome is to build, as a matter of urgency, a revolutionary party, that can lead the working class in a political revolution against the bureaucracy. Only success on this score can ensure the preservation and extension of the gains so far achieved. Only this would give the Polish working class a real chance of defeating an intervention by the Soviet Bureaucracy, which, if Kania and his cronies can't break the back of the working class, will undoubtedly be forthcoming.



real solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Turkey/Kurdistan. To organise such solidarity a number of socialist organisations in Britain have established a Turkey Solidarity Campaign. WORKERS POWER will be supporting this campaign and arguing that a major priority will be to enlist rank and file trade union support and action for the blacking of military shipments and economic aid to the junta. For more information on the campaign contact us at BCM Box 7750 London WC1V 6XX.

murder he has been charged with. In Kurdistan four Kurdish nationals were murdered by troops a move that is likely to indicate increased attacks on the Kurdish minority. Altogether it is thought that between ten and twenty thousand people have been detained, 2,000 in Corum alone. In Istanbul ten youths were indiscriminately arrested for 'questioning' after a left wing slogan was found written on a bus. This pattern of events belies the 'gentle' and supposedly democratic nature of the Evren regime. It is in line with Evren's real thinking though: "Any kind of resistance, demonstration or attitude towards the army and the new administration will be broken in the severest manner instantaneously." His railing against those who sing "the Communist Internationale, rather than the National anthem" make it clear who this "guardian of the great republic of Ataturk" thinks is his main enemy.

The militancy and heroism of the Turkish and Kurdish working class, displayed again and again, in Istanbul, Ankara, Corum, Izmir, Kurdistan and elsewhere, can defeat the military rulers of Turkey. The strikes that crippled Ecevit and Demirel could also cripple the junta. But the movement that is necessary to smash the junta could only achieve a lasting success if it is won to the leadership of a Trotskyist party in Turkey, fighting, not only to oust the generals, but also to finish off the fascists, the corrupt and anti working class parties of Ecevit, Demirel and Erbakan and free Turkey from the stranglehold of imperialism through the revolutionary socialist transformation of the country.

The central tasks of such a Trotskyist party would be:

- * For a united front of all workers organisations to organise resistance, by building armed workers defence squads, to the attacks of the fascists and the military. For the full independence of workers organisations from bourgeois parties. No to a popular front alliance with Ecevit's RPP - Yes to a Workers United Front against reaction.
- * No sacrifices for the junta. Defend jobs, wages and living standards through strike action.
- * Fight for the release of working class, peasant and Kurdish national political prisoners. Fight for freedom to organise trade unions and political parties. Down with martial law.
- * Defend the right of the Kurdish people to self determination.
- * Kick out NATO. Out with all US and NATO military bases in Turkey. Cancel the foreign debt.
- * Defend the right to strike in Turkey—For a General Strike to break the rule of the Junta. Build workers councils to organise a general strike.
- * Fight for a government based on and accountable to workers councils—a government that would expropriate the imperialists and the Turkish bourgeoisie, arm the Turkish and Kurdish workers and peasants and nationalise Turkish industry under workers control and plan it in the interests of the masses not the imperialists.

sh masses

SOLIDARITY WITH THE TURKISH AND KURDISH WORKERS AND PEASANTS

The Financial Times made Turkey's new military boss, Evren, their 'man of the week'. The New York Times dubbed him 'Friend to the West, Foe of Turkish terrorists'. Clearly the western bosses and their press stand four square with Turkey's reactionary generals, who have already launched physical and economic attacks on the workers and peasants in Turkey/Kurdistan. The Turkish and Kurdish masses need not look to the 'democratic' hypocrites, Carter and Thatcher, for any support in their struggle against the junta.

It will be up to the working class in Britain, Europe and the USA to show

Articles from
workers
power
newspaper

25p

IRAN: workers must make the revolution permanent

Workers Power has reprinted, in pamphlet form, all the articles that appeared on the subject of the Iran Revolution in our newspaper from October 1978 to June 1980. It costs 40 pence including postage and is available from Workers Power, BCM Box 7750, London WC1V 6XX. All cheques and POs must be made payable to Workers Power.

"Principles and Tactics in

By Rudolf Klement

The article we reprint here was first published in English in the May, 1938 issue of "The New International" - "A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism". Rudolf Klement wrote the article under the pseudonym "W. St." in Brussels in December 1937. Klement, who was Trotsky's secretary in France and Turkey, was at the time in charge of the preparations for the founding conference of the Fourth International.

Within three months of the publication of this article, Klement had been kidnapped in Paris by the GPU (Stalin's secret police). His mutilated body was eventually found in a river at Melun. Klement was the seventh of Trotsky's secretaries to be either murdered or driven to suicide by Stalin.

Trotsky and Klement discussed the article before its publication; after having seen a draft, Trotsky wrote:

"I most warmly recommend this article to the attention of all comrades. As the article is not confined to any 'internal' polemic, it can and must, in my opinion, be reproduced in all our publications. The excellent article of Comrade W. St. shows anew that new, very serious Marxist cadres have grown up amongst us". (Writings 1937-38 p153)

The article was written in the shadow of the coming world war, at a time when the world labour movement was in disarray over the questions of disarmament, pacifism, and the prospect of an imperialist war under the cover of "a war to defend democracy". Klement's article cuts across this confusion, and clearly restates the Marxist position on war and the questions of revolutionary defeatism and the defence of the workers states. It was written to clarify some "necessarily incomplete" formulations of Trotsky given in evidence to the Dewey Commission on the Moscow Trials, and reproduced in the book "The Case of Leon Trotsky".

In the article, Klement writes mainly about the question of inter-imperialist wars (such as World War 1) and imperialist wars involving workers states (such as World War 2). The article does not deal in any detail with wars between non-imperialist capitalist nations, such as the war between Iran and Iraq (see Note 1). Although the principles he puts forward here are still valid today, the tactical application of these principles in wars such as that between Iran and Iraq is not covered in this article. We deal with this particular matter elsewhere in this issue.

To our knowledge this article has never been reprinted before. We reproduce the article (with minor typographical changes) in order to make clear the Trotskyist view of war, as part of our re-elaboration of Trotsky's Transitional Programme.

Like Trotsky, we believe Klement's article to be an excellent statement of the Marxist position on "Principles and Tactics in War" which should be widely read and discussed, in order to provide us with a clear understanding of what tactics to adopt in an atmosphere of imperialist war-mongering over Afghanistan, the deployment of Cruise Missiles in Europe, and the development by imperialism of the neutron bomb and other new weapons of mass destruction.

We dedicate the reprinting of this article to the memory of Rudolf Klement and the hundreds of Trotskyists who fell during the Second World War.

The review of the book 'The Case of Leon Trotsky' in the first number of the periodical 'Der Einzige Weg' quotes the following interesting statement of comrade Trotsky on the differences in the tasks of the proletariat during a war between France-Soviet Union and Germany-Japan (reproduced here somewhat more completely):

"Stolberg: Russia and France already have a military alliance. Suppose an international war breaks out. I am not interested in what you say about the Russian working class at this time. I know that. What would you say to the French working class in reference to the defence of the Soviet Union? "Change the French bourgeois government", would you say?"

Trotsky: This question is more or less answered in the thesis, 'The War and the Fourth International', in this sense: In France I would remain in opposition to the government and would develop systematically this opposition. In Germany I would do anything I could to sabotage the war machinery. They are two different things. In Germany and Japan, I would apply military methods as far as I am able to fight, oppose, and injure the machinery, the military machinery of Japan, to disorganise it, both in Germany and Japan. In France, it is political opposition against the bourgeoisie, and the preparation of the proletarian revolution. Both are revolutionary methods. But in Germany and Japan I have as my immediate aim the disorganisation of the whole machinery. In France, I have the aim of the proletarian revolution. . .

Goldman: Suppose you have the chance to take power during a war, in France, would you advocate it if you had the majority of the proletariat? Trotsky: Naturally. "

Within the limits of a book review it was naturally impossible, with this isolated, half-improvised, necessarily incomplete and special colloquial statement, to develop the general problems of the revolutionary struggle in wartime or even to throw a sufficient theoretical light on that special question. Since the above quotation thereupon unfortunately led to misunderstandings, and worse yet, to malicious distortions ("preparing for the civil peace in France", renunciation of revolutionary defeatism etc!), it is well to make up here for the previous neglect.

As to the basic principles of the revolutionary struggle against war and during it, considerations of space compel us to confine ourselves here to our theses on war which were adopted in May 1934 by the International Secretariat of our movement, have since formed one of the most important programmatic documents of Bolshevism, and acquire more topical importance with the passing of every day.

With regard to the specific question that interests us, comrade Trotsky, in the statement above, makes reference to the following points in the theses on war:

"44. Remaining the determined and devoted defender of the workers state in the struggle with

imperialism, the international proletariat will not, however, become an ally of the imperialist allies of the USSR. The proletariat of a capitalist country which finds itself in alliance with the USSR must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable hostility to the imperialist government of its own country. In this sense, its policy will not differ from that of the proletariat in a country fighting against the USSR. But in the nature of practical action considerable differences may arise, depending on the concrete war situation. For instance, it would be absurd and criminal in case of war between the USSR and Japan for the American proletariat to sabotage the sending of American munition to the USSR. But the proletariat of a country fighting against the USSR would be absolutely obliged to resort to actions of this sort—strikes, sabotage, etc.

45. Intransigent proletarian opposition to the imperialist ally of the USSR must develop on the one hand, on the basis of international class policy, on the other, on the basis of the imperialist aims of the given government, the treacherous character of this 'alliance', its speculation on capitalist overturn in the USSR etc. The policy of a proletarian party in an 'allied' as well as in an enemy imperialist country should therefore be directed towards the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power. Only in this way can a real alliance with the USSR be created and the first workers state be saved from disaster". (Writings '33-'34)

The wars of recent years did not represent a direct struggle between imperialist powers, but colonial expeditions (Italy - Abyssinia, Japan-China) and conflicts over spheres of influence (China, Chaco, and in a certain sense, also Spain), and therefore did not, for the time being, degenerate into a world conflict. Hitler hopes to attack the USSR tomorrow just as Japan attacks China, i.e., to alter the imperialist relationship of forces without directly violating the essential interests of the other imperialisms and thereby temporarily to localise the conflict. These events, occurring since 1934, have clearly shown that the above-quoted theses on the attitude of the proletariat of imperialist countries are valid not only in an anti-Soviet war, but in all wars in which it must take sides—and those are precisely the ones involved in recent years.

War is only the continuation of politics by other means. Hence the proletariat must continue its class struggle in war-time, among other things with the new means which the bourgeoisie hands him. It can and must utilise the weakening of its 'own' bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries in order relentlessly to prepare and to carry out its social revolution in connection with the military defeat engendered by the war and to seize the power. This tactic, known as revolutionary defeatism and realisable internationally, is one of the strongest levers of the proletarian world revolution in our epoch, and therewith of historical progress.

Only, where the struggle is imperialist only on one side, and a war of liberation of

non-imperialist nations or of a socialist country against existing or threatening imperialist oppression on the other, as well as in civil wars between the classes or between democracy or fascism—the international proletariat cannot and should not apply the same tactic to both sides. Recognising the progressive character of this war of liberation, it must fight decisively against the main enemy, reactionary imperialism (or else against the reactionary camp, in the case of a civil war), that is, fight for the victory of the socially (or politically) oppressed or about-to-be oppressed: USSR, colonial and semi-colonial countries like Abyssinia or China, or Republican Spain, etc.

Here too, however, it remains mindful of its irreconcilable class opposition to its 'own' bourgeoisie—or its political opposition to the Soviet bureaucracy—and does not surrender without resistance any of its independent positions. As in the imperialist countries it strives with all its strength for the social revolution and the seizure of power, the establishment of its dictatorship, which, moreover, alone makes possible a sure and lasting victory over the imperialists. But in such cases, it cannot and does not, as in the imperialist camp, seek revolutionary victory at the cost of a military defeat but rather along the road of a military victory of his country. (1)

Class struggle and war are international phenomena, which are decided internationally. But since every struggle permits of but two camps (bloc against bloc) and since imperialist fights intertwine with the class war (world imperialism—world proletariat), there arise manifold and complex cases. The bourgeoisie of the semi-colonial countries or the liberal bourgeoisie menaced by its "own" fascism, appeal for aid to the "friendly" imperialisms; the Soviet Union attempts, for example, to utilise the antagonisms between the imperialisms by concluding alliances with one group against another, etc. The proletariat of all countries, the only internationally solidary—and not least of all because of that, the only progressive class, thereby finds itself in the complicated situation in war time, especially in the new world war, of combining revolutionary defeatism towards his own bourgeoisie with support of progressive wars.

This situation is utilised with a vengeance right now and certainly will be tomorrow, by the social-patriots of the social-democratic Stalinist or anarchist stripe, in order to have the proletarians permit themselves to be slaughtered for the profits of capital under the illusion of helping their brothers of the USSR, China and elsewhere. It serves the social-traitors, furthermore, to depict the revolutionists not only as 'betrayers of the fatherland', but also as 'betrayers of the socialist fatherland' (just as they are now shouted down as agents of France). All the more reason why the proletariat especially in the imperialist countries, requires, in this seemingly contradictory situation, a particularly clear understanding of these combined tasks and of the methods for fulfilling them.

In the application of revolutionary defeatism against the imperialist bourgeoisie and its state, there can be no fundamental difference, regardless of whether the latter is 'friendly' or hostile to the cause supported by the proletariat, whether it is in treacherous alliance with the allies of the proletariat (Stalin, the bourgeoisie of the semi-colonial countries, the colonial peoples, anti-fascist

liberalism), or is conducting a war against them. The methods of revolutionary defeatism remain unaltered: revolutionary propaganda, irreconcilable opposition to the regime, the class struggle from its purely economic up to its highest political form (the armed uprising), fraternisation of the troops, transformation of the war into the civil war.

The international defence of the proletarian states, of the oppressed peoples fighting for their freedom, and the international support of the armed anti-fascist civil war, must, however, naturally take on various forms in accordance with whether one's 'own' bourgeoisie stands on their side or combats them. Apart from the political preparation of the social revolution, whose rhythm and methods are in no way identical with those of war, this defence must naturally assume military forms. In addition to revolutionary support, it consists consequently, in military support of the progressive cause, as well as in the military damaging of its imperialist opponent.

The military support can naturally take on a decisive scope only where the proletariat itself has the levers of power and of economy in its hands (USSR, and to a certain extent, Spain in the summer of 1936). In the imperialist countries, which are allied with the countries conducting progressive and revolutionary wars, it boils down to this: that the proletariat fights with revolutionary means for an effective, direct military support controlled by it, of the progressive cause ("Airplanes for Spain!" cried the French workers). In any case, it must promote and control a really guaranteed direct military support (the sending of arms, ammunition, food, specialists, etc), even at the cost of an 'exception' from the direct class struggle (2). It will have to be left to the instinct and revolutionary perspicacity of the proletariat, which is well aware of its tasks to make the right distinction in every concrete situation, to avoid injuring the military interests of the far-off ally of the proletariat out of narrow national class struggle considerations, no matter how revolutionary they seem, as well to avoid doing the dirty work for its 'own' imperialism on the pretext of giving indirect aid to its allies. The only real and decisive aid that the workers can bring the latter is by seizing and holding the power.

It is otherwise—so far as the outward form of its struggle goes—with the proletariat of the imperialism engaged in a direct struggle against the progressive cause. In addition to its struggle for the revolution, it is its duty to engage in military sabotage for the benefit of the 'enemy'—the enemy of its bourgeoisie but its own ally. As a means of revolutionary defeatism in the struggle between imperialist countries, military sabotage, like individual terror, is completely worthless. Without replacing the social revolution or even advancing it by a hairs-breadth, it would only help one imperialism against another, mislead the vanguard, sow illusions among the masses and thus facilitate the game of the imperialists. (3) On the other hand, military sabotage is imperiously imposed as an immediate measure in defence of the camp that is fighting imperialism and is consequently progressive. As such, it is understood by the masses, welcomed and furthered. The defeat of one's 'own' country here becomes not a lesser evil that is taken into the bargain (a lesser evil than the 'victory' bought by civil peace and the abandonment of the revolution), but the direct and immediate goal, the task of the proletarian struggle. The defeat of one's

Left to Right: Rudolf Klement, Trotsky, Yvan Craipeau (a visiting Trotskyist), Jeanne Martin



War

'own' country would, in this case, be no evil at all, or an evil much more easily taken into the bargain, for it would signify the common victory of the people liberated from the existing or threatening imperialist yoke and of the proletariat of its enemy, over the common overlord—imperialist capital. Such a victory would be a powerful point of departure for the international proletarian revolution, not least of all in the 'friendly' imperialist countries. (4)

Thus we see how different war situations require from the revolutionary proletariat of the various imperialist countries, if it wishes to remain true to itself and to its goal, different fighting forms, which may appear to schematic spirits to be 'deviations' from the basic principle of revolutionary defeatism, but which result in reality only from the combination of revolutionary defeatism with the defence of certain progressive camps.

Moreover, from a higher historical standpoint these two tasks coincide; in our imperialist epoch, the national bourgeoisie of the non-imperialist countries—like the Soviet bureaucracy—because of its fear of the working class which is internationally matured for the socialist revolution and dictatorship, is not in a position to conduct an energetic struggle against imperialism. They do not dare to appeal to the forces of the proletariat and at a definite stage of the struggle they inevitably call upon imperialism for aid against their 'own' proletariat. The complete national liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial countries from imperialist enslavement, and of the Soviet Union from internal and external capitalist destruction and anarchy, the bourgeois democratic revolution, the defence from fascism—all these tasks can be solved, nationally into the proletarian revolution. The coming world war will be the most titanic and murderous explosion in history, but because of that it will also burst all the traditional fetters and in its flames the revolutionary and liberative movements of the entire world will be fused into one glowing stream.

Principles and Tactics in War

To present clearly, even now, to the proletariat the problems of the coming war and its combined tasks—this serious and difficult task is one of the most urgent of our day. The Bolshevik—Leninists alone have taken it upon themselves to arm the proletariat for its struggle and to create the instrument with which it will gain its future victories: the programme, the methods, the organisation of the Fourth International.

Brussels, December 1937 W. ST.



NOTES

- 1) We leave aside the case where wars between two non-imperialist countries are only or predominantly the masked combat between two foreign imperialisms—England and America in the Chaco war—or the case where the war of liberation of an oppressed nation is only a pawn in the hand of an imperialist group and a mere part of a general imperialist conflict—Serbia from 1914 to 1918.
- 2) It may be confidently assumed that for the French bourgeoisie in wartime, a strike of the Marseilles workers, which makes an exception of war shipments to Russia, in which it is least of all interested, would be particularly vexatious! No less nonsensical would it be, for example, in the course of a printers strike, not to allow the appearance of the labour papers which are needed for the strike struggle itself.
- 3) Lenin wrote on July 26, 1915 against Trotsky's false slogan of 'Neither victory nor defeat' and said polemically: "And revolutionary actions during the war surely and undoubtedly signify not only the wish for its defeat but also an actual furtherance of such a defeat (for the 'discerning' reader: this does not mean 'blowing up bridges', organising unsuccessful strikes in the war industries, and in general helping the government defeat the revolutionaries") (My emphasis—W.S.)
- 4) Naturally, military sabotage in favour of the non-imperialist opponent of one's own bourgeoisie is not to be extended in favour of its imperialist ally. The German proletarians, for example, would seek to disorganise militarily the eastern front, to help Soviet Russia; for the western front, where a purely imperialist war would be raging between Germany and France allied to the USSR, 'only' the rule of defeatism would be valid—for the French proletariat as well as for the Germans.

Blackpool

Continued from Page 2

would have had the will or the capacity to damage our economy." (Socialist Challenge) While it should come as no surprise that sections of workers believe that a Benn led Labour Government would be a Government more responsive to their needs and have therefore launched themselves into Benn's campaign. More surprising at first sight however, is the number of members and organisations of the supposedly revolutionary and Trotskyist left who have marched into Benn's ranks in the last period.

The revolutionary left has been totally unable to take advantage of the crisis of leadership and direction on the shop floor. Indeed they have by and large turned sharply away from it, jaded with what they call syndicalism, to find 'politics' in the Labour Party. Instead they have taken up the role of foot soldiers for the Benn-Heffer bandwagon. Benn for his part is happy to have them in the Labour Party as activists in his cause, providing they come within the orbit of 'Labour Party Democracy', supporting a Benn-Heffer led NEC and working for a 'left' Labour Government.

Workers Action, for example, has eagerly obliged. Abandoning even the pretence of defending a revolutionary current within the Labour Party they first of all created a centrist propaganda bloc (the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV) and its paper Socialist Organiser) and then dissolved their own grouping into it. Now they have acted as midwives to a left reformist bloc, the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Party Democracy. Workers Action/Socialist Organiser have now liquidated the need for a revolutionary party and the struggle for workers power into a transformed Labour Party (rendered unstable as an instrument for bourgeois power), a parliamentary 'workers government' (a Labour government with 'socialist policies'). As we demonstrated in Workers Power 15 Socialist Organiser is firmly set to tread the road that the erstwhile 'Trotskyists' of the Institute for Workers Control and the Militant trod before them.

Workers Power has a radically different strategy to such centrist evasion. For us there can be no covering up of the truth that the Labour Party cannot be transformed into the instrument for winning working class power. The working class does not need a hybrid Trade Union electoral machine, but a disciplined combat party comprising the vanguard of class fighters, organised to fight the reformist misleaders in the unions, 'left' and right. Certainly revolutionaries should demand their right to membership of a party that claims to be 'the party of the whole working class', the party of the unions. Since a myriad of liberals, right and left reformists and centrists exist as organised factions within the Labour Party then revolutionaries claim that right too. We are against all the bans and proscriptions, witch hunts etc. We support all measures, however limited to increase accountability and democracy within the Labour Party.

LIQUIDATING

United Action with the Bennites and the centrists to this end is, of course, necessary. But it is impossible for revolutionaries to make common blocs for propaganda with Benn without first of all liquidating their own revolutionary programme. Benn himself has made that quite clear when he declared:

"That is why some on the left are saying this might be the movement to join. This week will have started a tremendous debate with the left groups. If they come in as individuals—there is no question of a popular front with any organisations—they would have to ask themselves if there was anything in the analysis that the methods we have chosen for change can work. It can't work if they don't agree."

Benn has been even more specific in the types of entrists that his 'broad church' would be prepared to tolerate:

If they believe that the Labour Party's main function is to betray the working class they wouldn't come in, or would come in with the object of 'exposing the con trick', which is disruptive entrism, like we had with Gerry Healy, which was not sustainable. There is another form of entrism which is to persuade, to argue and I regard the Militant Tendency as that. They have accepted that the Labour Party is the main instrument of the working class, but they understand it has not departed from its basic socialist analysis."

The church may be broad, but you can't join the congregation unless you sing the same psalms as Tony Benn! While we demand of Benn and his supporters that they fight intransigently for those goals they have set themselves, we, at no stage, disguise the limited and inadequate nature of these measures even on their own terrain. Of course the MPs should be replaceable but not only by reselection. They should be sent to parliament as delegates of the labour movement that elects them. Every MP should deposit his/her resignation from the House of Commons with

the party. The PLP should be under the direct control of the NEC. The leader of the PLP should be appointed by the Conference annually and replaceable between conferences by the NEC. The manifesto/programme should be set by Conference and its implementation overseen by the NEC as should all major statements, proposals for legislation etc.

But the existing undemocratic structures of the Labour Party can never be fundamentally weakened whilst the block vote is in the hands of the bureaucrats. As part of the struggle for rank and file control of the unions, for the ousting of the bureaucrats and for the development of a revolutionary communist strategy and leadership, a fight is necessary to take the union votes in the Labour Party into the hands of the base units, ultimately the workplace organisations. Only thus can a Duffy, an Evans or a Scargill, be prevented from misrepresenting their members politically, as well as in the industrial struggle.

However this process of struggle for workers democracy is inseparable from and subordinate to, the fight for effective tactics and strategy in the class struggle—for direct action against the Tory offensive now—against unemployment, cuts, factory closures and the anti-union laws. We demand that the Labour leaders—and particularly the left talkers like Benn, Heffer and Co mobilise the Labour Party in support of these struggles. It is precisely this that was missing at their conference. A campaign which does not flinch from fighting to drive the Tories from power. Whilst we say openly that Benn and the 'lefts' programme is not a socialist one—that a Benn Government would not be a 'workers government', revolutionaries should join with the mass of workers who have illusions on this score to put them to the test of governmental power. Every partial measure that they promise which is in the interests of the working class should have our full support. We should propel with the maximum united action the Labour Party to fight to bring the Tories down and to take power. Even in their own beloved parliamentary arena, they should now obstruct the Tories business, filibuster their bills and make the 'normal business' of the house impossible. Labour MPs should join every picket line, use the immunity of the House of Commons to call for defiance of Prior's laws, of Heseltine's Cuts. Likewise Labour Councillors should defy and obstruct the cuts—over-respond, refuse to raise rents or rates, call on the unions to take direct action in their support, and assist the formation of councils of action.

KEY DEMANDS

If such a mass campaign led to the Tories calling a general election (as Heath did in 1974) then it would be the duty of revolutionaries to call for a vote for Labour whilst strengthening the organisations of struggle to force on Labour the key demands of the struggle, for example:

- * Abolition of the anti-union laws and dissolution of the picket-busting SPG squads.
- * Full and immediate restoration of the cuts—not only of Thatcher and Heseltine but of Callaghan and Healey.
- * Nationalisation without compensation and under workers control of all hived off state industries, of all firms declaring redundancies or closing factories.
- * No wage restraint under capitalism—for a sliding scale of wages and pensions and social security benefits to protect working people against inflation.
- * Withdrawal of British Troops from Ireland and from NATO.

Revolutionaries should not conceal from the working class their view that the Labour leaders would be at best the concealed foes of such a struggle, that they would only even attempt to carry out such measures on the basis of mass pressure. They need moreover to build a revolutionary leadership, a party, with strong roots in the class that can fight betrayals and replace the reformists when they betray. Should the direct action struggle against the Tories reach the level of a general strike (and we fight for just this), should organs of mass struggle—action councils and mass workers defence squads come into existence, while the reformist leaders still retain their leadership we should agitate for these Labour Party and Trade Union leaders to enter on the road of struggle for a workers government—i.e. one that would have as its central task the utilisation of governmental power to arm the workers, and to crush the resistance of the bosses, the bureaucracy, the judges, the police chiefs and the generals.

Such a government would be a workers government to the extent that, based on workers councils, it aided the working class itself to transfer power entirely to these councils. This task itself could not be completed without revolutionary communist leadership i.e. without a cadre of militants conscious and propagandising from the outset of the necessity of doing just this. The 'workers government' is the tactic that revolutionaries can use where the working class itself enters into a decisive confrontation with the ruling class, where the question of power is objectively posed (i.e. will the workers crush the bourgeoisie or will the bourgeoisie subject the working class to a pitiless dictatorship—Chile, Bolivia etc) but

where workers still have democratic illusions. That is for workers who think it is necessary to have a majority or, to defend a majority, to gain parliamentary sanction for 'socialist acts' or not to be the first to violate democracy. These workers consequently still give their support to social democratic leaders who make it their lives work to peddle these illusions. To demand that they use and defend a democratic majority by direct class (i.e. revolutionary methods) against the counter-revolutionary methods of the ruling class is a way of winning all those who can be won to communism. It will win all those capable of boldly defending the interests of the working class and of rejecting and exposing those who can not and will not.

To use the 'workers government' for any other purpose is to dilute and confuse the communist programme, to become a left apologist for the reformists. But it is precisely such a principled operation of the united front tactic that is absent from the statements and tactics of those who support Socialist Organiser. Rarely if ever, in its pages, does it criticise the reformist programme of Benn and the lefts and counterpose itself to him tactically. In no way does it distinguish itself as a specifically revolutionary tendency, counterposed to the reformists, within the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy.

John O'Mahoney openly acknowledges that the Socialist Organiser is not based on a revolutionary programme:

"The political platform contained in our Where We Stand is not a scientific programme, but a class struggle platform. It is an adequate political basis on which to begin to organise the Socialist Organiser groups." (Socialist Organiser No 24)

and Colin Foster attempted to anticipate, caricature and feebly parry our criticisms in WA No 178 when he predicted disingenuously that "some will condemn us for joining in common action with the reformists without simultaneously denouncing them at the top of our voices." He claims that "we do not hide our differences with our allies in the Mobilising Committee". But at Blackpool the Socialist Organiser proved themselves to be no more than advisers to Benn and to be set on hiding their formal differences with the reformists. In their Briefing No 2 they talk of Benn's plan to outface a capitalist reaction to a Labour Government. "Absolutely right" they declared "Yes we have got to outface them. The pity is these problems weren't discussed during the debate yesterday, weren't even mentioned in any of the resolutions.

It was a pity that Arthur Scargill was not able to speak at the meeting because of an NUM commitment. We then might have been able to discuss how the movement can build its strength in the way he is often associated with—militant direct action.

Its that which is the only weapon we have got to defeat the sort of problem that Tony Benn so accurately described."

No mention, no warnings, that Benn has explicitly rejected the use of industrial muscle to destroy the Thatcher government. Only passive advice to use the Trade Union strength of Scargill to back up the implementation of Benn's state capitalist Alternative Economic Strategy.

The Socialist Organiser aims to build its credibility by its contribution to the Mobilising Committee's campaign to restore Labour's flagging credibility amongst militant workers, and win the leadership of the party for Benn. It declares itself to be waging war against sectarianism and the Socialist Organiser has thrown itself into what it loves to call "the movement of the working class, that actually exists, and as it actually exists, here and now in Britain" (SO 24)—read for this 'movement' the internal conflicts within the Labour Party and the campaign to democratise the Labour Party.

OPPORTUNIST

In this conflict Socialist Organiser asks to be judged not by its independent revolutionary programme, not by its tenacious struggle to put the lefts to the test, but by its work to build Benn's Mobilising Committee. That is what Colin Foster meant when he said "We throw ourselves honestly and without sectarianism into building the Mobilising Committee and ask workers to judge us and other political currents by our contribution to the common effort." This comrades of Socialist Organiser is a perfect opportunist rationale to turn yourselves into much needed foot soldiers for Benn's struggle for the leadership of the Labour Party. That is precisely how you will appear to militant workers.

Now doubtless the comrades of Socialist Organiser think they are doing something else. Following in the footsteps of the Socialist Challenge unity flop, and the continued isolation of Workers Action, the comrades hope to emulate the IMG's cut price politics on a different terrain. They hope to trigger a regroupment of Marxists in the Labour Party on their 'adequate' but not 'scientific' programme. The comrades may think, like so many before them, that the key to success lies in 'temporarily' liquidating themselves and their programme. They will find however, that their decision marks a qualitative step in the degeneration of their politics in their perceptible rightward drift into the baggage train of the reformists.

workers power

FORD = START

THE FIGHTBACK NOW

THIS MONTH will see the first round of negotiations in the Ford pay claim. In the past, Ford workers have played a particularly important role in the annual pay round, their November anniversary date puts them at the head of the whole working class. In 1978 it was their nine week strike which broke Callaghan's 5% pay limit and last year their 21% settlement was the first major dent in the Tories' 10% strategy.

Now, in 1980, both the City and Whitehall are well aware that the size of the Ford deal will be seen as a major test of their political and economic strategy. The most important element of that strategy is the use of unemployment to scare workers into accepting wage deals well below the official level of inflation. It has already begun to take its toll in the car industry.

In the first quarter of 1980, car production was down 10.2% on last year. This has led to widescale redundancies, lay-offs and short time working. In BL some 10,000 of the 25,000 redundancies called for in the Edwardes' plan have already gone through. 5,000 workers have been laid off from Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port and Luton plants. In Coventry, Talbot workers are on a one day week until Christmas. Pay settlements have reflected the impact of this attack on jobs, Talbot's have accepted 15% spread over 18 months and Vauxhall's recently settled for only 8%. The argument used by management throughout these firms has been that they simply cannot afford to maintain jobs and wage levels.

Ford, however, is in a different position, for years the UK operation has turned in healthy profits, £386 million in the last year, for example, and maintained their share of the market. In preparing their strategy for countering this year's wage claim, Ford management obviously had to take steps to undermine the confidence of the workforce both in their own ability to fight and in the ability of the company to pay.

Taking their cue from the Tories, management have used selective lay-offs and redundancies throughout the summer to do just this. A total of 2,705 redundancies have been

announced—900 at Dagenham, 605 at Halewood and more at Swansea, Belfast, Enfield and Croydon. On top of that the Basildon tractor plant has been almost permanently laid off, short time working has been introduced for 400 workers at Enfield and 700 at Leamington.

Ford have now announced that the available funds for lay off pay are fast running out. They are threatening lay offs without pay and redundancies in their major plants.

At Ford Langley over 1200 workers have been laid off for four weeks in August.

Management have also attempted to undermine the, 'Ford can afford it' argument by insisting that all available funds are needed for investment in, for example, the new Escort production lines at Halewood. In addition, much publicity has been given to the fact that Ford UK 'had' to lend Ford America £229 million because the parent company had lost half a billion dollars in the first quarter of the current year. Finally, it has recently been 'leaked' via a Daily Mirror front page, that Ford are so low on ready cash that they are asking for state aid to cover lay off pay. In case anybody was not sure of what this meant the Mirror hastened to add that the aid would probably not be forthcoming and that, therefore, jobs were threatened. Taken together all this amounts to a very carefully planned campaign by management which is aimed at forcing through a very low pay settlement—10% is the most commonly mentioned figure.

In May, recognising how management would use the recession in the car industry Workers Power supporters at Ford Langley argued the need for the unions and shop stewards to begin a campaign to counter that of the bosses immediately. In a resolution to T&G branch 1/1231 laying out the basic steps that had to be taken before the national stewards conference then scheduled for June, they called for; section meetings in all shops to discuss the size of claim needed to maintain workers' living standards rather than the bosses' profits; for a mass meeting to finally decide on the figures for the claim; for a meeting to be held for all those dependent on Ford wages at which the claim could be explained and the

ground prepared for support for any future industrial action; for a pay claim committee to be elected from that meeting to help mobilise support for the claim and, later, to act as a 'pricewatch committee' to advise stewards' committee on the monthly increases needed to protect any eventual settlement from inflation. In the event the union branch did not vote on the resolution and the claim finally formulated by the Langley stewards called only for a substantial settlement together with improvements in holidays, pensions and for a line workers allowance.

At a national level the tactics of the union leaders can be seen from the cancellation of the national stewards conference. For years Ford management have been undermining the strength of shop stewards in the combine through the restrictions laid down in the Blue Book. Now the union leaders have set their seal of approval on this by leaving the stewards out of the discussions on the claim altogether.

No national shop stewards meetings have been called for two years—ever since the Fords stewards organised to punch a hole in Callaghan's pay policy. In this way the officials hope to keep a tight rein on the stewards and the rank and file in the Fords claim.



It was the National Joint Negotiating Committee, dominated by full time officials that drew up the claim. The result is a masterpiece of vagueness and potential loopholes; wage increases to be not less than the rate of inflation, for a shorter weeking week, parity with European Ford workers on holidays, improvement of pensions and early retirement, to seek staff status and for a line workers' allowance of one hour's pay per shift

Such a claim is a recipe for disaster for Ford workers. The avoidance of naming a figure is an indication to management that this is not meant to be a fighting claim, that there is plenty of room for negotiation, in other words that the union negotiators accept management's arguments before they even start.

Cuts . . .

Continued from Front Page

What we can expect from leaders such as Knight can be seen from their pre-conference utterances. Knight is already talking about making cuts, "We can't walk away from it. Their jobs are going to be cut. They (the local trade unions—WP) may decide that they prefer to do that with Labour in control than with the Tories or receivers or anyone else." (Socialist Organiser, August 30th.)

He has been quietly agitating for this amongst the leadership of the council manual workers for some time. The conference resolution reflects this approach. Industrial action is viewed in terms of preparation for national strike action in "January 1981". There is no mention of what to do here and now to the fight the cuts already being implemented. We must fight now in the unions for a determined campaign of direct action involving refusal to cover for vacancies, the banning of overtime and for strike action against the cuts. Mobilising such action means the setting up of delegate-based action committees both within the public sector and the private sector unions and drawing in support from local

shop stewards' committees, trades councils, union branches and tenants' associations. It would involve delegations from the public sector unions going into the factories and fighting to win support for their struggles from private sector workers.

Only by hitting the bosses where it hurts, in their pockets, is it possible to force their government to retreat. This means uniting the public sector with private industry in strike action.

If the Labour Lefts were serious about organising the industrial might of the working class in their support this is what they would be fighting for now. They would combine it with a series of massive protest strikes and demonstrations like that on November 7th. Only such a preparation could guarantee a huge industrial and private sector response to back up any council defying the government and allow the possibility of fighting to turn such action into a general strike against the Tory measures.

In Parliament we demand that Labour MP's back up this campaign by doing everything in their power to disrupt and delay the Tory proposals.

The draft resolution to the November conference contains no

answer to the question of where the money can come from to finance the maintenance and expansion of the public services. You only have to look at the crippling burden of interest repayments suffered by all local authorities to see why rents and rates have to rise astronomically.

Camden council, for instance, pays £46 million a year in interest payments alone—a massive 50% of the council budget. This situation is repeated in councils up and down the country. While kids' school dinners are cut and old people dragged out of local hospitals that are to be axed in the interests of 'economy', the banks and the finance houses will make £1,000's of millions profits this year. It is vital that the councils refuse to make these repayments and campaign around the demand to nationalise these institutions under workers' control.

The November 1st conference could be a vital starting point in the struggle against the Tory attacks on the working class and, as such, all labour movement bodies should support it. However, if it is not to turn out simply as yet another anti-cuts talk-shop and a cover for left talkers like Ted Knight who will claim, 'we tried didn't we?' the delegates must adopt a strategy which can defeat Heseltine's cuts with or without the support of the labour councillors, and, most likely, against their active sabotage of such a struggle.

The failure to convene the stewards and to organise a campaign of mass meetings behind the claim signals to management that the union leaders don't want a fight.

However, much more is at stake than just the question of pay, important as that is. If management can get away with a low settlement this year, or if they can tie a slightly higher figure to more job losses, then they will realise the way is open to push through the kind of changes in manning levels that they are really after. What this means can be seen from Fords part owned subsidiary Mazda, in Japan. If management in the UK could introduce the machinery and work practices operating there they could cut three-fifths of the workforce and still produce as many cars as now. That is the scale of the fight that Ford is mounting against its workers. Important elements in their strategy have already been achieved. For example, the apparently generous 21% pay rise last year was conditional on both increased job flexibility and freedom for management to introduce 'new' technology as it wishes.

For Ford workers the pay campaign has itself to be aimed at preparing for the fight over jobs and conditions. That is why Workers Power argues that there have to be two main elements to the pay claim which can be summed up as the sliding scale of wages and hours. What does this mean? First and foremost it means that wages should keep pace with inflation and that the hours of work should be calculated on the basis of maintaining current manning levels, if there is less work provided for us then we will all work for a shorter time under the control of the shop stewards with no loss of pay.

Secondly, it means re-asserting the role of shop stewards as the direct representatives of the workers, and, therefore, having the right to veto management's plans over speed of work and manning levels.

Revolutionaries and militants within Fords must campaign for the convening of the national stewards conference before November, if necessary by convening it through a plant stewards' committee. They must draw up a claim centred on the sliding scales of wages and hours and popularise it throughout the

plants by shop meetings, mass meetings and bulletins. Only the direct mobilisation of the entire Ford workforce behind a demand that meets their needs can regenerate the strength and organisations necessary to throw back the bosses attacks both now and in the future. A victory for Fords workers behind such a claim would prove a rallying cry for all workers as they prepare to do battle with the employers and the Tories in the next round of wage bargaining.

STEVE
McSWEENEY

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