

Workers Power

Monthly paper of the Workers Power group

Inside: TUC - ready to fight?



TO FIGHT WAR - FIGHT IMPERIALISM

SINCE THE RE-ELECTION of the bomb-happy Tories, CND has been in retreat. Its counterparts in the "women's peace movement" have been equally afflicted by a decline in support and activity. Whatever the size of the demonstration on October 22nd there is no doubt that CND's days as a mass campaign are numbered.

The (holy) alliance of Monsignor

Bruce Kent and the Stalinist backed Joan Ruddock had been busy engineering CND's right turn. The most energetic and vital section of the movement, Youth CND, were attacked by the executive for failing to toe the new rightist line. Opposition to NATO, a hostility to capitalist warmongering - not just to its most destructive weapons - were all condemned by the executive.

When the youth refused to give in, Kent and Ruddock, following time-worn Stalinist and social democratic practice, dissolved the members. YCND was robbed of its autonomy and its elected leadership disbanded.

Now Ruddock and Kent can get on with desecrating CND's holy of holies - unilateralism. They are now putting CND's campaigning machine behind the slogan of a nuclear freeze. In the latest *Sanity* Ruddock explained, "CND has always accepted that nuclear disarmament between the super-powers can only come by agreement between them. The freeze proposals are more radical than anything that has reached the conference table."

IRISH MUST STAY Fight all deportations!

THE BIRMINGHAM-BASED Immigration Aid Unit who monitor deportation cases say that the rate of deportations is running at 250 per month. At present only a tiny minority resist the attempt to expel them from the country. Black trade unionists are aware of the crippling effect that the immigration laws have on the willingness of their brothers and sisters to become involved in trade union activity.

The Muhammad Idrish campaign is one of the most important anti-deportation campaigns in existence. It is unusual in the sense that rarely have the British unions campaigned on behalf of the rights of immigrant workers. In fact it is only as a result of militant struggle waged by predominantly black workers in the 1970s and 80s that the union bureaucrats have had to listen to the voice of the black rank and file. NALGO have organised a march in support of Idrish on October 8th. Yet if the deportation order goes ahead a great deal more will be required. The terms of the NALGO conference resolution call for limited industrial action if the order is served. It also calls on other unions whose members may be involved in actually handling this deportation, to refuse to carry it out.

October 8th is an important test. The NALGO leadership must call a meeting of all the other unions whose members are involved in processing deportations to thrash out a practical policy of refusing to implement the deportation order.

As a result of the efforts of local Labour Party rank and file activists Idrish's fight was featured predominantly in the election campaign in the Birmingham Ladywood constituency. As a result, Ladywood's Labour MP Clare Short has taken the matter up in Parliament by trying to find legal loopholes and making appeals to the Home Office. Only in the odd case has this worked. Usually it merely delays the passage to the embarkation lounge.

CARL, the National Campaign Against Racist Laws, which presented itself as a platform for left-talking Labour MPs and union leaders has done nothing since the national demonstration on 27th March 1983. No discussions have taken place for nearly a year and no circulars have been issued. It has not campaigned on behalf of a single depor-

tee but has lived off the individual campaigns that had developed. Refusing to discuss the orientation of existing campaigns it has condemned itself to irrelevance.

Politically the worst response of all has come from the SWP. While giving political support to CARL and doing little or nothing to campaign on behalf of any individuals threatened with deportation they end up providing a left cover for the assorted parliamentarians and CPers who grace the occasional CARL platform. In return these bureaucrats have to deliver nothing but high-sounding rhetoric. In NALGO the record of the SWP is even more shameful - concentrating exclusively on the failure of broad left electoral machines and the attack being mounted by Labour and Tory councils on NALGO members. *Socialist Worker* has failed to report on and to build the support for opposition to Idrish's deportation. 250 people attended the SWP fringe meeting at NALGO conference addressed by Paul Foot and Muhammad Idrish who was invited at the last moment. Under pressure from defence campaign supporters the SWP have persuaded the Birmingham anti-racist talking shop, CARF - B, to organise a conference for October 29th. Yet because CARF - B had done absolutely nothing to fight deportations it commands no leadership amongst anti-deportation campaigns and will contribute nothing to the struggle to smash immigration laws.

The campaigns that do exist need to be unified irrespective of colour/race/sex/marital status of those threatened. The very demand for unification is itself an expression of opposition to all the various laws that are currently being used against black people. By and large a principled anti-deportation campaign remains to be built. This can be done on the basis of uniting all those deportees who are prepared to fight, building defence campaigns which address themselves primarily to working class organisations and offer a perspective that workers can adopt to prevent deportations and smash the acts under which the people are deported.

- Resist all deportations irrespective of colour/race/sex or marital status!
- Unite the campaigns!
- For working class action against all deportations!
- Smash all immigration controls!
- For the free movement of all workers!

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Some on the left, like *Socialist Action* and *Socialist Organiser* are complaining that this marks a fundamental change of tack on the part of CND's leaders. They only show that they have never understood the true nature of CND. Ruddock is saying nothing new when she argues, "I hope we will be prepared to use our central resources in more intensive lobbying amongst the opinion formers and those who exercise power." (*Sanity*, October 1983)

Any "mass activity" in the campaign have only ever been an adjunct to this opinion shaping. In fact the activities - mass canvasses, die-ins, embracing of bases - have never been aimed at achieving anything concrete in themselves. Actions which could have stopped the arms race - working class strike action and blacking - have always been opposed by the clique on the executive.

For them the peace movement has to be a broad, cross-class movement. They are militantly opposed to building an anti-militarist and therefore anti-capitalist campaign. That's why they bureaucratically crushed YCND and why their magazines regularly give pride of place to explaining alternative forms of defence from all kinds of military riff-raff including former NATO commanders.

BIZARRE LOGIC

They want their campaign to bridge all classes. To this end, their new perspectives remind us that CND's aim is, "to ensure that there is no threat to our broad base and to develop tactics appropriate to the new circumstances."

The 'women's peace movement' is treading the same path as CND. At Greenham's last major week of action over the summer three thousand turned up when tens of thousands had been expected. Thus, it is now, in a bizarre piece of logic, turning to the American



Bruce Kent, dedicated fighter against... YCND

Federal Court to stop Reagan siting Cruise.

The folly that unites CND and Greenham and Co, is their understanding of the causes and nature of war. They all put forward a hotch-potch of explanations for the occurrence of wars ranging from attributing them to accidents through to the belief that they are the product of something unique to the male gender.

This leads them to oppose *not* capitalist war (where were they on the anti-war demonstrations during the Falklands campaign?) but, nuclear weapons in particular. They up the accident stakes....They are immoral....They are phallic...are the constant refrains of CND and the Greenham women.

Real anti-militarists need a clearer view of things. They need to know that war is a result of class society - the competitions between rapacious imperialist powers; the defence of workers' states against these powers; the

struggle for national liberation from these powers; civil war against the bosses, by the working class. In particular the militant youth of YCND need to be won to this understanding. They need to act upon it by opposing war through an opposition to the warmongers - the bosses and their army.

CND's move right will do nothing to halt the present fearful drift towards nuclear war. Working class action will. In the months ahead the best elements of CND need to be won to a struggle to foil the bosses' war moves. This means campaigning for class action against Cruise and Pershing; support for those fighting imperialism; agitation, demonstrations, publicity directed towards building a new anti-militarist campaign which is not against war in general but is in favour of class war against the class enemy.

For a Working Class Anti-Militarist Movement!

EDITORIAL Stop the Imperialist war drive

THE REAGAN-THATCHER Cold War Mark Two has reached a new level of intensity in the last few months. It becomes ever more apparent that the Korean airlines flight over the USSR's most sensitive bases was an organised provocation. The flight and the hysterical campaign over its being shot down are part and parcel of a rapidly intensifying imperialist campaign against the USSR.

The Soviet Union is ringed with hostile states and Western military bases. Its territory is regularly overflown by US spy planes and observed by high technology satellites. A rapid deployment force of twenty thousand marines is stationed in Okinawa. Under pressure from the US, Japan has been persuaded to expand the scope of its armed forces to a thousand mile zone which stretches deep into the eastern territory of the USSR. At the same time US F16 fighter bombers with the potential of a thousand kilometre nuclear strike capability are to be stationed at Misawa air force base in Japan. The US wants to equip these planes with Cruise Missiles which would give them a 3,000 km. destructive range.

Reagan and Thatcher's determination to station Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe this winter is but one element of their global strategy to achieve massive nuclear superiority over the USSR. Reagan is a long term member of a faction within the US political establishment that has fought to defend and extend US nuclear superiority. His chief negotiator at the START talks in Geneva - Paul Nitze - is likewise a long time spokesman for the winnable nuclear war lobby which came together into the sinister Committee for the Present Danger in the mid 1970s. Other arch reactionaries from this group - Pipes and Rostow for example - received important positions in the Reagan administration since 1980. Thirty-two CPD members were brought in to staff the major state bodies governing US-Soviet relations.

The pre-eminence of this group in the US political establishment ensured that the SALT agreements were never ratified. It also meant that at Geneva the USSR was presented with the no-win option of scrapping all its nuclear weapons or facing a further increase in NATO's nuclear superiority.

The drive against the USSR is at the heart of imperialism's combined offensive against national liberation struggles and nationalist regimes (Syria, Libya, Nicaragua and the PLO, FMLN etc). It is part of a conscious attempt to undo the disastrous decade which stretched from the US defeat in Vietnam to the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and Somoza.

There can be no mistaking imperialism's new offensive. 1,200 US marines are stationed in Beirut backed by a small fleet willing and ready to bombard anyone who threatens the US puppet regime of Gemayel. At the same time the US fleet is "exercising" off Nicaragua's coastlines and involved in eight months of military manoeuvres in Honduras. Imperialism's new military offensive explains why French troops and Marines are in Chad and the Lebanon. It explains Thatcher's war against Argentina over the Malvinas and British commitment to "Fortress Falklands."

The US, British and French ruling classes see the hand of the Soviet Union in each of these struggles. This is false to the extent that the bureaucratic caste that monopolises political power in the USSR is itself a deadly foe of world revolution. In the struggles against imperialism the Soviet bureaucracy and its local agents counsel deals with imperialism and its stooges and that struggles be limited within capitalist property relations. It seeks to use the struggles of the oppressed and exploited to increase its bargaining power with the imperialists and to open up more seats for itself in the thieves kitchens of world diplomacy.

Despite this, the very fact that the USSR supplies some arms and economic aid to offset US imperialism's far greater military and economic strength, makes it the hated enemy of Reagan and Thatcher and an obstacle to the realisation of their objectives. That is why imperialism's chiefs see the Kremlin as the source of their checks, frustrations and defeats. They do so because - despite the counter-revolutionary political programme of the Stalinist bureaucracy - the planned economy of the USSR and other degenerate workers' states remains a historic gain for the workers and peasants of those countries. It remains a vital bulwark of revolutionary anti-imperialist forces around the planet. It remains a gain for the world working class.

The Imperialist war drive is aimed directly against movements of national liberation, most vitally in Central America, the Gulf Region and the Middle East. Here it repeatedly and shamelessly casts aside its "democratic" disguise. Should the oppressed masses of the "oil states" rise to overthrow their rulers then the British, American and French task forces would clamp them down again. Should the Soviet bureaucracy intervene in such conflicts then Reagan and Thatcher are fully prepared to initiate nuclear armed confrontation against the USSR.

Any such war situation would be the outcome of a political situation that would demand the taking of sides *not* neutrality. The Falklands war showed how rapidly the millions for peace in general dwindle to a handful actively opposed to a particular, real war. The absolute uselessness of pacifism is glimpsed in that "little war". Real anti-militarists must learn the lessons and start acting accordingly.

We must fight now to win the decisive class in the imperialist heartlands - the working class, men as well as women and especially young workers, whose futures capitalism will callously destroy - to opposition to imperialism's drive for war. We must win the working class to take action in support of Arab and Latin American anti-imperialists as they withstand the assaults of imperialism. We must win the working class to the defence of the Soviet Union and the other workers states.

The issue of the defence of the USSR is such a vital one that it cannot be left as a private viewpoint. However we Trotskyists have no intention of following Arthur Scargill in painting up the Stalinist bureaucrats as socialist heroes. We don't need to suppress our opposition to the tyranny of the bureaucratic ruling caste in order to defend the USSR just as we can defend the EETPU and the AUEW as trade unions without ever pretending or supporting Chapple and Duffy.

An anti-war movement capable of action when serious political issues are at stake must know precisely where it stands on all these issues. It must rally the youth and women. But above all it must rally the working class around the slogans

- Not a penny, not a soldier for the defence of Imperialism
- Solidarity with all those forces fighting Imperialism. Hands off the anti-imperialist struggles - Troops out of Lebanon, Central America, Chad, the Malvinas.
- No Cruise, No Pershing - break up the NATO alliance.
- Defend the USSR, the other workers' states and all semi-colonial countries attacked by Imperialism.

YOUTH AGAINST MILITARISM

The legacy of Karl Liebknecht

THE LIFE OF Karl Liebknecht spanned the period between two European wars. Born August 13th 1871 in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, he was murdered by the hirelings of the German military and capitalists on January 15th 1919. His life was dedicated to, and ultimately sacrificed for, three inseparably linked causes - the organisation of working class youth into a conscious movement, the struggle against militarism and imperialist war and the fight for proletarian revolution.

Karl's father, Wilhelm Liebknecht was a personal friend and comrade of Karl Marx from the days of the 1848 revolution. The elder Liebknecht was in the 1860s and 1870s, along with August Bebel, the founder of the German Social Democratic Workers' party. This party was the first permanent, organised, mass party of the proletariat. Within its framework were developed many of the methods of organisation and tactics which are a permanent heritage of the revolutionary workers' movement.

The growth of a working class youth movement in Germany pledged to socialist goals and actively engaged in anti-militarist work owes its origins to an initiative from a group of young workers. It

began when some Berlin apprentices organised in 1904 to resist the heavy oppression and super-exploitation they suffered in their workplace and in society. At their pretext of labour was super-exploited under the pretext of training and they were forbidden to resort to trade union organisation. In society at large they had no civil rights - no vote, no right to join or form organisations or even to attend political meetings. By 1906 groups of young workers all over the industrial north of Germany linked up in the Union of Free Youth Organisations of Germany. Because of the notorious Prussian "Law of Association" they were subject to constant police harassment. In Königsberg when the police broke up the town's socialist youth group and arrested and imprisoned its leading member, the young workers formed illegal groupings to carry on the work. Under such hostile conditions it is hardly surprising that the youth movement was a force against the conservatism, routinism and bureaucracy that were triumphing in the "adult" Social Democratic Party and in the Trade Unions. Indeed from its earliest years it was in collision with the party and union bureaucrats. In these clashes the youth found a tireless advocate in

Karl Liebknecht.

As early as 1904 he addressed the Bremen conference of the SPD calling for an extensive anti-militarist propaganda campaign amongst potential recruits to the army. The old party leaders objected that the government and the courts would never tolerate such activity, that it would expose the whole party to being outlawed, that it was impractical and unnecessary. Militarism could not be overturned short of socialism, said the party executive's spokesman and therefore anti-militarist activity was a waste of time.

Undeterred, within a year, Liebknecht had won the SPD to undertaking a series of pre-induction meetings for army recruits, explaining their formal rights, which were certainly going to be violated in an army where brutalization and assaults on young recruits were common. In 1906 at the Mannheim Congress he defended the newly formed Youth Organisation and clashed bitterly with his father's old comrade and surviving co-founder of the party August Bebel. The growing national-chauvinist poison had affected even Bebel, the anti-militarist hero of the Franco-Prussian War. When Liebknecht pointed to the outstanding youth organisation in Belgium, the Young Guards and their anti-war agitation, Bebel scornfully replied that it was "A country which stands for nothing", and ruthlessly defended Liebknecht's motion by making it a vote of confidence in the executive.

CATASTROPHIC WAR

Liebknecht was not stopped by this hostility and obstruction. The whole past period indicated to him an escalating drive towards a catastrophic European war. The previous decade had seen four major wars with an imperialist character; the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, the Boer War of 1899, the "Boxer" War in China in 1900 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. The rapacious imperialist appetites of the major European powers were obvious as, too, was their bitter rivalry. It was merely a matter of time before clashes over colonisation erupted into a war in Europe. In 1904 Britain and France formed an alliance (the famous Entente Cordiale) clearly aimed at Germany. The Morocco Crisis was the first ominous clash between the alliances.

The world congress of the Second International meeting in Stuttgart passed a resolution that clearly characterised the approaching war and its causes: "Wars between capitalist states are as a rule the result of their rivalry for world markets, as every state is not only concerned in consolidating its own market, but



Karl Liebknecht speaks to crowds in Berlin

The shooting down of flight 007

THE SHOOTING DOWN of a Korean Airlines flight 007 by the Soviet Union has become the occasion for a massive storm of condemnations and reprisals from all the "Western" (ie. imperialist) powers. Whilst the death of 269 passengers is deeply regrettable, moral outrage at such deaths is a poor guide to a political assessment of the situation. Certainly, as the Russians pointed out, for the government which napalmed many thousands of innocent civilians in Vietnam, who bombed Kampuchea "into the stone age" and whose present proteges in Central America indiscriminately kill civilians by the hundreds, to talk of moral revulsion is the most barefaced, cynical lying imaginable. But no state's policy, whether diplomatic or military, is dictated by abstract moral codes, whatever the born-again liar in the White House may claim. The fact that Margaret Thatcher, with the blood of over 400 Argentine sailors of the Belgrano not dry on her hands, should join in the chorus demonstrates this without a shadow of a doubt.

Spying flights over the Soviet Union go on regularly. Civilian airliners are likewise used for surveillance. The

Korean jumbo jet was 500 miles inside Soviet airspace, flying directly over two of the Soviet Union's most vital defence installations. No Western commentator has been able to suggest how this could have happened accidentally given modern air navigational technology. Either this plane was engaged in espionage, or it was engaged in a gigantic act of provocation. The Russians had nothing to gain from shooting it down if they knew or believed that it was a civilian airliner. They claim that the plane switched off its navigation lights, ignored Soviet pilots warning shots and refused to land on a Soviet airfield. Self interest would have dictated such a course of action on the part of the USSR. On the other hand the US government has met stiff resistance to its war drive from the American and European peace movements and even some reticence in congress to voting astronomical sums for new waves of armaments, or for large scale deployment of troops in Honduras and the Middle East. The shooting down of the plane has been used to the utmost to whip up cold war hysteria to overcome this opposition.

The present incident has all the

appearances of a provocation. In any case, ringed as its very borders are with hostile military bases and airfields, the Soviet Armed Forces can hardly afford to be reticent or negligent. Nor would we advise them to be. The defence of the Soviet Union and its planned property relations, a historic gain of the world working class, is our duty as well. Immediately our task is to mobilise the Labour movement against Reagan and Thatcher's bellicose moves: to obstruct by class action the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles directed at the USSR; to force the withdrawal of US, UK and French troops from Honduras, Chad, the Lebanon, the Malvinas and Belize; to break the boycotts, embargoes and blockades.

- HANDS OFF EL SALVADOR, CHAD, LEBANON!
- NO TO BOYCOTTS OF SOVIET FLIGHTS!
- DEFEND THE USSR, CUBA AND NICARAGUA!

Workers Power Political Committee
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Der Hochverratsprozess gegen Dr. Liebknecht und die freien Jugendorganisationen.

Newspaper of the German Youth Organisation, 1907.

In the personal life of Karl Liebknecht there was - alas, already we say "was"! - the incarnation of kindness, simplicity and fraternity. I first met him more than 15 years ago. He was a charming person, attentive and sympathetic. You could say that in his character there was almost a woman's tenderness, in the best sense of the word. But along with this womanly tenderness he was distinguished by an exceptional temper of revolutionary will, an ability to fight for what he considered just and true, to the last drop of his blood. His spiritual independence was shown even in his youth, when he dared more than once to insist on his own opinion against the indisputable authority of Bebel. His work among young people was distinguished by great courage, as was his struggle against Hohenzollern war-mongering. Finally, he revealed his true worth when he raised his voice against the united warlike bourgeoisie and the treacherous social democracy in the German Reichstag, where the whole atmosphere was permeated with the miasma of chauvinism. He revealed the full measure of his personality when, as a soldier, he raised in Berlin's Potsdam Square the banner of open insurrection against the bourgeoisie and its militarism. Liebknecht was arrested. Prison and penal servitude did not break his spirit. In his cell he waited and confidently predicted. Liberated by the revolution of November last year, Liebknecht immediately took his place at the head of the best, the most decisive elements of the German working class. A Spartacus appeared in the ranks of the Spartacists and died with their banner in his hands.

By Leon Trotsky

also in conquering new markets, in which process the subjugation of foreign lands and peoples plays a major part. Further, war arises out of the never-ending armaments race of militarism, which is one of the chief implements of bourgeois class rule and of the economic and political enslavement of the working class."

It went on to outline the tactics of the socialist parties against militarism: "The Congress holds, therefore, that it is the duty of the working classes, and especially their representatives in parliaments, recognising the class character of bourgeois society and the motive for the preservation of the opposition between nations, to fight with all their strength against naval and military armament, and to refuse to supply the means for it, as well as to labour for the education of working class youth in the spirit of the brotherhood of nations and of socialism, and to see that it is filled with class consciousness."

The Congress sees in the democratic organisation of the army, in the popular militia instead of the standing army, an essential guarantee for the prevention of aggressive wars, and for facilitating the removal of differences between nations."

It further tackled the question of what was to be done in the circumstances of an immediate war threat or an outbreak of war: "In the case of a threat or an outbreak of war, it is the duty of the working classes and their parliamentary representatives in the countries taking part, fortified by the unifying activity of the International Bureau, to do everything to prevent the outbreak of war by whatever means seem to them most effective, which naturally differ with the intensification of the class war and of the general political situation."

UNABASHED CHAUVINISM

Should war break out in spite of this, it is their duty to intercede for its speedy end, and to strive with all their power to make use of the violent economic and political crisis brought about by the war to rouse the people, and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule."

The debate on this issue saw the majority of the German party amongst the most unwilling to envisage any action against war. The right wing of the SPD, figures like Friedrich Ebert, Philip Scheideman and Gustav Noske were unabashed in their chauvinism. The last-named even exclaimed: "The Social-Democrats will not lag behind the bourgeois parties and will shoulder their rifles... We want Germany to be as well armed as possible."

In the same year as the Stuttgart Congress Liebknecht published his fam-

ous book *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*, aimed at encouraging the growth of the youth movement against the war, it immediately caused a furore. The book started life as a talk made before the Young Workers Union of Germany and was originally entitled *Youth and Militarism*. On the initiative of the Prussian War Minister the book was seized and its author charged with high treason. He was sentenced by the Imperial court at Leipzig to eighteen months imprisonment.

PROPAGANDA

His speeches in court and demonstrations outside furthered the cause of anti-militarist propaganda and the copies of his book which escaped destruction were consumed all the more eagerly. Liebknecht's book analysed the necessary connection between capitalism and militarism. It pointed out that military action is the "most concentrated form of political action" and that the latter arises out of economic rivalries between the great powers. "We know that this tension is a necessary consequence of the sharpening economic competition between England and Germany on the world market, therefore a direct consequence of unrestrained capitalist development and international competition."

Liebknecht rails the various disarmament schemes of the major powers such as the Hague Conference - "simple folly, empty talk, attempts to cheat". He outlines the policy of the International with regard to militarism, pointing to its principled outright opposition to all standing armies as a "tool for reactionary coups d'etat and social opp-



ression." He gives numerous examples of the use of the military as strike breakers, murderers of workers fighting for their class and democratic rights. Whilst supporting the slogan of the universal arming of the people - a militia - Liebknecht, looking at the example of Switzerland, points out that "The general and equal arming of the population can only become a permanent and irreversible characteristic when the production of arms itself is in the hands of the people." This is of course only possible when all the decisive large scale means of production are in the hands of the collective producers. This by no means denies the efficacy of fighting for the abolition of the standing army and its replacement by a citizen militia since this democratic slogan exposes the real motives of the militarists - not defence of the people's hearths and homes, but defence of the bosses' profits and plunder whether against foreign rivals or "their own" workers.

Liebknecht however mercilessly exposes the false, utopian idea that disarmament, to such a degree that it would end the danger of war, can be achieved within capitalism: "Disarmament means moreover neither more or less than the abandonment of those international interests that might cause the ruling class, capitalism, to appeal to the 'last resort of Kings', that is to say to just those interests which are regarded by capitalism as most important, indeed vital for its life, especially the policy of expansion."

MERCILESS CRITICISM

Turning from the hypocrisy of official bourgeois patriotism, Liebknecht mercilessly criticises the pacifism of the anarchists and libertarians: "The anarchist method of applying anti-militarism of giving effect to anti-militarist sentiments is again of a more individualist and fantastic character. It lays great stress on individual refusal to serve in the army, individual refusal to resort to arms and individual protest."

Liebknecht attacks the moralism and voluntarism of the anarchists' anti-militarist tactics - a continuation of propaganda of the dead aimed at "enlightening" or opening people's eyes, as if wars were simply the product of people being duped.

Turning to the Marxist position on anti-militarist tactics he defends the utilisation of special agitation aimed at and carried out by youth - especially young workers.

"For the working class youth is the working-class-to-be, he(sic) is the future of the proletariat. He who has the youth, has the future." Liebknecht argues strongly that given "the different conditions of life, the different level of understanding, the different interests and the different character of young people - it follows that (agitation) must be of a special character... and that it would be sensible to put it, at least to a certain degree in the hands of special organisations."

It should be aimed, he stresses, at young people between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one and will be more agitational than the normal education work of the party. Liebknecht, in discussing the content of anti-militarist propaganda amongst youth, draws out useful lessons. Abstract, strident, "anti-patriotism" is useless - little more than self-indulgence for the coward and a provocation to the still backward sections of the youth. He advocates the publication of propaganda on the massive expenditure on war preparations and the exploitation through taxation that this involves; on the ill-treatment and injuries suffered by soldiers; on the use of troops as strike breakers; on anti-working class actions and statements of the High Command and officers. This should illustrate and convince young workers of the class nature of the army as the instrument of capitalist oppression; thus incitement to military disobedience is not necessary, except at the point where "direct conflict or an insurrection is on the order of the day."

Liebknecht concludes in ringing tones "The proletarian youth must be systematically inflamed with class consciousness and hate against militarism. Youthful enthusiasm will take hold of the hearts of the young workers inspired by such agitation. These young workers belong to Social Democracy, to Social Democratic anti-militarism. If everyone carries out his task, they must and will be won. He who has the young people has the army."

These were the tasks that the German working class youth organisations set out to achieve. The "Free Youth Organisations of Germany" had their own monthly paper *Working Youth* with a circulation of over 20,000 in 1909 and of 97,000 in 1913.

The Youth organisation in these years despite its growth or even because of it



suffered a series of attacks from the trade union and party leaders aimed at destroying its organisational independence and self government. As early as 1906 Carl Legien, head of the German TUC wanted a trade union controlled organisation under firm "adult" control. In 1908 a definite plan was adopted by the congress of trade unions, whose power in and over the SPD was growing by leaps and bounds, to shackle the youth. Their resolution declared that "a special youth organisation is not required", Youth education should be exclusively "by lectures on natural science, law, history, art etc" plus social and sport activities. Committees should be set up to organise this made up of trade union and party officials "which should co-opt a few representatives of the youth". "Economic interests and the decision of political party questions shall always remain the tasks of the trade unions and the political organisations respectively."

The message was clear to youth - keep out of politics and trade union struggles and we, the bureaucrats, will provide improving classes and sports facilities instead. This recipe for the death of youth work was bitterly resisted by the youth themselves and the whole left wing of the party led by Liebknecht and with the help of Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin. Though they won the right to keep the Youth organisations the new strongman of the party bureaucracy, Ebert, was put in overall charge of supervising the youth. The next six years were a series of attempts to smother the flame of youth radicalism.

WAR CREDITS

Liebknecht's struggle, his anti-militarist cause, seemed to have met total defeat when on August 4th the German Social Democracy voted war credits and supported the Imperialist War so long foreseen. The chauvinism of the Legiens and Eberts was momentarily totally triumphant. Karl, himself a Reichstag deputy, though bitterly opposed to the war credits vote, followed discipline and voted with the party in August. The voice of internationalism was apparently stifled. Yet, when it rang out again a few months later, it was the voice of Karl Liebknecht, in a speech motivating his own solitary vote against the December 1914 renewal of war credits. His speech was struck from the Reichstag proceedings, yet it was soon circulating as an illegal pamphlet. Many of those who risked imprisonment or immediate dispatch to the carnage of the trenches were the young workers trained and recruited by the Youth organisation. They were the nucleus of cadre of the Internationale group and eventually of the new party of revolutionary Marxism, the German Communist Party. On May Day 1916 Liebknecht was the first to address a public demonstration against the war. On the Potsdamer-Platz ten thousand workers gathered. Liebknecht shouted "Down with the War! Down with the Government!" The police stopped his speech, arrested him, yet his words carried across Germany and indeed across Europe. His

name became synonymous with Internationalist opposition to the war; his slogan "The main enemy is at home" the touchstone of revolutionary action against the war.

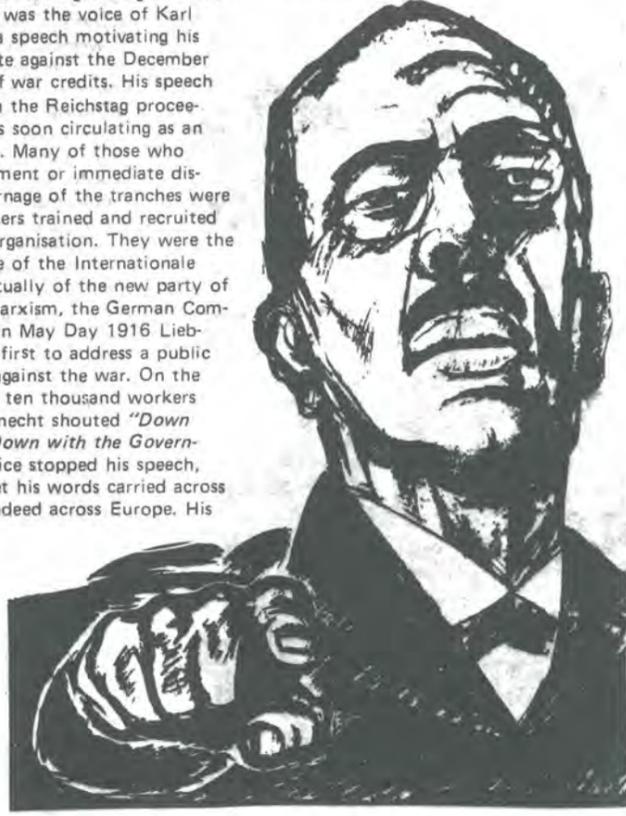
Tragically Karl Liebknecht fell in the first phase of the revolution that engulfed Germany in the aftermath of the war. Though his actual murderers were the hired thugs of the Freikorps (returned soldiers in the service of capitalist "order") the instigators and abettors of the crime were none other than Friedrich Ebert and Gustav Noske - the latter now nicknamed "the bloodhound". "Someone has to be the bloodhound" he is reported to have said proudly.

ORGANISE THE YOUTH

But Liebknecht's life-work could not end there and did not die with him. Joining Bolshevism it flowed to merge with the broad stream of the revolutionary fight against imperialism. Today it can and must inspire us to take up his banner, to organise youth against a new and even more horrific imperialist holocaust. His watchwords still retain their full force: organise the youth of the working class against imperialist war; only the destruction of capitalism can remove the threat of catastrophe; the main enemy is at home! His enemies remain our enemies - the capitalist warmongers, the bloody generals and their underlings, the chauvinist politicians. Amongst these enemies are also the conservative bureaucrats in the Labour movement itself. Without a struggle against them we can never settle accounts with the main enemy. Young anti-war activists today sick and tired of the pacifist windbags of CND and the poisonous CIA stooges who can be found in the Labour Party and who head too many unions can find all the inspiration they need in the life and work of Karl Liebknecht. ■

By Dave Stocking

All quotes by Liebknecht are from his book *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*, which should be read by all anti-militarist youth. It is available from Workers Power - Price £3.00.



TREACHERY TRIUMPHS AT BLACKPOOL

FOR THE LAST four years the TUC's annual conference has been the non-event of the political calendar. Each congress was dominated by ritual psalms to the not-too-distant day when Labour would be returned to office and when class collaboration could be conducted under the guise of a social partnership. In between congresses Lionel Murray mysteriously disappeared from public view. The TUC hoped the Tories would go away and leave them alone.

The 115th Congress in Blackpool last month saw some change in this pattern. Labour had been thrashed at the polls and the union leaders were forced to take stock of what five more years of Tory rule would mean. Something had to change.

In the event the hitherto dominant Labour and Communist "left" coalition was stripped of power and replaced by a 33-18 right-wing majority on the general council. The plans for the shift had been carefully laid by the right. They were helped by the conservative immobility of the official left. A previous decision to allot general council seats on a membership basis instead of according to trade groups was implemented this year. In the face of this apparently democratic reform which gives unions with over 100,000 members an automatic seat on the General Council, the left had no answer. Their power bases in the TGWU, the NUM and the smaller unions were dwindling, along with the unions themselves.

An ambitious layer of right-wing bureaucrats from the vastly enlarged white-collar unions - the CPSA, BIFU, NALGO - wanted to muscle in and mould the TUC in an image more suited to their own professional, middle-class outlook. They found ready allies in the AUEW, EEUPTU and GMBATU. Duffy, Chapple and Basnett, with Murray as their front man, were keen to bring in crypto SDPers like Alastair Graham of the CPSA and Roy Grantham of APEX. They did so in the name of extending democracy. The left discredited itself by defending the grossly undemocratic status quo in an attempt to cling to dominance. Neither the Labour left nor the Communist Party could speak the plain truth and point to the undemocratic nature of both the TUC and the white collar unions, and raise the banner of thoroughgoing transformation as an alternative.

LABOUR'S DEFEATS

The case against the "left" also seemed to be strengthened by Labour's defeat at the polls. After all had Labour not gone into the election with an economic policy drawn up by a TUC-Labour liaison committee based on the old general council? The right, pressing for "rethinks" and "credibility", the favourite words this year, appeared to be the only ones calling for any urgent changes.

The right's victory in the general council elections was matched by policy shifts right down the line. The left spluttered impotently as their sacred cows were unfeelingly slaughtered. Frank Chapple, appropriately this year's president, kicked things off by stating: "We have to encourage a greater industrial consensus and stop using our factories and services as political footballs." In plain words do not resist the vandalism of the bosses and Tories as they slash jobs, wages and services. Reason with them instead.

In line with this congress voted by 6,934,000 to

Sell-out merchant Mathers.



3,590,000 to talk to Tebbit about his plans to "neuter" trade unions (his phrase). Terry Duffy explained the logic behind this decision: "The Tories are entrenched in power for at least five years, and if we want to soften any of the measures they are proposing we have to get to talk with them."

True enough, if all you want to do is "soften" the unremittent attacks of the bosses and government. But surely the task of a trade union - even one led by reformists - is to resist these attacks and defend their members' interests. Bill Keys, who since has likened Tebbit to Pinochet after being rebuffed by him, urged "reasoned discussion" with the Tories. Murray himself chipped in with: "What do we gain if we sulk and skulk in our tents?" Well, he should know - he's been doing it for three years.

In fact talks had already begun with Tebbit. They yielded nothing in terms of changes in his plans. The YTS workers are to remain on a pittance. His laws on secret ballots, elections and political funding of the Labour Party by the unions are already framed. Besides, he doesn't need to give concessions to an outfit who have voted this year to oppose any "political strikes"!

The same story was repeated on the economic policy front. The inadequate and, in some respects reactionary Alternative Economic Strategy is to be replaced with something more "realistic, pragmatic and relevant" (Murray). He explained this alternative to *The Guardian* newspaper - acceptance of massive unemployment and a concentration on the creative use of leisure time. Ties with the Labour Party are to be maintained but downgraded. Some unions (the NAS/UWT and the Bakers) have started talks with the SDP.

The right intend to maintain a role for themselves in national politics by sanctifying the Tories' attacks as long as they take place after "consultation".

The importance of the composition of the general council and its paper policies - lies in what it reflects. The Tories have scored a number of important victories over the working class. The established Labour and Communist Party left have not been capable of resisting, let alone reversing the bosses' offensive. The combination of these two factors has created an ideal climate for a series of right-wing victories in particular unions and hence in the TUC.

The Tories' victories are plain to see. In their first term of office they managed to establish two sets of anti-union laws, which, as their use against the NUJ in the dispute at the Stockport Messenger show, attack effective trade unionism. That dispute received a setback when the basic TU practice of blacking by the NUJ members, was deemed illegal and the NUJ members accepted a court ruling to that effect. In disputes to come the laws will be used to attack effective picketing. The NCB was quick to talk of the Yorkshire miners' recent flying pickets as "illegal". Despite a special conference last year the union leaders have not organised any active opposition to these laws. They've made no attempt to explain what's wrong with them to the rank and file. The last national action concerned with opposing anti-union laws took place on May 14th 1980. Now the TUC is sitting down to talks with Tebbit on the content of future laws.

The boss class have also had successes on the economic front. Pay "restraint" - the Tory doublespeak for pay cuts - is now the order of the day in most wage settlements. Labour costs, mostly wages, have been falling steadily since 1979. In early 1981 labour costs per unit output were 16.7% down on 1975.

MORE WORK - LESS MONEY

By early 1983 they were down a further 3.6%. What this means in terms of wages has been graphically revealed by *Labour Research*, which reported that in 1981-82: "only 8 agreements out of 309 (were) at or above the inflation level." (September 1983). While 1983 settlements have so far been better there is no doubt that employed workers have been working harder for less money. Thus the August *Employment Gazette* (a government publication) commented on the downward trend of settlements: "This downward movement continues to reflect the extent to which pay settlements currently being implemented are at generally lower levels than a year ago."

Increases have been uneven across industries. There is little doubt that the Tories have been holding the line for the bosses in the public sector, while mass unemployment has done the trick in the private sector. Of the 2.1 million jobs lost since 1979 1.7 million were in manufacturing industry. The threat of the dole queue has been used to impose low wages. In June 1982 *Employment Gazette* made this quite clear: "The doubling of unemployment during the last two years has held wages in the private sector to about 17% below what they would otherwise have been."

The "left" in the TUC systematically sabotaged resistance to the Tories. As a result they have presided over a series of major defeats for the working class. It is those defeats that have allowed the right to sweep forward. It is no use attributing the Tories' victories to Thatcher's strength of character or to her creation (how?) of a new "consensus" against the unions and in favour (it seems) of mass unemployment. This is the line of the CP's industrial organiser, Pete Carter, who thinks the Tories "have conditioned the working class in their favour." (*Marxism Today* September 1983). His intellectual counterpart Bob Rowthorn writing in the same journal adds: "The old consensus has been effectively destroyed." Neither of these defeatists can explain how this has happened, because neither of them root what has happened in developments within the class struggle.

Let us look at the events in the class struggle that helped Thatcher return to Number 10 in June. In late 1979 and early 1980 Thatcher was far from being secure

for ten years. Her plans had taken a blow when the engineers won a shorter working week and a developing movement against the cuts, centring in Lambeth organised two massive demos in November 1979.

Thatcher needed a decisive victory over the working class. It had been Heath's failure to defeat the working class between 1970-74 that had led to his collapse. In 1980 the Tories chose the nationalised steel industry (BSC) as their chosen battleground. While the inflation rate was heading towards 20% the steel workers were offered a 2% wage increase.

Vital sections of organised workers showed they were ready to do battle against the Tories. The steel workers in the traditionally right-wing ISTC organised mass pickets on a scale and with an impact comparable to the miners' strike in 1972.

In late January 1980 the Welsh TUC called a general strike. A general strike against cuts was called in South Yorkshire. The South Wales miners announced their determination to link their fight against closures with the steel struggle. Rank and file trade unionists from all over the country turned out in hundreds of thousands for a solidarity demo in London on March 9th 1980. The potential for a class wide offensive on the Tories was there. It failed to materialise and after three months of bitter struggle, hardship, mass arrests and physical attacks, the steelworkers were defeated. Why?

The trade union bureaucracy feared the explosion of working class anger that surrounded the strike. Their strategy of class collaboration, limited protest, and the preparation of a suitable alternative Labour Government, was entirely at odds with the direct action and determination of the rank and file. In the steel industry Sirs of the ISTC showed the white feather from the start. He refused to release union funds for strike pay, refused to link the pay struggle to the issue of closures - which would have linked the struggle to miners and rail workers - and refused to bring out the private sector until it was too late.

The TUC were not idle at this time. They cajoled the Welsh TUC into calling off the general strike after a one day demonstration when a quarter of a million struck. They provided no material assistance for the steel strike. To crown it all they announced that their "day of action" against the Tories was to be lunchtime meetings, or perhaps a "day off" on May 14th. The so called "left" went along with this treachery. Moss Evans, Ken Gill and even Arthur Scargill all complied with the decision of the TUC to let steel fight alone.

TUC'S SABOTAGE

At the same time the militants were unable to defeat the TUC's sabotage. No national link up of steel militants existed, leaving Sirs in control of all negotiations and strategic decisions. The militants in other unions, notably in the mines and the TGWU took their leaders' calls for action...on May 14th, as good coin. They were offered no alternative by the established "left". As a result the steel workers were starved back to work and the TUC handed the Tories a crucial victory. The poor wage deal was followed by a 52% cut in the workforce in BSC. 82,000 workers were sacked as a consequence of the 1980 defeat! The Tories have had the upper hand since that defeat. In 1980 Prior's Law against picketing was carried and enforced by massive shows of police strength in the Brixton dole office dispute and Adwest in Reading. In British Leyland Edwardes, having already scored a triumph by sacking Derek Robinson, pushed through the vicious (95 page) "Slave's Charter". In 1981 the union bureaucracy lent support to the People's March for Jobs while at the same time the TGWU and the AUEW allowed key struggles against unemployment at Ansell's brewery and Plansee engineering to fight alone. In the Ansell's dispute TGWU official Brian Mathers waged a prolonged battle against the strike committee.

By the end of 1981 the working class movement was in retreat. Militants were disorientated, disorganised and increasingly demoralised in the face of the Trade Union bureaucracy's surrender. Usually those workers who wanted to fight had neither the organisational strength nor the political clarity to offer a sharp alternative to the propaganda of the Tories and the capitulation of their leaders. In these circumstances the lies of the Tory propaganda machine were often left unanswered or even tacitly accepted by the silence of the Trade Union leaders. No wonder then that an increasing number of workers could see no visible alternative to Thatcherism. This was the direct result of the Trade Union leaders and the political crisis in the ranks of the militant activists.

The profound crisis in the ranks of shop floor militants was revealed most sharply in British Leyland. Two weeks after a massive vote against a pay offer of 3.8%, Leyland workers voted against a strike. Duffy, Kitson, Hawley and Chapple all either opposed a strike or refused to make recommendations, leaving workers confused and fearful that the union was unwilling to support a fight. Leyland militants were powerless to stop this climb-down.

In 1981 fewer days were lost due to strikes than in any year since the war. While 1982 saw an increase in combativity, particularly with whole groups of workers like the health and the rail workers taking action. But the defeats continued. The class-wide confidence that drove Heath from office in 1974 and smashed Labour's 5% wage limit in 1979, had gone. The union officials made sure of that. The TUC scabbed on Aslef's fight against "flexible rostering" in the rail industry. It threatened the union with expulsion if it failed to end the strike on management terms. At the same time it confined the health workers to selective action - thirteen days of it (nationally) over five months.



Militant steel workers battle with police

In this dispute the rank and file did take important steps in organising resistance. *Workers Power* supporters fought for and achieved the convening of a national stewards' conference to campaign for all-out action. The "left" NUPE bureaucracy under Bickerstaffe, ordered their stewards to boycott the meeting.

In order to defuse the militancy displayed at a mass demonstration on September 22nd the union began a protracted consultation procedure on strike action, designed to inculcate a spirit of despair, passivity and defeatism. It all worked. Despite the resistance of the stewards' conference the dispute was beaten. In the aftermath of the election, the Tories now feel confident enough to announce the first major jobs cuts in the NHS, including doctors and nurses, since it was founded.

It is this legacy of defeat that explains Thatcher's triumph. Cumulatively the defeats had had a dramatic impact on working class organisation. Mass unemployment has meant a loss of union members and the waning of shop floor organisation. Since 1979 the overall loss of union members has been 16%. In that year there were 12.2 million members of TUC affiliated unions. In 1982 this was down to 10.5 million and since then there have been more losses. The TUC has lost 28% of its members, the AUEW 18%, UCA 25% and GMBATU 15%.

However the white collar unions have not been immune - ASTMS lost 16%, APEX 28%, the CPSA 11%. Despite some growth areas, (NUPE, COHSE) the overall picture is one of decline. This decline favours the right. In the white collar unions it will lead to a return to "professionalism" in a bid to hold on to members. In the manual unions the right will call for "realism", "restraint" and so forth in order to trade wages and conditions for jobs, in a pathetic bid to hold on to members.

Corresponding to this decline is the actual decline in organisation on the shop floor. The once powerful Cowley stewards' organisation provides the most alarming example of this. One of its most respected leaders, Alan Thornett, was victimised by Edwardes. He had been tried before, and beaten by strike action in 1974. In 1982 there was a 10-1 vote against a strike. Back in 1979 190 stewards were elected. Five months later 85 had taken voluntary redundancy. Now there are barely 40 left. In the recent "mole" case, convener Bobby Fryer reported that he was desperate to list some stewards to fill the gaps. In other industries the picture is similar. In the NHS the task of building stewards' organisation has been made a hundred times more difficult as a result of the sell-out.

RIFF-RAFF

There is no shortage of semi-intellectuals, right-wing careerists and other riff-raff, who take the decline in numbers of manual workers to mean that the working class is "disappearing". Andre Gorz's book on this theme was not the most popular one in London left bookshops for several weeks running for nothing. In fact this argument is a rationalisation for people moving right. The working class is not disappearing. It is being abandoned by erstwhile supporters from petit-bourgeoisie. Excluding service workers, manufacturing and production workers count for 12% of the working class in Britain. Add to that millions of proletarians from the service sector and the enormity of the working class as a social force becomes obvious. Moreover that class is driven constantly to defend itself against the bosses. In doing that new militants, local leaders are produced.

There is increasing evidence that workers' confidence and determination is growing at present. This year has seen important victories in the water industry over pay, Greenings over redundancies, in Michlins over shifts, at Pritchards - a new "privateering" firm - over pay and union recognition. Important disputes have been fought to "honourable compromise" at Tillbury docks, *The Financial Times*, - against Thatcher's sabotage. For a time BL were fought to a standstill at Cowley, where workers struck to defend conditions. All of these disputes show that despite the major defeat in 1980, the potential for explosions of class struggle that could generate class-wide resistance, is there.

AT THE BEGINNING of September Thatcher's chosen axe man MacGregor took control of the National Coal Board. In his spell at the head of British Steel he served the Tories well. He cut the workforce from 160,000 to 78,000. Now he has been unleashed on the mines and against the NUM leader Arthur Scargill.

The Tories have been ginger about taking on the miners. They have bitter memories of fighting and losing. The 1972 miners' strike ripped their incomes policy to pieces. In 1974 Edward Heath lost a union-bashing General Election against the miners. In 1981 unofficial action in the coalfields forced the Thatcher government to grant extended subsidies to the NCB to fend off the immediate implementations of the Tories' pit closure programme.

Thatcher and MacGregor have everything to fight for against the miners. They are a strategically placed and powerfully organised group of workers. But the miners mean more than that to the Tories. Ruling class and working class militants alike know full well that the miners are the traditional core of the British working class able to command real support and solidarity from other groups of workers, as they did in 1926 and 1972, and able to deliver decisive blows in support of other groups of workers. That is why the Tories backed off from a showdown with them in their first term of office. And it is why they have to tackle the unbroken potential of the miners in their second term.

The strategic planners in the British ruling class have had well laid plans for the coal industry for many years. As far back as 1979 a cabinet document was openly canvassing a nuclear power based energy programme on the grounds that it "would have the advantage of removing a substantial proportion of electricity production from the dangers of industrial disruption by coal miners or transport workers."

Their plans include the virtual closure of coal production in South Wales, Scotland and the North East of England and the concentration of production in Yorkshire and Nottingham. This concentrated production itself will be carried out by a drastically thinned down workforce if the miners fail to defeat the Tories. MacGregor intends to stock the remaining pits with high technology rather than working miners. Bradford University's Working Technology Group calculates that 75% of the 220,000 jobs left in the mining industry will go if these plans are implemented. That this is not an alarmist fantasy is shown by the fact that the new prize Selby pit complex which operates with the new technologies employs a mere 4,000 miners to produce what 16,000 could produce with the technologies prevailing in the rest of Britain's coalfields.

SHARPLY DEFINED TACTICS

To implement this plan the NUM must be decisively weakened. That is why the Tories have proceeded carefully in choosing the ground to launch their attack. Millions of workers will take heart if the Tories have to accept defeat at the hands of the workers in the coalfields.

If the strategic goal of the employing class is clear so too are their tactics becoming more sharply defined. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission has dutifully reported that too much coal is produced from too many high cost pits. It proposed the closure of 10% of the pits in order to eliminate what it calls "oversupply". A vigorous propaganda campaign has been launched against the "losses" of the mining industry. Of course none of this propaganda makes it clear who the NCB makes a profit for by making these "losses". 75% of the NCB's 1982-83 deficit was equivalent to the interest payments it made to banks and finance houses for its loans. No mention is made of the fact that the NCB continues to compensate the old landowners and to provide cheap coal and guaranteed lucrative markets to profit-making private capitalists.

The Tories are well prepared for action as well as for words. Anticipating an impending decisive showdown with the NUM they have stockpiled 54 million tonnes of coal, equivalent to six months supply and worth a staggering £1.6 billion at today's market price. In late August they also negotiated a 50% cut in the Central Electricity Board's coal order for the coming year. Miners who want to fight pit closures and an insulting pay offer now face an employer which has enough stocks to last out a long strike and which has arranged for its class allies to cut coal consumption in solidarity against the miners.

MacGregor has also instructed management to initiate a campaign of provocative attacks against the miners. The penalty for managers and overseers who fail to comply will be that they lose their jobs in MacGregor's threatened "managerial shakeup." Mac-

Miners picket the South Kirkby pit to win support for Dodworth



... As Tories target the miners

Gregor has never disguised his desire to assert managerial authority against the NUM. His backers in the editorial rooms of *The Economist* are openly calling for an end to ten years of "timid management" in the NCB since the great victories of the miners in the early 1970s. Quick off the mark, a supervisor got himself into a scrap with George Marsh at Dodworth colliery near Barnsley and the colliery management tried to fire Marsh. Monkton Hall overseers were even more anxious to prove their commitment to MacGregor's new regime. They threatened to sack 63 and then 300 workers. When an entire shift returned five minutes late from a weekly meeting which discussed and partially accepted their plans, management locked them out. In the prize high tech Selby complex management chose to fight the workforce over a new productivity deal. At Westhose, management picked a trial of strength over the introduction of a new shift system.

At every level the ruling class and its lickspittles have been gearing themselves up for a fight with the miners. It has upped the tempo of pit closures in a bid to outdo the record of the Labour Government which between 1965 and 1969 managed to close a pit a week.

At a rank and file level they have met with concerted resistance from miners wherever and whenever they have attempted to close pits that were not geologically exhausted. In 1981 a rolling unofficial strike starting in South Wales forced the Tories to shelve their closure plans. Since then pits faced with closure have shown ample evidence of the miners' preparedness to fight to save jobs. The Kinneil fight in late 1982 showed that the miners were prepared to resist closure. It coincided with plans for a coalfield wide strike against closures in South Wales. More graphically in February this year miners resisting closure at Lewis Merthyr triggered a rolling strike throughout South Wales coalfields which threatened to bring out pits throughout the country in strike action against closures.

RESISTING THE FIRST WAVE

In the first five months of 1983, 30,000 miners were involved in unofficial strike action. The meaning of these figures can be grasped only if we realise that this means that 15% of miners struck in the period up to July this year regardless of whether they had the blessing of the relevant NUM official committees. According to the Department of Employment Gazette there were 202 stoppages in the industry during this period which involved 50,600 miners and led to 265,000 days being lost in production for the NCB management.

In the same vein workers have shown that they are prepared to resist the first wave of MacGregor's managerial offensive. At Monkton Hall the miners took strike action and attempted to win support

J. Sturrock (Network)

throughout the coalfield. At Dodworth miners struck in support of George Marsh for two weeks before picketing and lobbying 16 pits out in their support without any official sanction whatsoever. The rank and file miners have not yet been decisively defeated. No wonder the Tories are choosing their battleground carefully.

The Tories greatest asset has been the failure of the NUM executive to give a decisive lead to resolute action by miners when they have taken on the NCB and the Tories. Last December Mick McGahey sat back and watched while the Kinneil workers attempted to pull the Scots miners out behind them. When they had clearly failed McGahey treacherously declared the battle lost and the Kinneil campaign a failure. In February a rolling strike in the South Wales coalfield with pickets dispatched to other areas, offered a real chance to unleash a struggle against pit closures. Again the NUM executive refused to move. Arthur Scargill first passed the buck back to the Welsh miners by declaring that the NEC would respond to requests from South Wales. Then the action was torpedoed by the calling of a ballot a precisely the time that the militant sections should have been supported and the momentum kept up in a campaign to picket other areas out. In these circumstances the ballot registered the mood of the miners after the NUM leaders had taken the struggle off the boil.

CLOSURE TEMPO UP

For Scargill and McGahey every move taken by the members has either been "premature" or too risky to commit the NUM's bureaucracy to. The result has been that one by one threatened pits have reluctantly accepted the NCB's proposals. In August Brynlliw and Cardowan accepted closure. Back in July Scargill was proudly declaring to the NUM conference that the NCB's attempt to close Cardowan would be the signal for a fight against closures. In fact defeats at Kinneil, Lewis Merthyr, Cardowan and Brynlliw have only served to up the tempo of NCB closure announcements.

Nowhere was the bankruptcy of the NUM officials more clearly revealed than in the Dodworth and South Yorkshire strike. The "Left" Yorkshire NUM leaders Jack Taylor and Owen Briscoe not only refused to back workers fighting MacGregor's get tough management. They agreed that George Marsh should be transferred to another pit and attacked the strike as a diversion from the struggle against closures on which the Yorkshire executive intends to hold a ballot in the near future. Scargill remained studiously silent throughout the entire dispute! Now he and the NUM executive have thrown the responsibility on an October 21st special conference to come up with a way to fight closures...after derailing all the major struggles this year.

The wave of unofficial stoppages in the mines is evidence that a new generation of younger militant miners is emerging. It was from the great unofficial miners' strikes in the late 1960s and early 1970s that the present left leaders in Yorkshire - including Scargill himself - developed their base. It is vital that out of the present struggles a new leadership is built which will lead the fight against the Tories, put the fake left leaders to the test and oust all those who will not lead a struggle. If this is not done, then the disputes will remain localised and isolated and a new generation of potential fighters will become demoralised and even open to right wing demagogues against their do-nothing "Left" leaders. The building of a rank and file movement organising the militant minority across and within coalfields is a matter of dire necessity for the miners. The initiative must be taken out of the hands of the bureaucratic lefts with their fine speeches, their periodic ballots and conferences and their repeated failure to lead when real struggles erupt in the mines.

The MacGregor regime of closures and clamp-down can be resisted. But it means following the trail blazed by the South Wales and South Yorkshire miners supporting and spreading struggles where they take place, not waiting for a bureaucratic ruling that the executive has now decided the time is ripe to ballot the miners again.

The NCB have offered the miners a deliberately provocative pay deal. Their officers are rolling up their sleeves for a fight. Militants in the coalfields must win the argument for solidarity action with all pits fighting the management offensive. They must organize to strengthen and spread the networks that have pulled out South Wales and South Yorkshire. They must take their arguments to other sections of workers to win the support that will be vital in a protracted struggle with the Tories. They must organize to hold the NUM leaders to account and force them to back up, not out of, a fight with MacGregor.

The Tories know that an early victory over the miners would have the same effect as their defeat of the steel-workers in 1980. It would be a defeat for the miners themselves. Crucially, though, it would sap the confidence of other sections of workers. A victorious miners' strike raises the very real prospect of a regrouping and remobilising of the whole working class. It could become a rallying point for class-wide action against the Tories. It could stymie their vicious plans and leave their government in tatters well before their term of office is due to end. A defeat of the miners, on the other hand, might well lead to a re-run of the 1980-82 period of fragmentation and defeat. Precisely because of these stakes, there must be no complacency in the workers' movement. The balance of class forces can be shifted back in favour of the working class. To this end militants in every plant and office must forge links with the miners and win the arguments to back their fight. The Triple Alliance must be activated in every locality with joint meetings of workplace representatives to prepare for solidarity action. The TUC gave notice that if the miners fought, they would do so alone. The rank and file of the movement can and must prove these traitors and cowards wrong by building now for victory. ■

By Dave Hughes



J. Sturrock (Report)

What is missing is an organised body of militants capable of seizing the opportunity to bring this about.

The current temporary revival of Broad Lefts in the unions provides no such strategy. Staffed by *Militant*, *Socialist Organiser* and *Socialist Action* supporters, these "new" organisations, like their CP dominated ancestors, are playing directly into the hands of the right.

They are modelled on the "caucus" style organisation of the Labour Party democracy campaign. In certain instances they have scored electoral successes, being for the most part electorally orientated. They dominated the CPSA - for a year. During that time they refused to give national backing to two strikes over under-staffing at Oxford and Birmingham. They counterposed action in the future over pay to actual action being taken by an angry rank and file. The result is that Alastair Graham - in the forefront of Scargill-baiting at the TUC - is now the general secretary and the right is in the saddle.

VICTIMISATION RECIPE

The "victory" of the Broad Left in the POEU looks similarly tenuous. Their strategy of selective action to fight privatisation is a recipe for a fragmented fight, victimisation and resentment developing between sections. Their refusal to consult the membership on their backing for Labour Party NEC candidates, resulted in a delegate conference censuring them for refusing to back the union sponsored MP (and right-winger) John Golding. In line with their right-wing counterparts, these characters do not want to "democratise" the unions' block votes inside the Labour Party. They want to capture it and wield it for their own faction. The longterm result will be a resurgence of right wing dominance.

So, in the face of a right wing victory in the TUC and a legacy of defeat during the first Thatcher government, what needs to be done?

In the first place around every instance of direct action the rank and file must be organised to resist bureaucratic sell-outs. Out of the strikes that will take place in the period ahead active strike organisations must lay the basis for renewed shop floor structures. These must be built on a new basis - a basis of thorough-going democracy in which members are involved through regular section and mass meetings, through regular bulletins, a paper if possible, through report-backs and regular elections of stewards. The status quo in the unions has proved the way for defeats.

The unions must be transformed from top to bottom and put on a war footing. All officers must be regularly elected, accountable and paid the average wage of the members. Union policy must be decided by annual lay delegate conferences, and the block vote must represent - according to votes cast - different viewpoints within the union. Union meetings must be held in work-time so that all members, especially women, can attend. To answer the daily lies of the Fleet Street muck rakers a labour movement daily paper must be launched.

This programme will meet with stiff resistance from the bureaucrats. But, if strikes are to be made effective and the Tories' laws smashed, if the curse of unemployment is to be vanquished, if the NHS is to be saved and pay and conditions defended, then this programme must be implemented.

To achieve this militants within every workplace, every industry and across industries, within every union and across unions, need to be organised. To win the majority we must organise the militant minority. Only a rank and file movement can do this. It can be a force to counter the political fraud of the Tories and the TUC leaders, to be a force to resist sell-outs, to force an end to talks with the Tories, to organise picketing, solidarity and so forth. It can organise the sort of class-wide action, so feared by the bureaucrats that they smashed it in 1980, that can defeat Thatcher and her system. It will be down to revolutionary communists to take on the task of organising such a movement, winning leadership of it in an open and thoroughly democratic manner. Workers Power is determined to take on that task. Join us. ■

By Mark Hoskisson

LETTERS

Fascism?

Dear Comrades,
I must take issue with comrade Daher of the Communist League of Chile writing in the last issue of *Workers Power*. In his letter he says that the fall of Allende led to the "advent of fascism" and that, in the junta that replaced Allende, Airforce General Gustavo Leigh was "the most fascist" of the junta members. Indeed unlike Pinochet, Leigh "clearly aimed at a corporatist, fascist state." For this reason it seems, he was ousted by Pinochet.

Taken together these statements can only mean that the Chilean regime is some kind of "lesser" fascism, led by Pinochet, an unconscious "fascist." This description of the Chilean regime is, in my view, muddled and unhelpful. The regime in Chile is repulsive and barbarously repressive, but not, in the Trotskyist sense, fascist. Fascism arises as a mass movement of the petit-bourgeois and the lumpen proletariat, mobilised by militant demagoguery, in order to smash to smithereens the organisations of the working class. For the ruling class to call up a fascist party or movement to do this job is a dangerous last resort.

In countries like Chile - semi-colonial countries - the imperialists and their supporters in the native bourgeoisie have preferred to maintain their rule by repressive military Bonapartist regimes. These rely far more directly on the imperialist funded and trained armed forces, than on any indigenous mass reactionary movement. Military regimes of this type exist in Chile, Argentina, Turkey, Guatemala and elsewhere.

Of course there are no watertight stages between forms of government. Historically in the imperialist epoch the rise to power of a Bonapartist regime has often preceded the rise to power of fascism. It is in this light that the conflict between Pinochet and Leigh should be seen - not in terms of them being more or less fascist.

Yours in comradeship,
Chris Philips,
Reading.

SPUC's activities

Dear Comrades,
Little attention has been paid by the left press, *Workers Power* included, to the recent activities of right-wing anti-abortion campaigns. With the climate of moral reaction being stoked by Thatcher and her "Victorian Values" campaign, we can ill afford to be complacent.

The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) recently announced that the "Bolsheviks...set out deliberately to destroy the two institutions which preserve ethical traditions...the family and the church": the Bolsheviks are a good focus for their attacks - these heathen communists not only legalised adultery, abortion and incest but "...attitudes were changed by means of heavy propaganda and social engineering." The equivalent today of the Zhenotdels (Bolsheviks' women's organisations) is apparently the government funded Family Planning Association which "solicits youngsters outside schools" and "distributes contraceptives to youngsters".

This hysterical propaganda is not the only card that the anti-abortionists SPUC and LIFE are playing. Unable to reverse the 1967 Abortion Act by successive parliamentary Bills (Corrie, White and Benyon), they are aiming to alter the law by individual cases and rulings. The most recent case was to accuse gynaecologist Mr. Anthony Hamilton of attempted murder when he performed a late abortion and the foetus was delivered alive. LIFE persuaded the Director of Public Prosecutions to bring the charge which was thankfully dismissed by Luton magistrates last month. This was the 5th case which LIFE has brought, the only other one taken up by the DPP being that against Dr. Leonard Arthur, a paediatrician who was also cleared of attempted murder when he ordered the withholding of treatment from a severely handicapped baby.

LIFE are now hounding nurses and ancillary workers to spy on medical staff and report cases of late abortion or withholding treatment. They argue that under the Infant Life (Preservation) Act any viable foetus has the right to be left to be born naturally at full term, and since modern medicine is now able to keep some foetuses alive from 22-23 weeks' gestation at birth, they hope to reduce the upper time limit for abortion.

As yet such insidious attempts to restrict abortion rights have failed, but the closing of FPC's and abortion facilities due to NHS cuts will itself result in more unwilling mothers. If LIFE and SPUC also succeed in harassing doctors so that all attempts are made to keep severely handicapped babies alive, more women will become confined to nursing these children with ever-decreasing state back-up services.

SPUC and LIFE do not give a damn about any of this. Their bigotry leads them to view women as breeding machines. Unwanted children can be handed over to Mother Theresa and her homes for abandoned children and catholic indoctrination.

The anti-abortionists' campaign must be vigorously opposed as we struggle to defend the rights and services we already have, and seek to extend those rights so that abortion is freely available to all women on demand.

Yours in comradeship,
Dr. Helen Davis
(South London).

Write to: *Workers Power*, BCM 7750
London WC1N 3XX

STOP 'PEACE KEEPERS' WAR

ON SEPTEMBER 4th Israel withdrew its 36,000 troops to a line behind the Awali river for a prolonged occupation of one third of the Lebanon. After having inflicted a major military defeat on the PLO during its invasion of Lebanon last year, the cost (517 dead) of providing the military back-up to the Maronite government in the area around Beirut and in the Chouf mountains was becoming politically untenable in Israel itself. Jerusalem, by its partial evacuation, has indicated its preference for a massive security line on its northern border and allowing its withdrawal to set the Maronite and Muslim population of Lebanon against each other.

In the first three days after Israel's partial withdrawal between 250 and 500 people died in fighting in the Beirut and Chouf areas. This was largely the result of the Maronite Government being let off the leash to assert its control in the no-go areas of West Beirut and Chouf Mountains, both being predominantly Muslim areas. In previous confrontations the 32,000 strong Lebanese army has been as unstable weapon, consisting as it does of mainly Maronite officers and Muslim rank and file. In a similar situation in 1976 the army split along confessional lines, thus proving ineffective. In the last weeks however, they have largely held together. The problem for Gemayel this time has been that in West Beirut he has found himself up against the well-trained Shi'ite Amal militia, while in the Chouf the Syrian armed 30,000 fighters in the Druze militia has proven more than a match.

IMPERIALIST RUSH IN

It was the success of the military campaign by the Shi'ites and Druze that led to US imperialism rushing in to fill the vacuum left by the Israelis. By September's end over 1,000 US marines are in Beirut while 2,000 more wait offshore in the flotilla of 12 US Navy ships. To give Reagan's actions a veneer of "international peacekeeping" he has enlisted the willing support of British, French and Italian troops in the action as well.

The notion that US imperialism's actions can be part of a solution to Lebanon's ills is a lie. On the contrary, imperialism is the problem. From the time Lebanon was carved out of the Middle East as an artificial state to reward French imperialism's efforts in the First World War, imperialist plans have caused ruin in Lebanon. In 1943 the French handed over power to a trusted minority of rich Maronite landowners. The Constitution guaranteed them a 6 to 5 majority in all areas of national life. The majority Sunni Muslims, its most prosperous section, was co-opted into this system. On the other hand, the poorer peasant and urban workers of the Shi'ite and Druze population were deprived of any meaningful political life. In turn, this gave them little leverage to resist their economic subjugation.

The oil boom of the 1960s transformed Lebanon into a banking centre and massively bolstered the Maronites wealth. For this reason US imperialism has continued to back a succession of Maronite Governments. In 1958 the US sent 10,000 marines in to back a tottering Maronite regime. Its actions



Muslim fighter launches a rocket propelled grenade in West Beirut

now are from exactly the same mould. Reagan needs a stable centralised Lebanese state if it is to carry out its traditional role in the Middle East's economy and to prevent Syrian carrying Kremlin's influence into the Middle East. That's why the points of difference have arisen between the US and Israel in recent months and why the US tries hard to prevent Israel's withdrawal - at least until the Syrians were out of the Bekaa valley and could not prevent the Lebanese Army re-establishing control over the Muslim areas.

MILITARY STRENGTH

The Lebanese Muslim left are intensely divided politically. The strength of the various militias is primarily military, receiving arms from Syria, Iraq and inevitably taking on the political colouring of their backers. In July this year a Syrian-backed National Salvation Front (NSF) was formed from the leading Muslim opposition groupings. The largest of these remains Walid Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party, the main force among Lebanon's 250,000 Druze.

Whilst Jumblatt's followers include the most downtrodden elements of Lebanese society. Jumblatt himself is a largish landowner and politically is not prepared for a thorough-going fight against imperialism and its Maronite agents. Jumblatt agreed to the recent ceasefire precisely at the moment when the Druze militia were in a very strong position to take the strategically important town of Souk El Gharb. In early September Jumblatt met with US special Envoy Robert McFarlane and Gemayel's adviser Haddad in Paris to try and reach a settlement. Jumblatt does not aim to end imperialist domination nor even the crippling confessional system of government which has so fatally undermined unity amongst the workers and poor peasants of Lebanon. Jumblatt wishes only to see himself head of a more stable and enlarged group of Druze representatives in a national government. The main barrier to its realisation, however, is the extreme Phalangist domination of the Maronite government which considers any concessions to the Muslim oppositionists

impermissible.

While imperialism itself would be willing to grant greater Muslim influence in Lebanon, it cannot risk abandoning its Christian allies, even when they will not make any concessions. This explains why the key imperialist powers all showed themselves ready to join the fighting. They could not have tolerated a Syrian backed Druze victory over the Christian government. For precisely this reason revolutionaries would support a military victory of the Druze over the Lebanese army and the imperialist 'peacekeepers'. Moreover if Syria were to get drawn into the conflict, then it would deserve support against the imperialists and their Lebanese agents. For this reason workers in Britain France, America and Italy must take action to demand the withdrawal of all imperialist troops from Lebanon.

INDEPENDENT ORGANISATION

While even an NSF victory over the Maronites and Phalangists would be a severe blow to imperialism, it would not guarantee a lasting victory for the workers and peasants of Lebanon. Jumblatt and Assad of Syria are no revolutionary socialists. Both are capable of turning viciously on their own working class. To meet such a threat workers and poor peasants must organise to act independently, build their own organisations, and prepare to smash the confessional state in Lebanon absolutely. To fail to do this would result in a partition that would benefit, above all, Israel. To begin this struggle political unity between the Lebanese masses themselves and with the dispersed Palestinian urban and rural masses must be forged. Against Jumblatt's power broking and the Phalangists' intransigence the mass must fight, in the period ahead, for a sovereign constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage. To convene such a body the masses - the workers and poor peasants will have to develop their own committees and unified, accountable militia, bodies that can and must develop into an alternative power to the Lebanese army and the state it defends. ■

by Keith Hassell

Belgian strike wave betrayed

THE BRITISH PRESS blacked it out for good reason. For two weeks in September Belgian workers showed how to fight against an anti-working class government. They showed the enormous power of the industrial working class, which so many of its fair weather friends have declared to be defeated or finished.

The Belgian government was set on tightening the screws of its austerity drive against the working class. It attempted to rip up agreements to keep public sector wages increases in line with inflation, it announced plans to take one month's pay off its employees by paying workers one month in arrears in future and to increase national insurance contributions.

Without waiting for their trade union leaders in the Socialist Trade Union Federation (FGTB), its public sector union (GGSP) and Christian Federation (CSC) railworkers took spontaneous strike action against the government. Public sector workers throughout the country backed them up with strike action on their own initiative. Only then did the union federations back the action and call a one day public sector General Strike for Thursday

15th September.

The one day strike served to up the stakes of the dispute. Most public sector workers stayed away the next day. Private sector workers stopped in solidarity in many workplaces. The workers had the government by the throat. In the face of mounting working class militancy the paralysed government started to offer meagre compromises. Its attempt to order Antwerp dock workers back to work failed and was withdrawn. They withdrew plans to end bonus overtime payments and salary increments.

With the government in retreat the union leaders ran for cover. The leaders of both major federations had been desperate to avoid any challenge to the power of the government. The longer the strike continued and the more confident and effective the workers action became, the more the strike threatened to topple the government itself. First the Christian Unions and then the FGTB called off the action and kept the government in power in exchange for paltry concessions.

Angry meetings denounced the Trade Union leaders. But the leaders had kept each group of

workers separate from each other wherever they could. While there was unity in action between Flemish and Walloon workers and between the private and public sector no unified strike committees existed strong enough to prevent the bureaucrats' sell out and challenge Belgium's Tories for power.

Now wonder the British media blacked it all out. Its message was dangerous. Despite 15% unemployment and previous defeats for steel and public sector workers the Belgian workers took on a hard nosed right wing government and showed the way to win. Only the official union bureaucracy stood between the government and destruction - not a point the union bashing press was keen to publicise either. The strike showed all too clearly that the union bureaucrats misrepresent the working class, but not in the way the gutter press would have workers believe. Belgium's strike wave showed that the recession has not destroyed the fighting spirit of the working class. Hence the silence in the bosses' press. ■

by Dave Hughes

CLERICAL REACTION TIGHTENS ITS GRIP

THE PASSAGE OF the anti-abortion amendment by a 2* to 1 majority in a total poll of 55% is a serious setback for working class women and small farm-based Irish women. It is a blow to the limited gains achieved in the area of pay, contraception and the right to work which were won on the crest of the growth in employment that flowed from the post-war expansion of imperialist investment in Ireland. It has strengthened the grip of the Catholic Church on a society that was just beginning to overcome the narrow-minded insularity which was copperfastened by decades of imperialist partition and protectionism. It has re-established the role of the clergy and hierarchy in the maintenance of "family, order and morality." This is indispensable to the Irish bourgeoisie as it attacks wages, jobs and public spending, and which, deeply dependent as it is on imperialist investment, is thoroughly incapable of displacing the Catholic Church in a semi-colonial state where over 50% of the population is under 25 and where married women in the working class form a massive army of hidden unemployed.

The reactionary movement that mobilised for the amendment was the "pro-Life Amendment Campaign" (PLAC) formed in April 1981. Despite significant liberal opposition to the campaign in the cities, its success was assured by Catholic support in the countryside and varying degrees of support from the two southern Tory parties - Fine Gael and Fianna Fail. In rural areas the "Yes" vote averaged 80%, while in Dublin and Cork anti-amendment votes topped the 40% mark.

The success of PLAC illustrates not only the

confessional limits of both wings of the southern Tories but also the bankruptcy and sycophancy of the reformist Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy. The Labour Party successively committed itself to supporting a coalition with Fine Gael in elections in June 1981, February 1982 and November 1983. Labour leaders equivocated on the idea of an amendment when first approached by PLAC in 1981. Its "majority" position was rooted in opposition to any form of legalised abortion. It was concerned only to avoid the embarrassment of a "denominational" wording. In the event Fianna Fail's wording was voted for by five Labour deputies, helping ensure its success. In the coalition programme for government Labour merely reserved for itself the right to a free vote on the issue while it also allowed the issue of divorce (unconstitutional at present) to be assigned to an "interparliamentary committee."

The trade union leadership, whose traditional deference to the Catholic hierarchy was evidenced in 1979 by papal flags in union head office windows to welcome the globe-trotting pontiff, issued a formal ICTU statement in December 1982 only after the Fianna Fail wording was published. It argued that the amendment was "unnecessary in that the position is already covered by existing law" - law which threatens women with penal servitude for life if they attempt to have an abortion here! After that the ICTU ducked out of the controversy. Individual unions were more blunt. The Marine Port and General Workers Union called for "tighter laws against abortion". The Federated Workers Union referred back an anti-amendment conference motion while the Irish branch of ASTMS stated its opposition

to abortion as a condition of its publicly opposing the amendment. Indeed one of the signals for the launching of the PLAC offensive was a decision by the Irish branch of the National Union of Journalists to renege on union policy defending the right to choose. This decision, taken in 1980 under pressure from right wing Catholic groups and employer pressure, showed both the limits of liberal bourgeois opinion and the general weakness of the trade union movement on the question. Capitulation here emboldened the reactionaries to make their move.

The referendum controversy threw considerable light on the republicans of Sinn Fein. Throughout the whole period they remained as passive spectators on the sidelines. Sinn Fein not only could not change its policy on abortion but couldn't even find its way to opposing it on the grounds of its sectarian aspects. This illustrates that it is still rooted in a social base deeply influenced by the religious preaching of the Catholic hierarchy and clergy who were allowed to have such a disastrous influence during the H-Block hunger strike. By these strings it remains tied to the bourgeoisie as it sets itself the task of winning the support of the "plain people of Ireland" from Fianna Fail!

There are, however, other strings tying the working class to the bourgeoisie as the politics of the Anti-

Amendment Campaign, sadly, reveal. The initiative for the opposition to the amendment came, not surprisingly from the "far" left. Centrist groups such as Peoples Democracy and the Socialist Workers' Movement (sisters of the SL and SWP respectively in Britain) joined forces with the two-nationist Democratic Socialist Party in a propaganda bloc which initially included the Workers Party (formerly Official Sinn Fein). It was from the outset a "rotten" bloc which forced the existing SWM/PD sponsored Right to Choose Group into silence as it set about finding the most opportunist set of reasons for opposing the Amendment. Among those reasons were the cost of a referendum - estimated at £700,000 - to the state; another one was the non-necessity of constitutional change since, after all, abortion is a serious criminal offence. When Fianna Fail's wording, which met with approval only from the Catholic Church, was produced the campaign got so bogged down in secondary issues that it was disarmed for months by the alternative wording proposed by Fine Gael, to which the campaign gave a cautious welcome. The campaign invoked the support of the Protestant churches from the outset and suitably decked out its platforms with protestant clergy.

Clearly, for want of recognising the tasks and dangers posed for socialists - whose duty it was to get quickly to the heart of the matter and class substance of it, the centrists soon became embroiled in the internal dilemmas of the bourgeoisie. This was inevitable, as the Irish Workers Group argued at successive meetings and conferences, as long as the campaign only dealt with the constitutional shadow and not the substance of the amendment - abortion, and more generally women's oppression. We proposed that the campaign platform be extended to simultaneously fight for the abolition of the noxious 1861 legislation and to defend against the stigma of criminalisation the 50,000 or more Irish women who have had abortions in Britain. This was rejected. We called on the campaign to oppose the restrictive Health (Family Planning) Act 1979 and to fight for free contraception on demand. This too was rejected. In December 1982 we proposed an emergency resolution at the campaign's delegate conference calling for trade union and industrial action to have the charges dropped against a Dublin doctor faced with prosecution for giving condoms to a patient. This was ruled out of order on the grounds that "this campaign had no position on fertility." We jest not. When we earlier proposed that the "trade union committee" create affiliated groups of rank and file workers the "Workers Party" rejected it as "contrary to custom and practice". Not surprisingly the committee was as dead as a dodo for most of the campaign's history. Such was the level of class liquidation of the left.

In all of this the IWG fought to orientate the campaign to the working class, to crystallise out a minority of working class militants as a nucleus in the fight for a working class based women's organisation. Thus we put forward the only adequate principled basis for a united front based centrally on working class organisations and industrial action. In this endeavour we were opposed by centrists and their much cherished liberal allies. ■

by a member of the Irish Workers Group



Reaction stalks the streets of Dublin

Derek Spiers (Report)

WHO'S GOT THE N.A.C.?



SISTERHOOD was notably lacking at this year's National Abortion Campaign Conference. Speaker after speaker pursued a hostile, bitter and futile debate. One hundred and fifty women, plus a handful of men, took part in the wake, but no one would actually pronounce death. The result is that NAC still exists but "has problems" to quote one leading member. It no longer has any aims, there is no constitution and no organisation.

Since the Corrie Campaign NAC has had no defensive battles to fight, and has been in disarray. Two years of argument have taken place whilst the national organisation has all but collapsed, except for servicing the GLC with research work. Local groups have largely collapsed or pursued other issues. The Reproductive Rights Group, formed within the NAC, argued at the conference to widen

the campaign and change the name, so that the interests of all individual women would be included. Their opponents, who included supporters of Socialist Action, argued that abortion was still politically and strategically central, that A Women's Right to Choose, Free Abortion on Demand should remain the priority.

Neither faction won the 2/3 majority required to make a decision, and hence no decisions were made. Neither side addressed the political weakness of NAC. Despite significant trade union and labour movement support, NAC has remained a series of local pressure groups with no active organised support of groups of women workers. Trade Union bureaucrats affiliate to NAC, but no rank and file support has been sought. NAC is paralysed.

Defence of jobs, pay, NHS cuts and abortion facilities are all necessary for women and cannot be achieved through feminist activities. A movement of organised working class women involved in strikes, occupations and militant direct action is needed to take on the employers, the government and the right wing anti-abortion pressure groups. Women seeking to defend their rights should ignore the farcical death throes of NAC and turn instead to building such a working class women's movement. ■

by Helen Ward

NEWHAM 8 - NO CASE TO ANSWER!

EIGHT ASIAN YOUTH from Newham will appear in court on October 24th to face charges of conspiracy to assault persons unknown. The Newham 8 are charged with the "crime" of defending themselves and the black community from racist attack. Their arrests followed a series of vicious attacks on black school-children by white racist thugs.

At first the eight were charged with offences ranging from threatening behaviour to

actual bodily harm. Only later did the police lay the much heavier charge of conspiracy on the youth. Against black youth who organise to defend their community the police are using a 140 year old political charge initially designed to prevent working class organisation and resistance.

It is vital that all trade union and Labour Parties rush messages of support to the Newham 8 and commit themselves to organising

and fighting on their behalf. If the police succeed this time they will feel more confident to step up their conspiracy against black militants and working class activists. A successful police prosecution will be a green light to the racist thugs who have roamed the Newham area in search of black victims.

In Sheffield, Asian Youth Movement militants have taken up the campaign as an urgent issue of the day and as a means of building the confidence and fighting ability of the black community. As individuals from the Asian Youth Movement told Workers Power supporters active in the campaign: "We didn't see it as a moral duty but as an important political issue to be taken up in the black community and the labour movement" and "This is a long term issue of the rights of the black community, an issue where we have to stand

up and fight. The work done now helps this in the future." We agree with them. It is necessary and possible to build joint struggle to defend all such victims of police repression. Through such campaigns it will be possible to build the confidence and ability of the black community to defend itself with the support of the organised labour movement.

Workers Power will continue to campaign on behalf of the Newham 8 and to defend all victims of police conspiracy. For information on the campaign, donations and messages of support write to

Newham 8 Defence Campaign,
c/o PO Box 273,
Forest Gate,
London E7 9JN

by Bridget Thomson



The Newham 8 - Self defence is no offence!

The RCP and the Newham 8 - a statement

The Newham 8 support demonstration on September 24th showed that the ever more frenzied sectarian Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) have an approach to the struggle of the Newham 8 that aids rather than attacks the police.

This outfit lives on a diet of self-delusion. It is losing members rapidly following its drubbing at the hands of the Raving Looney Party in the election. Its sectarian stunts are becoming all the more dangerous the more it loses touch with reality. They arrived in Newham to declare that their front "East London Workers Against Racism" (ELWAR) had sole rights to lead the demonstration. They proceeded to assemble their tiny contingent and huge banner near the front of the march, ahead of the local black organisations and supporting working class organisations. The demented RCP refused all calls to shift, choosing instead to deliberately provoke the stewards into attempts to move them on, which the self-styled East London Workers tried to rebuff with their fists. The RCP action was the signal for police to move in on the demonstration; their organisation was directly responsible for opening black youth to police attack for defending their own demonstration. All the RCP's shrieks and posturings could not disguise this fact. We condemn them outright for this action. ■

FOWLER SLASHES N.H.S.

SOCIAL SERVICES SECRETARY Norman Fowler has gone on the rampage. In just one week he announced a further 5,000 NHS workers were to be added to the dole queues. No section is safe from this latest round of cuts. Although 1,500 doctors are already unemployed more will be sacked alongside nurses, paramedical staff and ancillaries.

These cuts come at a time when the need for an increase in the NHS is becoming ever more urgent. The West Midlands Regional Health Authority (RHA) for example, reckons that it alone needs at least 2,100 MORE staff.

Tory election promises that the NHS was "Safe in their hands" were a blatant lie from the beginning - and they knew it. On May 11th Sir Kenneth Stout, permanent secretary at the DHSS, wrote to all Health Authority administrators warning them against publishing "politically sensitive" documents, that is Tory plans for cuts, in the run up to the election.

Since they came to power in 1979, the Tories have closed 109 hospitals with thousands of beds being lost. They have forced down wages to a point where 40% of NHS employees are on, or below, the poverty line. Since the June election they have:

- ▷ announced a growth limit of 1/2% per year for the next ten years - this equals a real cut of 2 1/2%

- ▷ cut £83 million from the health budget as part of their £500 million public expenditure cuts

- ▷ demanded a cut of between 6-8,000 jobs before next March.

In addition, Fowler is insisting that all laundry, catering and domestic services must be put out to tender to private firms. His argument that this will lead to more efficient use of resources is exploded by the example of Newcastle upon Tyne. They could have saved £100,000 by using NHS facilities for their laundry but Fowler forced them to drop this plan because it would have meant taking on more staff. The Tories' target is not a more efficient Health Service for the great mass of the population who rely on it. It is to open up the £800 million NHS budget to their profit hungry friends. In order to make sure the resulting profits are as big as possible, they have to break up the trade union organisations of NHS workers. They hope to do this by bringing in private contractors and by cutting NHS wages and jobs.

Even the Regional Health Authorities, with their hand-picked pro-Tory leaders, have been taken aback at the viciousness of Fowler's attacks. A lot of publicity has been given to health authorities that have opposed his plans such as Brent authority which has refused to bring in cuts of £250,000 and intends to press on with a £600,000 spending programme. Leicester has also said that it will ask for money to open its new District General Hospital. However, these examples are far from typical. Many authorities hope to avoid the worst effects of the cuts by negotiating with the Tories. They wrongly believe that if they implement



Vocal lobby of Health Union bureaucrats, June 82

"rationalisation" and cut costs then they will be able to use the money to employ staff in selected areas. This will not work - the Tories' plans are for cuts, not for redistribution of funds.

Other authorities think they can cope by tendering for contracts at prices below their private competitors. This simply means that their own workers will have to accept yet worse wages and conditions to ensure that they undercut the pirates.

Workers in the NHS can put no faith in the ability of Health Authorities to protect their jobs or pay. Even in cases like Brent victory or defeat will depend ultimately on the ability of the workers' own organisations to fight for themselves. Certainly trade unions and shop stewards' committees should support such authorities, but that support will be effective only if it is based on the direct action, strikes and occupations like that at Thornton View Bradford, of the workers themselves. Where representatives of unions, Trades Councils and the Labour Party sit on area and Regional Health Authorities they should be called upon to make public the plans for cuts. Which hospitals are to be closed, which services privatised, which departments are to lose jobs. Expressions of sympathy for health workers do not cut any ice, we need practical action. There is no point in these "Labour Movement Representatives" sitting on such bodies if they do not put themselves at the service of the Labour Movement. If they are prevented from doing this then they should publicly boycott the authorities, not allow themselves to be sucked into taking responsibility for cuts or being seen as agreeing to them.

Union response to the announcement of yet more cuts has been very muted. So far they have limited themselves to statements opposing the "immorality" of Tory policy (Bickerstaffe) and sending bulletins and leaflets to union branches. Not one leader has taken a clear stand in favour of indus-

trial action, strike action, to defeat the Tories. It has been left to regions, or even branches, to organise their own campaigns. In July NUPE in the North-East and Cumbria region agreed to take immediate industrial action if attempts are made to privatise any hospital service. Full backing was given, in advance, for occupations to prevent such privatisation.

This is an example that should be followed in all areas and at regional and national level.

Very few people in the NHS can be in any doubt about the deterioration of standards and conditions in hospitals. The task of the minority, whose militancy shocked both Cabinet Minister and union leader alike last year, is to make effective preparations to throw back this latest attack. Within the hospitals this means campaigning for regular branch and departmental meetings to keep union members informed and for the building of active Joint Shop Stewards' Committees to co-ordinate action.

At the heart of such preparation must be the need for strike action to be taken as soon as jobs are cut or services are contracted out. This has to be built for. Shop stewards' committees need to take a lead in involving trade unions in local plants and other public sector industries in organising publicity and massive demonstrations in every area. Local Labour Parties must be mobilised to bring pressure on local government and health authorities. Public statements of support for strike action to defend the NHS and for solidarity action from other workers, must be demanded from all labour movement organisations and leaders. There is no time to lose. Such preparation is vital to combat the effects of the defeat of last year's campaign on pay. Without it Tory lies and the complacency of union leaders could isolate healthworkers and allow the further dismantling of the NHS. ■

by a Health worker

WORKERS IN ACTION

Vauxhall

As we go to press it is reported that Vauxhall management's first line of attack on the national strike, which is against the management's miserable pay offer, has failed. They had hoped to push through a deal with local union negotiators and convenors before the strike really began to bite. That, however, is not the end of their tactical plans. Far too much is at stake for them and for Ford and BL management for that to be true.

It is expected that their next attempt will be to negotiate a return to work, on the basis of a slight re-jigging of their offer, with national union officials during the first week of the strike. If that should also fail then the pressure will be on to break the strike before Ford talks begin in four weeks time. BL negotiated a two-year pay deal, so are sitting pretty.

Militants need to shake this complacency by tearing up the agreement and drawing up a new claim for the year ahead.

Militants need to take the lead in building and strengthening the unity between Dunstable, Luton and Ellesmere Port. It is a unity that has proved too weak in the past. A national strike committee elected from mass meetings at each plant should insist on controlling all negotiations and reporting back to mass meetings on every move by management and trade unions. It should ensure that the strikers are not left uninformed by bureaucratic insistence that the strike can be organised via union leaders. Mass involvement in picketing Vauxhall's plants and those of their suppliers and dealers will be the only possible defence should management decide to invoke Tebbit's anti-union laws. □

The mines

The decision of the NUM executive not to reject the Coal Board's 5.2% offer is a clear abandonment of leadership responsibility. Instead of getting on with the urgent task of planning an all-out strike against the pay policy of the NCB and the Tories, the executive chose to pass the buck to a conference planned for October 21st to discuss pit closures. This is not working class democracy in action, it is dereliction of duty.

But working class democracy must be brought into action. The time before the conference must be used by militants to campaign for strike action and to organise to make sure that it will be effective. The militancy that has been seen in recent months in many pits must now be mobilised via pithead and coalfield meetings not just to discuss how inadequate the offer is but to plan for strike

action to smash MacGregor's plans. The dispute at Dodworth underlined the need for leadership at pit level, militants need to argue now for the election of strike committees. Within the pits these need to ensure that all members are kept fully informed via regular reports and bulletins and fully involved via mass meetings and demonstrations.

The secondary picketing and solidarity action that won the strikes of 1972 and 1974 is now illegal. Strike committees need to create firm links with the rank and file workers in the power, transport and dock unions if they are to be able to withstand legal attacks and attempts to organise action solely between union leaderships.

ALL OUT STRIKE TO SMASH MACGREGOR'S PLANS!



Miners on the march in 1972

NIGHTMARE FOR LABOUR LEFT

THE EMPTY WIT and the man of letters are enthroned. Kinnock and Hattersley's landslide victory in the Labour leadership elections indicates a powerful shift to the right in the Labour Party. Heffer and Meacher received 6.3% and 27.8% of the electoral college vote respectively. This indicates a serious collapse for the left. Worse still, Heffer received only one in fifteen of the constituency votes. Even in the clearer left/right contest of Meacher vs Hattersley, the left candidate got less votes than the right amongst the CLPs (48% to 52%). Clearly the constituency activists have stamped in panic towards "Kinnock as saviour".

The reasons for this are not hard to find. Kinnock hits them on the head in his acceptance speech, "June 9th 1983, never again will we experience that." If the upsurge of the left in 1979 had as its battle cry, "never again a Labour government like the last one", Kinnock has now uttered the sentiment to silence the left. The spectre that faced the Labour activists this summer and one that made the hardest reformist knees turn to jelly was the prospect of "never again a Labour government". This nightmare made the great majority of the labour activists grasp at the "dream ticket".

This dream will not come cheap. Kinnock made that abundantly clear, "Unity is the price of victory. Unity here and now and from henceforth. Unity which is not a cosmetic device." Kinnock has promised some changes in organisation and policy to "attune ourselves to the realities". We can expect short shrift for the more electorally awkward elements of Labour conference policy; and no shrift at all for dissenters who spoil the hushed silences, or those whose voices might drown out that of the leader.

The left have hastened to support the new leader. They're still shackled to the fatal unity deal they struck at Bishop's Stortford. Then, at the pinnacle of their strength they did not

dares press their advantage against the right. Two years ago, at the post-conference Tribune rally, they shouted "Judas" at Kinnock. Now they must fawn on him as the saviour.

The Socialist Organiser and Socialist Action will no doubt desperately attempt to haul the shattered Benn bandwagon out of the ditch. After all, in its wreckage lies most of their schemes and schemas. They will not succeed. The real task of the next period is to forge a fighting revolutionary left, in what will be savage battles against a Thatcherite offensive.

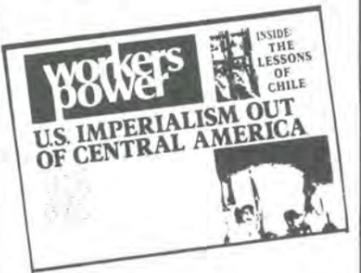


Ticket to ride roughshod?

Kinnock's five-year election campaign along with the TUC's sell outs is a recipe for disaster. Wanted now! People who have the guts to fight reformism, break the false unity of empty rhetoric and forge united action against the Tories. ■

workers power

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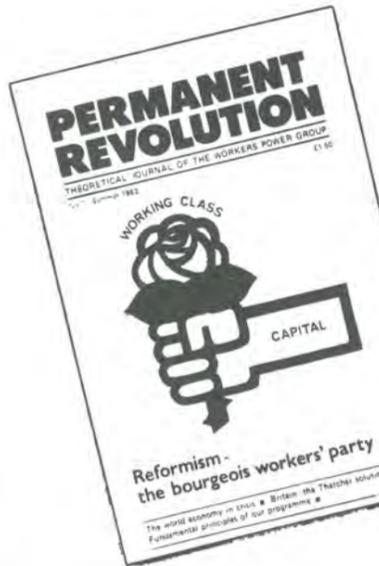
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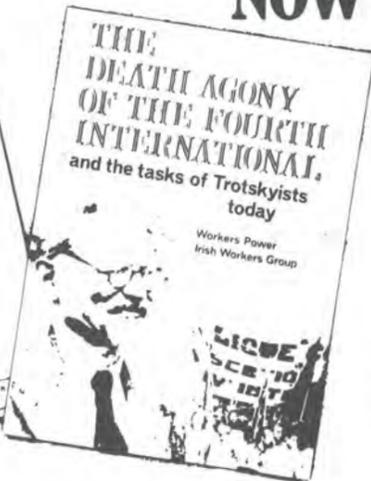
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