

# KEEP LEFT



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## SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

### GERMANY AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The controversy over the rearmament of Western Germany represents both an opportunity and a danger for the left-wing in Britain. On the one hand, it gives us a chance to rally a considerable body of opinion against the 'bi-partisan', coalition line at present being followed; for on this issue the suicidal character of British foreign policy shows itself most clearly. At the same time, the arguments on which much of this opposition is based are threatening to poison the movement with a stream of nationalism and anti-German prejudice.

Supported by many Labour leaders and by the Communist Party, wartime propaganda spread the lie that the German people were responsible for the war. The idea was encouraged that the German nation is in some way (presumably biologically) more militaristic than, say the English, Scots or Welsh.

It is the duty of anyone who calls himself a socialist or internationalist to fight against these ideas. Our task is to show the unity of interest of the workers of Britain and of Germany. We must remind people that it was the capitalist statesmen who backed Hitler, and the Stalinist and social-democratic leaders who betrayed the German Labour Movement, who were really responsible for the rise to power of Nazism and for the war which followed.

The present situation in Germany is a direct result of the policies followed by these gentlemen and their successors after the war. In accordance with the principle of unconditional surrender, the country was divided and occupied by the armies of the U.S.S.R. and of the capitalist powers. As agreed by Churchill and Roosevelt at Yalta and Potsdam, hundreds of thousands of Germans were forced to leave their homes in parts of Eastern Germany and live as refugees in the West.

Large quantities of industrial equipment were dismantled. In this way, the ordinary people of Germany were punished by democracy for allowing their rulers to lose the war.

It is largely due to these and similar actions that reactionary forces are now in control in West Germany, and that rearmament can command any support at all in the country.

Today, the whole world is preparing for war, and with the development of more and more powerful weapons of mass destruction, this means preparation for world suicide. After two wars to end war, two struggles for democracy and national independence, we are faced with the prospect of a third. And this time our late 'gallant allies' will be the enemy, while the defence of freedom in Europe will be in the hands of ex-Nazi generals. Is it not clear that the interests of the common people, who are the losers in every war, are opposed to those of both sides in the conflict between Russian totalitarianism and bankrupt capitalism?

The rearmament of Germany, while it is the focal point in the militarisation of Europe, is only a part of this international preparation for war. In this sense, it is no better and no worse than rearmament in East Germany, Russia, America or Britain.

Having rejected the policy of German rearmament, what alternative are we to follow? This is the question which must be answered, and it is avoided by many opponents of the Government's policy.

Are we to advocate the continued occupation of the country by British and American troops? Are we to demand that the German people be forcibly prevented from running their own affairs? Are we to leave the solution to 'talks' between the Powers, in which Germany is merely a pawn in the game? In our opinion, socialists cannot support these methods, for history has shown that it is not possible to build a peaceful Europe on this basis.

We have seen that the 'statesmen' of the Great powers are not capable of solving the problems of Germany; in fact, they are to blame for the very existence of these problems. Only the German workers can achieve a real solution on the basis of socialism. Only the German Labour Movement, by overthrowing the Adenauer government in the West and the totalitarian puppet regime in the Eastern zone, can bring about a united independent Germany. Our task is to help them to succeed by demanding the end of military occupation in East and West.

The problem of Germany cannot be solved in isolation. While fighting the development of 'Vansittartism', we in Britain must oppose German rearmament as a part of world capitalist rearmament. In this way we can give an internationalist lead to the world Labour Movement and the colonial peoples in their fight for peace and prosperity.

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