

Workers' ACTION

12 pages
15p

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ENGINEERS

LOCKOUT

ALL

OUT

MANY OF the locked-out Rolls Royce workers are calling for an all-out engineering strike to throw back the bosses' attack and win the unions' claim.

The Rolls Royce workers were locked out on Wednesday 19th after all the employers' efforts to get them to break the strike on Monday and Tuesday 17th-18th had failed. The RR bosses are clearly an advance-guard in an attempt to panic the unions into settling quickly and for very little.

As far as the union leaders are concerned, they seem to have had some success. According to the Financial Times, negotiators for the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions "have abandoned the demand for a 35 hour week by 1982" and are "prepared to discuss alternatives to the claim for a 35 hour week" immediately.

The cut in hours is the most important part of the claim, giving real benefit to all engineering workers and striking a blow against unemployment. The union leaders have no authority to give it up, nor to give up the other parts of the claim: £80 minimum time rate for skilled workers, £60 for unskilled, two days extra holiday, and a common implementation date on April 1st 1979.

As far as the rank and file of the unions are concerned, however, the bosses' arrogance has just made the action more solid.

At two Rolls Royce plants, Anstey (Coventry) and Derby, management said they had conducted secret ballots showing a majority against strike action. At Anstey a mass meeting was held which voted narrowly to go in.

But one lone picket at Anstey turned back most of the workers who actually turned up on Monday 17th, and there were only 200 of them. Fewer than 50 went in. At Derby there were no pickets, but still not enough workers went in for RR to be able to start production.

At the Parkside factory in Coventry, workers have voted to call for an all-out strike. The same call has come from Bristol RR workers.

Elsewhere — for example at the Dunlop plants in Coventry — factories which had previously not supported the Confed strikes came out this time. Anger at the bosses' obstinacy, and the collective solidarity generated by united national action, has outweighed the weakening effect of the union leaders' miserable tactics.

This solid support must now be used as a basis to mobilise to bring the union leaders back into line with the claim — and win it. All-out strike is the way.

If the Rolls Royce workers decide to sit in, they must be given full support, and the sit-ins must be spread to strengthen the strike action and prevent further lock-outs.

Labour conference: right wing prepare for battle

THE RIGHT wing of the labour movement is running scared as the Labour Party conference draws near.

It now seems likely that at the Brighton conference, which opens at the beginning of October, left-wing proposals will be carried in favour of mandatory re-selection of Labour MPs, Party control of election manifestos, and election of the Party leader by the whole Party and not just as now by the Parliamentary Labour Party only.

Just how scared the right now is was shown by the desperate act of AUEW conference chairman Harold Robson [deputising for President Terry Duffy]. On Tuesday 18th he closed down the conference of Britain's second-biggest union rather than allow the conference to vote for the AUEW's block-vote to be thrown behind the proposals for better Party democracy at the Labour conference.

Last year AUEW President Hugh Scanlon cast the union's vote against mandatory re-selection of MPs, contrary to the delegation's policy [he said it was 'a mistake'], and 'left' MP Joan Lester, in the chair, would not take a second vote. Bureaucratic manoeuvring may frustrate the desire of the rank and file to impose labour movement democracy this year as it did last year. If the proposals get through, however, it will be the beginning of a major left/right struggle. The stakes will be higher than at any time since the early and middle '20s, and the outcome will probably determine the character of the Labour Party for decades.

EITHER the left will go on from a victory on democracy at Brighton to consolidate the Labour Party as a genuinely socialist party seeking to overthrow capitalism on the basis of the class struggle of the working class, and build up a mass membership around such policies. OR the left will be purged and the Labour Party transformed from its present ramshackle self into a tight and intolerant party modelled on the West German, Swedish, and other Social Democracies.

Under the Labour Government we saw the paradox of a comparatively left Labour Party together with a right-wing, reactionary, Labour Government. The rank and file have no way to control the MPs or the Party leader. The growth of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the emergence of support for the current proposals was a direct result.

From the other side, that of the Liberals who lead the Labour Party, the situation was tolerable only because there were effective 'checks and balances'. Even then, sections of the ruling class were not

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FUND DRIVE

We received £10 this week, from South London. Total so far this month: £16. Needed by WA 154: £184. Send to: Fund, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD. WA 154 will be dated Oct. 6-13, since next week WA staff will be helping to produce *Socialist Organiser*.

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Lambeth says: no cuts! DEMONSTRATE NOV.7

THE LAMBETH Council Labour Group at its meeting on 14th September voted by 29 to 9 to 'reverse the cuts' of £3 million which it decided to impose at its July meeting.

However, the Council will not improve the derisory 5% wage increase offered to workers in the voluntary-aided projects and the Law Centre. And the maternity/paternity scheme negotiated with Lambeth NALGO will still not be implemented.

Lambeth Trades Council's Fightback Campaign mobilised over 300 demonstrators to picket the meeting. Banners from Norwood Labour Party, Lambeth Trades Council, Lambeth Teachers' Association, South West London ACTS and Brixton SWP, with chants of 'No cuts! Restore the £3 million!' greeted the councillors outside the Town Hall.

Union representatives made it clear that their opposition was not only to the cuts but to attempts by the Council to renege on previously-negotiated agreements. A speaker from playleaders in NUPE General Branch told the meeting that his members were faced with cuts in their working hours from 36 to 27 hours per week. Without extra staff this will result in vital work outside playground hours not being done, and will have a serious effect on transporting equipment to the playgrounds and on the number of outings for the children. Strike action by NUPE is likely if current negotiations break down.

A member of ACTS drew attention to the position of workers in neighbourhood councils and other voluntary-aided bodies. The Council is offering them a wage rise

of only 5%, well below the awards won earlier this year by other council employees. They have received no increases in London Weighting in 1978 or 1979, which leaves them about £600 a year behind. The speaker accused Ted Knight of attempting to cut off the "little battalions" of council workers, and appealed for support from other union members and the people of Lambeth affected by the cuts.

Mike Waller, Branch Secretary of Lambeth NALGO, saw the Labour Group meeting as a turning point in the local fight against the cuts. NALGO has cooperated with the Council for a long time with a policy of fighting all cuts and expanding services. But NALGO is suspicious

of the extent of the Council's willingness to resist Tory cuts.

The Labour Party's election manifesto, for example, set a target of free child day care for the people of Lambeth, but already half the places are under threat. NALGO has negotiated improved maternity rights (16 weeks on full pay, and 24 on half-pay, while the national agreement is 6 and 12 weeks respectively), plus special leave for nursing sick children; the Council is now refusing to implement these agreements.

Waller suspected that even despite a vote to reverse the cuts, the Council might not necessarily fill all vacant posts or fulfill its obligations. The Council's planned Day of Action on

Iran: More control for Khomeiny

ARTICLE 5 of the new Iranian constitution confers enormous power on Imam Khomeini. The article puts the state's leadership in the hands of the Velayet-e Faghi, the most authoritative sage of Shi'a Islam. The title clearly refers to Khomeini.

According to the Council of Experts amending the constitution, Imam Khomeini is the temporal Imam, leading the Shi'as during the 'absence' of the 'hidden' Imam, Imam

Mehdi, who died in the ninth century.

There will still be a president and a prime minister; there will also be a parliament. But in reality almost total power will rest with the Velayet-e Faghi.

With the civilian government under attack from the clergy, the tide is rising in favour of a determined shift towards rule by the mullahs. They have even acted against their initial sponsors, the baz-

aaris. These merchants had their traditional right to shut the bazaar when they want removed.

In Kurdistan the butchery continues. Executions go on under the judicial blind eye of ayatollah Khalkhali, and Islamic Guards keep up their activity. According to a report published in the French daily *Le Monde* 'a section of the population of the small Kurdish village situated between Naqadeh and Mahabad have

been murdered by pro-government Guards... 56 bodies are said to have been counted. For the most part they were young children, women and the aged, who stayed in the village after the men had left to join the guerilla war'.

The Iranian press, while not reporting such things directly, frequently makes reference these days to the 'bad elements' among the Guards, who bring disrepute on 'the Revolution'.

The Kurds are beginning to strike back in the guerilla war. One strange feature of this is the killing of several feudal chiefs near Urmieh and the killings of pro-government tribal leaders attributed by the press to the nephew of Senar Mamadi, a leader allied with the Kurdistan Democratic Party. If these accusations are true, they give the lie to the reports of a grand alliance of Kurdish forces.

JAMES DAVIES

They sent bombs. Now send food!

JOHN PILGER has written two articles in the *Daily Mirror* (September 12 and 13) on the plight of Cambodia. A country shattered by war now faces mass starvation.

In the 1960s about six or seven million people lived in Cambodia. The country was poor, but fertile enough to feed its population adequately.

In 1969-70 Cambodia was dragged into the Indochinese war. The USA launched secret bomb raids on areas supposed to provide refuge for the Vietnamese fighting against US imperialism.

In 1970 Lon Nol took power in the coup possibly engineered by, and certainly backed by, the US.

As opposition to Lon Nol grew, the US bombs rained down more and more heavily. By 1974-5, rice production was down to one-sixth of previous levels, over half the population were refugees, and about 600,000 people had been killed.

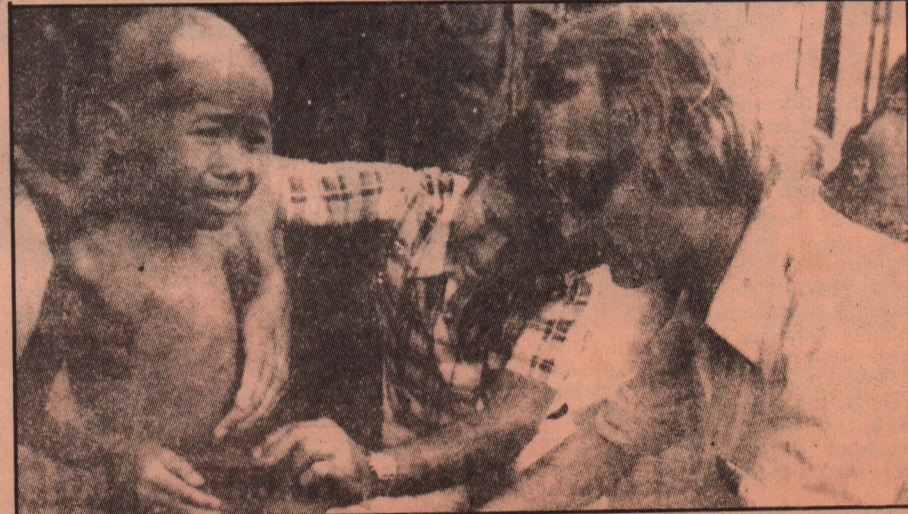
In April 1975 the Khmer Rouge took power. Leaving Phnom Penh, US officials

reported: "without large-scale external food and equipment assistance there will be widespread starvation..."

"Slave labour and starvation rations will be a cruel necessity for this year..."

There was slave labour and starvation rations, and also bloody repression on a huge scale. The Khmer Rouge government evacuated the towns, killed every supporter of the old regime they could find, pulverised the population, and turned the whole country into a prison camp. Certainly hundreds of thousands died, maybe as many as three million. The Stalinism of the Khmer Rouge and the devastation and brutalisation by imperialism combined in a deadly way.

Now Vietnam, in alliance with Cambodian opposition forces, has overthrown that regime. Many people have taken the chance to try to find their homes again, to pick up the threads of life before the war and the revolution. In any case the population is exhausted. Thus rice



Before 1975 there were 550 Cambodian doctors: now there are 48. And international aid is minimal.

production is minimal. Relief officials estimate that up to 2½ million people could starve to death.

Vietnam has coupled each province of Cambodia with a province of south Vietnam which is asked to provide aid. In some areas Vietnamese families have been asked to provide 3 kg of rice

each for the Cambodian sister province.

20,000 tons of rice and many other goods have been supplied. But Vietnam itself — devastated and exhausted by war, battered by the Chinese invasion and by bad weather — is not much less desperate than Cam-

bodia.

What about the rich countries? As Pilger writes, "Their response has been a studied indifference... Mrs Thatcher's government and the EEC have gone as far as cutting off food aid to Vietnam, the only country attempting to hold back the famine in Cambodia with

supplies of food and drugs that it badly needs to combat its own critical shortages..."

"The Western governments and their dependents have mounted a campaign to blockade and punish the Vietnamese. One of the reasons given for this campaign is Vietnam's 'aggression' in Cambodia — that is, the overthrow of the murderous Khmer Rouge regime.

"Every Cambodian I have met regards this 'aggression' as having saved their nation from slavery and extinction..."

"Six years ago America sent more of its most lethal bombers to Cambodia than it has sent anywhere. It has not sent one relief plane..."

Even the USSR, which has recognised the new Cambodian government, has supplied no substantial aid.

During the years of the Indochina war, Britain faithfully backed the USA in sending planes full of bombs to Indochina. It is time we forced the government to send planes full of food and medicine.

NICARAGUA

Why Sandinistas expelled socialists

WE ARE reprinting extracts from a statement on Nicaragua put out by the Socialist Workers Party (PST) of Colombia.

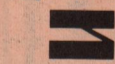
The Simon Bolivar Brigade, a group of militants organised by the PST and sent to Nicaragua in the last stages of the fight against Somoza, was expelled soon after the Sandinistas took power. None of the accounts of the expulsion suggest any criminal activity on the part of the Brigade to justify the expulsion; they were expelled for their politics.

The politics of the PST and the Simon Bolivar Brigade are not the same as Workers Action's. We print these extracts, however, as a gesture of solidarity with socialists facing political repression from the Sandinista regime.

According to reports in the press of the USFI, the international tendency within which the PST is part of a minority current, the Simon Bolivar Brigade was guilty of political irresponsibility [pretending to be an official part of the Sandinista movement when in fact they were not] and the PST has used slanderous abuse and thuggery against other socialists in Colombia who have criticised the Simon Bolivar Brigade. The political record of the current of which the PST is part — led by Nahuel Moreno — gives no basis for saying that these accusations must be false.

Nevertheless, we believe that the voice of these militants, active in fighting for a socialist revolution in Nicaragua, should be heard.

The text is excerpted from *Intercontinental Press* [17th September].



About forty Colombians and Latin Americans from the Simon Bolivar Brigade in Nicaragua were expelled by the Government of National Reconstruction.

According to statements made to the press by various members of the government, the main reasons for this action were the following:

- Organising more than seventy trade unions in Managua.
- Advocating seizure of all the land.

- Organising militias in the barrios of Managua and in Bluefields.

- Describing the leaders of the FSLN at times as reactionaries.

- Describing other members of the new government as bourgeois.

The Simon Bolivar Brigade, it is true, has the honour of having helped to organise more than sixty trade unions (about eighty, in fact). This it did not only in Managua but also along the Caribbean coastline — trade unions organised through mass assemblies, factory by factory.

It is true that we say that the farmers and rural workers should carry out the agrarian revolution, taking over all the lands of the big estate owners. In other words, we say that the land, the principal means of production in Nicaragua, should pass into the hands of the poor peasants and rural workers.

We cannot claim the honor of having ourselves been the main initiators of the militias, which in ninety percent of the cases were organised spontaneously in the heat of the insurrection against Somoza and in response to the calls made by the FSLN.

What we do say is that the popular militias should not be disbanded — as is now being rapidly done — but that on the contrary it is necessary to extend them; that is, to proceed to the general arming of the workers, peasants and poor people. As the history of all revolutions shows, this is a necessary condition to prevent the revolutionary processes from being contained or reversed.

The fact is, deplorably, that the majority of the members of the junta are bourgeois. We are not to blame for the fact that they are bourgeois, nor was it the brigade that put them there, where they are skillfully and consistently defending the interests of their class.

Mrs Chamorro represents

not the Managuan proletariat but the members of the landowning oligarchy who opposed Somoza. The Chamorro family — and this is not a discovery of the Simon Bolivar Brigade — has played a role in Nicaraguan history and in the Conservative Party similar to that of the Ospina family in Colombia.

The revolution destroyed the basic pillar of the bourgeois state: the old Somozaist National Guard. From here on there are two roads: either proceeding to the general arming of the workers, peasants, and inhabitants of the poor neighbourhoods, organising them into militias; or their disarming and the organisation of a standing army and police.



The first road points toward the socialist revolution; the second, toward the reconstruction of the bourgeois state. The fact is that a rapid process of disarming the militias and forming a regular army is taking place. The incident with the Simon Bolivar Brigade is only a detail in this picture.

In Managua militias of combative neighbourhoods such as Costa Rica, Open 3, Paraisito, Monsenor Lizcano, Las Americas, etc., have been disarmed, though they had nothing to do with the brigade. The policy is a

general one. At the same time, in the Sandinista army itself, a sizable number of combatants have been discharged, and a reorganisation of the police has been announced.

Why does this situation exist? Why have the leaders like the FSLN's, with their past history as heroic fighters, put the government in the hands of the junta?

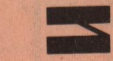
Here various factors come together. First, the character of the FSLN itself, which is neither a workers' nor a socialist party, but a democratic, revolutionary nationalist movement, profoundly heterogeneous in character, with the middle class and the intellectuals having great weight, as well as — in recent years — the most radical sectors of the bourgeois opposition.

But, in the second place, the international factor has an enormous and decisive weight.

Two factors have weighed on the FSLN leadership. The first and main ones are the Second International (the European Social Democracy) and the Latin American democratic governments (especially the Panamanian government). The second factor is the influence of the Castroist leadership. Both say the same thing: don't make another Cuba, don't make a socialist revolution.

That neither Torrijos (of Panama) nor the Second International desire another

socialist revolution in Latin America, we do not think it is necessary to prove. As for Fidel, we refer to his July 26 speech, which is completely devoted to explaining to the Nicaraguans the need to maintain intact the 'democratic front' with the Panamanian, Mexican, and Venezuelan governments and with those of other countries of the Andean Pact, and not to break it and try to make another Cuba.



Among much of the Latin American left there are illusions that Nicaragua is sliding like a toboggan toward socialism, repeating the Cuban process. We in no way exclude the possibility that the FSLN leadership, or part of it, will end up breaking with the bourgeoisie, establishing a workers' and peasants' government, and putting into practice an anti-capitalist programme, as the leadership of the July 26 Movement (in Cuba) did.

Precisely because we do not exclude this possibility, we explain to the Nicaraguan masses, with no sectarianism and more forcefully than ever, that they should demand that the FSLN leadership do this. But this is an abstract future possibility. Today, the real and concrete fact is that the FSLN leadership is not going in this direction.

Council to cut 406 teachers and shuffle the rest around

THE equivalent of 406 full time teaching jobs are to be axed in Avon (the Bristol area) by next January, if Avon County Council complete their plan to implement the Tory education cuts as quickly as possible.

Teachers returning to work at the beginning of September were faced with a six-page document 'reflecting the firm intention of the Education Committee to transfer rapidly teachers from 'overstaffed' schools'.

According to the document, the arrangements proposed 'are of necessity relatively rigid'. This is something of an understatement, for the proposals include:

1. Cancellation of the Rising Fives programme and withdrawal of staff. Heads are no longer allowed to admit any children below the statutory school age.

2. Special staffing allocation for schools in deprived areas to be reduced; this means larger classes for kids with special educational needs from poorer backgrounds.

3. Many teachers both now and in the future 'will have to divide their teaching responsibilities between more than one school'.

4. Teachers identified for transfer 'may well have virtually no choice of post'.

5. Schools may not be able to appoint a teacher of their choice to fill a particular vacancy.

6. 'At any time in the foreseeable future the Authority may well have to withhold the confirmation of appointment of any teacher to a post where it is thought possible to fill the post by transferring the teacher from another school'.

7. 'If there is an expectation that a post may eventually be filled internally, external advertisement will not be approved, and schools will have to continue supply arrangements'. This means that until the 'expectation' is fulfilled, a class in maths, say, could have a steady stream of supply teachers, maybe qualified in other subjects than maths — if they are lucky and get supply teachers at all.

For supply teachers — those who cover for staff who are ill or absent on courses, school trips etc. — 'It must be made clear that they are employed on a day to day basis and their services may be dispensed with at a day's oral notice'.

And 'teachers may be engaged on a supply basis to cover permanently employed teachers absent on maternity leave only if the Head believes it to be essential'.

The Education Authority is determined to keep up the pressure on teachers, and the document is peppered with thinly veiled threats: '...an unreasonable refusal to accept transfer to another post may jeopardise the future employment of the teacher'. '...Undue opposition and delay at this difficult time will place teachers' employment at risk'.

All this, of course, is supposed to happen between now and 1st January 1980 'at the latest'. 'It is greatly hoped that actual dismissals will be avoided to the maximum extent possible — hence the absolute insistence that procedures should be followed'.

A rally of 600 NUT members in Bristol on Wednesday 12th endorsed these recommendations from the NUT National Executive:

1 Refusal to cover for unfilled vacancies and for absences known in advance or in excess of one day.

2 Class size action where oversize classes result from the rigid application of staffing formulae.

3 The freezing of timetables for the academic year 1979-80, i.e. no loss of options.

4 An extensive publicity campaign on the effect of the cuts on the welfare of children and on the standard of education.

Further proposals for action — including a one-day strike and demonstration decided by Bristol NUT last term — were ruled out of order, as the platform declared we should be cautious and expect a 'war of attrition'.

But more is needed. We must demand:

■ An immediate blanket campaign of no cover for all absent staff

■ No dismissals

■ No loss in educational provision or in the total of teachers' jobs through redundancies in any form or 'natural wastage'.

■ Immediate restoration of the Rising Fives programme and expansion of nursery provision.

■ Guaranteed one fifth marking and preparation time for all teachers in secondary and primary schools.

TOM KENNEDY

NOTTINGHAM

Women storm council cuts meeting

TORY councillors walked out of a meeting of Nottinghamshire County Council's Social Services Committee on September 11th, after coming face to face with some of the victims of the cuts they plan to carry out.

Over 100 nursery kids, their parents and NUPE members had packed the visitors gallery at the meeting to protest at plans to close two day-nurseries in Nottingham. The West Bridgeford and Sycamore nurseries cater for over 50 kids; both have very long waiting lists, and together employ 17 nursery nurses who will lose their jobs if the plans go through. The protest took place after one parent, Margaret Lee, got in touch with parents of children at the two affected nurseries to tell them what the council planned.

After the Tory councillors walked out of the meeting, the council's chief executive was wheeled in to tell the Labour members, who'd

stayed behind, that they couldn't use the opportunity to vote down the cuts plan. Then the police were called to try to evict the protestors.

The meeting eventually took place two hours late, and the Tories pushed through the cuts. The proposal will be decided finally on October 16th, when the County Council has its full meeting.

The night after the Social Services Committee decision, NUPE's Social Services Branch met to draw up plans to fight the closure. Over 150 members, as well as nursery parents and members of NALGO attended, and the branch declared its total opposition to any cuts in social services, and said: 'We feel that these cuts are directed at the working class and their families, who will suffer both directly through loss of jobs and indirectly through a reduction in services. In particular we feel these cuts are directed against working women, and represent the Tory philosophy

that 'a woman's place is in the home', and are an attempt to force women to give up their employment ... We applaud the examples of councils refusing to implement the cuts and note with interest the £29 million reserves which Notts County Council has invested. These cuts are not necessary but are designed to trim the economy in the interests of big business and their Tory supporters.

'However, we also note the gradual reduction in services under the last Labour administration, and while we call on support from all sections of the Labour movement, we place no trust in empty words or promises, but only in action and initiatives that will defend jobs and achieve a reversal of these cuts.'

The branch decided to 'take whatever industrial action we feel necessary to defend our jobs, including work to rule, refusal to cover for lost jobs or hours, and occupation of establishments being closed'.

The branch decided to back a mass demonstration outside the October 16th council meeting, and only very narrowly voted down a proposal for strike action on the 16th.

Copies of the resolution have already been sent to union branches and Labour Party bodies in Nottingham, and the NUPE branch is sending speakers to meetings to explain the fight — Calverton NUM has already invited a speaker.

On Monday 17th the parents' group had a meeting of over 100, and voted to support NUPE's proposals, as well as making their own plans for protest action to highlight the fight against the closures.

On Saturday 22nd September, nursery nurses have organised a demonstration against the closure. Assemble 12 noon at the Forest to march to Market Square.

TIM THORPE
(Secretary, Nupe Social Services, Nottingham)

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

November 7th will be a sham, he said, if all the effects of the cuts are not reversed, and NALGO will only unite in a fight against the Tories if all their negotiations are implemented.

Cllr Jock Macpherson Quinn addressed the picket amidst much heckling. The Council's most important priority is to ensure no redundancies, he said. Pointing to the 'one thousand jobs' advertised in the *South London Press*, Cllr Quinn said, 'Don't blame us for cutting jobs'. Although allegedly in sympathy with the aims of the picket, Cllr Quinn refused to say whether he would vote for the motion to reverse the cuts.

The extent of Cllr Quinn's solidarity with the Fightback Campaign was questioned by Trades Council president Brian Hodge, who pointed out that it was Cllr Quinn who had prevented the affiliation of his own union, the AUEW, to the Trades Council.

The demonstrators wanted to send a delegation in to address the Labour Group meeting, and Cllr Kevin Moore intended to support this proposal. The request, however, was refused. The task now for the Fightback Campaign is to redouble its efforts to produce its own campaign material and not to rely on left-sounding phrases from the Council leadership; to strengthen its links with the Council workers' shop stewards, and to campaign hard for a position of 'No cuts, no rate increases!'

Our response to the Council's call for action on the November demonstration should not be to boycott it because of the Council leadership's treachery, but to mobilise support for the demonstration on the basis of the campaign's own policies.

CHEUNG SIU MING

STOP THE CUTS NOW!

'We're the management now'

A MASS picket of 300 trade unionists greeted Coventry Labour councillors on Tuesday 11th September as they entered the council house.

The Labour Group went on to announce to the council meeting cuts of £1,964,070 before next May. Whilst suspending standing orders in order to condemn the Edwardes plan for British Leyland's Canley plant, the councillors announced, in almost the same breath, their own cuts.

Several NUPE members, including Coventry branch secretary and NEC member Joe Little, were threatened with eviction for heckling. From the floor of the meeting not a word of opposition to the cuts was heard.

Speaking to the Socialist Organiser meeting on Sunday 16th, Joe Little explained the background to the local NUPE branches' decision to refuse cover for unfilled vacancies through lightning strikes, and for all-out strike where agreements were violated.

Within NUPE itself, a week before the TUC conference, Alan Fisher was challenged about fighting the cuts, and suggested leaving the decision to the conference. The vote at Blackpool went against a real fight, and left the local branch to take the initiative.

The attitude of the Labour Council has hardened the determination of NUPE members. In 1974, Coventry

Council employed 22,000 workers: now there are only 16,000. The original Labour Group plans were for even more savage cuts. They were leaked to the NUPE secretary (on the condition that he kept them to himself!) and showed that the council planned to sack a quarter of the city's teachers.

Although the cuts are less than envisaged in the leaked document, the threat still looms next May. The councillors' attitude is summed up in a comment from Harry Caplan, supposedly a left winger. In opposition, Labour had voted for a closed shop among council manual workers. In power the story is different. Why? 'Well', said Caplan, 'we're management now'.

NUPE's action has already saved jobs in Coventry. At the Brooklands Annex of the technical college, 2 women canteen workers left and weren't replaced. NUPE members refused to cover and two more women have now been employed. Another job has been saved the same way at Cannon Park school.

The key is an organised fightback. Socialist Organiser supporters will be backing all direct action against the cuts, and arguing for a one-day strike throughout Coventry in conjunction with a plan for a conference against the cuts.

RICHARD PAINE

HARINGEY

Tory cuts, Labour cuts - we'll fight the lot

OVER 200 people attended a demonstration and rally called by Haringey Campaign against the Cuts, on Saturday 15th. Speakers included MPs Tony Benn, Norman Atkinson and Reg Race; Ted Knight (leader of Lambeth Council), and representatives of Haringey NUT and NALGO Women's Committee.

Tony Benn and Norman Atkinson asked why it is necessary to fight cuts and unemployment in a country like Britain which is rich in natural and industrial resources, and in which it should

be possible to run industry profitably and to maintain welfare services.

For Atkinson, the answer lies in replacing the Tory Government by a Labour one committed to putting 'socialist ideals' into practice. For Benn it centres around the struggle for Labour Party democracy.

Ted Knight pointed to the anti-cuts fight in Lambeth (forgetting to mention his own role in approving the cuts at first) as proof of the potential for organising against the cuts, as part of a general working

class mobilisation against the Tories. Like the proposed legislation to curb the right to picket, the cuts are just one way of attacking living standards and cannot be tolerated. He pointed out that the Labour leaders aren't prepared to use the industrial muscle of the unions against the Tory Government. But, he said, Labour has a mandate to defend living standards. We must be prepared to use strike action to bring down the Tories.

Val Graham, of Haringey NUT, said that Labour coun-

cillors who implement cuts without putting up a fight are in fact lining up with the Tories. To militants fighting the cuts, such councillors are indistinguishable from the Tories. Local Labour councillors, she said, made cuts and whined about how it could be worse. Well, next year it will be, when the next round of cuts happens, but we can't wait until then. The fightback must start now, and that means active support for Haringey Campaign against the Cuts.

NEIL COBBETT

CITY AND East London Area Health Authority has decided to close 60 general, surgical and gynaecological beds at St Leonard's Hospital, Hackney.

But the AHA meeting which took this decision was lobbied by a demonstration of over 1000 local health workers, council manual workers,

and supported by NUPE, ASTMS, CPSSA, and SCPS. Hackney Direct Works was shut down for the day in protest at the cuts.

The AHA has passed a £3½ million cut in the local health service. The effect will be to continue the run-down of St Leonard's. It is

proposed that patients are transferred to St Barts Hospital, but the cuts are biting there as well, with one children's ward already due for closure. At the London Jewish Hospital, facilities such as pacemakers for heart patients are to be cut. The cuts will also mean heavy job loss.

NEIL COBBETT

Workers strike against health cuts

by
Andrew Hornung

LESSONS FROM 1972

All out is the way to win

THE PRESENT domination of the AUEW by the right wing might tempt some people to look back on the ten years of Scanlon's leadership of the engineering union as days of a glory now gone. In reality, however, the problems faced by the engineers then were very much the same as the ones they face now.

In 1968, tens of thousands of militant engineers expected to be led into battle against their employers in a great national strike. A date was set ... but there was no strike. At the last moment there was an agreement between the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (the Confed), representing the workers, and the Engineering Employers' Federation.

The agreement was a full-blow productivity deal tied up in a three year package deal: a total disaster. For three years, rank and file militants in engineering fought a guerilla struggle against the imposition of the productivity elements which had been agreed in principle at national level. When negotiations started for a new national deal in 1971, many were eager for a fight.

Timing

The timing was not exactly perfect: during the first three months of 1971 there was a 21% fall in overseas engineering orders and a 6% fall in home orders. It was estimated that the industry in general was working at 15 to 20% below capacity. But that was all less important than the will of many mili-

tants to force the bosses to pay up substantial increases now that there was a left-wing leadership.

There was no leadership from Scanlon. Instead there was the pseudo-democratic cover-story: 'We are waiting for the rank and file to show the way'. Manchester was an obvious place for the attack on the employers to start. It was a key engineering area pretty solidly dominated by the Communist Party. More important still, it was Scanlon country. The militants there believed that "our Hughie" would back them to the hilt.

The Confed leaders had broken off their negotiations with the EEF on December 15th 1971, after the employers had only offered £1.50 in reply to the unions'

demand for a "substantial increase", with more for women as a step towards equal pay, a 35 hour week (yes, eight years ago!), an extra (fourth) week's holiday, and other lesser items.

Guerilla

It soon became clear that there would be no call for a strike from the national leaders. Scanlon's call for plant bargaining on the basis of district-organised action covered up their refusal to fight the employers. Other leftists covered up in turn for Scanlon. The recently retired Executive Committee member, the Maoist Reg Birch, praised Scanlon's strategy and the Maoist

paper *The Worker* carried the idiotic headline, 'Our Guerilla Line Suits Us Fine'.

In Manchester the Confed stewards held their first meeting at the end of February 1972. They decided unanimously to go onto day-work. (The Manchester piecework agreement allowed engineers to go onto day-work [as distinct from piece-work] by request and still receive the basic rate of pay. In practice that meant taking the basic rate in exchange for no work at all).

The district braced itself for a fight against lock-outs, as it was clear that employers would shut down factories where the workers insisted on their right to go onto daywork. Lockouts were to be fought by sitting in.

The Manchester area workers were so eager that the first occupation started a full fortnight before the scheduled beginning of day work. The workers at Bred-

bury steel works started their sit-in on March 16th. As soon as news of the sit-in got around other firms' stewards turned up with messages of support and went back to their factories to urge bringing the action forward. In fact, the Stockport District Committee brought its sanctions forward by a week.

Within a week, 5,000 of the 15,000 engineers in Stockport were at least working to rule.

While workers throughout the district were organising sit-ins in response to lock-outs imposed by the bosses, the trickle of settlements started. The local union leadership refused to make them public, but it soon became clear that some of them were absurdly low. The apparent militancy of the actions was

not matched by the level of the claims.

The sit-ins continued to be triggered by lock-outs throughout early April. On April 1st, for instance, there were sit-ins at 11 factories; on April 12th, at 23. On that day Scanlon visited Manchester, but the most important news was that there was a sit-in in Sheffield, the other traditional centre of engineering militancy in England, and a decision in Aberdeen to emulate Manchester. The sit-in movement continued.

But, with no national lead, Sheffield and Aberdeen did not follow suit, nor did the shipbuilding centres, the Midlands, or anywhere else.

By mid-May, the AUEW leadership had clearly decided the struggles should stop. Scanlon obviously felt he had done enough to keep his leftist credentials, while the right wing got what it wanted: the isolation of Scanlon's stronghold.

On May 15th the Confed called a big stewards' meeting in Manchester. For the first time the right wing were represented: the GEC-AEIEE stewards were there courtesy of the company, an army in dark blue donkey jackets with the firm's name stamped on the back.

Circular

The central feature of this meeting was the reading out of a circular from the union leadership which in effect said "drop the struggle for shorter hours and accept money-only deals". Even the *Morning Star*, usually a fan magazine for Scanlon and the AUEW leaders, managed to admit, "They [the workers] have not been greatly assisted by the circular".

With the right wing there and with many of the left whipped into line by the Communist Party — almost all the AUEW officials were CP members — the acceptance of the circular was ensured. Still, a third of the meeting voted against it. Everyone knew now that the signal had been given to wind down the action.

By 25th May there were only 13 firms sitting in and settlements were generally low: £2.50 plus 50p productivity bonus at Mirrlees, £2 plus some minor elements at Ferranti.

Meanwhile, however, the strike wave threatened to spread to London, where there was a sit-in at Stanmore Engineering. So far the Manchester struggle had been isolated as well as internally fragmented. Now,

however, the chance was at hand to spread the strike to the vital North and West London districts.

At a big stewards' meeting in London, Scanlon praised the courage of the Manchester strikers and recommended their example. When he was attacked — by an SLL (now WRP) militant and a CP militant who had connections with the SLL and was soon to join them (for a few weeks...) — for not leading a national action, Scanlon again claimed that in a democratic union, it was up to the rank and file to lead. The left backed Scanlon, covering up the truth of the isolation in Manchester and the sell-out on the hours question.

Isolation

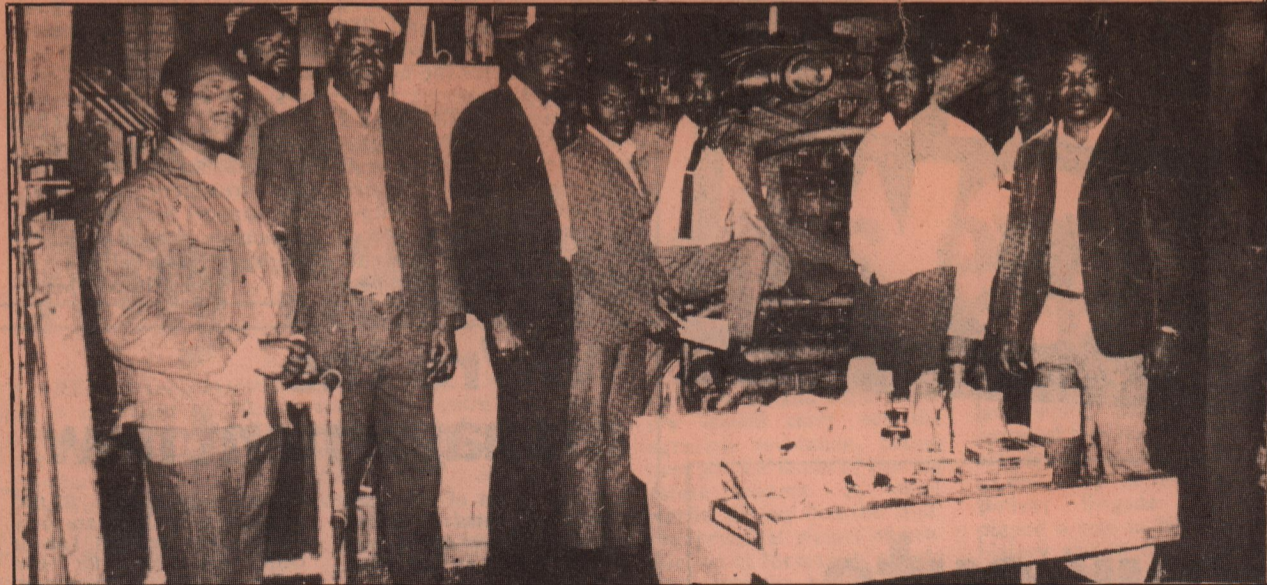
Worst of all, the Stanmore men, when they demanded that they get full backing and that the strike be spread in London were told that they had "jumped the gun". The isolation of Manchester was now complete: it was clear there would only be isolated actions in London.

The result was clear: at a time of unprecedented militancy in the engineering industry, the leadership had refused to call for national action and allowed the most militant area to be battered by a very determined and well-organised section of employers in the Manchester area. For the left there was a second, less immediately clear, result: the loss of their grip in the Manchester area. Before long the Communist Party suffered defections among its leading lights, the officials in the Manchester area.

The lessons for today are clear. Given the strength of the engineering employers, and given the state of the order books then and now, it is very difficult to win in an isolated struggle. Even the militancy of 1972, with wave after wave of sit-ins, was not enough so long as the union leaders refused to organise all-out national action.

Secondly, so long as the negotiations were on a factory by factory basis, the superficial look of unity suggested by the mass of similar actions was shot through with divisions that the employers could play on.

Today the engineers must insist that their leaders call an all-out national strike, and that Duffy doesn't ditch the hours demand, as he is preparing to and as Scanlon did in May 1972. We need an all-out struggle for the full claim.



Stanmore workers supported Manchester but were told they'd jumped the gun

RIGHT TO WORK MARCH

The kids are alright

Dear comrades,

Stan Crooke's picture of demagoguery and shallow anti-Toryism from the Socialist Workers' Party is certainly recognisable. But I felt that Stan's report on the Right to Work march [WA 152] was one-sided or at least open to misinterpretation.

The march was organised round political slogans: 35-hour week now, employed and unemployed unite and fight, don't talk to the Tories. The Socialist Worker bulletin on the march put socialist arguments on racism, Ireland, sexism.

Given that, the fact that many marchers expressed class hatred of the Tories in crude or backward language does not count against the march. A socialist organisation mobilising 500 young unemployed people to speak out for themselves cannot correct every prejudice. Nor should it even try to.

Schoolmasterly supervision, however 'correct', can mean extinguishing the activity and the free flow of ideas which will help newly militant youth to get rid of those prejudices for themselves, in their own time and their own way.

That the SWP put the arguments for a revolutionary party in a crude way is not a strong objection. Very often it is a valid method of socialist argument to try to get across a first rough idea which can put people on the path to more complete explanations.

The SWP's "more complete explanations" of the revolutionary party are wrong, to be sure; but that is not a specific criticism of the Right to Work march.

That many SWP members on the march gave incoherent accounts of the SWP's policies is not a weighty criticism, either. Serious criticism has to be based on the best argu-

ments for the SWP's positions, not on what this or that individual member may say here or there.

In my view, Workers' Action should be doing what we can to copy what was good about the Right to Work march, the way it mobilised young unemployed people to make their voice heard against the system. We should do it, of course, on a stronger political basis than the SWP, and more as part of ongoing activity.

But we too have to learn how to explain socialist ideas to a new generation of militant youth, without talking down to them [as the SWP often does] and also without lecturing. In trying to learn, we will surely make many mistakes. Let's not appear [even unintentionally] to be ultra-critical of others' real achievements.

COLIN FOSTER

6,000 MARCH AGAINST TORNESS

6,000 PEOPLE demonstrated in Edinburgh on September 15th against the construction of Torness nuclear power station and for a "safe and sane" energy policy. The demonstration, organised by SCRAM (Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace), was the largest ever demonstration in Britain against a nuclear power station.

The march consisted almost entirely of supporters of local anti-nuclear power groups from all over Scotland, but there were also labour movement contingents, including Aberdeen Trades Council and Edinburgh Central CLP.

The size of the demonstration reflects the widespread disquiet in Scotland about the dangers of further nuclear power development, and about Atomic Energy Authority proposals to develop parts of Scotland, particularly Caithness, as centres of waste disposal.

Torness, as the next site for a nuclear power station in Britain, has become a rallying point for the anti-nuclear power movement throughout Europe — there were delegations from Denmark and Holland on this demonstration.

A local poll conducted this summer by the East Lothian Courier indicated widespread opposition in the area to the building of Torness.

Workers Action supporters put out a leaflet at the demonstration arguing that: "The labour movement should fight for an immediate moratorium on Torness, with immediate re-employment for site workers. The Scottish TUC's new policy on the issue calls for a review of nuclear power — this should be taken up as a labour movement inquiry in order to bring together workers from throughout the energy industry and the country..."

"Nuclear power workers have gone on strike for economic demands, at Dounray this summer and at Windscale in 1977. The labour movement has to relate to this militancy with full support, and campaign against restrictions on trade union rights, especially bans on the right to strike. Some anti-nuclear power campaigners have used the existence of these restrictions as a reason to oppose nuclear energy. Instead, the labour movement should campaign for full trade union rights; access to information, including that classified under the Official Secrets Act; the right to fight for the highest standards of safety, environmental protection, and monitoring of waste disposal. The fight for such measures is of prime importance, whether or not they make nuclear energy uneconomic compared with the other energy options."

FORMALLY THE British government is within reach of agreement with the Patriotic Front.

Both would agree to a 'third force' (UN or Commonwealth) holding military power in Zimbabwe during a transition period. Both would agree to limited privileges for whites in a new parliament. Both would agree to a new Zimbabwean army including elements from both the Patriotic Front forces and the present army.

But neither can afford to be seen to agree with the other until they can be sure of clinching a deal.

The British ruling class is tied by its substantial personal and economic links with the white settler class, and

WHAT SORT OF PEACE IN ZIMBABWE?

ers are tied by the fact that the fighters in their guerilla forces want more, and will insist on more, than top jobs for their leaders and a few minor reforms.

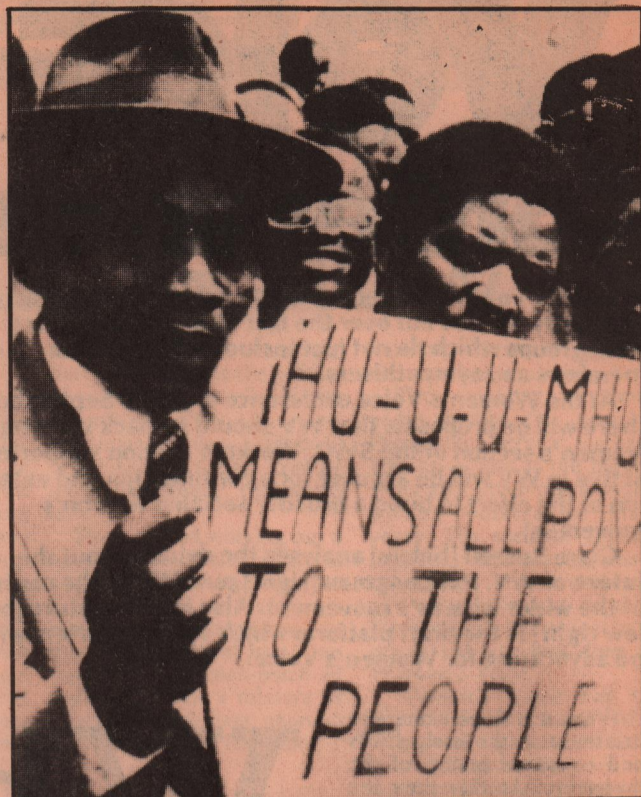
es' magazine *The Economist* speculates that the British government does not want to settle, but rather to drive a wedge between the Patriotic Front and the black African

states to suppress the Front by force of arms), one way or another the white dominated regime, a vile legacy of British colonialism, may stagger on, with the white 4% of the population holding all the wealth and power and keeping the black 96% in poverty and under martial law.

From a socialist point of view there is no reason to paint a future Patriotic Front regime in rose colours. Support for the Patriotic Front forces against the racist regime is, however, an elementary question of the right of the people of Zimbabwe to control their own country.

The lines of force making for a settlement have been there since Portuguese colonialism collapsed in southern Africa, in 1974-5. Britain, the US, and also South Africa, decided that a negotiated transition to a black neo-colonial regime in Zimbabwe must be arranged as soon as possible. A radical armed overthrow of the settler regime could have revolutionary repercussions in South Africa itself.

Zimbabwe's bourgeois black politicians saw that they could secure good posi-



tions for themselves in the future neo-colonial regime if they played the negotiations skilfully. (And, given a bourgeois class horizon, a deal at some point may well be the most intelligent policy). The states surrounding Zimbabwe have become increasingly concerned to stop the war there as soon as possible.

Those are the factors motivating the negotiators in London. For socialists, the guidelines are:

- Support for the Patriotic Front against the white-dominated regime,
- Support for the Zimbabwean masses, and especially the black workers, insofar as they want to go further

than the Patriotic Front.

Any 'third force' in Zimbabwe, UN or Commonwealth, will be there as a guarantor of bourgeois and imperialist interests.

The future of the black working people in Zimbabwe lies in an alliance with the powerful proletariat of South Africa, fighting for socialism in the whole of Southern Africa. Every material support we can give to this — solidarity with the Patriotic Front against white racism, blacking of any supplies to the settler regime or to South Africa, pressure on the TUC to stop propping up rotten yellow trade unions in Zimbabwe — should be given.



Blacks in 'protected villages': still trapped in a racist state

by its concern for a peaceful deal in Zimbabwe with minimum conflict and minimum damage to privilege.

The Patriotic Front lead-

ers, despite all the pressures to settle, this London conference, like so many before, may result in another stalemate. Indeed the boss-

an states which support the Front, clearing the way for a settlement without the Front.

Even if that plan is unlikely (it would require those

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to reach us by Friday for the following week's issue to Events, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

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

WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER. Manchester Socialist Organiser meeting: Fight the cuts fight the Tories. Speaker: John Douglas. 8pm at Hulme Labour Club, Bonsall St.

THURSDAY 27 SEPTEMBER. 'Against repression in Iran: defend the Kurds and the Iranian left'. Speakers include Hojabr Khosravi (HKS of Iran) and a member of AKSA. 7.30, Hertford Tavern, Coventry. Sponsored by WA, IMG, WSL, Big Flame.

SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER. Islington conference against the cuts.

BBC2 Open Door programme on the Southall trials: Saturday 22nd, 5.20pm, repeated Thursday 27th, 11.10pm.

CORRECTIONS

1. Last week's WA implied that Communist Party members in the CPSA had changed their position on the General Council's motion 45 at the TUC. In fact the CP had supported this class-collaborationist, nationalist motion from the beginning. Only Militant supporters changed their line.

2. Also in last week's WA, James Ryan was described as "editor of Socialist Organiser". This should have read, "an editor". SO is produced by an editorial team, of which James Ryan is a member, under the supervision of a delegate Editorial Board which meets monthly.

Labour conference

continued from front page

convinced that the 'checks and balances' were adequate from the point of view of the bourgeoisie and its need for a stable government, in face of the big contradictions between the Government and the rank and file. In 1975 the usually pro-Labour 'Observer' and the Tory 'Sunday Express' tried to provoke a purge of the Labour left by launching a witch-hunt against 'Militant' and 'Workers' Fight'.

Remove the 'checks and balances', that is, make the Labour Party accountable to its members, and the framework for an easy coexistence within Labour's "broad church" is gone. The possibility of a Labour government ignoring the Labour Party conference without scuttling itself as a consequence goes. The option of muddling along and avoiding sharp, binding decisions and choices is diminished. Also diminished is the scope for the 'socialist' faking which for decades has provided so much of the cement for the Labour Party 'coalition'.

Much of the ground on which the 'Tribune' left stands would disappear. The pro-capitalist right wing and the Marxist left both have a grip on reality, though from opposing class positions. The Tribunes' political solutions are unrealistic and often reactionary and utopian (though no less a thorn in the side of the Right for that) — like their import controls policy. Such vaporisings can only exist where no binding decisions are to be taken.

In a genuinely democratic Labour Party, where decisions and policies might immediately be tested for their relevance to the real world, the climate would suddenly turn unfavourable for this type of politics. The choice would be between the hard, class-struggle left, and the hard class-collaborationist right.

The right-wing and those 'socialists' who consciously

fake understand this perfectly. They fight now with the weapons of bureaucratic manoeuvre, as at the AUEW conference. If we win on democracy at the Labour Party conference, they must either scuttle or go out and organise.

Already, Shirley Williams, James Callaghan, and David Owen — who, politically, are Liberals — have talked of the impossibility for them of accepting what the Brighton conference is likely to decide. Such people could just hive off (as the right-wing so-called 'neo-socialists' hived off from the French Socialist Party in 1933). But it would be a mistake for the left to be complacent. It is unlikely they will hive off without a fight.



Callaghan won't go quietly

The Right has positions of great reserve strength and support within bourgeois society. They have backing from the bourgeois press. They could count on support from passive Labour voters and supporters if they could organise them — and there are powerful forces in British capitalist society which would be eager to help them organise.

They have powerful support also within the bureaucracy of the British labour movement.

The militant left cannot rely on even 'left' trade union bureaucrats. If the proposed de-

mocratic measures had been in operation in 1975, then Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon would have had to support a massive purge of the Labour left as the necessary consequence of the political decisions which they [together with the Parliamentary Labour Party] made and the Labour Government carried out in defiance of Labour Party policy.

The left must organise. For the first time in over half a century the political structures built by the British labour movement and still massively supported by it [despite Labour's record in office] are fluid and are likely to be recast in a new mould, to serve the right or the left, either the bourgeoisie or the working class.

The class struggle of millions of workers organised in the labour movement who need political answers to the crisis and decay of British society and who know that Callaghan's style of reformism has now answers — this struggle objectively favours victory for the left [and makes a compromise settlement unlikely]. But only if the left organises itself.

Two conferences planned for November will allow the left to take stock and organise. The Labour Coordinating Committee conference, that of the 'Tribune' reformist left, is scheduled for 3/4 November. The conference of the revolutionary left, the SCLV/Socialist Organiser supporters' groups [with delegates from sponsoring labour movement bodies] is due for November 24th. Workers' Action supporters will be going to both, and will be active in organising the SCLV/SO conference.

If we do not organise a serious Labour Party left in the coming period, then there is a big chance of a left triumph at Brighton being followed by a decisive right-wing victory which will transform the Labour Party decisively and make it impossible for any left wing to exist within it.

JOHN O'MAHONY

FREE JUNE GREIG

AN ALL-NIGHT vigil followed by a mass picket is to be held outside the Edinburgh Court of Appeal where June Greig is appearing on the 27th or 28th of September.

June Greig is appealing against her 6 year sentence for killing her husband. Throughout their 7 years of marriage her husband beat and abused her. He kicked her in the stomach when she was pregnant; slashed her neck and ear with a gorkha knife; burned her with cigarettes; beat her daughter. She attempted suicide several times.

On the evening she killed her husband, he came home drunk and she anticipated another beating. She told her children that she was going to kill their father, and by the time they had fetched the neighbours, she had stabbed him.

Because she told her children of her intention, her action was treated as premeditated and her plea of self-defence dismissed. Lord Dunpark passed the sentence as a "deterrent to all battered women who might be tempted to kill their husbands".

It is hardly likely that women would take humane treatment of June Greig as meaning that it is all right to kill their husbands. All the sentence has done is allow society to take its revenge on her.

But the judge could instead have thought about the fact that half of all

murders are of women killed by the men they are living with. 25% of violent offences reported to the police are wife assault and many more go unreported. Police rarely intervene, and their involvement usually only results in more beatings for the woman.

For women to leave their husbands is often a desperate last resort: where can they live; what can they live on? There are too few women's refuges, and women there live in constant fear of further attacks.

Edinburgh Women's Aid has launched a campaign for her release, and has had a good response, particularly in Westerhailes, the working class area where June Greig lived. *Women's Voice* has taken it up, and with support from NALGO is trying to extend it.

The all-night vigil (women only) and mass picket will be held outside the Sheriff Court, Royal Mall, Edinburgh. The campaign is encouraging supporters to:

- write to the Lord Advocate, Rt. Hon. Lord McKay of Clashfern, QC, and to the Solicitor General of Scotland, Nicholas Fairbairn QC, MP, both at Fielden House, 10 Great College Street, Westminster, London;
- write to June Greig at Cornton Vale Prison, Cornton Rd., Stirling;
- join the vigil and picket;
- donate to the campaign, c/o Women's Aid, 88a George Street, Edinburgh.

ALICE PFISTER

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Womens VOICE Conference

Women's Voice, initiated by the Socialist Workers Party, has partly opened over the last 18 months, building local groups which do not just include SWP women members and sympathisers.

At the Women's Voice conference on 29-30 September, there will be proposals that WV should go back to being a women's section of the SWP. Workers' Action supporters active in WV will be arguing for a continuation and extension of the effort to build a broader socialist women's movement.

Clare Russell [below] analyses the debate about the future of WV. Pat Longman [right] puts WV in the context of the wider women's movement. Also in this feature [below right] is the draft platform which WA supporters will be advocating for Women's Voice.

Women's Voice came into existence in the early 1970s and consisted mainly of the magazine. At this time the relationship with the SWP was clear. WV was the women's magazine of the SWP. Women were welcomed into WV on the basis that they were close contacts or sympathisers of the SWP and had close agreement with its programme. It was clearly a periphery or women's section of the SWP.

About 18 months ago a decision was taken to turn WV into a more popular magazine. Hand in hand with the more popular image went the desire to broaden the organisation and relate to the mass of working class women, turning WV into a more campaigning organisation. It was based on an optimistic assessment of the possibility of building a mass working class based women's movement fighting for women's liberation and revolutionary socialism. To the extent that the subsequent success of WV in drawing women towards it demonstrated the potential of building a healthy socialist women's movement it was a positive step.

However, the broadening out was not accompanied by a political programme and organisational structure which would express the new relationships of the SWP and the women coming into WV. Two types of organisation — the periphery organisation and the broad-based one — became mixed into the all-embracing concept of a 'sister relationship'.

Long

There has been a long debate about what this 'sister relationship' means.

The result, it seems, is that at the WV conference on 29th-30th September SWP women will push for WV to be defined once again as the women's section of the SWP, thus excluding non-SWP women like Workers' Action supporters. (Manchester SWPers have already tried to exclude WA supporters, Labour Party members, and IMGers, from the WV group in Moss Side).

Because WV magazine does not carry political debate, the argument has taken place mostly in the SWP Internal Bulletin. Three main positions have been put:

- For WV to be a women's section of the SWP,
- For WV to be a 'broad-based' movement, based on a 'minimum' or 'reform' programme,
- For an 'independent' revolutionary WV. Interpretations of this varied from a basically SWP organisation with some autonomy to a fully-fledged independent 'revolutionary feminist'

Why WV should open out

movement.

On all sides of the debate, there has not been much strategic idea of what sort of women's movement must be built and how. WA argues that organisation of militant women's groups in workplaces and in the labour movement must be coupled with intervention in the existing women's movement round the project of building a mass working class based women's movement.

What we propose to women comrades in the SWP is cooperation in building such a movement. That is the purpose with which our comrades have worked within Women's Voice.

But throughout the debate in the SWP, the choice has been posed as either a broad organisation on a minimum or reform programme, or an SWP organisation on a revolutionary (i.e. maximum) programme.

Missing here, as in the SWP's whole politics, is the idea of transitional demands. Through transitional demands, "stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class, and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat", we can try to develop the revolutionary logic of the class struggle to its maximum.

The organisational side of this policy is not only to work in the existing labour movement but "to create in all possible instances independent militant organisations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society". Such independent organisations — rank-and-file groups, strike committees, women workers' caucuses — are not defined in advance as either reformist or revolutionary. We strive to draw them towards revolutionary conclusions on the basis of the experience of the struggle and our agitation

for transitional demands.

In this spirit Workers' Action fights for the building of a mass working class based women's movement, and for revolutionary socialist politics within the movement.

But in the SWP the comrades arguing for Women's Voice to be a broad movement ask: "What sort of programme has WV? Is it a revolutionary or reform programme?", and reply by arguing for "drawing together the active reformist and revolutionary socialist women around a reform programme in a broad organisation".

Chris Harman poses the choice: a "periphery organisation" or a broad movement like the Anti Nazi League or rank-and-file groups. Joan Smith argues that industrial rank and file movements can be built on "minimum politics" (too true a description of the SWP's practice!) and poses her answer as "an independent revolutionary organisation of women".

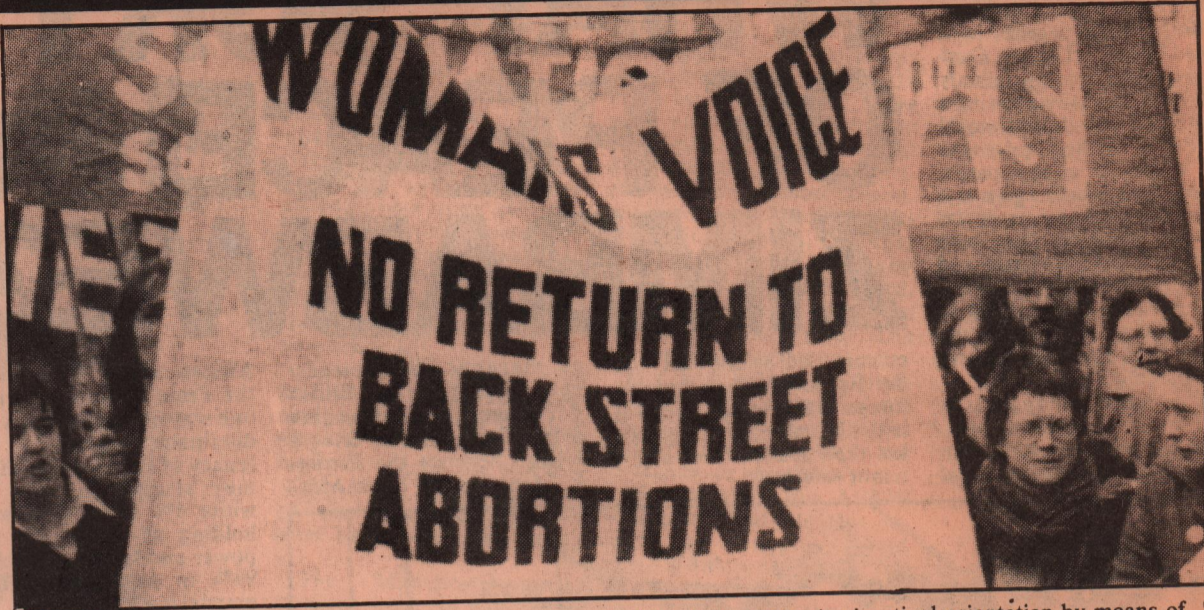
Lindsey German, replying to Smith, again states the alternatives as "either... a revolutionary organisation for women which has a total view of the world or... a broad-based campaign round one or several issues..."

Links

Only in one contribution is there an approach to the idea of organising round a linked chain of transitional demands. A document by 15 leading SWP women comrades in February argued for a movement with "a relationship with the Party deriving from the links we make between the specific strategy of combatting oppression to the general strategy of the struggles against exploitation".

The document tries to break out of the SWP's characteristic notion of the

Building a social



mined by their oppression in the family, which then structures the form of their exploitation. There is a "qualitative different" in the position of women workers which means they cannot be united into the party in the same way as engineers and hospital porters can be united despite their different conditions.

An 'independent revolutionary feminist' organisation is possible and necessary. "It will recruit into the party and will also transform the party".

Smith's theoretical starting point is very similar to the idea of society having a dual basis in a patriarchal mode of reproduction and a capitalist mode of production, an idea which leads many feminists to conclude that there is a women's revolutionary struggle (against patriarchy) quite distinct from the class struggle (against capitalism). Smith avoids the same conclusion only by a contrived argument that the family is essential to capitalism and can be abolished only when capitalism is overthrown.

The argument is very formal (and unsound even on a formal level, as Alex Callinicos shows in reply to Smith). In reality capitalism takes over the family and women's oppression from previous societies. It remoulds them according to its needs.

Forms

Women's subordination in the bourgeois family serves capitalism in several ways: providing cheap reproduction of labour power, creating a reserve pool of low-paid workers, and (equally important) in social control. Nevertheless, different capitalist societies can have different family forms.

Despite the importance of family relations, it is the sphere of production which generates the class relations and the class struggles that change society. Because the working class (insofar as it is fully class-conscious) fights for personal liberty and equality for all, and for social provision of the means of existence, it also fights for the liberation of women.

Struggles for wages, for jobs, or for workers' control, are specifically workers' struggles. But struggles for nursery provision or for abortion rights are not narrowly women's struggles. They enter as a special part of the class struggle. The feminist theory, dimly reflected in Joan Smith's argument, of two parallel struggles, the women's and the workers', is false.

Callinicos rightly complains that Smith "attempts a concrete problem of poli-

tical orientation by means of an abstract theoretical analysis". Indeed, the theoretical analysis gives the appearance of being a contrived justification of 'independence'; and the 'independence' argument focuses on the internal relation between the SWP leadership and the WV leadership. Sadly lacking is any outward-looking view of how to intervene in the women's movement and the working class.

In all the debates about what programme WV should have, no-one seems very concerned about the fact that WV has lived its whole existence with no programme at all, or that the SWP's attempt to work out a written programme for itself ended in embarrassed silence in face of the evident impossibility of reducing the SWP's opportunist practice to coherent principles. Nor is there any notion what WV would do with the programme (other than exclude women who believe the USSR is a degenerated workers' state, or that the SWP is not the nucleus of the revolutionary party...)

Only Chris Harman attempts some concrete assessment. It is almost entirely negative. Only "the remains" of "the old women's liberation movements" still exist; no more can be built than "a political, revolutionary organisation of women, linked to the SWP and its politics, of some hundreds". (Not very ambitious, since the SWP claims 1000 women members!) Nothing will be lost by making WV an SWP periphery organisation except some anti-revolutionary women and a few "members of the left sects".

This view is wrong, and not just by mistake: it reflects the SWP's habit, acquired over the last few years, of considering the SWP as the centre of the world and every other group to the left of the CP as insignificant. And Harman does not even pose the question of how many women could be organised in a real, fighting socialist women's movement — a movement which would have a clear programme of transitional demands, but would not arbitrarily demand its members must believe Russia is state-capitalist and the SWP is the party; a movement within which different revolutionary tendencies could cooperate (and debate where necessary); a movement within which the SWP of course could and should organise its own fraction of women members and sympathisers.

WV seems set to miss a great opportunity for building a socialist women's movement. It will be a setback for us all if it does miss it.

Socialist women's movement

Where the women's movement is now



SINCE the late 1960s, the number of women in trade unions has increased by 91%, while the increase has been less than 10% for men. White collar and low paid sections where women are concentrated have become more militant. During this last year many strikes, especially the public service workers' low pay campaign, have brought women workers into action for the first time, although that involvement was impeded by the manner in which the strikes were run.

The possibilities of building a working class based women's movement would seem healthy. But the large number of women becoming active in the labour movement has not been matched by a significant increase in the women's movement or in active women's caucuses in white collar unions.



This can partly be explained by the fact that there has been a significant drop in the number of strikes to do primarily with women's demands like equal pay; many such disputes have been hived off into the industrial tribunal system. The *Working Women's Charter Campaign*, for instance, received a big impetus from the long and militant equal pay strike at Trico in West London.

The other reason is the impasse, both political and organisational, of the women's movement, and

most notably of the socialist-Feminist tendency.

The women's movement is petty bourgeois. This is not a comment on the class background of those involved in the movement, but a political characterisation stemming from the fact that many women in the movement have an individualistic approach to the question of women's oppression and do not see its connection with class society. The struggle against class society and the struggle for women's liberation are seen as two distinct struggles.

The radical feminists do not have much weight in the movement, and campaigns such as *Wages for Housework* with which they were associated have been largely rejected. However, some of the theoretical arguments which they have used have not been discarded and have been the subject of much debate.

The socialist feminist tendency — the most important current in the women's movement — encompasses a broad spectrum of people. But there are a number of distinct ideas that are shared by most people who call themselves socialist feminists.

The socialist feminists have rejected 'orthodox Leninism/Trotskyism' as being inadequate to incorporate the ideas which have sprung up with the emergence of the new women's movement. Democratic centralism, which accepts

the need for a vanguard party and negates the politics of experience, leads to dogmatism, they say — regardless of how different organisations may define what democratic centralism is.

Their task of working out a new political theory which is a synthesis of everything that is good in the women's movement (feminism) and in the left (socialism) has often resulted in a hotch-potch of confused ideas; a mixture of libertarian-marxism, anarcho-syndicalism, and feminism.



A large proportion of women involved in the socialist feminist movement have been in or around left wing organisations and, reacting against those organisations or against disciplined working class politics in general, define the left as being workerist, economic and undemocratic.

The drive to work out a socialist feminist practice has gone hand in hand with the desire to build a women's movement which will be completely autonomous both organisationally and politically. The political rationale behind this is that the women's struggle is parallel to the class struggle. It is a fight to be waged over and above the class struggle. The result is often an inability to see the interconnections between class society and women's liberation. The working class becomes merely one of the allies in the fight for women's liberation; and the starting point becomes the search for a feminist strategy rather than a class perspective.

There is also a heavy emphasis on changing people's ideas and attitudes; class struggles on wages or working conditions are seen as irrelevant to all this. Naturally they tend to become sceptical about the ability of the working class to act as a revolutionary class. Though they may sympathise with these struggles, they see them as going nowhere at all in the direction of changing personal relationships and ideas about women.

In some ways the socialist feminist current mirrors the oppressive division within capitalist society. Their writings tend to be heavily subjective, experience-orientated and anti-theoretical: the job of analysis is implicitly abandoned to the revolutionary left. And this subjective approach is seen as something healthy, a mark of their superiority over the revolutionary left.

Their aim of a politically and organisationally autonomous women's movement has resulted in bans and proscriptions on political organisations. Though they criticise the left as undemocratic, this aim has led to the exclusion of political organisations and attempts to prevent members of left organisations from causing and fighting for their ideas.

Many socialist feminists do orientate toward the working class and are very often active in the trade unions. But a strategic understanding of the importance and potentialities of

working class struggle is almost always missing.

The clearest evidence came earlier this year, in the public service workers' strikes — one of the biggest struggles involving low-paid women workers for many years. The socialist feminist tendency had no organised orientation to the strikes at all; what little was done by the women's movement in an organised way was done by *Women's Voice*.

Women's Voice has the opportunity to act as a socialist pole of organisation in the women's movement — and we have a duty to try to make sure that opportunity is taken.

Women's Voice has to be able to reach out to working class women newly brought into struggle. At the same time, recognising that many of the women in the socialist feminist current are open to argument, it must understand and intervene intelligently in the debates in the existing women's movement.

A broad-based socialist women's movement could become the nucleus of a working class based women's movement — not only through its own growth, but through its efforts to build fighting women's sections and caucuses in the trade unions, the Labour Parties and the workplaces.

To do this *Women's Voice* would have to adopt a democratic structure and work out a political platform — not one that is artificially restrictive so as to exclude non-SWP women, but one that is serviceable as a basis for activity.

In this sense *WV* should become a broad-based movement. That is a different concept from an 'autonomous' movement.

Most people in the women's movement pay homage to the autonomy of the women's movement (including the IMG and also many women in the SWP). Although the definitions vary they all have an anti-party kernel to them.

At the present time, a broad-based women's movement orientated toward the working class and not exclusively linked to one particular political organisation is desirable, given the fragmentation of the left and the lack of a mass revolutionary party.

A politically exclusive movement would be harmful in stifling debate and excluding a large number of women who could be drawn into such a movement. Within such an organisation, all political tendencies should have the right to fight for their ideas.

Political autonomy is in any case an impossibility: all movements are dominated by political ideas of one variety or another. The demand for political autonomy means, in the last analysis, the demand not to be dominated by left wing organisations.

Socialists should support the need for women to organise separately because of their special oppression and to ensure that women's demands become an integral part of the demands of the workers' movement. But such a movement should become politically aligned to the revolutionary movement.

A fighting programme for women

Women have been oppressed since the beginning of class society. The age-old subjugation of women has been integrated into capitalism's specific methods of oppression and exploitation. A double burden is placed on working class women through the family, as both low paid workers and housewives.

Women will never be liberated by formal equality. Housework must be taken out of the privatised family and become the job of society as a whole.

The overthrow of capitalism by the working class and the collective ownership of the means of production geared to the needs of people and not to profit is therefore necessary. Only this will lay the material basis for the liberation of women.

The active participation of working class women, fighting against their own specific oppression and the general oppression of their class, is vital to the struggle for socialism.



Women's Voice fights for women's liberation and socialism. As part of that struggle we fight now:

- ★ For equality for women in the right to work, in education, in pay and opportunity, in law and within the labour movement.
- ★ In the labour move-

ment, for all those measures that will enable women to participate fully.

- ★ For legal and financial independence for women, and complete freedom of divorce. Against discrimination in social security and taxation.

- ★ For positive discrimination in job training, in employment, in education etc to redress the social oppression of women.

- ★ For defence and extension of protective legislation for women.

- ★ For equal rights to equal pay, employment protection etc for part time and casual workers and for homeworkers.

- ★ For abolition of the qualifying period for maternity leave, for extended paid leave for both mother and father.

- ★ Free and safe contraception and abortion on demand. Against forced sterilisation.

- ★ Against all discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in custody of children, employment, in law, in education, or in the labour movement.

- ★ For free 24-hour nurseries and child-care provision, state financed and community controlled.

- ★ For the right of women to organise against sexual and domestic violence.

- ★ For extension of the social and welfare services to meet the needs of the working class. No cuts.

Make the bosses pay: nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation.

- ★ Against all racial and national oppression.

★ For support for all working class struggles, against wage controls, for a national minimum wage. For a shorter working week without loss of pay and for nationalisation under workers' control, to gain the right to work.



Women's Voice fights for demands that meet the immediate needs of working class women. It orientates towards working class women not only because they are the most oppressed but primarily because they are part of the class which will change society. It takes up this fight in all areas of the labour movement: the trade unions, tenants' associations, Labour Party. It seeks to build branches in all areas but particularly in the workplaces.

Women's Voice recognises the importance of other women's organisations and in doing so aims to win them to a socialist perspective of women's liberation.

On the basis of this platform all women are welcome to join Women's Voice and to participate in all its activities.



From Kautsky to Eurocommunism: The servility of a theoretician

CONCLUDING INSTALMENT

INTRODUCTION

by Bruce Robinson

THE RUSSIAN Revolution of 1905 was the first working class attempt at revolution since the Paris Commune of 1871. It occurred in a country traditionally seen by Marxists as the bastion of reaction, a backward country in which capitalism had not yet developed fully. Yet in that country the working class had used weapons unprecedented in their boldness and scope: from the mass political strike and the creation of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies through to the armed uprising in Moscow.

In 1905-7, Kautsky, like Luxemburg, argued that the mass strike showed how advanced the Russian workers were, and was a model for other countries to follow.

In 1910 Rosa Luxemburg did not just show that Kautsky had changed from his earlier position on Russia and the mass strike, though she does point out that in practice Kautsky was repudiating any use of the mass strike and thus the resolution the SPD had carried at Jena in 1905. She also argued that Kautsky's analysis of the reasons for the mass strikes in Russia was the exact opposite of reality, that the general strike corresponded precisely to the highest development of capitalist industry, and that it was the existence of such industry in Russia which made the mass strike possible. The fusion of the economic and political action of the working class showed that it had reached a certain level of maturity and political struggle was no longer simply the prerogative of the bourgeois liberals.

To prove her point, Luxemburg gives a long list of more advanced countries in which mass strikes had taken place and how they had often been short protest strikes of the type Kautsky had in general ruled out. The only time and place in the world where the mass strike was totally excluded for Kautsky was his own country, Germany, at that time. Behind this argument Luxemburg senses that Kautsky's motives are simple opportunism and implicitly points this out by comparing his attitude with that of the revisionists centred in Southern Germany, who always used the argument that where they came from things were different and thus fundamental Marxist principles did not apply.

Still today, talk of 'national peculiarities' and 'national roads to socialism' only serves to provide a reason for arguing that the historical experience of the working class and of revolution and counter-revolution is irrelevant, and that in one country after another a peaceful road to socialism is possible.

Luxemburg then again returns to Kautsky's conception of the mass strike as a cataclysmic events which leads directly either to the destruction of capitalism (in which case it is identical with the revolution) or to a calamitous defeat of the working class. She points out that in reality no mass strike has ever corresponded to this schema; their value has been in 'partial' and 'indirect' successes, but also more importantly in "strengthening of the organisations, of the class consciousness, and of the sense of power of the workers".

This whole conception was raised again by debates on the British left in the early '70s about whether it was correct to put forward the slogan of the general strike with limited aims (such as the removal of the Industrial Relations Act) at a time when the working class appeared not to be ready for the decisive test of strength with capitalism. In practice, those who refused to raise the slogan then were unable to give a direction to the real struggles that were going on.

In the same way, Luxemburg characterised her differences with Kautsky on this point as fundamental ones of method. Kautsky was very good at drawing abstract pictures of what might or could happen, but totally unable to take the working class from its current struggles to a socialist revolution. She sums up the whole approach now connected with the concept of 'transitional demands':

"... it does not merely depend on portraying revolutionary struggles and their external development in theoretical abstraction... but just as much on providing in practice at any particular time those slogans which release the maximum of the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, which can advance the situation to the greatest extent and at the quickest pace". For Kautsky, it was enough to rely on economic development, general socialist education, and electoral activity.

At the end of the article, Luxemburg again returns to

the very concrete question of what had happened to the struggle for the equal suffrage in Prussia which had initiated the whole debate. She describes what the SPD should have done if it had wished to lead the movement to success and had been willing to use the weapon of the mass strike at the right moment. She indicts the SPD leaders for deliberately breaking off the movement when they should have intensified it. A political party which abdicates its tasks of political leadership either demoralises the working class, or, if a revolutionary struggle erupts, is swept aside by the masses.

Luxemburg here overestimates the extent to which the working class can quickly find a new leadership, or do without any conscious leadership, under the impact of events, but at the time she was writing there was little political experience on which she could lean. The last section of this article, however, shows the considerable extent to which she, more than Lenin or many others at the time, had grasped the conservative, routinist nature of the SPD's work and the role of its leadership in actually holding back struggles of the working class which threatened to go outside 'safe' bounds. She also saw that Kautsky was using his 'radical' reputation to help put over grandiose justifications for this.

The latter-day Kautskys lack even the justification that Kautsky could find for his strategy in 1910. Today such a strategy means disarming the working class in the face of a capitalism in crisis, forced increasingly to attack the working class. The idea of building up positions of strength within capitalism is today becoming increasingly clear as the mirage it always has been. It can only lead to severe defeats.

Luxemburg's choice between attrition or struggle is the choice between the strategy offered by the Eurocommunists and that of Trotskyism. It is not a choice between two different ways of getting to socialism. The option of struggle is the only one that make socialism possible.

Rosa Luxemburg: THEORY AND PRACTICE

III

WE HAVE briefly examined the factual basis of comrade Kautsky's latest theories about Russia and Western Europe. The most important element in this latest creation is however its general tendency, which amounts to constructing a sharp contrast between revolutionary Russia and parliamentary 'Western Europe', and presenting the outstanding role which the political mass strike has played in the Russian revolution as a product of the economic and political backwardness of Russia.

Here, however, comrade Kautsky has the misfortune of having proved much too much. Something less would in this case have been decidedly more.

Above all, comrade Kautsky has not noticed that his present theory overthrows his earlier theory of the strategy of attrition. In the centre of the strategy of attrition stood the reference to the coming Reichstag elections. My unforgivable error, indeed, lay in the fact that I considered the mass strike to be suitable in the present struggle for suffrage in Prussia, while comrade Kautsky declared that only our future tremendous victory in the Reichstag elections next year would create the "completely new situation" which might make the mass strike necessary and suitable. Now comrade Kautsky has proved with all the clarity to be desired that the conditions for a period of political mass strikes in the whole of Germany, indeed in the whole of Western Europe in general, are absent.

"Because of half a century of the socialist movement, Social Democratic organisation, and political freedom", even simple protest mass strikes of the size and drive of the Russian ones have become almost impossible in Western Europe. If that is so, then the prospects for the mass strike after the Reichstag elections seem rather problematic. It is clear that all the conditions which make the mass strike in Germany impossible in general: the strongest government of the present day and its outstanding prestige, the blind obedience of the state employees, the unshakeable defiant power of the bosses' confederations, the political isolation of the proletariat — it is clear that all this will not suddenly dis-

appear by next year. If the arguments which speak against the mass strike no longer lie in the conditions of the moment, as the strategy of attrition claimed to be the case, but precisely in the results of "half a century of socialist education and political freedom", in the high level of development of the economic and political life of 'Western Europe', then the postponement of the expectations of a mass strike from now to next year after the Reichstag elections reveals itself to be merely a modest fig-leaf for the 'strategy of attrition', whose only real content thus consists in boosting the Reichstag elections. In my first answer I attempted to show that in reality the 'strategy of attrition' amounts to 'nothing but parliamentarism'. Comrade Kautsky now himself confirms this through his further developments of his theory.

Even more, Comrade Kautsky did indeed postpone the great mass action until the time after the Reichstag elections, but at the same time he himself had to admit that in the present situation the political mass strike might be necessary "at any moment", for "in the whole existence of the German Empire the social, political and international contradictions have never been as tense as now". If at the present time, however, social conditions in general, the historical level of maturity in 'Western Europe' and especially in Germany, make a mass strike action impossible, how then can such an action suddenly be carried out "at any moment"? A brutal provocation by the police, or the spilling of blood on a demonstration, can suddenly arouse the masses very much, but they obviously cannot be that "strongest cause" which suddenly transforms the whole economic and political structure of Germany.

Comrade Kautsky has proved more than he wants in another way. If general economic and political conditions in Germany are such as to exclude a mass strike action of the type of the Russian revolution (the product of specific Russian backwardness), then not merely the implementation of the mass strike in the Prussian suffrage struggle is put in question, but the Jena resolution in general (*1). Up until now the resolution of the Jena party congress was regarded as such a highly important statement, both here and abroad, because it officially took the mass strike as a method of political struggle from the arsenal of the Russian revolution and incorporated it into the tactics of German Social Democracy. Admittedly, this resolution was formally so conceived, and by many exclusively so interpreted, that Social Democracy declared it had the intention of implementing the mass strike only in the case of an attack on the right to vote in Reichstag elections. However, comrade Kautsky in any case used not to belong with those formalists, for he wrote quite explicitly in 1904: "If we learn from the Belgian experience (*2), then we shall reach the conviction that it would be a fatal mistake for us here in Germany if we were to want to tie ourselves to the proclaiming of the political strike for an appointed day, for example for the eventuality of an attack on the present right to vote for the Reichstag" ["Revolutionary Miscellanea", 'Die Neue Zeit', XXII, I, p. 736. My emphasis].

The main importance, the actual content, of the Jena resolution was indeed not in this formal "tying ourselves down", but in the fact that German Social Democracy basically accepted the lessons and the example of the Russian revolution. It was the spirit of the Russian revolution which dominated the congress of our party in Jena. If comrade Kautsky now derives the role of the mass strike in the Russian revolution precisely from the backwardness of Russia, and thus constructs an opposition between revolutionary Russia and parliamentary 'Western Europe', if he emphatically warns against examples and methods of the revolution, if he even hints at debiting the grandiose mass strike action, through which the proletariat "in the end had to be exhausted" with the defeat of the proletariat in the Russian revolution — in short if comrade Kautsky now declares quite clearly: "However that may be, the pattern of the Russian mass strike before and during the revolution does not in any case suit German conditions", then from this point of view it obviously appears to be an incomprehensible confusion that German Social Democracy officially took the mass strike as a new method of struggle precisely from the Russian revolution. The present theory of comrade Kautsky is basically an underhand fundamental revision of the Jena resolution.

In order to justify his particular wrong position on the Prussian suffrage campaign, comrade Kautsky thus gives up step by step the teachings of the Russian revolution for the German and West European proletariat, the most significant extension and enrichment of proletarian tactics in the last decade.

IV

IN THE LIGHT of the consequences which result from comrade Kautsky's latest theory, it now clearly emerges how very wrong this theory is, from its very foundations upwards [★]. To derive the mass strike actions of the Russian proletariat, unprecedented in the history of modern class struggle, from the social backwardness of Russia, means in other words explaining the outstanding importance and leading role of the urban proletariat of large scale industry in the Russian revolution by the 'backwardness' of Russia. It means turning the whole thing upside down. It was not the economic backwardness but precisely the high level of development of capitalism, of modern industry, and of communications in Russia which made possible and was the condition of that tremendous mass strike action. Only because the urban proletariat in Russia was already so numerous and concentrated in the leading centres, so mature in class consciousness, and only because the genuinely modern capitalist contradiction was so far developed, could the struggle for political freedom be decisively led to only by this proletariat, and as such it could not be a pure constitutional struggle according to some liberal recipe but rather a genuine modern class struggle in its whole breadth and

depth, in which it was a case of fighting for both the economic and the political interests of the workers, against both capital and Tsarism, for both the eight hour day and the democratic constitution. And only because capitalist industry and the modern means of communications linked with it had already become vital to the economic life of the state could the mass strikes of the proletariat in Russia achieve such a shattering, decisive effect that the revolution celebrated its victories with them and succumbed and fell silent with them.

At the moment I can find no more precise formulation of the fact involved here than what I provided in what I wrote in 1906 about this mass strike:

"We have seen", I wrote there, "that the mass strike in Russia does not represent an artificial product of premeditated tactics on the part of the Social Democrats, but a natural historical phenomenon on the basis of the present revolution. Now what are the factors which in Russia have brought forth this new phenomenal form of the revolution?"

"The Russian Revolution has for its next task the abolition of absolutism and the creation of a modern bourgeois-parliamentary constitutional state. It is exactly the same in form as that which confronted Germany at the March Revolution (*3), and France at the Great Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. But the condition, the historical milieu, in which these formally analogous revolutions took place, are fundamentally different from those of present-day Russia. The most decisive difference is the circumstance that between those bourgeois revolutions of the West and the present bourgeois revolution in the East, the whole cycle of capitalist development has run its course. And this development had seized not only the West European countries, but also absolutist Russia. Large-scale industry with all its consequences — modern class divisions, sharp social contrasts, modern life in large cities and the modern proletariat — has become in Russia the prevailing form, that is, in social development the decisive form of production.

"This remarkable, contradictory, historical situation results from this, that the bourgeois revolution, in accordance with its formal tasks will, in the first place, be carried out by a modern class conscious proletariat, and in an international milieu whose distinguishing characteristic is the ruin of bourgeois democracy. It is not the bourgeoisie that is now the leading revolutionary element as in the earlier revolutions of the West, while the proletarian masses, disorganised amongst the petty bourgeoisie, furnish material for the army of the bourgeoisie, but on the contrary, it is the class-conscious proletariat that is the leading and driving element, while the big bourgeois sections are partly directly counter-revolutionary, partly weakly liberal, and only the rural petty bourgeoisie and the urban petty bourgeois intelli-

* The attack, as unmotivated as it was sharp, which the editorial board of 'Die Neue Zeit' made in the last issue, and also their claim that my article "can only damage the cause of the proletariat at the present moment", force me to make the following reply.

1. I most decisively reject the assertion of the editorial board that in the present discussion it is a matter of "my affair which seems to me to be 'so tremendously important'". The question of the Prussian franchise struggle and the tactics to be employed in it is not "my" affair but that of the Social-Democratic movement of Germany.

2. The question of the franchise is on the agenda of the party conference in Magdeburg and even after the events in Baden has not been removed from the agenda. Therefore there exists for the party press, and in the first place for the party's theoretical discussion organ, the simple duty of preparing the debates of the party congress through an all-sided elucidation of the question.

3. The accusation that I am starting a "quarrel in the camp of Marxism" is unfounded. Marxism is not a clique which finds it necessary to conceal serious objective differences of opinion from the world. It is a great intellectual movement which we may not identify with us few people, a world-view which has become great in the open and free struggle of ideas and can only preserve itself from ossification in this struggle.

4. The declaration of the editorial board that my article "gives itself the task of discrediting the party executive, Vorwärts, and those elements..." amounts to the assertion that whoever criticises the leading party organs and the politics pursued by them can have in this only the intention of "discrediting" them. That is word-for-word the same argument with which up until now the trade union leaders have sought to ward off any criticism of the policy of the trade unions, including criticism by the editorial board of 'Die Neue Zeit'. The editorial board of a theoretical discussion organ of the party should be the very last to resort to petty insinuations about the critics within the party, even if they happen to find themselves among the criticised.

5. The breaking-off of the discussion about the Prussian suffrage struggle which the editorial board demanded of me out of consideration for the budget vote in Baden would mean that we postpone the questions of the struggle against the bourgeois opponents for an indefinite period in order to gather ourselves exclusively for the struggle in our own ranks. Since the thrusts from the opportunist camp have been unceasing for a dozen years, it would mean simply declaring the party to be in a state of siege by opportunism if one were to want to put off all serious debate about tactics and all problems of the further development of the Social Democratic mode of struggle whenever our revisionists see fit to play a new trick. Such agitation and fuss contradicts the editorial board's own words elsewhere. "But", we read in the leading article by comrade Mehring in the same issue of 'Die Neue Zeit', "the party will not allow its optimistic militant mood to be dampened by this episode. When the party press has spoken about it so far, it has been with the same lofty calm with which Engels used to consider the escapades of the 'Baden canton'. I wish the editorial board of 'Die Neue Zeit' some of this 'optimistic militant mood' and this 'lofty calm'".

Rosa Luxemburg

With that "lofty calm" which comrade Luxemburg demands of us we are printing this declaration along with the 30 pages of her article, and calmly leave to our readers the verdict as to whether such a polemic is in order at the present moment and whether the violent efforts of comrade Luxemburg against any postponement of her answer for a few weeks do not mean an over-evaluation of the importance of her own expositions.

The Editorial Board.

igentsia are definitely oppositional and even revolutionary-minded.

"The Russian proletariat, however, who are destined to play the leading part in the bourgeois revolution, enter the fight free from all illusions of bourgeois democracy, with a strongly developed consciousness of their own specific class interests, and at a time when the antagonism between capital and labour has reached its height. This contradictory situation finds expression in the fact that in this formally bourgeois revolution, the antagonism of the bourgeois society to absolutism is governed by the antagonism of the proletariat to bourgeois society, that the struggle of the proletariat is directed simultaneously and with equal energy against both absolutism and capitalist exploitation, and that the programme of the revolutionary struggle concentrates with equal emphasis on political freedom, the winning of the eight-hour day, and a human standard of material existence for the proletariat. This twofold character of the Russian Revolution is expressed in that close union of the economic with the political struggle and in their mutual interaction which we have seen is a feature of the Russian events and which finds its appropriate expression in the mass strike..."

"The mass strike is thus shown to be not a specifically Russian product, springing from absolutism but a universal form of the proletarian class struggle resulting from the present stage of capitalist development and class relations. From this standpoint the three bourgeois revolutions — the Great French Revolution, the German Revolution of March, and the present Russian Revolution — form a continuous chain of development in which the fortunes and the end of the capitalist century are to be seen..."

"The present revolution realises in the particular affairs of absolutist Russia the general results of international capitalist development, and appears not so much as the last successor of the old bourgeois revolutions as the forerunner of the new series of proletarian revolutions of the West. The most backward country of all, just because it has been so unpardonably late with its bourgeois revolution, shows ways and methods of further class struggle to the proletariat of Germany and the most advanced capitalist countries..."

Comrade Kautsky, too, formerly regarded the Russian revolution from the same historical perspective. In complete agreement with my conception he wrote in December 1906: "We can best do justice to the Russian revolution and the tasks which it places before us if we regard it neither as a bourgeois revolution in the traditional sense nor as a socialist one, but as a completely unique process which takes place on the border-line between bourgeois and socialist society, promotes the dissolution of the one and prepares the formation of the other, and in any case takes the whole of the humanity of capitalist society a very large step forward in its process of development" ["Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution", 'Die Neue Zeit', XXV, I, p. 133].

However, if one understands in this way the real social and historical conditions which form the basis of the mass strike action, of the specific new form of struggle of the Russian revolution — and a different conception is hardly possible unless one cobbles together the actual course of this action from pure imagination, as comrade Kautsky now does with his "amorphous, primitive strikes" — then it becomes clear that mass strikes as a form of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat come into consideration even more for Western Europe than in Russia, to the extent that capitalism in Germany for example is much more developed.

Precisely those conditions which comrade Kautsky brings into play against the political mass strike are just so many factors which must make mass strike action in Germany even more unavoidable, even more extensive, and even more violent.

The defiant power of the bosses' confederations to which comrade Kautsky now appeals in defence of his case and which "is without parallel", as well as the spirit of blind obedience in which the enormous section of state employees in Germany is maintained, are the very factors which make peaceful and gainful trade union action ever more difficult for the majority of the proletariat in Germany, which provoke ever more violent tests of strength in the economic arena, whose elemental character and mass scope assume more and more political significance.

It is precisely the political isolation of the proletariat in Germany to which comrade Kautsky refers, precisely the fact that the whole bourgeoisie right down to the petty bourgeoisie stands behind the government like a wall — precisely these factors mean that any great political struggle against the government becomes at the same time a struggle against the bourgeoisie, against exploitation. And the same circumstances provide us with the guarantee that every energetic revolutionary mass action in Germany will not take on the parliamentary forms of liberalism or the former methods of struggle of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, those of the short battle on the barricades, but the classic proletarian form of the mass strike.

And, finally, precisely because we in Germany have "half a century of socialist education and political freedom" behind us, the action of the proletariat, as soon as the situation has so far developed that the masses can come into play, must on the occasion of any political struggle wheel out all the old debts to be settled with private and state exploitation and link up an economic mass struggle to the political one. For, wrote comrade Kautsky in 1907, "we do not have the least reason to suppose that the level of exploitation of the German proletariat is less than in Russia. On the contrary, we have seen that with the advance of capitalism the exploitation of the proletariat increases. If the German worker is in many ways better placed than the Russian worker, then correspondingly the productivity of his labour is also much greater; and his needs, corresponding to the general standard of living of the nation, are much higher, so that the German worker feels the capitalist yoke even more painfully than the Russian worker" ["The Social Revolution" second edition, p. 60]. Comrade Kautsky, who now paints so colourfully how the German worker is "amply occupied with clubs, meetings, elections of all kinds", has forgotten at this moment the enormous slave hordes of Prussian-

German state employees, railway workers, post office clerks, and also farm workers, who unfortunately possess only to a very small extent the pleasure of being occupied by "clubs, meetings, and elections of all kinds", while they lack either in law or in fact the right to organise. He has forgotten that these enormous groups live politically and economically in genuinely 'Russian' conditions, in the midst of royal Prussian freedom, has forgotten that these very sections — to say nothing of the miners — will not possibly maintain their blind obedience in a political upheaval, and will present their particular demands in the form of huge mass strikes.

But let us look at 'Western Europe'. Comrade Kautsky, who disputes all this, should take issue with a different opponent from me: with reality. What do we see here in fact, if we concentrate on only the most important mass strikes of these last ten years?

The great Belgian mass strikes which had achieved universal suffrage still stood isolated in the '90s as a bold experiment. Since then, however, what an abundance and diversity!

In 1900 the mass strike of the miners in Pennsylvania, which according to our American comrades' account did more to spread socialist ideas than ten years of agitation; in 1900, too, a mass strike of miners in Austria; in 1902 a mass strike of the miners in France; in 1902, in the whole industry of Barcelona, a general strike in support of the metalworkers who were engaged in struggle; in 1902 a mass strike in Belgium for universal and equal suffrage; in 1902 a mass strike of the farm workers (over 200,000 of them) in the whole of East Galicia in defence of the right to organise; in 1903, in January and April, two mass strikes of the railway workers in Holland; in 1904 a mass strike of the railway workers in Hungary; in 1904 a protest strike in Italy against the massacres in Sardinia; in January 1905 a mass strike of the miners in the Ruhr district; in October 1905 a protest mass strike in Prague and the surrounding district (involving 100,000 workers) for equal and universal suffrage for the Bohemian parliament; in October 1905 a protest mass strike in Lemberg for universal and equal suffrage for the Galician state parliament; in November 1905 a protest mass strike in the whole of Austria for universal and equal suffrage for the federal parliament; in 1905 a mass strike of the farm workers in Italy; in 1905 a mass strike of the railway workers in Italy; in 1906 a protest strike in Trieste for universal and equal suffrage for the state parliament, which successfully achieved the reform; in 1906 a mass strike of the foundry workers in Wittkowitz (Moravia) in support of 400 shop stewards dismissed because of the May Day celebrations, brought to a victorious conclusion; in 1909 a mass strike in Sweden in defence of the right to organise; in 1909 a mass strike of the post office workers in France; in October 1909 a protest mass strike of all workers in Trient and Rovereto as a protest against the political persecution of Social Democracy. In 1910, a mass strike in Philadelphia in support of the tramway employees in struggle for the right to organise, and at this moment preparations for the mass strike of the railway workers in France.

This is how the 'impossibility' of mass strikes, in particular of protest mass strikes, in Western Europe looks, the 'impossibility' which comrade Kautsky has proved so very clearly. Comrade Kautsky has proved theoretically quite distinctly the impossibility of combining political and economic strikes, the impossibility of general imposing protest mass strikes, the impossibility of mass strikes as a period of repeated individual struggles, and he has forgotten that for ten years we have been living in a period of economic, political, combat and protest mass strikes, a period which with striking uniformity extends to almost all 'West European' countries, as well as to the United States. It extends to the most capitalistically backward countries like Spain and to the most advanced, like North America, to countries with the weakest trade union movement like France and to those with strong Social Democratic trade unions like Austria, to agricultural Galicia and to highly industrialised Bohemia, to semi-feudal states such as the Hapsburg monarchy, to republics like France, and to absolutist states like Russia. Along with those already listed above there is also, in particular, the great mass strike action of Russia from 1902 to 1906, which has shown how the importance and the extent of the mass strike grow only with the revolutionary situation and the political action of the proletariat.

"For while we are discussing the political strike and seeking its theoretical formulation and basis, there spontaneously flares up, as a result of the self-combustion of the masses, one tremendous political mass strike after another — or, every mass strike becomes a political action, every great political test of strength reaches its climax in a mass strike, whether it be the miners, whether it be the proletarians of Russia or the farm workers and railway workers of Italy, etc." [K. Kautsky, 'The Lessons of the Miners' Strike', 'Die Neue Zeit', XXIII, p. 781].

According to this it almost appears as if comrade Kautsky through his latest theory of the impossibility of a period of political mass strikes in Germany, had proved not an opposition between Russia and Western Europe, but rather an opposition between Germany and the rest of the world, including Western Europe and Russia. In fact Prussia would have to be an exception to all capitalist countries if what comrade Kautsky explains about the very impossibility of short, general protest mass strikes were true. It is supposedly "not to be thought of at all" that in a protest strike against the government in this country, "metropolitan railways, trams and gasworks would come to a standstill", that we would experience in Germany a protest strike which "changes the whole situation and thereby makes the deepest impression on the whole bourgeois world and also on the most apathetic layers of the proletariat". Then what has been shown to be possible in Galicia, in Bohemia, in Italy, in Hungary, in Trieste, in Trient, in Spain and in Sweden, would have to be inconceivable in Germany.

In all these countries and towns outstanding protest strikes have taken place which completely changed "the

situation". In Bohemia on 20th November 1905, there existed an absolutely universal withdrawal of labour which extended to *agriculture*, something which has not yet been experienced in Russia. In Italy in September 1904 the farm-workers, the trams, the electricity and gas works were stopped, and even the whole daily press had to cease publication. "It has certainly been the most complete general strike" — wrote 'Die Neue Zeit' — "which history has seen: for three whole days the town of Genoa had been left without light and bread to meat, all economic life had been paralysed" [Oda Ollberg, "The Italian General Strike", 'Die Neue Zeit', XXIII, I, p.19]. In Sweden, in the capital, Stockholm, in both 1902 and 1909, all means of transport — street trams, cabs, wagons, etc — were at a standstill in the first week. In Barcelona in 1902 all economic life was at a standstill for several days.

We would then finally get in Prussia-Germany, with its "strongest government of the present day" and its particular "German conditions", which are to explain all kinds of impossibilities of the proletarian method of fighting which are possible in the whole of the rest of the world, an unexpected counterpart to those special 'Bavarian' and 'South German' conditions which comrade Kautsky in his own time so thoroughly derided with the rest of us (*4). In particular, however, these German 'impossibilities' render themselves very pleasant in view of the fact that precisely in Germany we have the strongest party, the strongest trade unions, the best organisation, the greatest discipline, the most educated proletariat and the greatest influence of Marxism. Indeed in this way we would actually come to the strange result that the stronger Social Democracy is, the more impotent the working class is. However, I am of the opinion that to say that in Germany today mass strikes and protest strikes which were possible in various other countries are impossible is to issue the German proletariat with a certificate of poverty which it has not in any way earned.

V

WHAT ACTUALLY REMAINS of the mass strike theory of comrade Kautsky after he has proved all the 'impossibilities'? The one 'final', purely political mass strike, which on just one single occasion, separated from economic strikes, but quite finally, erupts like thunder in a clear sky. "Here, in this conception", says comrade Kautsky, "lies the most basic reason for the difference of opinion about the mass strike which exists between my friends and me. They expect a *period of mass strikes*; under the conditions which exist in Germany I can conceive of a political mass strike only as a *single event* into which the whole proletariat enters with all its might, as a life and death struggle, as a struggle which defeats our opponents or smashes, or at least paralyses, the totality of our organisations and our whole strength for a number of years".

With regard to this picture of the "final mass strike" as it hovers before comrade Kautsky it must first be said that it is in any case a completely new creation which is drawn not according to reality but from pure 'imagination'. For it does not only fail to match any Russian example; not *one* mass strike among the many which have taken place in 'Western Europe' or the United States approximately resembles the example which comrade Kautsky has invented for Germany. None of the mass strikes seen up until now was a "final, life and death" struggle, none has led to the complete victory of the workers, but none has "smashed the totality of our organisations for a number of years" and "the whole power" of the proletariat, either. The success was mostly only a partial one and an indirect one.

The massive strikes of the miners usually ended directly with a defeat, but they resulted in important social reforms as a result of their pressure: in Austria the nine-hour day, in France the eight-hour day. The Belgian mass strike of 1893 had a highly important result, the conquest of universal unequal suffrage. The Swedish mass strike of the previous year formally concluded with a compromise, but basically it warded off a general offensive by the united industrialists on Swedish trade unions. The Austrian protest strikes powerfully developed the electoral reform. The mass strikes of the farm workers, along with their formal, partial lack of results, strengthened *organisation* among the farm workers in Italy and Galicia. All mass strikes, whether economic or political, protest or combat strikes, have contained what comrade Oda Ollberg so accurately described in 'Die Neue Zeit' in her balance sheet of the Italian railway workers' strike:

"The achievements of the political strike are not to be figured up: according to the level of proletarian class consciousness their value changes. A political strike carried out with vigour and solidarity is never lost because it *is* what it *aims for*, a development of the power of the proletariat in which those fighting harden their vigour and their sense of responsibility, and the ruling classes become conscious of the strength of the opponents" ['Die Neue Zeit', XXIII, 2, p.385].

If, however, every mass strike hitherto, without exception, in 'Western Europe' as in Russia, has brought neither complete victory nor the smashing of the proletariat, in strict contradiction to the latest scheme of comrade Kautsky, but on the contrary has brought almost always a *strengthening* of the organisations, of the class consciousness, and of the sense of power of the workers, then there arises on the other hand the question: how can the great and 'final' apocalyptic mass strike occur at all in Germany, in which the stoutest oaks crash down, the earth opens up, and the graves are opened, if the mass of the proletariat is not prepared for this, schooled, and aroused by means of a whole long *period* of mass strikes, of economic or political mass strikes in advance of this great 'final' strike.

According to comrade Kautsky, "the whole proletariat of the Empire", and what is more "with its entire might", is to throw itself into this "final" mass strike. How however

are the Prussian-German state employees, the railway workers, the post office employees, etc. who today are frozen in 'blind obedience', the farm labourers who have no right to organise and thus no organisations, the broad layers of workers who are still to be found in opposing organisations, in Christian or Hirsch-Duncker, yellow trade unions, in short the whole great mass of the German proletariat which hitherto was accessible neither to our trade union organisation nor to Social Democratic agitation (*5) — how are these to suddenly be ripe at a stroke for a 'final' mass strike which is a matter of 'life and death', if they are not gradually freed from their rigidity, their blind obedience and their fragmentation, and integrated into the following of Social Democracy by a preceding period of stormy mass struggles, protest strikes, partial mass strikes, mammoth economic struggles, etc?

Comrade Kautsky must certainly understand this. "Of course", he says, "I do not conceive of this single events as an isolated act 'like shot from a pistol'. I too expect a period of embittered mass struggles and mass actions but I expect the mass strike as the *final* weapon". But which "mass struggles and mass actions" which are to precede that "final" mass strike and do not themselves consist of mass strikes does comrade Kautsky have in mind then? Are they to be street demonstrations? But it is impossible to simply stage street demonstrations for decades. And widespread, impressive protest strikes are supposedly excluded in Germany according to comrade Kautsky; it is indeed "not to be thought of at all that in this country in a protest strike against the government, metropolitan railways, the trams and gasworks would come to a standstill". Economic mass strikes likewise cannot achieve that preparatory work for the political mass strike, indeed according to comrade Kautsky they are to be quite strictly separated from the political mass strike, they do not promote it at all but on the contrary harm it.

So what are these "embittered" mass struggles and mass actions of the preparatory era to consist of? Perhaps in "embittered" Reichstag elections or in meetings with protest resolutions? But those extensive layers of the unorganised proletariat or of the proletariat organised in opposing organisations on whom the issue depends in the "final" mass strike unfortunately stay away from our meetings. And so it is utterly incomprehensible how we actually win, arouse and school the "whole proletariat of the Empire" for the final "life and death" struggle. Whether comrade Kautsky likes it or not, his final mass strike occurs, because he excludes a *period* of mass strikes of an economic and political character, like a pistol shot.

Finally, however, one must ask oneself: what kind of a "final" mass strike actually is it that occurs only *once* and in which the whole proletariat of the Empire is involved with all its might in a life and death struggle? Is a *periodic* "final" mass strike to be understood by this, which in any great political campaign, for example for the Prussian franchise, for the right to vote for the Reichstag, for the prevention of a criminal war, etc, finally proves decisive? But one cannot fight for "life and death" periodically and on several occasions. A mass strike thus portrayed in which "the whole proletariat", and moreover "with all its might", fights for "life and death" can only be that struggle in which the whole political power in the state is at stake. It can obviously only be that "final", "life and death" struggle in which the proletariat fights for its dictatorship in order to put an end to the bourgeois class state.

In this way the political mass strike in Germany is postponed further and further: first it was expected to take place as a result of the strategy of attrition after the Reichstag elections next year, now it recedes from our gaze as the "final" and only mass strike and teases us from the shadowy distance of the — social revolution.

Let us now again remember the conditions which comrade Kautsky in his first article, "What Now?", linked to the execution of the political mass strike: the strictest secrecy of the preparations to keep the enemy in a state of ignorance, the taking of the decision by the supreme "council of war" of the party, the greatest possible element of surprise in the attack on the enemy — and we unintentionally arrive at a scenario which has a strong similarity with the "final great day", the general strike according to the anarchist recipe. The idea of the mass strike is transformed from being the historical process of the modern proletarian class struggles in their final period covering a number of decades into a sudden crash in which "the whole proletariat of the Empire" puts an end to the bourgeois order of society at a stroke.

What did comrade Kautsky write in 1907, in his book 'The Social Revolution', 2nd edition, p.54:

"That is absurd. A general strike in the sense that *all* the workers of a country down tools at a given signal presupposes a unity and an organisation of the workers which can hardly be achieved in present-day society and which, if once achieved, would be so irresistible that it would not require the general strike. Such a strike however would at a stroke render impossible not only existing society but any form of existence at all, that of the proletarians even more so than that of the capitalists. It would thus indubitably have to collapse precisely at the moment when it begins to develop its revolutionary effect. The strike as a political method of struggle will hardly ever, and certainly not in the foreseeable future, take on the form of a strike of *all* workers in a country. We are approaching a time when, in the face of the superior strength of the bosses' organisations, the isolated, unpolitical strike will be just as hopeless as the isolated parliamentary action of the workers' parties will be hopeless in the face of the pressure of the state power dependent on the capitalists. It will be increasingly necessary that each complement the other and draw new forces out of their cooperation. *Just like the use of any new weapon, so too must that of the political strike first be learnt!*"

Thus the more comrade Kautsky digressed to justify his position in the Prussian struggle for suffrage by making broad theoretical generalisations, the more he lost sight of the general perspective of development of the class struggle in Western Europe and in Germany, the development which

he himself has not been tired of describing in recent years. He has certainly had the uncomfortable feeling of incongruity himself between his present and his former views, and was therefore so obliging as to reproduce in detail in the final, third, part of his reply to me his series of articles from 1904, 'Revolutionary Miscellanea'. The blatant contradiction is certainly not thereby fully removed, it has only caused the chaotic, many-coloured character of that final part of the article which so uncommonly impairs the pleasure of reading it.

But it is not only that series of articles which produces a shrill dissonance with what comrade Kautsky is now putting forward. In his book 'The Social Revolution' we read of a whole long period of revolutionary struggles into which we shall enter and in which the political mass strike "will doubtless play a great role" (p.54). The whole pamphlet, 'The Road to Power', is devoted to the portrayal of the same perspectives. Indeed here we have already entered the revolutionary period. Here comrade Kautsky revises the 'Political Testament' of Friedrich Engels and explains that the time of the 'strategy of attrition', which consists in the legal exploitation of the given state basis, is already past:

"At the beginning of the 'nineties" — he wrote — "I recognised that a peaceful further development of the proletarian organisations and of the proletarian class struggle on the given state basis would take the proletariat furthest forward in the situation of that time. I cannot therefore be reproached with some need to intoxicate myself in revolution and radicalism. If the observation of the present situation leads me to the view that *relationships have thoroughly changed since the beginning of the 'nineties, that we all have cause to suppose that we are now in a period of struggles for the institutions of the state and state power, struggles which as a result of manifold vicissitudes can last for decades, struggles of which the forms and length are still unforeseeable for the time being, which however will very probably result in the foreseeable future in considerable shifts of power in favour of the proletariat, if not even its absolute power in Western Europe*". And furthermore: "In this general confusion however the immediate tasks of the proletariat are clear. We have already developed them. *There can be no further advance by the proletariat without a change in the state basis on which it carries out its struggle. To strive as energetically as possible for democracy in the Empire, but also in the individual states, especially in Prussia and Saxony — that is its immediate task in Germany. Its next international task is the struggle against the world-wide foreign policy of Germany and against militarism. Just as clear as these tasks are the means which are at our disposal to solve them. In addition to those already used there has emerged the mass strike, which we accepted theoretically as long ago as the beginning of the 'nineties, and the implementation of which under favourable circumstances has already been repeatedly tested since then*" ['The Road to Power', p.53 and p.101. My emphasis].

In 'The Social Revolution', in 'The Road to Power', and in 'Die Neue Zeit', comrade Kautsky preached the political strike to the German trade unions as the 'new tactic' increasingly required in view of the fact that the purely trade union strike is more and more condemned to be unsuccessful by the employers' federations. This was the conception which brought him into the embittered feud last year with the 'Korrespondenzblatt' of the General Commission of the trade unions.

Now comrade Kautsky wants to separate economic strikes strictly from political action, now he explains that all strikes in Western Europe must unconditionally achieve "particular successes", otherwise they have "failed to achieve their purpose", and he counts only "successfully fought-out wage movements" amongst those means which "organise the proletariat, raise its understanding and awareness of its own strength, and increase the confidence of the popular masses in their organisations". Now we need nothing at all more urgently than "visible successes" in order to impress the masses. There are however "few successes which document our growing strength to the masses so manifestly as electoral victories, as the winning of new seats". So, Reichstag elections and seats in parliament — that is Moses and the prophets!

We now hear that the German worker is only to be had for meetings "without risk", that "a mere protest strike is not even the most impressive" form of political protest, "a victorious Reichstag election makes a far greater impression"! And finally "a real mass demonstration" which is concerned with something that "does not demand immediate defence but which is to publicise a mere protest against an injustice which has already been in existence for half a century", such a protest strike is scarcely possible in Germany "without a tremendously important reason". Comrade Kautsky has merely failed to notice that he has provided in passing with this argumentation the finest theoretical justification for — *the abolition of May Day celebrations*.

Quite correctly, comrade Kautsky points out that "already before the Russian revolution" he had given in his article 'Revolutionary Miscellanea' a more precise description of the effects of a political mass strike. But, as it appears to me, it does not merely depend on portraying revolutionary struggles and their external development in theoretical abstraction, in the middle of nowhere so to speak, of sketching out their general format, but just as much on providing in practice at any particular time those slogans which release the maximum of the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, which can advance the situation to the greatest extent and at the quickest pace. Comrade Kautsky has certainly provided with forceful clarity the picture of the revolutionary struggles of the future in his numerous articles and in his pamphlets, and has portrayed, for example, in his description of the mass strike as early as 1904 how "every mansion, every barn, every factory, every telegraph line, every stretch of railway, is militarily guarded", how the soldiers are sent in against the crowds every-

where and yet how it never comes to a battle, "for wherever they arrive the crowd breaks up in order to meet everywhere where the troops have not arrived or have just been and gone", how first of all "gas and electricity works cease to function, street trams cease to run, finally even the post and railways are gripped by the strike fever; at first the workers in the various workplaces strike, then the younger officials and inspectors too" — in short, everything is described with a tangibility, a liveliness and realism which are all the more remarkable since it is a matter of purely imaginary developments.

When however the question descended from this airy height, where theory peacefully circled around like some bird of prey, to alight on the flat ground of the Prussian suffrage campaign, then suddenly this headless Prussian government, which had been at a complete loss, was transformed into a brazen bastion, the German conditions which had been ready for social revolution ("Hurrah, march, march") as they had been described in 'The Road to Power' were transformed into a barren country where "it was not to be thought of at all" that state employees and officials whether young or old would participate in a demonstration, and "the coming revolutionary era" was transformed into a diligent preparation for the Reichstag elections, for "There are few successes which document our strength so tangibly to the masses" as — seats in the Reichstag.

Heaven-storming theory and "attrition" in practice, the most revolutionary perspective in the clouds and seats in the Reichstag as the only perspective in reality. Comrade Kautsky has explained his campaign against me on the grounds of the pressing necessity of saving the idea of the mass strike from a compromise. I almost fear that it would have been better both for the idea of the mass strike and also for comrade Kautsky if this act of salvation had not taken place.

VI

LET US RETURN to Prussia.

At the beginning of March, in view of the suffrage campaign under way and the growing demonstration movement, I explained that if the party wanted to lead the movement further forward it must place the slogan of the mass strike on the order of the day, and so a protest strike was "the first step in the present situation". I was of the opinion that the party was faced by a dilemma: either it would escalate the suffrage movement to sharper forms, or, as in 1908, the movement would fall asleep again after a short time. It was this that called comrade Kautsky into action against me.

And what do we see? Comrade Kautsky refers to the fact that, in spite of me, we have not experienced any trace of a mass strike, he triumphs with the fact that my suggestion has been made "as dead as a doornail" by the situation. Now in his polemical zeal comrade Kautsky has, it seems, quite overlooked the fact that unfortunately something else has been struck "dead as a doornail": namely, the demonstrations, and, with them, the suffrage movement itself.

Comrade Kautsky proved against me that an intensification of the demonstrations was not at all necessary, that the party was not confronted by a dilemma, that the main thing was "to further employ, above all, *street demonstrations*, not to slacken in this, but on the contrary to organise it ever more energetically" ["What Now?", 'Die Neue Zeit' of 15th April 1910, p.71]. Now since the beginning of April the street demonstrations have completely ceased. And it is not because of some lack of enthusiasm and militancy in the masses. They have not fallen asleep because of inner exhaustion. No, the street demonstrations have simply been called off by the leading authorities of the party, contrary to the exertions and the attempts of the party comrades in the provinces. As May 1st showed, as the demonstrations in Braunschweig and Breslau in May showed, they have been deliberately called off. Precisely as I wrote in my first reply in 'Die Neue Zeit', at the end of March — without awaiting the further course of events and the situation — under the pressure of the mood in the provinces, the demonstration had been fixed for 10th April with the feeling: But now an end to this! And an end was made. No demonstration or even meetings occupy themselves any more with the question of the franchise, the fiery suffrage struggle rubric has disappeared from the party press. And, as the most certain symptom that the matter is past for the time being and is no longer immediately significant there can serve the fact that our leading central organ has begun to become occupied with tactics in the suffrage campaign. "The popular movement in the best style" has been sent packing for the time being.

What does comrade Kautsky say to this? Does he who brought into confrontation against me 'jest, satire, irony and deeper meaning' dare to emit even one word of the most gentle blame against those 'supreme authorities' who, against his exhortation not to "slacken in street demonstrations", have simply put an end to the demonstration movement? On the contrary, here is comrade Kautsky full of admiration. He finds only words of enthusiasm for "the latest campaign of demonstrations" which quite correctly "was an example of a successful strategy of attrition". This is how the strategy of attrition turns out in actual practice: after two bold steps it itself is worn down and must rest on its laurels, allowing the resounding overture of the "popular movement in the best style" to peter out in the quiet grumbling of the preparations for the Reichstag elections.

The suffrage movement has thus again been brought to a standstill, for one or perhaps two years, and at such a skillfully chosen moment that the government has thus been done the greatest service which one could possibly do it.

The withdrawal of the suffrage bill by Bethmann-Hollweg was the decisive moment (*6). The government was completely in a fix. The parliamentary patchwork on the voting reform and parliamentary horse-trading were bankrupt. The opponents were at the end of their wits. If one had

really wanted to be serious about the "suffrage storm", about the slogan "no peace in Prussia", about the great words spoken at the Prussian party congress, then the collapse of the government bill was the given moment to reply immediately to this fiasco of parliamentary action with a general massive thrust, with street demonstrations throughout the country under the slogan of: Bring in a new bill! Those street demonstrations could then have further led on to the protest mass strike and powerfully advanced the struggle.

Comrade Kautsky, who kindly suggests to me that I should acknowledge, for example, such ideas as the "armed" appearance of workers in Treptow Park as the application of my "strategy", here has a clear example of what "my strategy" in reality is about. Not childish Quixotic acts, such as those of which comrade Kautsky accuses me, but political exploitation of the defeats of the opponent and of one's own victories, which moreover is not the invention of any "new strategy" but rather the ABC of any revolutionary, indeed of any serious, tactic of struggle, that was the task of the party. I do not thereby want to pronounce it to be the unconditional duty of the party to introduce every other day of the week a "revolutionary period". But I do mean: when the party begins an action, when it has rung the alarm-bells and called its huge masses of followers into action, when it has spoken of a "popular movement in the best style", of struggle "by any means necessary", then after two run-ups it cannot suddenly scratch behind its ear, yawn and explain: it was nothing, this time it wasn't serious, let's go home... The whipping up of a fighting mood in this fashion, as a trial run carried out on the word of command, is in my opinion unworthy of the stature of the party and the seriousness of the situation and likely to discredit the party in the eyes of the masses. The suffrage and demonstration movement which was under way was moreover an excellent opportunity for agitational and educational work among the apathetic masses and for the winning of circles of workers who support our opponents, such as regular agitation is not at all in a position to do. By the deliberate breaking off of this movement the party has, after the finest beginning, left unused this outstanding opportunity.

Above all, however, there are further political aspects which come into consideration. It is extremely short-sighted to separate mechanically the question of the Prussian voting reform from the question of suffrage for the Reichstag and to declare on the occasion of the Prussian struggle for suffrage: our big guns are not to be brought into action, we want to save them in case the right to vote for the Reichstag is cashed in after the Reichstag elections. But one must deliberately shut one's eyes to the real connections to fail to understand that in the present situation the struggle for the Prussian voting reform is basically nothing but the struggle for the right to vote for the Reichstag. It is clear that a powerful and victorious campaign for Prussian suffrage is the most certain way to parry in advance a blow against the right to vote for the Reichstag. The determined and consistent continuation of the suffrage struggle would thus at the same time have been a defensive action against the desires of the forces of reaction for a coup, an action which would have had all the advantages of the offensive before a forced defensive.

Comrade Kautsky now objects — and this is his last trump — that since the mass strike (as we see) has not broken out, then this proves best of all how little it could arise out of the situation and how wrong my position was. "The mere fact" — he writes — "that it is being discussed would show that the situation has not yet reached this level of maturity. As long as it is still possible to argue and discuss about whether the mass strike is due or not, the proletariat as a whole is not yet imbued with that measure of bitterness and awareness of its strength which are necessary if the mass strike is to take place. If the necessary mood for it had been in existence in March then a warning voice like mine could not have avoided being stifled by a protest of raging indignation".

Comrade Kautsky here shows an interesting oscillation between two extremes: one moment the mass strike is a carefully hatched-out coup, organised in the confines of the tent of the council of war, and secretly prepared in a whisper; another moment it is an "elemental event, the occurrence of which cannot be organised at will, and which can be awaited but not given a final date". I am of the opinion that the task of the Social Democratic party and its leadership consists neither in the secret hatching out of "great plans" nor in "awaiting" elemental events. As I clearly wrote in my first article in the Dortmund Arbeiterzeitung, mass strike cannot be "made" at the command of the highest levels of authority, they must arise out of the masses and their developing action. But to take this action forward *politically* in the sense of an energetic tactic and a powerful offensive in such a way that the masses become every more conscious of their tasks — that can be done by the party and is also its duty. Social Democracy cannot artificially create a revolutionary mass movement. Under certain circumstances it can however certainly paralyse the finest mass action as a result of its vacillating, weak tactics. The proof of this is provided by the failure of the suffrage mass strike, or rather its breaking off immediately after its start, in Belgium in 1902. How effectively the party under certain circumstances can hinder a mass strike, this "elemental event", by putting on the brakes, has been reported by comrade Kautsky himself with regard to Austria.

"Although", he told us, "although the conditions in Austria favour the mass strike far more than they do here, and although the masses in Austria had at times reaches a level of enthusiasm far above ours in Germany, such a level of enthusiasm that they could be held back from entering into the mass strike only the maximum use of all forces; although in the end the mass strike was threatened repeatedly and in the most positive fashion, the comrades who were responsible for this tactic have hitherto applied the brakes as much as possible and hindered the mass strike" ["Die Neue Zeit", XXIV, 2, p.856]. That this preventive role of the party leadership can emerge most effectively in

Germany is natural in view of the extraordinarily developed organisational centralism and discipline in our party.

Already in my first article ('What Next?') I wrote that "in a party like the German one, where respect for the principle of organisation and of party discipline is unparalleled, where as a consequence of this the initiative of unorganised popular masses, their spontaneous, so to speak improvised capacity for action — such an important and often decisive factor in all great political struggles hitherto — is almost excluded, the party is subject to the unavoidable duty of showing the value of such highly developed organisation and discipline for large scale actions, their use for other forms of action than parliamentary elections".

The fate so far of the Prussian suffrage movement almost appears to prove that our organisational apparatus and our party discipline prove their value for the time being better in braking than in leading great mass actions. If beforehand the street demonstrations are carried out only timidly and unwillingly; if every opportunity offered for intensifying the demonstrations, such as the 18th March or 1st May, is painfully avoided; if one's own victories, such as the conquest of the right to the street on 10th April, and likewise the defeats of the enemy, such as the withdrawal of the government bill, are left completely unused; if finally the demonstrations in general are postponed and the masses sent home, then of course there cannot arise even out of the masses that stormy movement which must make a place for itself in a mass strike.

The inhibiting effect of such a leadership can of course best prove to be decisive when the mass action is only in its initial stages, as is the case with us in Germany, when it is still taking its first steps. If the revolutionary period is in full flow, if the waves of the struggles are already welling up, then no brakes being applied by the party leaders will be in a position to achieve much, then the masses simply push aside their leaders who oppose the storm of the movement. This can even take place in Germany. But in the interest of Social Democracy I find it neither necessary nor desirable to steer in this direction. If we unconditionally want to wait with the mass strike in Germany until the masses have stormed past their leaders with "raging indignation", those leaders who are trying to hold back the movement, then this can obviously only occur at the cost of the influence and prestige of Social Democracy. For then it could easily turn out to be the case that the complicated organisational apparatus and the strict party discipline of which we are justly proud are unfortunately an excellent makeshift measure only for day to day parliamentary and trade union life, but that in view of the given character of our leading circles they are an obstacle to mass action in the great style such as is demanded by the coming era of stormy struggles. And one further particular weak point of our organisational relationships could thereby have a fateful effect. If in fact it had been the trade union leaders alone who had publicly opposed the slogan of the mass strike in the recent franchise campaign, then this would only have led to the clarification of the situation, to the sharpening of mass criticism. The fact that they did not need to do this, that on the contrary they could, through the medium of the party and with the help of the party apparatus, tip the scales in favour of applying the brakes to the mass action by using the whole authority of Social Democracy — that fact brought the suffrage movement to a standstill; comrade Kautsky has merely provided the theoretical musical accompaniment for this.

In spite of this our cause does indeed advance. The enemy works so unceasingly for us that it is no particular merit if our seeds flourish in any weather. But ultimately it is not the task of the class party of the proletariat to live only from the sins and errors of its opponents in spite of its own mistakes, but rather its task is to accelerate the course of events by its own energy, to release at every moment not the minimum but the maximum of action and class struggle.

And when in future mass action again begins, then the party will be confronted by exactly the same problem as it was two years ago and in last spring. After those two attempts the broad circles of our party comrades must be clear from the outset about the fact that a real mass action in good style can only arise and be maintained in the long run if it is not treated as a dry piece of exercise with the rhythm being tapped out by the party leadership, but as a great class struggle in which all important economic conflicts are employed, all factors which arouse the masses must be led into the whirlpool of the movement, and in which an increasing sharpness of the situation and decisive struggles are not avoided but are approached with a resolute and consistent tactic. Perhaps the present discussion will contribute its share to this.

NOTES

1. At the Jena Congress in September 1905 the SPD adopted a resolution favouring the use of the mass strike in certain circumstances.
2. There were general strikes for equal suffrage in Belgium in 1891, 1893 and 1902.
3. The March Revolution of 1848 in Germany demanded a united Germany and a democratic constitution. It failed because of the feebleness of the bourgeois liberals in whose hands its leadership lay.
4. South Germany was the stronghold of the SPD right wing, who justified their policies there by reference to supposed special local conditions.
5. The Hirsch-Duncker unions were founded by bourgeois liberals to keep the workers away from socialism. In 1905 they had 117,097 members, compared with 191,690 in the Catholic unions and 1,429,303 in the Social-Democratic Free Trade Unions.
6. Bethmann-Hollweg was German Chancellor from 1909 to 1917. In 1910 he proposed a Bill making minor alterations to the Prussian three-class suffrage. There were mass Social-Democratic demonstrations in February, March, and April, and the Bill was eventually withdrawn.

THE SPOILS OF TREACHERY ARE ON THE MOVE: BLACK ALL TRANSFERS!



'I'd like to be able to grin at McGarry and say 'there's no justice for muggers' but the pity is, it won't be him who'll suffer but 8000 of his workers'.

That was the reaction of one Leyland steward to the news that all assembly work at the Canley plant is to end. The steward's bitterness was directed against Canley convenor Eddie McGarry, who played a leading role in ensuring that there was no real fight to save the Speke No.2 plant last year.

Of course, when Speke closed, Canley got the TR7. Now the TR7 is being transferred again, this time to Rover Solihull. Stewards there are confident that they can win a commitment from the shop floor to black the TR7 — so long as there is a fight at Canley.

Blacking is going to be vital in the fight against the carve-up. The new Edwardes

plan involves a whole series of transfers. The TR7 goes to Solihull; the BL/Honda that was to have gone to Canley now goes to Cowley, as does work from the MG plant at Abingdon; body production from Castle Bromwich will go to Cowley, Swindon and Speke No.1.

If the BL Combine Committee's existing policy of blacking all transfers of work were implemented the Edwardes plan would never get off the ground. But that policy existed at the time of the Speke closure last year, and McGarry, Robinson and the others made no effort to implement it.

This time convenors like Robinson are talking about blacking and strike action, but is it just talk? The rank and file will have to make sure the convenors are held to their words.

Already, union officials are

preparing the ground for a retreat. Granville Hawley of the TGWU and Ken Cure of the AUEW both denounced talk of strike action as 'crackpot' and 'irresponsible' even after a T&G senior stewards' meeting on September 14th unanimously voted to support strikes against the cuts. Hawley still talked of trying to 'persuade' Edwardes to 'change his mind'.

Stewards' committees in every plant must draw up plans for blacking, occupations and solidarity strikes. The BL Combine Committee (bureaucratic and unrepresentative as it is) must be forced to give a lead in coordinating the action.

Another defeat like that at Speke might be a sort of rough justice for Eddy McGarry but 25,000 jobs are at stake — and you can multiply that by 5 or 6 if components workers are included in the count.

ROVER: STRIKE OVER 'EXCESS LABOUR' CUT

TREATS TO 1500 of the 4000 jobs at British Leyland's Rover Solihull SD1 plant have been met with strike action which must spread in order to challenge effectively the bosses' plans for sackings and speed-up.

BL is currently threatening to cut 25,000 jobs and several plants. At Rover Solihull, bosses have ignored their mutuality agreements with unions over job-cutting. They have axed 'excess labour' and talked to the unions afterwards. A mass meeting agreed to voluntary manning cuts, but voted overwhelmingly to strike

over the 'compulsory' cuts, and workers have been out since September 5th.

Last Wednesday, 12th, the works committee called the workforce back in to consider a slight concession the bosses had made: to have 'excess labour' stand by jobs, rather than being sent to a 'pool'. Workers voted to stay out, but by a lower majority, 60%.

It needs united and strong action to stop the job cuts: the fightback should be built around the demands of cutting hours not pay and occupation of plants threatened by closure.

No future in national pride

SEVENTY T&GWU senior stewards from British Leyland met in Birmingham on Friday 14th September and voted unanimously to support plant strike action and for blacking of the transfer of work, to stop the Edwardes Plan.

They also issued a statement couched in terms that will be familiar to every BL worker: 'It is our opinion that Leyland philosophy will mean the total demise of the only British-based car manufacturer. We will not allow this to happen. We believe that Leyland does have a future.'

By implication, they mean, a future as a capitalist enterprise — and there they

are wrong. In the real world of giants like Ford, General Motors, and Peugeot-Citroen, Leyland cannot survive unless workers reject considerations of viability, profitability and so on.

The alternative strategy favoured by many shop stewards and convenors centres upon the demand for import controls. This can only mean lining up with the bosses against car workers from Europe, Japan, and America. And for British Leyland, which exports 40% of its production, retaliatory import controls in other countries would be a death blow.

Significantly, not one senior steward, convenor or

official has yet raised any objection to the threatened closure of the Seneffe plant in Belgium, which produces Allegros and Minis. The British unions have virtually no links with Seneffe, and don't seem to care what happens to Belgian BL workers.

The only 'solution' to the crisis in BL is to reject both viability and nationalist ideas. We need to take over the factories, impose our control over production, hours and conditions. In that kind of struggle we will need maximum support from all car workers, whether they be from Ford Dagenham, Renault Paris, or Datsun Tokyo.

WORKERS' ACTION

Pottery engineers follow Confed lead

AUEW engineers in the pottery industry round Stoke on Trent are on strike for the Confed claim. They want their agreement, covering all firms but one in the pottery and tile industry, to be backdated to May 22nd.

H & I Johnson, the major tile-producing firm, which is not covered by the industry agreement, has met the claim.

300 out of the 450 maintenance fitters in the industry attended a mass meeting last week and registered and 3-to-1 vote in favour of the strike.

Pickets are out and '90% effective'. Oil delivery workers have agreed not to cross picket lines, and within about two weeks the kilns will be forced to close down.

ARTHUR BOUGH

Sellout deal bulldozed through at Cammell Lairds

WORKERS AT Cammell Lairds shipyard in Merseyside are not willing to accept British Shipbuilders' rundown plans. But their leaders are trying to railroad them through.

At a Confed mass meeting last week the stewards called for endorsement of the resolution passed on Tuesday 4th by a national recall conference of Confed shipbuilding delegates — which basically accepts the bosses' plans in return for a few small concessions.

The chairman spoke for three quarters of an hour, at a meeting which started one hour before lunch. No discussion was allowed, only questions. When the vote was taken it appeared to be against endorsement by a large majority, but the chairman said it was carried.

There was immediate uproar with shouts of 'Sellout' and calls for the stewards to resign. The microphone was immediately unplugged and the stewards and chairman made a hasty retreat from the platform.

A Confed stewards meeting the next day supported the chairman's decision.

Workers' Action supporters have pitched in with those who want to organise a fight in the teeth of this sellout. A series of factory gate meetings are being organised to put over our alternatives, and to try to inform the shop floor about what's being done in their name but against their interests by the stewards and union leaders.

What the sellout boils down to is that those yards threatened with closure will be kept open on a care and maintenance basis. Provided the redundancies are voluntary, the union will stand by allow six thousand jobs to be wiped out.

British Shipbuilders and the Confed's Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee (SNC) have begun and ended with one thing in mind: viability and profitability. Workers' jobs

Resolution passed by the recall conference of Confed shipbuilding delegates on 4th September:

This conference, having received a full and detailed report of the results of the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee's representation to British Shipbuilders, accepts that the spirit of the resolution passed at the delegate conference held on Thursday 23rd August at Newcastle has been vigorously pursued.

Further, this conference accepts that the main elements of the resolution regarding retention of capacity and the avoidance of the need for unwarranted compulsory redundancies has, to a great extent, been achieved.

This conference, therefore, endorses the report of the SNC and, in consequence, agrees to the removal of the overtime ban and other sanctions applied arising from the British Shipbuilders' statement on restructuring made on Thursday 16th August.

This conference now calls on the SNC to vigorously pursue the 22-point plan on the future of the industry as detailed in the resolution passed on 23rd August.

Finally, the conference congratulates those members who responded to the proposals of British Shipbuilders in such a way which assisted the SNC in achieving an acceptable and orderly transitional plan to deal with the immediate problems of the industry.

come nowhere in their thinking.

British Shipbuilders were not in fact in the strongest negotiating position, threatened with big penalties on any delay in the current Polish order, and keen to complete other ships being held up by union action. That was why they readily agreed to the SNC's demand that there be no enforced redundancies without consultation.

And that's what the SNC has settled for! They have ignored any strategy which may have inspired a fightback against the cuts, such as reducing the working week, and instead disarmed any fight by saying that the redundancies are inevitable and that we must all wait for the great shipbuilding revival predicted for the early 1980s!

Though the resolution went through the recall conference by a large majority, it appears to have had a lukewarm reception in yards other than Lairds. According to a convenor on the Clyde a mass meeting there carried the proposal by a vote of 60% to 40%. How many other yards saw antics like those of the Lairds stewards?

British Shipbuilders are now guaranteed a large number of volunteers because of our union leaders' cooperation. But this won't be the end of it.

We need to organise ourselves to stop any further redundancies and to prevent future sellouts. The reduction of the working week is one of the key demands that must be pushed. Instead of each shipyard fighting for its own separate demands, national joint action must be organised if thousands more jobs are not to be lost.

LOL DUFFY

TALBOT Strike stays solid: now spread pickets

ONLY 20 votes against the indefinite continuation of the 12-week old Talbot strike: that was the verdict of a mass meeting of almost all the 2,000 workers of the Ryton (Coventry) plant on the bosses' threat to close the plant if the strike continues.

The workers' militancy found a reflection in the union officials' speeches at the meeting, on Monday 17th. 'We are not prepared to accept peanuts... We are not prepared to be intimidated by threats', announced TGWU divisional officer Bill Lapworth.

George Turnbull's Peugeot-Citroen style of management has backfired on the Talbot bosses.

The Ryton union leaders' talks with Talbot manage-

ment at the government arbitration service ACAS the previous Monday and Tuesday broke down. Management refused to budge an inch.

by RICHARD PAINE

At the mass meeting an AUEW full-timer pointed out that discussions with Talbot started on July 5th, and no progress at all has been made since then. The Ryton leadership ended up talking to ACAS and no-one else.

Pat Fox, the Ryton convenor, revealed management's terms, which included a future of wages paid on a completely individual basis (with no uniform rate), flexibility

of labour between factories, security of employment only after two years, track speed increases to compensate for any production loss — in short, a completely free hand for the bosses.

Ryton workers have now reached the same stalemate as the 3,400 workers at the nearby Stoke plant, whose leadership have correctly refused to try to negotiate on Talbot's terms.

A mass meeting at Stoke on Friday 7th also voted to stay out.

Immediately after Ryton's mass meeting, shop stewards announced that the two plants would now fight together for an improvement of the '5½% plus strings' management offer. After 11 weeks, it's about time!

Talbot UK chairman and managing director Turnbull's announcement of the closure threat, which came just 48 hours after Michael Edwardes announced BL would axe their Canley plant in Coventry, has provoked the unity that was lacking until now. 'The writing is on the wall for Ryton', said Turnbull. 'Closure would be in a matter of weeks rather than months'.

There is only one way to win the strike now. Peugeot-Citroen's plans for Britain amount to keeping the distribution network. The stewards at Ryton and Stoke have managed to stop components being delivered, but since Peugeot-Citroen's other plants in Britain play

little role in the bosses' future plans, this blacking will have limited effect.

Peugeot-Citroen cars are flooding into Britain from the continent. Ryton shop stewards blame the union bureaucrats for this. They have been told since the beginning of the strike that blacking moves internationally were being 'taken care of'. It hasn't happened, though.

Delegations and flying pickets to stop the movement of all Peugeot-Citroen cars are essential. The rank and file must be involved, with regular mass meetings, not just the shop stewards.

Links are essential with laid-off Linwood, Luton and Dunstable must be brought out too, and support must be won from other car workers.