

Workers Power

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30p/10p strikers

NO SURRENDER TO KINNOCK!



Network John Sturrock

THIS YEAR'S LABOUR Party conference in Blackpool is the launch of Kinnock's final push to get into Number Ten. His 'revolution' in the party is well under way. The left is in retreat. The right control the shadow cabinet. The TUC is eating out of Kinnock's hands.

The delegates will be treated to a parade of new campaigns, a new, pretty rose logo and a series of anti-working class policy statements as the Whitty-Kinnock election machine shifts up a gear.

It is looking as though these aspirant statesmen will have few serious worries about a fight from the increasingly enfeebled left. The left's only concerted activity is around the question of nuclear power, judging by the number of resolutions on this from the constituencies.

RE-VAMPED

Since the electoral debacle of 1983 the party has sought a re-vamped image which will show the voters (especially those who had been lured by the Alliance) that all the 'electoral liabilities' have been dealt with. The extreme left, who scared off the SDP, have been and continue to be expelled with little or no resistance. Those embarrassing left policies on such questions as disarmament have been buried beneath a mound of glossy campaign literature on safe topics such as health (we all want a better health service don't we?), and law and order (we all want to be able to feel safe in our houses don't we?).

Neil Kinnock took on the job of leading Labour in its new style, electorally palatable image. In many ways he has made a success of the job and mincemeat of the retreating left. The sweet taste of success has whetted his appetite for absolute power in the party. He is no longer content with being party leader and Prime Minister in waiting. He now wants to be Party Chairman (sic) as well. This

move is fuelled by a combination of personal ambition and fear of Dennis Skinner, who should be chairman, being in the post in election year.

Kinnock has steadily gained ground in the party this year. An obedient NEC has been in place since the left was marginalised at last year's conference. With this backing Kinnock felt able to carry through a witch-hunting exercise to rid the party of its image of 'disunity' which he, like the press, blamed on the left.

GAMBLE

His gamble of increasing that disunity for a while, by investigating the Liverpool DLP and expelling some leading Militant supporters, in the hope that in the long term this would cow the left, has paid off. There is unlikely to be a big fuss at this conference over the purges. Only eight resolutions and amendments have been submitted on the Liverpool expulsions.

If Militant had seriously tried to fight on this issue they could have won much more support, including some of the 35 resolutions and amendments put forward on the narrow question of the reinstatement of Kevin Scally and Amir Khan. But Militant decided to keep their heads down in the hope that Kinnock will eventually leave them alone if they behave as loyal party faithful.

Militant are in fact handing Kinnock unity, on his terms. But the leadership will not stop. Recommendations put forward by the NEC for a tidier disciplinary procedure look set to be passed. They propose the establishment of a National Constitutional Committee. This would be elected by conference with the job of carrying out any further expulsions the leadership feels are necessary. The report explains:

"The party needs the moral and political credibility of its proceedings being seen to be fair,

impartial between factions and groups within the party and in line with natural justice."

That's good. We're going to have a 'democratic' witch-hunt next year.

What the proposals also contain are the grounds for a much wider purge if Kinnock wishes. There are new grounds for expulsion such as:

"Involvement in financial support for and/or the organisation of and/or the activity of any organisation declared to be ineligible for affiliation to the party."

This means any supporters of left papers and tendencies could be expelled, whereas at the moment membership of another organisation has to be proved. For Kinnock this is all part of his 'new style' Labour Party. At a meeting in Manchester he explained:

"We shall be implementing democratic socialism, ensuring the irrelevance of the ultra-left . . ."

He went on to say that:

". . . production in plenty and with efficiency is the precondition of satisfactory levels of provision. We seek democratic power in order to plan rationally and invest prudently in such production."

His idea of democratic power and planning is to ensure a tri-partite agreement between government, bosses and unions for more efficiency (job cuts and speed ups), less industrial 'strife' (legal shackles on the unions and wage restraint), leaving the power of the bosses firmly in place. These policies are contained in the various statements which will be put to conference for ratification.

NO RED FLAG

These documents will no doubt be opposed by some on the left, but the union bureaucrats with their all-powerful block votes wielded by unaccountable and unrepresentative delegations will ensure Kinnock is victorious. Other campaigning documents show the new image in full. No red flag, no talk of socialism or of a radical shift in the distribution of wealth. Instead we get genuflections to individual freedom, law and order and cooperation.

Kinnock is using Alliance policies and the smoothie Alliance image to try and win Alliance voters. Labour's message to these people is simple: we are in favour of home ownership and sale of council houses so don't panic; we will give you grants to put bigger locks on your doors, and we'll put up better street lighting. Of course Kinnock rounds this off with the promise to put more police on the streets. The promises to the middle class are plentiful. The promises

to the working class - apart from the promise of attacks on wages - are meagre.

The real message of this conference is clear. Whilst looking longingly at the middle class voters, hoping to steal them back from the Alliance, the Labour leaders are disciplining the class they claim to represent. The campaign literature on the NHS sums it up, "Be Patient."

Why should the working class, suffering years of growing unemployment, worsening services and benefits, the imprisonment of our class fighters, be patient? Because we are waiting for a Labour government. No need to struggle now, no messy strikes which embarrass the Labour Party and TUC, just hang on in there and the Kinnock in shining armour will rescue you.

The TUC has accepted this argument lock, stock and barrel. Many workers are accepting it, hopeful for better times in a couple of years. Even the left wing councils such as Lambeth are talking of everything in terms of not going for a confrontation over budgets but scraping through until Neil is in Downing Street.

FOOL'S GAME

This is no answer for the working class and oppressed. Workers must fight back now. Waiting for Labour is a fool's game. Struggles are taking place, in the print, in the public sector, over the reinstatement of sacked miners and the release of class war prisoners. Trade unionists are taking action in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in South Africa. These fights must be supported and extended. Our leaders must be put to the test - we must demand that they support these fights and organise solidarity action now.

In the Labour Party the left should get up off its knees and challenge the right. Dennis Skinner must stand against Kinnock for Party Chair. Local parties who have members expelled must defy the NEC and conference and continue to operate with them as members. Liverpool Labour Group must continue to meet with Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn in defiance of the NEC. The LPYS should clearly show that it will not be wound-up or shackled by the party but will carry on - independent of the party if necessary.

- No holding back on struggles now, in the name of an election in the future!
- Support the printworkers!
- Reinstatement the sacked miners!
- Release all class war prisoners!
- For workers' sanctions against South Africa!

BALLOT SPELLS SELL-OUT

ONCE AGAIN PRINTERS sacked by Rupert Murdoch are to vote on his 'final offer'. Apart from a few percent on the 'compensation fund' the latest offer is essentially the same as the last one in May. The scabs will remain in work, the sacked printers will remain out of work. What was rejected in May must be rejected again now. But why is it even being put to a ballot again?

The reason lies with the union leaders, Dean and Dubbins, rather than Murdoch. Nothing has been done to make him change his position and, therefore, he has done nothing more than repackage the terms of surrender that he offered in May. In effect the union leaders' position has not changed either since May or even January. They are 'New Realists'. Or, to put it another way, they cannot see how workers can expect to win a dispute against a determined boss.

They have never expected to win at Wapping in the sense of getting back jobs and union rights. Compensation was about as far as they could see. For them, the purpose of the dispute was not at all to win back the jobs but to convince other Fleet Street bosses that 'doing a Wapping' was, in the end, less cost effective than negotiating away jobs with their co-operation.

This is why Dean and company have opposed effective action against Murdoch from the very start. That would have involved a fight that would, inevitably, have spread to Fleet Street. It would also have meant open confrontation with the law. Instead, they argued for a boycott campaign - to convince 5 million Sun readers to become good class-conscious trade unionists.

GULF

The printers themselves had other ideas. The pickets grew at Wapping, support groups collaborated in picketing provincial depots, Dean was publicly humiliated at a mass meeting and the demand for more mass meetings grew. By May the gulf between rank and file and leadership threatened to become unbridgeable. This was a development that neither the union leaders nor Murdoch wanted and they found themselves suddenly able to put together a package.

Since the rejection of that deal Dean and Dubbins have concentrated on wearing down the determination of the strikers. They have gone along with every demand of the bosses' courts to demobilise the pickets and to distance the unions from the demonstrations at Wapping. Since the SOGAT conference in June they have also isolated the strikers within the unions.

The last act in their scenario was the shadow boxing at the TUC. As **Workers Power** predicted the huffing and puffing about Hammond and the EETPU was calculated to draw strikers' attention away from the central question of why their own leaders were refusing to fight. Just to make sure that the TUC did not, nonetheless, act as a focus for militants fighting to set the strike on a militant footing, the union leaders ensured that 'delicate negotiations' were in progress throughout the entire period.

Weeks of secret discussions (secret from the strikers that is) that were supposed to show how tough the bargaining was and what a good job the union leaders were doing were clearly a complete charade. The resulting proposals, if accepted, would represent complete victory for Murdoch. Of course they must be rejected. But, as the last four months have shown, rejection alone is not enough.

To go forward against Murdoch, even at this late stage, is still possible. What is needed is a dramatic change of direction in the strike.

- No more secret negotiations
- Regular Mass Meetings of all strikers
- Re-imposition of all picket lines
- Spread the strike to Fleet Street

editorial

WORKERS' SANCTIONS NEEDED

INCREASING DISCUSSION AND activity around the question of South Africa in the trade union movement shows that many workers do want to see effective solidarity action. A lobby of the Trades Union Congress called by Lambeth Trades Union Council held on 1 September drew support from engineers, bus and rail-workers as well as hospital, local government and other public sector trade unionists. A number of Trades Councils have set up special sub committees. Union branches and district committees are holding meetings on the issue. In two areas, West Midlands and East London, Labour Movement conferences have been called to discuss action. The South African Monitoring Service set up by Birmingham Trades Union Resource Centre has been receiving enquiries from shop stewards anxious to get the information they need to make a contribution to trade union solidarity.

What has the TUC done to give a lead in this situation? Produced an advertisement for cinema audiences urging them not to buy South African goods! However much this tugs at the heart strings, and however clear Dame Peggy Ashcroft's narration may be, there should be no doubt that this is a cop-out of the first order. The TUC is avoiding a clear call for the one really effective form of solidarity - workers' boycott action.

MINERS DEMAND ACTION

When South African Mineworkers' leaders Cyril Ramaphosa and James Motlatsi spoke to the British NUM conference, what they asked for was for the TUC to lead British unions in imposing sanctions themselves. Only the most cowardly leadership could interpret this as a plea for an advertisement asking for individual action well away from the workplace. "Our workers are beginning to doubt the TUC" said James Motlatsi last July. No South African trade unionist, and no British trade unionist who wants to support brothers and sisters in South Africa, should now have any doubts at all. You cannot trust the British TUC to fulfil even the most basic tasks of trade union internationalism. As well as stepping up demands on the TUC, rank and file trade union members must start organising the action themselves. There is no time to lose.

In the present situation we ought to be able to expect the major solidarity organisation in Britain, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, to be leading and organising a campaign for an effective workers' boycott. But once again the activist looking for a lead will be disappointed. The AAM did not take part in the Lobby of the TUC called by trade union bodies but organised its own leafletting. That in itself would not have mattered too much if its leaflets had made a clear call for effective boycott action - but that's exactly what they didn't do! The AAM sees pressure for government sanctions as the way forward. It sees its role in the trade unions as one of encouraging the 'left' leaders and its 'friends' to do behind the scenes lobbying. Out front, noisy and precise demands on these 'friends' might be embarrassing.

ORGANISE AMONGST THE RANK & FILE

So what can be done? First, work for action at a rank and file and local level must be stepped up. We need more groups of workers prepared to refuse to handle South African goods and services. We need to publicise the action that has taken place. Most militants have heard of the stand of the hospital stores' workers at Portsmouth. How many know that Leicester hospital stores' workers also refused to handle South African produce and quickly won an agreement from their management that no more such goods would be purchased?

We have got to win the case for action amongst broader layers of workers. Most crucially we must win the argument with those who handle important cargoes and contracts from and for South Africa. This means targeting the docks, the railways and road haulage to stop the flow of goods. It means targeting those unions who have it in their power to do so. That's what Knapp and Todd should be doing in solidarity with those fighting apartheid instead of appealing to individuals not to purchase goods that their own unions could and should boycott.

We need co-ordination and organisation of action. If the TUC won't fulfil this vital role then the trade unions that are taking action, or are prepared to, must plan and fight together.

We need to agitate for action and produce all the necessary detailed and clear material which will help to win this on the shop floor. All this needs a campaign. We should fight to win the AAM over to supporting such a campaign, but we cannot give up if they won't. The needs are too great.

A.A.M. MUST ACT

In the next month, trade unionists need to discuss solidarity action in branches and workplace organisations. A meeting of lobby participants in August agreed to hold a recall meeting to discuss further action and co-ordination. Branches should send delegates to this - in order to argue for an effective national campaign with wide labour movement backing. At the same time, motions must go forward to the Annual General Meeting of Anti-Apartheid, which takes place in January. They must call on it to prioritise the workers' sanctions demand, and participate in such a campaign. Motions can go from any affiliated organisation and have to be in by 5 October (this date may be put back). We cannot let another year go by in which the British working class fails to deliver the necessary aid to its beleaguered and heroic brothers and sisters. □

KINNOCK'S STUDENTS

FOR STUDENTS RETURNING to or starting college this term the prospects look bleak. Norman Fowler's vicious social security cuts package means that students will receive no rent rebate for the Christmas and Easter vacations.

Yet again universities and colleges are putting up rents above the rise of the pathetically low student grant. The future for an increasing number of graduates is the dole queue.

The record of the National Union of Students (NUS) in resisting these attacks has been lamentable. NUS's strategy has centred on the tried and failed methods of a pressure group. Signing endless petitions, writing letters to MPs, and calling the odd demonstration, all in the aid of arousing public sympathy for the plight of education. The NUS has excluded organising any militant resistance to the Tories' assault on education and the public sector.

NUS is presently controlled by the misnamed "Democratic Left", the Kinnockite majority within the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS). Indeed, Phil Woolas, until last Easter, the NUS president, played a virtual repeat performance in the student movement of Kinnock's role in leading the Labour Party.

Like Kinnock, Woolas has a record of, at best grudging sympathy for those in struggle, and at worst a venomous hostility to such action lest it be used by his bourgeois enemies as a sign of the irresponsibility of the labour movement.

Kinnock's purge of Militant supporters and other left-wingers from the Labour Party has been complemented by the NOLS leadership's persistent attempts to keep control of Labour students by bureaucratically excluding left-wingers from decision-making. At the last NOLS conference in March around 50 leftwing delegates were ruled out of order on spurious technical grounds.

PROTESTS

With the prospect of a general election looming on the horizon NOLS' strategy for NUS rests on keeping fingers crossed for a Kinnock led government to get in at Number Ten and hopefully restore the Tories education cuts.

Yet Kinnock's constant emphasis on the need for "sacrifices" and "patience" from workers in order to get Britain (which means the bosses' profits) on her feet again offers little hope for public sector workers let alone students.

For those of us who can't wait for one to two years for a rightwing Labour government to give us nothing worth having, what are the alternatives?

How can we organise a fight-back now in the NUS and NOLS? Alongside the "Democratic Left", Militant remain the strongest force in NOLS although a declining influence in NUS. Militant's strategy for students amounts to calls for limited protest actions such as their recent call for a one day national college shutdown against the Fowler

proposals complete with abstract arguments for students to "get stuck into the labour movement". In reality, this means joining a Militant controlled Labour Party Young Socialist branch and being recruited to the Militant. As the general election gets closer Militant's current "unity against the Tories" argument will be increasingly used against them by Kinnock as his NOLS lieutenants try to gag any criticism or calls for further action against the cuts.

The fastest growing grouping within NUS is Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN), initiated and politically controlled by Socialist Organiser.

At the last NUS conference at Easter SSIN succeeded in getting three candidates elected to the National Executive Committee. At that and the Christmas conferences SSIN was largely responsible for shifts to the left in some NUS policies. The union is now formally committed to calling on university and college administration not to implement the Tory cuts. On Ireland NUS's last existing policy was "Peace Jobs and Progress". However the Easter conference passed a policy condemning the Anglo-Irish Accord and calling for the phased withdrawal of British troops.

As a result of these apparent successes SSIN boasts,

"SSIN has arrived. We must now work to become SSAN - Socialist Students Are NOLS and transform the student movement" (Socialist Organiser 17.4.86)

OPPORTUNIST

Getting mildly leftwing policies passed at NUS conference is one thing; forcing the NUS leadership to fight for the needs of students is quite another. In fact the only major action SSIN has organised was the lobby of the Tory Party conference in Blackpool last year which caused no disquiet amongst the NUS bureaucrats. In fact SSIN's main efforts over the last year have been devoted to standing in student union elections. This is not bad in itself. However, if we look more closely at SSIN's political platform, we find not an action programme to transform NUS into a fighting union, but rather a hotch-potch of opportunist positions designed to win raw student recruits to Socialist Organiser - for example, SSIN's so-called "Non-implementation strategy" which was passed as NUS policy at the last Christmas conference. According to SSIN, NEC member Simon Pottinger, non-implementation is

"Our strategy to force the colleges to fight through refusing to implement the cuts and adopting a deficit budget". (Socialist Student Autumn 1985)

The big question is how can the colleges be forced to fight?

"... militant direct action against the cutters ... is vital."

Good. But what sort of action will be needed?

"Approaches to college union can and should be made ... and the basis for common action defined."

ELECTION

As with all centrists in the Labour Party as the General Election draws near the pressure to buckle under the leader becomes irresistible. For all its rhetoric about a "socialist campaign for Labour", SSIN has made peace with the Kinnockites in the NOLS-NUS leadership.

"now anyone in the labour movement who does not consider winning a labour victory in the next general election to be our task number one in the period ahead is politically disoriented: severely disoriented." (The Case for Labour, SCLV)

For a revolutionary opposition within NOLS and NUS our task number one must always be defending student and working-class interests in the here and now. This does not mean keeping our heads down and waiting for a Kinnockite-led government to get elected, but attempting to mount real resistance now to Thatcher's attacks. College administrators won't voluntarily stop passing on the cuts.

They must be forced, by students and campus workers using their strongest weapons, rent strikes, indefinite occupations and strike action. The NOLS-NUS leadership will not voluntarily begin a campaign of national direct action, even if it is NUS policy. They also must be forced by student unions demanding that they act, and by replacing them, if they do not, with those who will. Workers Power students are attempting to build a real fighting opposition to the NUS bureaucracy, one that will struggle to transform the NUS into an organisation that can and will defend its members. Join us in that fight. ■

by Julian Scholefield

workers power

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fighting fund

Last month we launched our fighting fund. We need a small fortune to purchase the typesetting and printing equipment necessary to enable us to go fortnightly, produce a regular journal and fund our activities, particularly our international assistance to the comrades of the FOT in Peru and Bolivia. Between now and Christmas we are aiming to raise £2000.

The fund got off to a flying start with £700 raised at our summer school. Since then contributions from readers and supporters in Leicester, Cardiff, London, Newcastle and Cambridge have taken us to £850. We need another £1150. Send donations to the address in the subs box.

yes-money talks!

LAW '86

The national campaign **LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT '86** needs more support! Get your union branch, CLP and ward to sponsor LAW (£10, £5 for individuals) and join the fight against Kinnock's purge.

Next Steering Committee Saturday 25 October. Details:

LAW '86
c/o 39 Talla House
Manchester Road
LONDON E14

CABLE STREET

Commemorate Cable Street

March against today's fascists

Fight racist attacks

Assemble Altav All Park,
(St Mary's Churchyard -
opp. Aldgate East tube) E1
Saturday 4 October, 12 Noon

LABOUR'S EMPTY PROMISES

LABOUR'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY comes in two versions. One is to be heard on the television, and read in the glossy brochures churned out by Walworth Road. The other is to be glimpsed in the debates and 'think pieces' which appear regularly in the Guardian and the New Statesman from a series of 'economic advisors' to Roy Hattersley.

In the first category you will find the curious newspeak that Kinnock and his entourage have introduced to the party. It is full of alliterative or rhyming buzz phrases - "Freedom and Fairness" etc. Its promises are vague in the extreme. It talks of "stimulating the economy through controlled expansion" and "a more productive Britain" (NEC's statement on Social Ownership). Kinnock is obviously modelling himself on the Thatcher of the pre-1979 election. He is keeping it vague so that neither supporters nor enemies have anything to hold against him.

The hardest pledge that Kinnock has made is to provide "one million jobs in two years". How is this to be done? Basically by adding £6 billion to the budget deficit and asking the nationalised industries to take on more labour. At the moment, however, the chiefs of the nationalised industries have given Labour "short shrift" (the words of the Economist). Of course as a government Labour could enforce its wishes though the Economist reports that they are modestly only asking for half the Tory's cut in the labour force to be restored.

All this of course leaves untouched the central question of the unemployment that the capitalist system creates by its very nature. We are now at the highest point of a boom phase of the economic cycle. That this phase left over four million actually unemployed in Britain tells you just how sick British capitalism is.

We are at the point of descent into another recession that will see unemployment soar once again as firms go bankrupt or seek to prop

up their sagging profit rates.

Even if Labour spends more in the public sector and on roads, schools and hospitals it won't directly touch the victims of private capital.

In any case it appears that only the £3.5 billion worth of taxes recuperated from what Thatcher gave the richest 10% of the population is earmarked for restoring the welfare state. This is only half the cost of the Falklands War or of beating the miners' strike. No wonder Kinnock scornfully rejects the calls to do for our class what Thatcher did for hers. He will not even undo what she did for the bosses!

There is a price to be paid for these chickenfeed reforms. It cannot yet be stated in official documents, but it is being constantly discussed by the shadow cabinet, its economic advisors and the key union leaders. It is incomes policy or put more honestly 'pay restraint'. Without it, Hattersley and Co point out, Labour has no counter-inflation policy.

There is some dispute as to what sort of incomes policy Labour should have. One of Hattersley's advisors, Gavyn Davies of the City Merchant Bank Goldman Sachs, formerly Jim Callaghan's advisor at Number 10, argues for a full blown incomes policy with the government setting a target figure and then imposing tax penalties on those companies who concede wage increases in excess of it. This idea has been shamelessly plundered from the Liberal-SDP Alliance, who stole it from the rubbish baskets of Wilson and Callaghan.

The problem of all previous incomes policies is that in the most profitable sectors of industry employers and unions have colluded to break the norms. The low paid have revolted against the minuscule rises they have received on the percentage basis. The minimum wage agreed by this year's TUC was eagerly sponsored by the unions like USDAW (that has never fought to raise its members wages



Hattersley emitting hot air

and never wants to do so) and NUPE (which fought in the past but has settled for the new realism). Hattersley and Kinnock hope that such a minimum wage will ensure them against a 'revolt of the low paid' or a 'winter of discontent'.

Another idea stolen from the Liberals to help head off large claims from higher paid workers is profit sharing. Thus companies with higher profits and productivity could make payments above the norm provided they came from higher profits per employee. By this means the knock on effect of high settlements in these sectors could be prevented.

Another of Hattersley's advisors, Paul Ormerod, rejects the extension of incomes policy to the private sector on the grounds that trade unions are now too weak to raise wages significantly. This is an exaggeration. In fact the bosses are now bitterly complaining about labour costs - particularly in the manufacturing sector. On official figures wages have kept up to a 7% increase average whilst price inflation slipped below 3%. The bourgeoisie may not want an incomes policy under the Tories but if they back Labour they will certainly demand 'pay restraint'.

Hattersley is also doing his best to assure the bosses that their income (profits, dividends etc.) will not be restrained in any way. The laughable restraints of the 70s - which at worst only resulted in the bosses having to defer spending their enormous salaries or selling their shares - are not even mentioned. Hattersley recently made clear at a banquet given by the American Fund Managers in New York that Labour would not re-impose the exchange controls Thatcher scrapped. This act of generosity is clearly intended to placate the City of London. Here again Hattersley is offering the bosses a Labour Government bound by the financial strait-jacket Thatcher designed to restrain state

spending. The City will continue to practice its massive tax evasion unhindered and will hold Labour on the tight rein with the threat of runs on the pound and 'investment strikes'. It is clear that talk in the NEC documents of "repatriation of funds invested overseas by financial institutions" is to be subject to a proviso - only if their owners would like to.

It is unlikely that a formal incomes policy will be signed and sealed before the election campaign. This will be so not only in order to deceive the trade union members but also in order to distance Labour from the TUC and draw the sting of Tebbit's charges that Kinnock is under the thumb of the unions or that a new 'social contract' would mean a return to trade union power. This is why in public, Kinnock likes to talk roughly to the unions, adopting a 'take it or leave it, I'm the future prime minister' style.

Alas - with the union bureaucracy - he has got an easy job on his hands. Kinnock has now only to show the whip to have them fawning like spaniels. And no spaniel fawns like a Stalinist spaniel. Thus Ken Gill puts the mood accurately when he says:

"With the prospect of another term of Mrs Thatcher I think the trade union movement is prepared to put up with almost anything, achieve any level of unity... to make sure that doesn't happen again."

What should be the attitude of trade unionists and Labour Party members to Kinnock and Hattersley's policies? The simple answer is that they should completely reject them on paper and in practice. No incomes policy! No wage restraint!

The policies will not help the unemployed. The bosses will throw out of their factories whoever they want unless a government attacks their right to manage and the sacred rights of property. Likewise the results of a minimum wage

will be the laying off of low paid workers unless a government and the trade unions prevented the bosses from doing so and obliged them to pay a decent living wage. Again the rights of profit would have to be invaded. If industry is to be developed to meet human need in Britain and abroad it must be controlled and directed by a plan drawn up by the producers themselves.

The alternative is the chaos of capitalism presided over by the City of London and the largest monopolies. Without striking at their power, without laying hold of their wealth the working class cannot have its own government. A Kinnock/Hattersley government will be another bosses, anti-working class government like those before it - if we let them have their way. We must stand up and fight the anti-working class policies of Kinnock, Hattersley and their flashy advisors. Whilst we should see that as many workers vote Labour to put them into office we should concede not an inch to their policies or programme.

Here and now we should defend every progressive policy or reform Labour has been obliged to adopt of the past five years.

We should fight to force them to abandon their wage freezing, to impose a living minimum wage on the employers and to provide a massive programme of useful public works to mop up the dole queues. We should fight to force Labour to restore all Thatcher and Healey's cuts and to nationalize all the firms resisting or sabotaging this programme without compensation.

The voices of those resisting the "unity at any price to get any sort of Labour government" will be very small in number in the next two years or so. But they will be proved right far sooner than their detractors think. ■

by Dave Stocking



Public sector workers will face cash limits under Labour

THE RECENT 'INTERIM agreements' on pay and cover have been hailed by the NUT leadership as the "most significant advances for the teaching profession since the Houghton report in 1974" (NUT pamphlet: A New Deal For Teachers). Quite apart from the fact that the proposed deal has been pushed through with absolutely no consultation with the membership, a serious look at what has been 'gained' soon shows that most of the so-called improvements are only "in principle" and contain no specifics.

Some teachers have been lulled into thinking the new pay scales are a significant improvement. To some extent they are, especially

for lower paid teachers. But they now link pay with conditions, thus opening the door to the employers increasing work with no extra pay. Removing the bar at the top of scales has been hailed as a great victory - in fact a teacher at the top of Scale 1 now will reach the giddy heights of £14,500 in 11 years time!

A new 'Entry Grade' has been created. This will create a pool of second class low earners subject to 'assessment' before they can advance up the scales.

NO-COVER NOW!

When we look at conditions the picture becomes even worse. The working year has been extended by five days and hours per day are being negotiated. It's no secret that the employers want five hours per day contact time. All teachers will now be assessed. On the question of cover the agreement smashes past gains with the employers committed to using their best endeavours to supply cover as soon as practicable, while teachers will cover indefinitely if they don't manage to.

What then should be the response of teacher militants to these new agreements? Firstly all schools and associations should pass motions committing themselves to continuing no-cover action. This must be done in the knowledge that such action is likely to be unofficial and could well be attacked by the employers in terms of deductions and suspensions. This can only be fought by

co-ordinated strike action. To this end schools and associations should set up action committees in order

to provide a common front against employer attacks.

Secondly we must demand that the Executive call a special salaries conference and mandate our delegates to vote "no" to the deals and to plan a serious fight against them in order that we do not have permanently worsened conditions of service.

Finally, militants must realise the urgent need to build a genuine rank and file movement that can eventually wrest control of the union from the present leadership and turn it into a democratic class struggle union that truly reflects the needs of its membership. ■

by Adrian Swaine

NOTHING NEW FROM BRIEFING



This month sees the launching of a new fortnightly Labour Briefing to "organise a campaigning, fighting hard left current in the Labour Party and the trade unions." The new Briefing is the outcome of a 200 strong conference in May where supporters of the original Briefing plus others from Socialist Viewpoint and the International magazine agreed to the new format and programme. The project of Briefing was outlined in a July pilot issue. The comrades seek to build unity of the hard left "focused around an action programme which highlights the main issues in the run up to the next general election and which offers a way forward for the working class and the oppressed."

This is a worthy aim in a period when the rest of the Labour left is busy re-aligning itself with Kinnock. The working class needs a manual of action for waking the labour movement from its dreams of a Labour government coming to the rescue. Such an action programme would have to face up to two basic tasks: fighting Thatcher's onslaught now, and fighting in the labour movement against Kinnock's plans for a thoroughly right-wing Labour government. Yet in the very same issue Briefing adds that:

"we are fighting to lay the basis for a fortnightly paper to take forward the campaign to organise the left in a democratic, non-sectarian struggle for socialism."

This is a slightly different message. On the one hand Briefing projects itself as a united front battling in the here and now. On the other it projects itself as a leadership in the struggle for socialism, as performing party tasks. In reality Briefing can perform neither task. And it covers up that fact with a mass of evasion and political dishonesty.

Their action programme recognises that the struggle "can only find a solution in a fundamental break with the capitalist system itself." They argue that this requires taking power away from the bosses and their state. For the Marxists of Socialist Viewpoint or International such phrases have a very distinct meaning and programme content. But Briefing's programme renders this 'hard' assertion into Labourite words:

"we fight for Labour to take real power, basing itself on the democratic accountable organisations of our class."

But what 'real power' is we are never told.

This is deliberate. Such phrases mean different things to different people. Those in Briefing who claim to be Trotskyists would presumably say they are talking about workers' councils and smashing the state. But for others in the Labour left these same phrases can mean a Benn-type 'real power'. They mean tinkering about with the bosses' state, abolishing the House of Lords, democratising the police and

controlling the movement of capital.

The same evasion and equivocation surrounds the question of who is going to take 'real power'. The action programme thunders:

"And we believe that if our leaders in the trade unions and the Labour Party will not lead the fight to take the power, they must make way for those who will."

How polite! If the current leadership will not take the power? We know already that the reformists of the LP right and left will never take significant steps against capitalism. But to say so might lose Briefing friends and influence. Hence the silence.

Briefing fails to warn the working class about the true nature of the Labour Party and its leaders. This is hardly a good start for an Action Programme that starts from the need for a Labour government, and builds up enormous illusions in the ability to get a 'better' one than all the previous ones. How does it suggest that the working class ensures this? By a struggle for "democratic reform" of the unions and LP. They want to:

"Make the PLP accountable to the Party as a whole; ensure the election of the shadow cabinet by the whole Party. Support the autonomous organisation of Black people, Women and Youth within the Party. Support the right of campaigns, currents, tendencies and journals to exist within the Labour Party and trade unions. End all witch-hunts."

These demands are important and ones that we too fight for. But they in no way challenge the real control of the leadership, or change the politics of the Party. In fact the one reform which would enable workers to change Party policy, the placing of the union votes in the hands of the rank and file in the unions, is not even raised. Yet all the same Briefing announces that:

"the Labour Party should be refounded to become a genuine party of Labour representing the working class and the movement of all the oppressed."

This could come straight out of the mouth of Tony Benn.

But what does it mean from the pens of professed revolutionaries? We are for the thoroughgoing transformation of the Labour Party so that it is taken into the hands of the working class. We are against all bans and proscriptions. But we fight for this because our purpose is to build a revolutionary party that proves its worth to the mass of workers in struggle and democratic debate. We wage that struggle in order to prove ourselves against the reformists, not in order to reform the Labour Party as an end in itself. Briefing is silent on what type of Labour Party it wants, or why it wants it.

As a platform for principled political regroupment of the hard left Briefing is evasive and in-

adequate. Does it stand up any better as a united front of struggle in the period ahead?

Like the rest of the Labour left which it claims to oppose, Briefing starts from the idea that the key to the next period is kicking out Thatcher as soon as possible and replacing the Tories with a Labour government. In the editorial they say:

"It is clear that Labour needs to unite and show itself united if we are to win the coming election; it is equally clear that the fate of our movement on the industrial level may to a large extent depend on our success in ousting Thatcher's Tory regime and putting a Labour government in its place."

Unlike the 'realigned left', however, Briefing insists that this goal:

"cannot be counterposed to pursuing a militant class struggle policy against the attacks of the employers and their government."

In starting from the question of the need for a Labour government, the Briefing programme skews its demands towards that goal. Symptomatically, when it deals with wages, the programme is already talking about fighting Hattersley and boosting the minimum wage, protecting pay with cost of living clauses. Fine, but what about the next two years when we're faced with the unfortunate but unavoidable task of fighting Thatcher? Their programme says nothing about how to organise such a fight, on wages or anything else. A programme for such issues would have to take up the organisation of the rank and file in the unions as a militant minority to challenge and replace the existing leadership. It would need to argue for strikes, solidarity action and defiance of the Tory anti-union laws.

WOMEN

On the question of women the programme offers support for all the demands of the oppressed and the right to organise autonomously. It repeats some of the demands of the women's movement, such as equal pay and benefits, free child-care etc., but again offers no way of organising that fight now. An article in the paper on Briefing Women does not elaborate further, and nowhere is the vital question of the need for a working class women's movement raised.

A united front is an agreement for action. Every demand in the revolutionary action programme pre-supposes united action between revolutionary and reformist workers. On every major issue on which the class needs to fight we will find different allies in the class. In Labour Against the Witch-hunts there will be unity between CLPs, union branches and sections of the PLP. In campaigning for workers' sanctions against South Africa other sections will join together the unions, black workers and others.

In asking for support for many different 'united fronts' contained in a programme Briefing supporters will exclude many workers who wish to fight on just one issue. Trotsky once summed up the attitude of the architects of Briefing. Writing in 1935 of a similar attempt to build a "broad, mass paper", he said:

"The programme of the Fourth International, that's for 'us', for the big shots of the leadership. And the masses? What are the masses? They can rest content with a quarter or even a tenth of the programme. This mentality we call elitism... It is not the attitude of a Marxist." (Crisis of the French Section p99) ■

by Paul Mason

FASCISM,

theory
programme
& practice

by Pat Spackman

oisie's point of view, can only be restored by the physical destruction of the labour movement. To achieve this it turns to fascism.

The distinctive feature of fascism is that it is not only committed to maintaining bourgeois society over the bones of the working class, but that it has as an integral feature, the perspective of building a mass movement, to achieve this. The raw materials for this mass movement are the masses of the petit-bourgeoisie caught, as in a vice, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In the event of the proletariat proving itself incapable of resolving the crisis it will turn to fascism. Analysing the Nazis, Trotsky wrote:

"The pauperization of the petit-bourgeoisie, by ties and socks of artificial silk, eroded all official creeds and first of all the doctrine of democrat parliamentarism... The shabby grievances of small proprietors never out of bankruptcy, of their university sons without posts and clients, of their daughters without dowries and suitors, demanded order and an iron hand."

In Germany the revolutionary proletarian party was absent to provide the iron hand of the dic-

IT IS FIFTY years since the famous 'Battle of Cable Street' in London's East End when Mosley's fascist Black-shirts were smashed by 250,000 workers. This mobilisation of workers to physically smash the fascists - a mobilisation that the Communist Party leadership very nearly aborted in the name of its popular frontist politics of alliance with liberal bourgeois elements - put paid to Mosley's attempt to build a mass movement.

It demonstrated the correctness of Hitler's own assessment of how his rise to power could have been prevented. Speaking at a Nazi rally in Nuremberg shortly after his triumph in 1933 he said:

"Only one thing could have broken our movement - if the adversary (i.e. the working class - WP) had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed with extreme brutality, the nucleus of our movement."

LAST RESORT

The Nazis remain a model for every fascist movement around today. Indeed, their rise to power reveals in the clearest manner the real dynamics and nature of fascism. Fascism is the last resort of the big bourgeoisie in the imperialist heartlands in its attempts to solve the crisis of its economy and preserve its political rule at the expense of the working class. In extreme circumstances the 'normal' means of containing the working class - via a parliamentary regime and a social democratic party - are rendered obsolete. Paralysis in the economy breeds a political chaos that neither social democracy, nor an open capitalist parliamentary party can cope with. Order, from the big bourg-



AFA march against fascists



Comrades, The rise in fascist activities in Birmingham has been very apparent of late. This year alone the National Front (NF) has made attacks on the Socialist League (SL) bookshop on at least eight occasions, and at least four on the bookshop of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

The worker inside the SL bookshop has received hate mail and death threats from NF sources and was the subject of a personal attack by fascists near his own home, as was the vice-president of Birmingham Trades Council. A public meeting in the city held by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) was disrupted by several NF members who also threatened to 'intervene' at a Youth Against Apartheid public meeting. Some left-wing mobilisation to defend the meeting was organised - this

receiving strong support from Workers Power.

Unfortunately this defence has been wound down owing to the complacency of the SWP and (some) SL members who fail to see the danger signals.

The SWP is particularly complacent and has argued that fascism is in isolation and is no sort of threat at this point in time. It is this complacency which will allow both the BNP and the NF to gain confidence and grow in numbers. The ever increasing amount of crude nationalism and racism depicted on the ever increasing number of BNP and NF labels/stickers all over Birmingham is something revolutionaries cannot ignore. Workers Power supporters have continually argued for a positive united front with other left groups to counter the rise of the fascists, to win workers and trade unionists with our arguments and indeed to smash the fascists completely. Until now these other left groups have failed to respond. Workers Power will continue arguing for this united front policy against fascism until it is won.

yours fraternally,
Jeff Davies (Birmingham)

THEN & NOW



NF thugs on parade

tatorship of the proletariat. The Stalinist KPD, in the grip of "Third Period" ultra-leftism, spurned the tactic of the workers' united front against fascism. Social Democracy bleated impotently but would not lead a fight. The ruined petit-bourgeoisie, dragging with it the dregs of the working class, the lumpen proletariat, turned to the party of "counter-revolutionary despair", the Nazi Party.

The Nazi Party appealed to the petit-bourgeoisie with nationalist demagoguery, not a clear programme. It had no real programme independent of the needs of German imperialism. But its racist ideology was ideally suited as a means of enlisting the support of the middle classes and the lumpen proletariat. Together with its promises of 'strength' in government, its racism - in the case of the Nazis vile anti-semitism leading to the Holocaust - seemed to the despairing middle classes a ready-made answer to their problems. Trotsky explained:

"As the ruined nobility sought solace in the gentility of its blood, so the pauperised petit-bourgeoisie befuddles itself with fairy tales concerning the special superiorities of its race... The pogrom becomes the supreme evidence of racial superiority."

THREAT

The Nazi Party was not unique. Its essential characteristics - the mobilisation of the middle class in a mass movement to smash the working class - were shared by Mussolini, Franco, the French fascist leagues etc. They are the characteristics that the fascist movements of today seek to emulate.

Fighting Fascism

The only national anti-fascist organisation in Britain is Anti Fascist Action (AFA). Workers Power is affiliated to AFA and supports many of its actions. However, AFA has tried to copy the populist (in fact it was popular frontist) orientation of the Anti-Nazi League of the 1970s. While AFA is more prepared to physically confront the fascists than the ANL was (it did not want to upset its middle class allies who refused to condone violence against the NF) it does try to use nationalist arguments against the NF.

It does not pose the fight against fascism in clear cut class terms. In a leaflet issued by AFA for the mobilisation against the fascist Remembrance Sunday march, the NF were condemned for their "act of sickening hypocrisy" in their "attempt to pass themselves off as respectable patriots". Subsequently AFA decided to hold an anti-racist, anti-fascist Remembrance Day rally themselves on November 9th in Trafalgar Square, to commemorate those who died "fighting fascism" in World

This is why, despite recognising that fascism is imperialism's last resort, we reject the tendency of many on the left (the SWP for example) to underestimate fascism on the grounds that "it is not a threat at the moment". This method is quite wrong. As Hitler pointed out above if we (the working class) had understood the principle of fascism we could have crushed it at its root.

There are many far right and fascist groupings in Britain today, from the fringe Tory groups like 'Tory Action' and WISE (Welsh, Irish, Scottish, English) to the outright fascist organisations like the League of St. George, the British National Party and the National Front (NF). Whilst we must have a firm grasp (round their necks!) of the entire right and its workings, we are concentrating here on the National Front.

SOLDIERING

The National Front, founded in 1967, has been to the fore of British fascism for most of its nine-



Goebbels

War II. In other words they are commemorating the imperialist slaughter that was conducted to boost profits and divide the world, not to fight fascism at all.

Such arguments are grist to fascism's mill. Against all nationalism we need to pose internationalism, which means supporting workers in all lands, and opposing the British bosses in their attacks on us and on workers in other parts of the world. So, while continuing to support AFA actions against the fascists we will retain our right to criticise its nationalist positions and argue for our policy of building a genuine workers' united front against fascism, within which we will fight for:

- No platform for fascists.
- No immigration controls.
- For black self-defence squads, supported by the labour movement, now!
- Fascists out of the unions.
- For a central orientation of the trade unions with the goal of a workers' united front and workers' defence squads to defeat fascist gangs.

teen year existence. It is particularly important to focus on the NF today because of its 'neo-Strasserism'. That is it has opted for an orientation towards the working class, hand in hand with a 'political soldiering' or terrorist approach to politics.

In the mid-seventies the NF, under the leadership of self-styled Fuhrer John Tyndall, attempted to bill itself as a 'respectable' party using electioneering tactics. In its campaigns and marches, its papers and pamphlets in this period it concentrated almost exclusively on its racist policies. It stood as the anti-immigrant party. All social evils were blamed on the blacks. Its fascism - once manifested in uniform wearing and military exercises - was downplayed.

The results of this tactic, with its attendant party political broadcasts and media publicity, were relatively successful. The membership rose to a figure approaching 20,000 and in the 1977 Spring GLC Elections the liberals were driven

into fourth place by the NF who polled 100,000 votes.

This success was not to last very long. The electoral tactic backfired in 1979 when the Tories, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, presented themselves as the respectable racist party, the party that could curb immigration. Fascist support dwindled after Thatcher made her infamous remarks on TV claiming that British people were afraid of being 'swamped' by people of a different culture and race. In the same TV interview she openly admitted wanting to win back support the Tories had lost to the NF. In 1979 she did.

In the mid to late 1970s the NF never abandoned the 'street' aspect of fascist politics. It conducted a series of brutal attacks on black people. It staged intimidatory marches through black areas in towns like Bradford, Leicester and Rotherham. Tyndall himself realised that this presence on the streets was essential in building a mass movement, based on an appeal to the irrational and emotional instincts of the most prejudiced elements in society:

"What is it that touches off a chord in the instincts of the people to whom we seek to appeal? It can often be the most simple and primitive thing... It may be just a flag; it may be a marching column; it may be the sound of a drum; it may

be a banner or it may just be the impression of a crowd." (Quoted in *The National Front*, Martin Walker)

Despite this impeccable fascist outlook Tyndall was held responsible for the 1979 electoral debacle and subsequent organisational decline in the NF.

Sensing the need for a new order a young faction of the NF began to work for a change in style. In 1980 Tyndall resigned citing the existence of a "homosexual network" in the party and "too many skinheads on marches" as his reasons. In reality he was ousted in a bid by younger elements in the Front to move away from the Hitlerite style of a one man leadership. Tyndall went off to form the short-lived New National Front, now the British National Party, leaving his old sidekick Martin Webster alongside Richard Verral and Andrew Brons. This triumvirate leadership was highly unstable offering nothing new to the fast dwindling membership. The new young faction led by Derek Holland and Nick Griffin was influenced by the ideas of the Strasser brothers, Goebbels, Julius Evola and the terrorism of the Italian "Third Position" Group (so called because of its claim to reject both capitalism and communism). By December 1983, it had enough support to sack Webster as National Activities Organiser and finally expel him in February 1984. ■

WHAT IS STRASSERISM ?

The NF today adheres to a 'political soldier' orientation. This mixes the blood and soil mysticism and cult of the warrior of Julius Evola - where Japanese Samurai, Roman Legionaires, Greek Spartans and Iranian Mullahs are set as examples of self-sacrifice - with the 'socialism' of Strasserism. This pseudo-socialism manifests itself in the NF's new style slogans such as "Smash Capitalism, Smash Communism" and "Tax the Greedy Not the Needy" and (shouted on marches in Bury recently) "The Workers United will never be Defeated" (!). It needs to be ruthlessly exposed for the hypocritical vomit it is.

While Strasserism likes to emphasise the 'socialism' in National Socialism it makes no attempt to hide its anti-semitism and general racism. Writing in *Nationalism Today* Derek Holland lays out a plan for re-patriation over ten years. Holland says it would take Heathrow a mere ten minutes and three plane loads to fly 1500 'immigrants' per day to "their own countries" - 500,000 per annum.

Strasserism was epitomised in the politics of the National Socialist Working Association (NSWA) wing of the Nazi Party through its central organ *NS Briefe* edited by Goebbels.

Their base was Elberfeld in the Ruhr, an area of Germany with radical labour movement traditions. The author Robert Black in his *Fascism in Germany* referring to the NSWA's "thoroughly pettybourgeois eclectic nature", was right when he described:

"The petty bourgeoisie enragee, the noisy radical who, denied what he thinks is his rightful place in the bourgeois sun, vents his anger on those above and below him. He admires (and fears) the discipline, heroism and dynamism of the revolutionary workers movement; just as he despises its internationalism and 'class exclusiveness'. He borrows from communism that which he finds useful to intimidate the big bourgeoisie in order to compel it to bestow on him the privilege and power he deserves; while from the same bourgeoisie he takes the poisonous ideology of chauvinism and anti-semitism, using it to divert the proletariat from its revolutionary path thereby rendering it a passive object under the tutelage of its social and intellectual betters."

Otto Strasser advanced a theory that "was opposed to Marxism and capitalism". Strasser had a vision of 'state feudalism' with the state-

owning the land and leasing it out to private citizens:

"All were to do as they liked with their own land, but no one could sell or sublet state property. In this way we hoped to combat state proletarianisation and restore a state of liberty to our fellow citizens. No man is free who is not economically independent." (O. Strasser. Quoted in *Fascism in Germany*)

Otto Strasser proposed a federal system of government consisting of representatives of corporations that would be divided into five groupings - workers, peasants, clerks and officials, industrialists and liberal professors:

"The prosperity of the country would be assured by the nationalisation of heavy industry and the distribution of great estates as state fiefs" and "Reconstruction could only be brought about on the basis of a new order which could re-establish harmony between labour and capital and between the individual and the community... there would be no dictatorship either of class or race." (O. Strasser. Quoted in *Fascism in Germany*)

The Strassers and Goebbels had argued that despite the huge gulf separating national socialism from communism they should attempt to obtain military aid from the Soviets in order to aid German imperialism for war against the Entente powers. After 1925, with the rise of the bureaucratic caste of Stalin and his theory of 'Socialism in One Country', the 'left' Nazis expressed some sympathy with the developments in the USSR. Stalin's anti-semitism was drawn on and the 'left' Nazis gloated that the United Opposition "was led almost entirely by Jews" (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek). *NS Briefe* carried articles on Stalin's purge of the Bolshevik-Leninists, sometimes addressing them specifically to KPD workers:

"Never has a suppressed class liberated itself through international protest, but only through nationalistic will for the future." (Goebbels. Quoted in *Fascism in Germany*)

A similar approach to the left was attempted (unsuccessfully) by today's NF in their open letter to Militant supporters in Liverpool.

By exploiting the betrayals of the social democracy and Stalinism, the Working Association made considerable gains amongst the more backward and lumpen sections of the working class. The Nazis claimed that they were the 'real' socialists as opposed to the Marxists.

Strasserism was useful to the Nazis and their bourgeois backers during the stage of building a reactionary mass movement. Once in power, however, the 'socialism' in National Socialism was abruptly dropped. As Trotsky noted:

"Such slogans as state control of the trusts and the elimination of unearned income were thrown overboard immediately upon the assumption of power."

The Strasserites (excluding Goebbels who was a Hitler loyalist) were purged and executed en masse in June 1933 - not because they were in any way real socialists (they were fascist to the core) but because their demagogic orientation to workers had become redundant.

Today's NF looks to the Strasserite tradition and to the values and warrior ideals of the SA (the early Nazi militia). It takes its inspiration less from *Mein Kampf* and more from a novel, *The Turner Diaries*, written by William Pierce, the leader of the USA's fascist outfit the National Alliance. The book glorifies the "political soldier" ideal and depicts the triumph of the fascist New Order as stemming from the ruthless pursuit of this ideal.

The National Front, active in the Six Counties with the UDA and UVF, have recently established headquarters there with paid full-timers and an Ulster paper - the *Ulster Sentinel*. Head of the operation in Ireland is John Field. Both he and Nick Griffin were recently pictured marching alongside Ian Paisley on the Loyalist night march into Hillsborough. Leaflets recruiting for the UDA are distributed by the NF and members are sent "across the sea" for weapons training, marches and meetings.

Eliminating dissidents within the NF also seems to be in order, judging by the recent car bomb attack on Ian Anderson, former chairman of the NF. Unfortunately Anderson was asleep in bed when the bomb (similar to those used by the UVF) exploded under his car in Barking. The bombing seems to be the result of a current faction fight in the NF between the Griffin/Holland ruling pro-terrorist group and the Anderson/Wingfield group who advocated toning down the links with Italian terror.

The NF and other British fascist organisations cannot be ignored. Their turn from elections to violence simply means that their tactics have shifted, not that they have ceased to be a threat. The working class must be mobilised to defeat fascism wherever it raises its head, and physically defend those who are targeted for attack by the fascists. ■

IN OCTOBER and November of 1956 the workers and students of Hungary took up arms against two successive waves of Soviet military intervention. They toppled a hated Stalinist government. They created workers' and revolutionary councils that became the real power in every factory and mine and most localities. Only after at least 20,000 had been killed and after the aerial bombardment of its major proletarian strongholds was the Hungarian revolution eventually drowned in blood.

The Hungarian uprising of 1956 contained the potential for the revolutionary destruction of Stalinism both within Hungary and beyond its borders. It opened the prospect of destroying the political rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy and replacing it with the direct political rule of the revolutionary proletariat.

Despite the ceaseless torrent of lies and slanders poured forth by international Stalinism the Hungarian workers were neither agents of the restoration of capitalism nor the dupes of such agents. They were in their overwhelming majority determined to achieve two things. They wished to defend the socialised and planned economy against the restoration of the capitalists and landlords, and they were determined to destroy the filthy tyranny that denied the proletariat the slightest democracy, subjecting it to a caste of highly privileged and upstart bureaucrats.

The tragedy of the Hungarian revolution was that the workers were unable to create - in the time available - a leadership and a programme of action that could establish a government and the armed forces necessary to defend Hungary's political revolution and to extend it to the rest of Eastern Europe and the USSR. That the potential for this existed is clear from every serious study or eyewitness account of the events of 1956.

The falsity of the Stalinists' slanders breaks out of the vast majority of workers' statements in this period:

"Soviet soldiers! We the workers from the railroad factory in Győr inform you that in our democratic state workers are the guardians of the socialist achievements. That means with all their might, they are speaking out against returning factories and banks to the capitalists. At the same time we are against any Rakosite - Stalinist restoration." (Quoted in M.J. Lasky (ed) The Hungarian Revolution p 211)

The death of Stalin in March 1953 served to destabilise the whole political system he had ruled over in the USSR and in the 'Peoples Democracies' of Eastern Europe. In the highest ranks of the Kremlin there was a murderous struggle for power which, although eventually won by Khrushchev, extended over several years. Berea, Khrushchev, Malenkov and their rival cliques battled for power - occasionally being forced to take manoeuvres onto the terrain of international politics.

As part of this factional struggle Khrushchev was obliged to denounce 'the crimes of Stalin'. In fact he carefully restricted himself to revealing the dictators' crimes against the bureaucracy itself. The political opponents of Stalin - against whom the mass terror was unleashed - were not rehabilitated. In a laughable standing on its head of the personality cult, the slaughter and imprisonment of hundreds of thousands was passed off as the result of the evil genius or paranoia of one man. Promises were made to relax the police terror regime, to open the labour camps and improve living standards.

A ferment of revolt seethed through the whole Stalinist system. In the slave labour mines of Vorkuta there was a strike in the summer of 1953. In June 1953 strikes spread from East Berlin to all the major industrial centres of East Germany. The general strike was put down by Soviet troops. There were major strikes in Pilsen in Czechoslovakia and at the giant Matyas Rakosi iron and steel plant in Csepel - the industrial centre of Budapest.

Stalin's death, the gang warfare in the Kremlin and proletarian resistance provoked a political crisis in the ranks of Hungarian Stalinism. Since 1948 the 'Hungarian Stalin' - Matyas Rakosi - had set course to industrialise Hungary at break-neck speed along the lines pioneered by the USSR in the 1930s. Workers living standards were driven down. The peasantry were driven at gunpoint into collective farms. Political repression was probably more severe than anywhere else in Eastern Europe with the apparatus of repression being in the hands of an extremely privileged uniformed security force - the AVH. Rankers in the AVH received at least three times the average industrial wage; officers received twelve times that wage. In addition the newly established Hungarian People's Democracy was obliged to pay massive reparations to the USSR for the war that the Horthy regime had waged alongside Hitler. In 1948 25.4% of Hungarian national expenditure went on reparations. That figure dropped to 10% in 1949.

Little wonder then that the Rakosi regime was amongst the most hated by its own people in Eastern Europe. Fully aware of this and fearful of the consequences, the Kremlin - and Malenkov in particular - moved to improve the image of the regime in 1953. Rakosi had to stay as Party Secretary, but there was to be a new Prime Minister in the person of Imre Nagy who was given the green light to inaugurate a 'New Course' in Hungary.

NAGY'S NEW COURSE

Given his role in 1956 and his popularity with large sections of workers and with oppositional intellectuals in the party it is necessary to characterise Nagy's politics. By training Nagy was a loyal Stalinist. He had spent 15 years of his life as a Comintern functionary in the USSR. On Stalin's death he delivered the standard eulogy to Stalin as 'the great leader of humanity'.

However within the spectrum of Stalinist politics Nagy was also decidedly a Rightist. His 'New Course' was aimed at achieving a slower pace of transition along the lines of Russia's New Economic Policy (NEP) of the 1920's. He attacked the politics of the Rakosi era for having more in common with the programme of the Left Opposition than with the actions of Stalin during the NEP. He was an ardent devotee of the Popular Front alliance that the Hungarian CP had maintained with peasant, social democratic and outright reactionary parties from 1944 to 1948. To that end he attempted to breathe life into the corpse of the still existent Peoples Patriotic Front, attempting to turn it into a mass organisation. Nagy talked openly of Hungary as having its own national road to socialism and mused in 1955 on:

"the possibility of neutralising Hungary on the Austrian pattern."

Nagy stands in the tradition of Bukharin and Rightist strands within Stalinism. More recently the model for his policy was Tito. However during his time in power writers and journalists were less restricted by censorship, real wages were increased, peasants were freed to leave collective farms and the grossest trappings of Rakosi's dictatorship were scrapped.

If this alone was not sufficient to give Nagy a degree of popularity his ousting from power by a resurgent Rakosi in January 1955, and his subsequent expulsion from the Central Committee and Party, served to provide him with the mantle of the courageous foe of the workers' and intellectuals' of number one enemy - Matyas Rakosi. This explains why throughout 1955 and 1956 most oppositional currents in Hungary looked initially to Imre Nagy for political leadership.

Despite his best intentions Rakosi found that he was not able to turn the clock back to the political norms of his old regime. In May 1955 Khrushchev travelled to Yugoslavia to embrace and rehabilitate Tito. This immediately opened once again the cases of those

"WE WON'T STOP HA

thousand who had perished as the 'Tito-ite Fascists' in the various 'Peoples Democracies'.

In Hungary it reopened the case of Lazlo Rajk, a prominent party leader who was shot after 'confessing' that he was an imperialist agent. The grisly story behind this was that Rajk had bravely resisted repeated torture; refusing to confess, until none other than Janos Kadar (now Thatcher's favourite 'communist') went to see him and pleaded with him to confess to save hundreds of other lives and offered him a deal - secret exile in the USSR. The confession having been made the Stalinist gangsters kept their word as only they know how to!

In February 1956 however the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) heard the most detailed denunciations of Stalin that Khrushchev had delivered. Of necessity this fortified all opponents of the various 'little Stalins' who had ruled in Eastern Europe. Opposition to Rakosi continued within the lower ranks of the Party. In 1956 members of the Communist Party's Youth organisation (DISZ) reactivated a discussion circle established in 1954 under the name of the Hungarian national democratic poet of 1840 - Petofi.

The leaders of the Petofi circle included pre-war and war time CP members as well as young party intellectuals such as Balazs Nagy who was deputy secretary of its provisional bureau. (In exile Balazs Nagy was later to become better known in Trotskyist circles as Michel Varga.)

In June 1956 the Petofi circle held a series of meetings attended by thousands which heard Julia Rajk demand the full and wholehearted rehabilitation of her husband and which endorsed a programme primarily demanding the freedom of the press and the return to power of Nagy. Rakosi ordered the Petofi circle to be closed and seems to have been prepared for a new wave of arrests.

WORKERS ON THE MOVE

The workers of the People's Democracies were to prevent him. The indignation of the Hungarian proletariat was about to boil over. In June and July there were a series of strikes in Csepel and Greater Budapest. Workers were reported to be expressing their hatred of privileged bureaucrats by openly spitting at their limousines in the streets. On 28 July, in Poland, the workers of Poznan struck, demonstrated and were brutally fired on by the internal security forces who killed 54 and wounded at least 300. In the aftermath the oppositional Stalinist Gomulka rode to power promising reforms and a break with the methods of the past.

Both incensed and terrified, Rakosi fulminated against the meetings of the Petofi circle as being 'Hungary's Poznan' but he was unable to stop them. Neither were his Kremlin patrons convinced that he was any longer able to hold the line for the bureaucracy. In July the Soviet leader Mikoyan visited Budapest and engineered the resignation of Rakosi, but foolishly installed as his replacement one of Rakosi's most trusted clique members, Erno Gero.

Squeezed between the restive workers, the Kremlin's desire for a less harsh face for Hungarian Stalinism and the Nagyite intellectual opposition the Hungarian bureaucracy began to crack under the strain. Sharp criticism of Party policy and demands for change became increasingly vocal in the Party cells in the working class districts.

The Party press became increasingly open and - within its own terms - critical. On 6 October



Stalinist secret policeman gets a taste of workers' justice

over 200,000 people attended the public reburial of Rajk in Budapest. Students with red flags and national banners first raised a slogan that was to be heard much more frequently in the weeks ahead:

"We won't stop halfway, Stalinism must be destroyed."

Destabilisation and disorientation in the Stalinist ranks first opened the road for the student youth to organise. In mid-October student youth in Szeged demanded the right to form their own organisation independent of party control. They also struck against the compulsory learning of the Russian language. The students of Budapest's Technological University followed suit by calling a demonstration for 23 October in solidarity with Poland, where Gomulka was now firmly in power and had faced down Kremlin pressure.

The 23 October demonstration was the spark that lit the Hungarian revolution. The authorities were not strong enough to ban it. Instead they asked the Party members of the Petofi circle to lead the demonstration - the Stalinist Antal Pro begged wartime CP militant Tancs to assist him:

"You must lead the demonstrators... and save the situation." (Balazs Nagy: quoted in The Truth About The Nagy Affair 1959)

At this time the Petofi circle, composed as it was of critical Stalinists, was indeed very anxious to avoid any serious confrontation with the regime. As Balazs Nagy put it later:

"At this time, and subsequently also, the Petofi circle curbed rather than encouraged the movement, considering that the hastening of events could lead to a catastrophe."

The demonstration had an extraordinary flavour. Its members sang the Marseillaise, the Kossuth national song and the Internationale. Participants from the Party school marched with enormous portraits of Lenin and Marx. The major slogans of the day were for **"Nagy to power, Rakosi to the Danube!"** and for Soviet troops to go home.

As they became more emboldened, demonstrators pulled down red stars from the top of public buildings and ripped out the People's Democracy emblems from the centre of the Hungarian national flag. Eventually, welding workers hauled down a giant statue of Stalin and dragged it round the city behind a dustcart, eventually leaving its head outside the nat-

ional theatre inscribed with the internationally understood W.C. As workers left factory shifts an joined the demonstration its ranks spread throughout the city. Troops joined the crowds and, in many cases, distributed arms.

On day one of the Hungarian revolution the demonstrators wrapped themselves in national colours. This was denounced over the radio by Party chief Gero and by subsequent Stalinists as evidence of

the chauvinist character of the Hungarian revolution. As the demonstrators took the streets of Budapest, Gero declared on the radio:

"We condemn those who wish to spread the poison of chauvinism among our youth and have used the democratic freedom assured to the working people by the state to organise a demonstration of a nationalist character." (Quoted in M Molnar: Budapest 1956)

THE FIRST SHOTS

In its turn Gero's attack served to render the crowds more angry and increase their resolve to hear their demands and arguments broadcast by the radio station. The first serious fighting took place at the radio station where AVH guards opened fire on demonstrators who returned fire from arms provided by fraternising Hungarian troops.

In general the political horizons of the increasingly proletarian demonstration were fixed on the return to power of Imre Nagy. He had refused an invitation to attend the demonstration and only belatedly agreed to address the thousands who had marched to Parliament Square calling for him to take power. His initial speech to the crowd showed just how alien his bureaucratic outlook was from that of the students and workers:

"It is by negotiation in the bosom of the Party and by the discussion of problems that we will travel the road that leads toward the settlement of our conflicts. We want to safeguard constitutional order and discipline. The government will not delay in arriving at its decisions." (Quoted in T Merray: 13 Days That Shook The Kremlin)

Yet one such speech was not sufficient to disabuse the masses of their illusions in Nagy.

Faced with a massive demonstration, active fraternisation between workers and soldiers and

HALFWAY - STALINISM MUST BE DESTROYED"



frontier:

"After eleven years of 'Peoples Democracy' it had come to this: that the security police was so remote from the people, so alien to them, so vicious and so brutal that it turned its weapons on a defenceless crowd and murdered the people who were supposed to be masters of their own country." (P Fryer: Hungarian Tragedy)

Little wonder then that insurgent workers showed the least mercy for the AVH officers and in most towns had to fight a bloody battle with them. In Miskolc, for example, the AVH attacked a proletarian crowd on 26 October. The local police handed their weapons to insurgent miners who finished off the AVH chief and the officers. In many cases the workers made a strict distinction between the AVH officers and the younger rank and filers who were shown more mercy.

In many instances the more hated Party officials in the localities simply disappeared or hid. However Party members also played a leading role in the uprising itself at every level. In the factories and mines CP workers were active in initiating workers' councils. The leading figure in the Budapest workers' council movement - Sandor Bali - had been a Party member since 1945. In proletarian Miskolc and the surrounding Borsod county, CP militants played a leading role in organising the workers' councils and in framing their demands. By 27 October the Trade Union Council called on all workers to elect councils that would take over the tasks of management.

In addition there were several instances of individual members from the highest ranks of the bureaucracy going directly and actively over to the side of those who were doing battle with the Soviet troops. Pal Maleter is the best known example. An army major and CP member since 1945, Maleter proudly sported a Soviet military decoration he received in 1944. On 24 October he was ordered to capture the Kilian barracks which was holding out against Soviet tanks. He described the events on Radio Budapest:

"When I got there I discovered that the fighters for freedom were not bandits but loyal children of the Hungarian people. I therefore informed the Ministry of Defence that I was joining the insurgents."

Yet Maleter always insisted that his struggle was for socialism. He told foreign correspondents:

"If we get rid of the Russians don't think we're going back to the old days. And if there's people who do want to go back, we'll see."

Reassuringly clutching his revolver he added:

"We don't mean to go back to capitalism. We want socialism in Hungary."

While the proletarian base of the party and certain elements of its apparatus went over to the insurrection its leading circles sought desperately to diffuse the crisis and reestablish bureaucratic rule. In late October, as workers' councils mushroomed and the security forces melted away, this was a task they attempted to do behind Soviet tanks. However the Nagy government was to find it impossible to restore an order to its liking so long as it was shielded by Soviet troops. And in turn those very Soviet troops were proving unreliable in this task.

FRATERNISATION WITH SOVIET TROOPS

Initially the Soviet troops believed, to some extent, that they were being sent in to fight fascists. This meant that fraternisation by workers and students was capable of having a devastating effect on Soviet troop morale. A worker recounted to *Time* magazine a typical instance of fraternisation:

"Our people were not afraid of the Russians, and talked to them. Some of the Russians thought they were in East Germany and that they would soon meet American 'fascists' who had invaded the country. Other troops thought they were in the Suez Canal zone."

The workers proceeded to explain who they really were at which point the Soviet troops began to fraternise, with their captain throwing down his hat and affirming that the Kremlin leaders:

"Bulganin and Khrushchev would rape their own mothers." (Quoted By Lasky: p 103)

Gyor and Miskolc radios - in the hands of their revolutionary committees - broadcast messages of solidarity to the Soviet troops. Miskolc declared:

"Our people did not revolt against you, but for the achievement of legal demands. Our interests are identical. We and you are all fighting together for a better socialist life." (ibid p 116)

In Gyor the Soviet commander even went on the air to declare:

"We will not interfere with your national political affairs... I think that the rising of the Hungarian people against the oppressive leaders is just." (ibid p 112)

The authorities had to act to prevent the spread of fraternisation. On the 25 October Soviet tanks accompanied a jubilant crowd to a demonstration in Parliament Square. That demonstration was fired on from the surrounding rooftops; Soviet tanks returned the fire. When the firing stopped, according to Bill Lomax, over 100 were killed including Soviet troops. Either the AVH or crack Soviet security units had taken the action to stop the drift towards fraternisation. In fact fighting between the two sides became far more severe as a result of the slaughter - which both Hungarian workers and Soviet soldiers saw as the others' responsibility.

The wave of fraternisation showed that the political revolution - whilst necessarily raising certain legitimate national grievances - held the potential for becoming international and indeed internationalist by spreading to the Soviet Armed Forces. The bloody outcome of the Hungarian revolution underlines just how vital that internationalism is if the political revolution is not to be crushed in national isolation.

Despite this enormous potential the actual politics of the workers' movement in the last days of October were those of sceptical Nagyism. The complete inadequacy of these politics was to be tragically revealed. In most areas the workers' councils busied themselves with local or factory problems involved in maintaining the general strike and gave different forms of critical support to Nagy. The leaders of the councils saw them as potential organs of management in the plants. They saw their committees as potential alternative local government but blindly ceded central political power to Nagy.

This was well expressed recently by a Budapest Workers Council Militant in Sandor Racz who explained that it wasn't until moves were made against Nagy by Kadar that council activists began to think about national politics or governmental power as a question that concerned them directly:

"Up 'till then we hadn't intervened in politics, because we trusted Imre Nagy. We saw him as the political guarantee of the revolution." (Interview from *Beszelo* No 7: In Labour Focus Summer 1984)

This meant that while the councils pressed demands on Nagy - most importantly for Soviet withdrawal, a new government, the right to strike and an amnesty (the 4 point programme of Miskolc in the first days of the revolution) - and while the councils maintained the strike action until they thought they had wrung serious concessions from Nagy, they remained hidebound by a variety of syndicalism that saw the factories as the property of the workers and the government as the property of the national politicians. Thus a decisive struggle for workers power, at a time when Soviet troops were in many instances unwilling to fight and when the Nagy government was very weak indeed, was excluded from the agenda. There was in fact an acute crisis of leadership in the Hungarian revolution.

How did Nagy use the political initiative that the workers movement ceded to him? Initially the authority of his government barely ran beyond the ministry buildings in Budapest. Cast in his Stalinist mould there was no question of him conceiving of the workers' councils as an alternative base of power.

The history of Stalinism shows it to be resolutely opposed to all manifestations of healthy workers' democracy, so much so that it will always ally itself with reactionary and bourgeois forces in order to subvert and destroy the potential organs of a healthy workers state.

The form that alliance took in Hungary during and after the war (in common with other People's Democracies) was a coalition with bourgeois parties within which the Stalinists would keep a hold on the organs of security and repression. Nagy's means of defusing the political revolutionary crisis was to attempt to piece such a coalition together once again.

NAGY'S COALITION GOVERNMENT

On 27 October Nagy announced the formation of a new coalition government including representatives of the historic Smallholders' Party and the National Peasants' Party. Two points must be underlined about this move. Firstly those parties barely existed except as motley collections of ex-party leaders. Secondly, if we look at the demands being voiced in Miskolc and Gyor, while it was the case that some ex-Social Democrats were joining in the fray, calls for a coalition government or for parliamentary type elections were rarely posed in the initial documents of struggle. It was in fact those around Nagy who reached for the old parties and the

trappings of a coalition with the ex-leaders of the bourgeois parties. This was a trusted tactic for deflecting the working class from the fight for its own political power.

In turn, as the old parties were reconstituted from the top downwards, and as horsetrading for office recommenced, so the call for genuine free elections was increasingly raised from within the workers' councils. After all the Stalinists had maintained the charade of parliamentarism, without the substance of a multiplicity of competing parties. Stalinists could never pose the political alternative to parliament of genuine soviet power.

The workers' movement posed the potential of workers' council power. Its predominant demands included the public trial of the most murderous bureaucrats of the Rakosi regime, the replacement of those responsible for faults in the planned economy, the publication and revision of foreign trade agreements as well as wage rises and management rights for workers' councils. Nagy and co tried to divert this movement into the channels of a bogus popular front coalition. In that coalition key figures of the old Stalinist apparatus - Apro, Munich, Horvath and Kossa - were to keep their positions. And they were to use those positions to murderous effect later.

Many of the Stalinists around Nagy were resigned to a very significant Rightist retreat as the road out of the crisis and a means of aborting the political revolution. The literary theorist Georg Lukacs was Minister of Popular Culture in the Nagy government. - Viktor Woroszycki, a Polish CP journalist from Nowa Kultura, describes a conversation he had with Lukacs at the time. He reports Lukacs as saying:

"Communism in Hungary has been totally disgraced... The working class will prefer to follow the Social Democrats. In free elections the Communists will obtain five per cent of the vote, ten per cent at the most. It is possible that they won't be in Government, that they will go into opposition. But the party will continue to exist; it will save the idea; it will be an intellectual centre and after some years or decades from now, who knows." (Quoted in Lasky: op cit p159)

As the political organs of a healthy workers' state were making their appearance throughout Hungary our Marxist philosopher preferred saving the 'idea' of being an opposition in a bourgeois parliament. And what idea did he want to save? The idea that he and his bureaucratic centre could get their hands back on power one day, once the political revolution of the Hungarian workers had exhausted itself.

Playing on the political weaknesses of the spontaneous workers' movement Nagy was able to temporarily regain some of the political initiative. On 28 October he requested a Soviet troop withdrawal from Hungary and an immediate ceasefire. He announced the dissolution of the AVH. On 30 October he announced the recreation of the 1945 coalition by inviting the Social Democrats to delegate a minister even though that party had not yet effectively re-formed itself at a national level. The Minister of the Interior was Ferenc Munnich - one time Ambassador to Moscow of Rakosi's regime. At the same time Soviet troops left the major industrial centres of Hungary.

The troop withdrawals were negotiated by the Soviet Ambassador, one Yuri Andropov. He had good reason to pull back the troops since they had been infected with many of the liberatory slogans of the Hungarian revolution. At the very same time he liaised with Khrushchev to organise the entry of fresh Soviet troops into Hungary. While Nagy's new popular front coalition was holding back the workers from a decisive showdown with Stalinism, the Kremlin was preparing a deadly second strike. ■

by John Hunt

to be continued

armed clashes with the AVH the Gero regime attempted a policy of using the carrot and stick. On the one hand it called for Soviet troops to restore order in Budapest and declared martial law. On the other it called on Nagy to head the government. It thereby hoped Nagy would be able to head off the mass movement. And indeed he dutifully attempted to do just that by supporting martial law, calling for order and promising, in reply, a return to his 1953 policies. Meanwhile groups of workers were already doing battle with Soviet tanks on the streets of Budapest.

Throughout the length and breadth of Hungary the workers replied to the Soviet intervention with strike action. By 26 October virtually all work had stopped. Moreover these first days saw the formation of workers' councils in every factory and mine and also the link up of those councils into regional revolutionary committees in major industrial centres such as Gyor and Miskolc.

The impact of the upheaval on the bureaucracy, the security forces and the ranks of the Communist Party was immediate. In general the officers of the hated AVH attempted to defend themselves and their barracks from the insurgents with the utmost brutality. Most dramatically at Mosonmagyaróvár the AVH let loose a hail of machine gun bullets at an unarmed and peaceful demonstration killing around one hundred. For the British CP's *Daily Worker* correspondent Peter Fryer it was a shattering experience to see the dead and the mourners on his arrival across the Austrian



Hungarian Stalinists - Rakosi, Gero and Nagy

GARCIA'S GENERALS OFF THE LEASH

The recent Non-Aligned Conference gave Alan Garcia, the President of Peru, a chance to refurbish his radical image. This image had been severely tarnished by the recent massacre of hundreds of Sendero Luminoso militants in Peruvian prisons. Garcia in his speech to the Conference lambasted the international capitalist system - "its unproductive and profiteering nature, its parasitic tendency expressed in the enormous international debt as a means of domination". He held up the Peruvian economic strategy as a model to be followed by the other "non-aligned" countries, a model which

he declared had "completely moved away from International Monetary Fund theories". The reality of Peru is very different to Garcia's rhetoric. Military repression and massacres of prisoners exist alongside massive poverty and destitution in town and countryside. Peru is suffering from a long term economic crisis typical of an impoverished semi-colony which Garcia's "new economic order" hardly touches, let alone solves.

One symptom of this crisis is the growing guerilla insurgency among the Peruvian peasantry and the repression it has provoked from the military.

IN 1980 THE militants of the Communist Party of Peru, "For the shining path" (Sendero Luminoso) of Jose Mariategui, initiated an armed struggle in the countryside and started a series of bomb attacks which increased in audacity in the urban centres. Sendero established itself in the national life of Peru, paying a high cost in young lives.

In 1982, after they assaulted the Ayacucho jail, and released around fifty prisoners, the government decided to move the trials against terrorism to Lima, moving the prisoners to the capital "for security reasons". The island called 'El Fronton' was equipped to accommodate the Senderista prisoners.

By 1984 200 prisoners were accommodated in the "Blue Wing" of this prison. In another jail - Lurigancho - the largest in the country, a whole wing was equipped for suspected Sendero prisoners. This wing was known as the "Britannico Wing". Here, in October 1985, the government of Alan Garcia ordered the suppression of a mutiny that left 30 Senderistas dead.

After this repression, the remaining Senderistas were moved (around 124 of them) to the industrial/workshops wing of the jail. This wing had high walls and roofs and was without internal divisions and in this way was without any means of defence in the case of eventual intervention from outside. In the little jail of El Callao, known as Santa Barbara, 70 women Sendero prisoners were accommodated in three small rooms that should not have housed more than two dozen.

Held in overcrowded and insanitary conditions and deprived of adequate medical attention, the Sendero prisoners used their incarceration to continue their struggle against the government. They used their organisation in the prisons to demonstrate the high morale and discipline of their cadres in the same way as the Republican prisoners used the H-Block struggle in Ireland. The jails, they declared, were "shining barricades of combat" and "liberated zones".

The government of Belaunde Terry, and after that Garcia, had their own reasons for allowing the concentration and organisation of the Sendero prisoners. At first they used it to demonstrate the intransigence and "fanaticism" of the guerilla movement, to justify the brutal repression being meted out in Ayacucho province by the military. Later they were to use it to argue that despite being in prison these militants still represented a serious threat to society.

By 1984 there were over 400 Sendero prisoners in jail. After the mutiny at Lurigancho in 1985, the government promised to relocate many at a new security jail "Canto Grande". Rumours circulated of a plan to annihilate the prisoners. After the assassination of a Senior Naval chief by Sendero and an attack against leading members of Apra, Garcia's party, the Minister to the Navy called for the reintroduction of the death penalty. At the same time General Cisneros - ex-minister of war and of the Interior - declared that the army should grant the Sendero's wishes when they said that they would



International

only be moved to Canto Grande if they were dead!

On 19 June the Socialist International's Conference was due to open in Lima. Chosen to show their support for the Aprista's new conversion to 'democratic socialism' the Socialist International willingly held its conference in a city where a state of emergency prevailed and where the military controlled the streets after curfew.

At dawn on 18 June the Sendero started a co-ordinated uprising. In El Fronton they disarmed 3 Republican Guards, took their rifles and used them as hostages. In Lurigancho they took a clerical worker hostage and in Santa Barbara they took the governor and 2 assistants hostage.

RIFLES

The rebels locked themselves in their wings of the jails, with the exception of El Fronton, where the capture of the rifles allowed them to take up positions - though they had only 36 rounds of ammunition. With the exception of those 3 rifles the rest of the prisoners had no firearms to defend themselves, only a few blow pipes, sticks and weapons they had made. The mutiny was above all a political action, which tried to hit at the government and to oblige it to negotiate, in a situation where the Apra Government was preparing itself for the International Congress.

Politically checkmated, the government ignored the demands of the prisoners, that were as a matter of fact very minimal and reasonable. These were:

1. Respect for the lives of the prisoners



Alan Garcia

2. Negotiation over the removal of the prisoners to other jails
3. Medicines
4. Cleaning of their cells - clean conditions
5. Electric light and water
6. Better treatment of prisoners' visitors and relatives
7. Disciplining of jailers who mistreated prisoners.

For Alan Garcia any dialogue was a sign of weakness. The government felt obliged to put the principle of authority over every other consideration.

In mid-morning on 18 June a cabinet meeting took place chaired by Garcia in the presence of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. That meeting decided on a solution by force of arms. The jails were declared military zones - a clear signal that a free hand was being given to the armed forces.

On the eve of 19 June the scene was prepared for the massacre. The prisons were surrounded by the combined military and police forces. The TV and radio repeated the government's official communiques that claimed a large scale operation by the Senderistas was underway that involved attacks on the Church, public buildings and the police. At the same time they claimed that fierce battles were taking place in the jails.

Of course all this was merely

advance justification for the huge number of deaths and for the horrific brutality. When military battalions are thrown against unarmed prisoners then it corresponds to a conscious decision to annihilate the Senderistas.

In El Fronton the Navy had 3 casualties and one hostage was killed by his 'rescuers'. This attack was led by the Chief of the Navy, Rear-Admiral Victor Nicolini. Only 22 Senderistas survived. Photographs show that the rebels were killed on the floor with their hands on their heads - i.e. shot in the back. It is not known exactly how many were killed as the victims were quickly buried in mass graves.

In Lurigancho the prisoners had no means of defence. Among the forces of order there were no casualties, not even light injuries. In this prison not one Senderista survived. According to some accounts the survivors were leaving through a hole in the wall made by the military, where they were killed straight away either by being shot in the mouth or by firing squad. It appears the Senderistas died singing and chanting their own slogans.

In the women's prison of Santa Barbara the Airforce and the Republican Guards entered the prisons via the roof, killing two women and leaving many injuries. This joint military operation in the three jails which was named "Operation Savage" by its own organisers ended at dawn on 19 June leaving nearly 300 Senderistas dead.

A few hours later Alan Garcia inaugurated the Congress of the Socialist International! The events of the night before were, however, too blatant even for the worthies of the Socialist International to ignore. The conference ended in disarray without agreement on an agenda.

Garcia defended his actions against all criticism and was firmly backed up by the Nicaraguan Sandinista delegation which endorsed Garcia's "firmness" against the Senderistas. While the European Social Democrats contented themselves with calling for an "independent inquiry" into the massacres, Willy Brandt attempted to stifle any serious criticism by giving out the (completely false) story that Garcia was under threat of an imminent military coup and therefore had to be supported!

Clearly it was the duty of the left, both in Peru and internationally, to condemn unreservedly the Aprista Government's actions and, whatever the differences with, or criticisms of, Sendero Luminoso, to stand for their defence against the massive repression directed against them. However the leader of the United Left (IU) in Peru, the 'Marxist' Barrantes did precisely the opposite. He not only endorsed the government's actions but spoke in favour of an "anti-terrorist national unity" saying that the main enemy of the hour was Sendero which was "trying to provoke a military coup".

These statements provoked an immediate crisis in the IU, a coalition of reformist and centrist organisations. It was clear that Garcia's actions had increased the confidence and control of the military over political life and had opened the road for a growing militarisation and repression of all the left. In the end after intense discussion between the parties of the IU a communique was agreed that condemned the government and military massacre but still referred to the mutiny in the jails as a "provocation" - a characterisation which Garcia quickly seized upon to justify his actions.

Neither was the left wing of the IU willing to challenge Barrantes as the candidate of the United Left in the re-election for Mayor of Lima. Notwithstanding his well known overtures to Garcia and his thinly disguised calls for "national unity", none of the centrist groups (which include the dissolved USec group of Hugo Blanco) were willing to challenge Barrantes and his dominance within the IU for fear of "splitting the left". Barrantes of course has no such fears and will split to the right as soon as it suits him and his supporters. Indeed he has already gone so far as to only register three of the parties of the IU for the coming municipal elections!

For the left and workers' and peasant organisations in Peru an important task in the coming period will be not only to defend Sendero Luminoso against repression but to defend their own organisations of struggle, to build anti-repression committees and fight against the growing militarisation of Peruvian society. ■

by Diego Macar and Stuart King



Murdered Senderistas piled up by the military

PINOCHET'S ISOLATION GROWS

THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet by the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front, the armed wing of the Chilean Communist Party, has had three principal effects. Firstly, it has greatly increased the CP's popularity amongst the workers and shanty town dwellers as a result of its daring and near success. Secondly, it has led to Pinochet letting the death squads off the leash and intensifying repression. Thirdly it has nevertheless led to a flurry of speculation as to what would happen if a future attempt were to prove successful.

Leaving speculation to the readers of political fiction, Marxists should look at the political and economic contradictions wracking Chile. The military response to the recent proof of the vulnerability of their strong man - the disappearance and assassination of left-wing opponents - shows that the regime's social support has dwindled to the 200,000 men under arms. The effusions of sympathy for the General have been cool even from the strata of the bourgeoisie closest to the junta. Even US imperialism whilst expressing its regret at the attempt immediately urged in the very same communique the opening of a process of dialogue with the (bourgeois) opposition.

CHAOS

The regime has lost bourgeois support within the nation and now the White House definitely wishes Pinochet to announce his forthcoming withdrawal. In this Reagan, the 'Chief Contra' is of course not motivated by any yearning for human rights.

Rather Reagan fears that destabilisation and chaos could threaten the military and economic interests of US imperialism. Recent revelations of the MRPF, who kidnapped a top US military aide who had been in secret discussion with top figures in the Chilean armed forces, demonstrate that the US wish to replace Pinochet. US imperialism sees the highly disciplined and massive Chilean army as a key element of its strategy in South America. Chile significantly aided US imperialism and its British ally during the Malvinas war helping the Anglo-Saxon allies to punish Galtieri for his unauthorised assault on imperialist property. Right-wing dictator or not, no one is allowed to do this in Central or South America. Also Chile's Pacific possession, Easter Island, is to be used in the US space shuttle programme.

RETIREMENT

Captured tapes from the US reveal that Reagan is offering Pinochet 'honourable retirement in the US'. He wishes to avoid a Philippines situation that would be far more explosive given the brutality of the last thirteen years' repression (15,000 to 30,000 killed and many more exiled) and the strength and class consciousness of the proletariat. The US are prepared to continue to support Pinochet till 1989, when his term of office under the harsh bonapartist constitution of 1980 expires. But they are not prepared to support him any longer than that. This is of a piece with their threats to impose economic sanctions if the human rights situation does not improve.

Thus Pinochet is under notice to quit both from the Chilean bourgeoisie and from his US masters. His successful ability to hold on to power so far is due to two factors. The forces of order fear that a revolutionary situation could develop

in the period of dismantling Pinochet's dictatorship. The General exploits this to the full with his slogan "Pinochet or chaos". But the other factor preserving his regime is the compromising and vacillating leadership of the 'popular' and 'democratic' opposition.

In the final analysis that comes down to the leadership of the two main workers parties - the CP and the SP.

NEGOTIATIONS

The assassination attempt of the MRPF in no way marks a change in the strategy of the Chilean CP. Indeed it has as its objective the removal of the obdurate Pinochet in order to facilitate its objective of negotiations with the leaders of the armed forces. Fanny Pollarollo, the CP's spokesperson in Spain, said in an interview with the Spanish paper *Diario 16*

"No negotiation is possible with the military while Pinochet has not said he will give up power".

The CP is not fighting for the dictatorship's expulsion from power and the overthrow of the military regime but for his resignation and for negotiations to install a civilian-military government. The CP naturally builds into this grand alliance the Christian Democracy which the above spokesperson said must play "a substantial role" in the "grand alliance of the centre and the left". The CP is playing out the bankrupt and blood-stained policy of popular unity but this time in an even more right-wing form. It must include as a pre-condition the very forces that murdered Allende and installed the dictatorship - the Christian Democracy and the high command of the armed forces.

STRUGGLE

In these conditions the road of struggle to bring down the dictatorship leads also to political and programmatic struggle against the Stalinist leaders. Nor should anyone imagine that the leaders of bankrupt Social Democracy are one grain better. The different currents of the fragmented Socialist Party of Chile (CSP) in one way or another put forward similar policies. At the Fifth national plenum of the Socialist Party (Briones) that took place in Santiago on 31 May and 1 June 1986 they approved amongst other resolutions the following

"In relation to the Christian Democracy the CSP has made many great efforts and we are persisting in attempting to establish new relations of mutual co-operation with it".

The resolution characterised the CD as "a multi-class party with two souls - a popular and a bourgeois one" led at the moment by the centre that is seeking to avoid the contradiction between the two souls.

Nor is this just historical gar-



Trade unionist seized by police in Santiago



Mass protests rock the regime

bage pilfered from the rubbish bin of history. It takes form today as the "National Assembly of Civil Organisations", a body formed of 18 "social organisations" including all the Chilean trade union federations and in which the parties participate informally through various prominent individuals. This body involves prominent representatives of the bourgeoisie - from business, academic and legal life and the church. Its purpose for the bourgeoisie is to give centralisation and expression to a bourgeois alternative to both Pinochet and chaos. This can be seen in its statement,

"If the situation remains as it is it is very easy to see that a growing confrontation will develop into which the armed forces will be drawn in such an irreversible way via large scale repression that the result will be in a definitive separation of the army from the people thus putting the forces' own stability in danger."

COLLABORATION

With the creation of the "National Assembly of Civil Organisations" the emphasis of the CP, of the Socialist groupings and of the leaders of the CNT (Chilean TUC, whose leaders are Socialists, Christian Democrats and Stalinists) has changed. From the mass strike action of limited duration - several of which were called in the 1984-86 period, the emphasis has shifted to a "Philippines style" mass peaceful protest approach - hoping to use the good offices of the Chilean catholic church and indeed the church internationally. As we have seen this process fits in with the long term desires of US imperialism at the moment.

This wretched class collaborationist strategy is however a noose around the neck of the workers, the

shanty-town unemployed, the peasants and the farm workers. The US will not voluntarily allow the grip of the military on Chilean society to be released. The Chilean economy which suffered the full and unhindered experiments of the "Chicago Boys" (disciples of Milton Friedman, Reagan and Thatcher's monetarist guru) has been in deep crisis since 1982, kept barely afloat by loans from the international bankers. Chile has punctually and faithfully paid its interest and repayments.

FIGHT-BACK

The willingness of the workers and urban poor to fight, to risk their lives indicates that the masses are accumulating an explosive charge sufficient not only to get rid of Pinochet but also to blow up the whole military dictatorship.

US imperialism and its Chilean bourgeois lackeys want a "Brazilian" or "Uruguayan" solution to their problems - a rightwing conservative parliamentarianism at gun point. The treacherous Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders are offering themselves for hire on this very project - justifying it as a 'stage' to democracy, which in turn is a stage towards a distant 'socialism'.

The Chilean proletariat must free itself from this disastrous programme and settle accounts with the whole popular front dead end that has cost it so much in blood, in human suffering and in grinding poverty. Its own struggles give it the possibility of launching a revolutionary struggle for the fullest democratic rights and the most basic economic necessities with the struggle for its historic class goals.

The trade unions, the peasant unions, the shanty town organisations must centralise into councils of struggle of the masses. These must aid the carrying through of a revolution in the countryside, and fight for a massive programme of public works in the cities. Only the workers and peasants, having broken the vicious discipline of the Chilean armed forces and won the soldiers and sailors to the side of the people, could give Chile the fullest revolutionary democracy - a sovereign constituent assembly. The military, bourgeois and clerical guardians of democracy will deceive and rob the masses as they have done so often before. Only when armed power is in the masses' hands and they have installed a workers and peasants government can the socialist solution to Chile's problems be put into effect. Thirteen years after Allende's fall this lesson still has to be learned. ■

by Diego Mocar

in brief...

FRANCE

IN TWO WEEKS in September 5 bombs have exploded in Paris killing 8 people and injuring over 160.

The Chirac government has responded with a security clampdown - 1000 extra soldiers at airports, the banning of some political demonstrations and requiring all non-EEC nationals to have visas to enter France.

The world press talks of this as the work of mindless Arab terrorists. They are whipping up racist anti-Arab hysteria against the many Arabs living in Paris.

In fact those probably behind the bombings are demanding the release of prisoners from French jails. Georges Ibrahim Abdallah is a Lebanese militant imprisoned for firearms offences. He now faces Israeli and US backed attempts to charge him with 2 murders.

France is centrally involved in the Middle East.

Until the imperialist powers are forced out of the Middle East, countries such as France will inevitably be targets for such attacks. Prisoners such as Abdallah must be released and the French troops withdrawn from the Lebanon.

AUSTRIA

THE RULING COALITION in Austria between the Social Democrats (SPO) and the tiny liberal Freedom Party (FPÖ) has collapsed. There will be an early general election, in November. SPO Chancellor Franz Vranitzky said there had been an "unacceptable shift to the right" by the FPÖ.

Vranitzky is not sorry to call an early election. It is likely that he will try and build a new coalition with the conservative, Waldheim-led Peoples Party. A similar 'grand coalition' governed Austria for 20 years after the war. The SPO are looking for a similar national government to increase its attacks on the working class.

SPY STORIES

PRESIDENT REAGAN AND his closest political allies seriously believe that the USSR has the means to militarily defend itself because it uses an army of spies to steal US technological know-how.

Since March Reagan has had his eyes on Soviet employees of the United Nations. He ordered the Soviet mission to reduce its numbers by a third and arrested Gennady Zakharov when he tried to buy details of aircraft engines from a hired FBI agent. In Moscow the KGB arrested an anti-communist US journalist - Nicholas Daniloff - after he picked up an envelope at a meeting he had arranged with one of his contacts. While both were released to their respective ambassadors Reagan took the opportunity to kick out another 25 Soviet 'spies'.

Behind all the fuss lies more than the blatant double standards of a press that believes a Russian automatically guilty and an American innocent of spying charges. The US whips up the spy hysteria in order to justify continued nuclear testings despite the Soviet moratorium, to justify its anti-Soviet war drive and its harassment of Eastern Bloc diplomats. That is the truth behind all the tears shed for Daniloff.

SPREAD COALFIELD ACTION!

MINERS FROM A number of British coalfields are showing unmistakable signs of renewed militancy. The Durham Mechanics vote (see separate article) is only the latest of a number of examples of rank and file miners fighting British Coal's continuing harsh regime.

The men are less dewey-eyed about the new boss, Haslam, than most of their leaders. His unilateral declaration of a pay increase, which he has refused to back-date to last November, has caused outrage. In South Wales it was greeted with a vote to continue the overtime ban on production. At Betteshanger in Kent a similar ban is in operation.

Action is taking place on other issues as well. The unrelenting round of closures is being resisted. At Seaham the attempt to 'mothball' the pit has been met by a 2-1 majority vote for an overtime ban by the whole Durham area. At Nantgarw in South Wales there was a five-day strike against closure.

The will for a fight-back is there. But it is being sabotaged by the 'left' leaders in the key areas. Des Duffield in South Wales has repeatedly stressed that he does not want the action taking place in his area spread to others. In Yorkshire, moves for an overtime ban by militant pits like Arncliffe, Hatfield and Rossington

were quashed at Area level. Jack Taylor said that the action had been "deferred" because:

"We want a reasonable approach and the ball is back in Sir Robert's court."

The Stalinists in Scotland are even more forthright in their opposition to a fight. Their entire strategy is based on collaboration with management to preserve a Scottish coal industry. What this means in practice is the closure of Comrie and the merger of Monktonhall and Bilston Glen with the loss of 2000 jobs. And all this is just for starters. George Bolton, Stalinist NUM vice-president in Scotland, responded to this slaugh-

ter with a call for a "positive attitude" to the sackings. He claimed:

"There are great possibilities in the next three or four years."

This boot-licking "heartened, encouraged and pleased" Scottish coal boss McAlpine.

Haslam's arrival will not change anything. Capitalism's crisis dictates the need for attacks on the coal industry. Two alternatives face miners - to fight or to see their industry disappear. The signs are that many are choosing to fight. If they are to be successful then they must also fight the enemy within the union - the Taylors, Boltons and co.

At the first 'new' Broad Left conference in September Workers Power supporters in the NUM

fought to give coherence to the present round of militancy. We proposed a campaign for a national total overtime ban. This can link together the area actions into a united campaign. It can rebuild the fighting strength required before another strike can be launched. If the new Broad Left is to escape the bureaucratic fate of the still existing, highly selective and secret old Broad Left, it must prioritise such a campaign. Speakers from every area and pit taking action must go out and address miners throughout the country. If the present round of action is not spread then Bolton and co. will get away with selling jobs and conditions and the militant areas and pits will be carved up. ■

by Mark Hoskisson

Durham Mechanics Strike

by Sue Todd

THREE THOUSAND MECHANICS in the Durham coalfield have voted to strike. The action will take the form of a series of one-day strikes, over an eight week period. It centres on four issues - the sacked and victimised miners, the wages issue, the unilateral decision of the board to take away the conciliation procedures and the closure of Seaham colliery.

These four issues were put to the mechanics in a ballot on strike action which received an overwhelming "yes" vote. Dave Temple, lodge delegate at Murton Mechanics, explained how this came about:

"We were confronted with a

number of problems, particularly the intransigence of the coal-board. The executive said they could do no more so we put the matter to the lodges. The reply was an overwhelming vote in favour of a series of one-day strikes."

Sackings continue in the Durham and Northumberland areas. In the same week as the mechanics' vote two NUM members were sacked at Westoe Colliery at South Shields for allegedly attacking a member of the UDM. The sackings led to a walk-out and an unofficial 24 hour strike which involved 1400 of the 2000 men employed at the super-pit.

The closure of Seaham colliery

is just the latest in the attempts of British Coal to run down the Durham coalfield. Since March 1985 six collieries, two coke ovens and two workshops have been closed, resulting in the loss of 9000 jobs. Dave Temple explained:

"The men are sick about everything, about being pushed about. This action shows all those faint-hearted leaders who say the men are not prepared to take action are only speaking for themselves, we now need to launch a serious campaign and aim through these strikes, to start to rebuild the strength of the union." ■



BLANK CHEQUES FOR KINNOCK

THE TUC CHIEFS enjoyed themselves in Brighton this year. They wanted a quiet and unanimous Congress. That is more or less what they got.

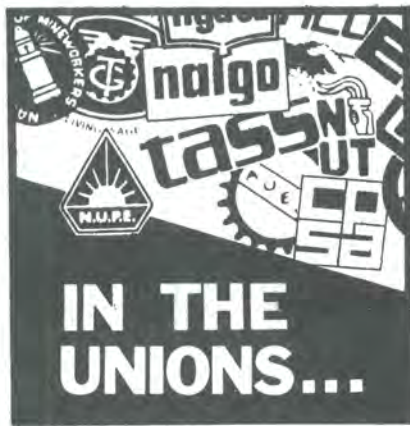
To the relief of all, Norman Willis shambled through the Congress without forgetting to read his speeches. To the relief of Neil Kinnock Congress wrote him as many blank cheques as he cared to ask for. The TUC promised not to oppose pre-strike ballots in return for empty promises on individual rights. It welcomed Kinnock's Trojan horse for an incomes policy - a statutory minimum wage agreement which everyone knows will be linked to a wage restraint deal.

SILENCED

When Kinnock told Congress that his government would take hard decisions, offer no easy options and offer the unions the choice of backing him or shutting up the delegates gave him a standing ovation. They were pathetically grateful for the measly promise of being consulted by a Kinnock-led government and being given the chance to put their seal

on anti-working class policies.

Chief scab-herder Hammond looked in an assured mood. No wonder. Last year he was making threatening noises about leaving the TUC if it tried to clip his wings. He had no need to make such threats this year. After a year in which the EETPU has



served Murdoch as a scab recruitment agency, Congress refused to take any action against him. They

passed a worthless resolution criticising the General Council for not telling Mr Hammond to stop his activities. The General Council has no intention of doing anything about the resolution. That made it all the easier for the soft left to vote against sin in the knowledge there would be no action taken against the sinners.

Hammond and his allies like Jordan in the AEU are quite happy now that they are pulling the TUC their way. They estimated that the TUC 'left' was not prepared to put its offices and salaries where its mouth was. They had the measure of their opponents and were rub-

bing their hands with glee as the spineless left received another setback in the vote for the General Council. The EETPU should have been kicked out of the TUC. The only alternative was that which has now come to pass. It is setting the pace and the agenda of official trade unionism.

The smug grins of the union functionaries at their annual get together should be a warning to all workers. The TUC tops hope soon to be back in the business of selling jobs and conditions in return for consultation with a Kinnock government. Except for the last days of the great miners' strike they haven't had too much practice at making the trip to Number Ten recently. At Brighton they readvertised their services. ■

ORGANISE

They are prepared to deliver the 9.6 million membership of the trade union movement to a future government bound and trussed. In fact they are prepared to do this whatever the political complexion of that government. A future pact with Kinnock means a continued truce with Thatcher in the here and now. That is why militants must organise to spoil the bureaucrats' celebration party by calling them to account in every union and forcing them to fight now or be cleared out of the way by those who will. ■

by Dave Hughes



Hammond and Laird planning their next scab operation

ONE BIG PRINT UNION

PRINTWORKERS WATCHING EVENTS at the recent TUC will have witnessed a carefully stage-managed display of unity by the NGA's Tony Dubbins and SOGAT's Brenda Dean. Together they led the chorus of disapproval against EETPU and together they moved a toothless motion in an attempt to conceal the accelerated pace of their capitulation to Murdoch and News International.

Behind the apparent show of unity lies an earnest jockeying for bureaucratic advantage as top officials from both the NGA and SOGAT prepare to construct a single industrial union in the print from above. The leading lights of

the respective bureaucracies now fear the eclipse of their own roles. The press barons' control of new technology has swept away the once real basis for the old forms of union organisation in the production chapels and also allowed the likes of Murdoch to bypass the top officials at the bargaining table. With the floodgates now opened the leadership of the NGA in particular feels a renewed urgency to move towards a single union once and for all. Its purpose in a dramatically altered, post-Wapping context would be to compete with but not against the business unionism championed by Hammond and Jordan of the AEU.

With the very basis of their power and privileges under threat both SOGAT and NGA leaders want to be in a position to offer single-union agreements to employers in the print. They want a union structure that can compete with Hammond on his terms.

The dangers for ordinary printworkers in such a marriage of convenience imposed by a handful of union leaders are obvious. At the same time, printers can ill afford to reject the idea of industrial unionism on the basis of craft and sectional allegiance. This is especially true for those confronting certain attacks on staffing levels, wages, conditions, and

chapel organisation as the death knell sounds for Fleet Street. In 1976 production workers said "no" in overwhelming numbers to the proposals of the Joint Standing Committee, a body for trade union collaboration with senior management to resolve the Street's chronic crisis of profitability.

SECTIONALISM

Ten years on and sharp sectional differences still persist. But the division of labour which threw up the earlier forms of organisation is now a thing of the past. Thus printworkers in Fleet Street and elsewhere must recognise the necessity of a single industrial union built from below. They must oppose a cosy bureaucratic stitch-up with

a campaign for a fighting democratic union with all officials directly accountable, all deals and negotiations open to the members and outright opposition to sweetheart agreements in return for recognition.

Workers Power has long argued for industrial unionism in the print as the alternative antidote to deeply engrained and crippling sectionalism but it is for printworkers not a bureaucratic coven to decide its future shape.

Workers Power would very much welcome the views of printworkers on the form of an industrial union and the content of an action programme with which to do battle against the multi-national press magnates. ■

by George Binetti

REVIEW

MARGARETHE VON TROTTA'S film, *Rosa Luxemburg*, is moving, intelligent and thought provoking. In a world dominated by Rambo re-makes, slasher movies and special-effect vehicles that get passed off as films, the cinematic depiction of the life of a great revolutionary is welcome indeed.

The film is not a complete biography of Rosa Luxemburg. Von Trotta has called it a "fragment" so that anyone who expects to find the whole of Luxemburg's political life covered will be disappointed. Its technique is to look backwards, not always in chronological order, over Rosa's life from the vantage point of her cells in the bleak prisons of Wronke and Breslau where she was incarcerated during the first Imperialist holocaust.

An important theme - in fact the central one - is the problems that Rosa faces as a woman in both her personal and political life. Her companion, Leo Jogisches, is shown as a committed revolutionary, but one with little imagination or sensitivity either in his political work - his articles are dull and lifeless - or in his relations with her. As Rosa develops politically and begins to outstrip him as a writer and a leading figure on the left wing of the German Social Democracy their relationship becomes ever more stormy. It eventually collapses in ruins in the aftermath of the failure of the 1905/1906 revolution.

The break comes ostensibly over Leo's unfaithfulness. But in reality it is because of his failure to take their relationship seriously. Rosa makes the break and Leo obviously regrets it bitterly.

PATRONISING

The difficulties Rosa experiences as a woman and as a genuine revolutionary amongst the leaders of the SPD are also well portrayed. On the one hand leaders like Karl Kautsky and August Bebel obviously at first appreciate the force and stature of her as a revolutionary writer and activist but, right from the beginning there is a patronising air to this. Also von Trotta shows well the contrast between the Polish "real revolutionaries" and the already desiccated

and bloodless leaders of the SPD who shy away from any form of action. Their message to her is increasingly that "Germany is not Russia". Luxemburg fights to let the fresh air of the first Russian revolution into the stale closed rooms of the SPD. She is shown fighting at the party congress for the general strike tactic. She fearlessly confronts even Bebel, the grand old man of the party, facing the massive hostility of the delegates. Only a handful rise to applaud her, while Kautsky remains sheepishly in his seat as Rosa defends his resolution.

Later Kautsky turns sharply to the right when the chips are down and refuses to publish her articles arguing for mass agitation against the Kaiser and for a republic. She centres on the fight for mass strikes against the undemocratic voting laws of the German Empire. Kautsky counterposes the forthcoming elections to Rosa's programme of action.

Barbara Sukowa gives a fine performance in these scenes expressing the full fire of Rosa's words. Two short scenes show Luxemburg as an orator in front of the rank and file worker members of the SPD. In one she speaks on what a revolution really is and in the other on the approaching danger of war. In these we get a glimpse of Rosa's marvellous oratory as she rouses the German workers from the routine of party and trade union life to the great dangers which threaten them and the great tasks that are confronting them.

The friendships that Rosa forged through party struggles, as with Clara Zetkin, or in spite of them, as with Lulise Kautsky, Karl's wife, are cleverly used to portray Rosa's personal and political thoughts. With Lulise she can relax and admit



Rosa addressing German workers

to the strains of the struggle, while sipping wine, and at the same time openly berate her friend's husband - "Lulise your husband is a coward."

A very effective scene shows Rosa and Clara Zetkin arriving late at a dinner party at which the main leaders of the party, Bebel, Kautsky and Auer are gathered. The two women have been delayed by stumbling upon soldiers involved in manoeuvres and tell of their 'narrow escape'. The men joke, raucously about what would have to be put on their tombstones and Rosa interrupts with "put here lie the last two men in German Social Democracy." The faces of Kautsky, Bebel and Co are as they say - a picture! No wonder that later in the conversation Bebel effectively tells Rosa she should have stuck to women's work in the party.

The arguments rage on around the dinner table and at one point Bebel says jocularly to Luxemburg - "When we come to power we will have to shoot you". Yet in the comfortable dining room, between 'comrades' this jesting prophecy still seems a world away from any possibility of fulfilment.

The film in these scenes vividly shows the descent of the party into philistinism and opportunism. It also shows Luxemburg's struggle, which she ultimately lost, to halt and reverse this process.

PACIFISM

The middle phase of the film deals with Rosa's struggle against Imperialist war. This is a struggle that brings her into contact with Karl Liebknecht, with Paul Levi - her lawyer in the trials which are the response of the Imperial government to her anti-militarist agitation - and draws her closer to Clara Zetkin.

And it is here that the limitations of Margarethe von Trotta begin to colour her depiction of Rosa Luxemburg. Whilst it appears that she was not responsible for the English language opening credit which calls Rosa Luxemburg an ardent pacifist, the sections of Rosa's speeches against war are those that von Trotta, who is a pacifist, would sympathise with. The connection between Rosa's earlier advocacy of militant class struggle and revolution is not linked to her anti-war stance. Rosa's anti-pacifist *Peace Utopias* is written out of history. Also von Trotta's deep pessimism comes to dominate the whole last phase of the film. Rosa is shown as unable or unwilling to speak at the last Brussels gathering of the Second International in July 1914 because of demoralisation. The defeat and isolation of Luxemburg and Liebknecht are the themes stressed in the portrayal of the 4 August decision of the SPD to vote war credits not the betrayal of the party and the International.

Neither is Rosa's anger and indignation against this betrayal faithfully expressed - an anger that made her write that the Social Democracy was "a stinking corpse".

From this point on much of the fight goes out of Luxemburg, and Liebknecht takes over as the enth-

ROSA LUXEMBURG

human democratic socialism, but I know that it is utopia. When I see the power games of the big nations and the possibilities they have to destroy the world I feel that I would be very illusionist to think that we might still have a chance."

As in one of her previous films, *The German Sisters*, this standpoint produces a powerful cinematic critique of the traditions of Prussian authoritarianism and the avaricious outlook of the German bourgeois of the post-war boom. It is a critique full of well founded rage. In *The German Sisters* the rage is expressed through the sympathetic treatment of an imprisoned Baader Meinhof style terrorist. In *Rosa Luxemburg* it is expressed through the rehabilitation of Rosa Luxemburg as a great humanist, a counter-point to the historical drift to authoritarianism in Germany.

But in both cases von Trotta can provide no solution to the problems she observes. In both, despair expressed through personal angst, takes the place of a solution. The Rosa Luxemburg of Spartacus, gives way to an angst ridden projection of von Trotta's imagination.

In jail Rosa is not allowed to hear of the outbreak and triumph of the Russian revolution. After her release from jail the deepening shadows never lift for a moment. The Spartacist leaders meet in deep gloom. Leo, amongst them is the most gloomy apparently having little hope for the Germans as revolutionaries. The sharp disagreement between Karl and Rosa over the occupation of newspaper offices and their armed defence, the so-called Spartacist uprising, is twisted to suggest that she was opposed to it because it involved needless violence rather than because it was a premature and isolated rising.

The impression is given of a Rosa for whom life, including political life, has gone badly wrong and who is not only ageing, ill and tired in a physical sense but is so in a political sense too. However nothing in Rosa's letters or articles of the last weeks of her life indicate that this was the case. Her last letter to Clara Zetkin is full of optimism about the young comrades of the new Communist Party, despite their ultra-left mistakes:

"On the whole our movement is developing magnificently and across the entire country at last... The fierce political

crises that we go through here in Berlin every two weeks, or even more frequently, seriously limit the course of systematic educational and organisational work, but at the same time they are themselves an excellent school for the masses."

This letter was written on the day the Freikorps - rightwing volunteer soldiers raised by the Social Democrat Noske to smash the Spartacists - opened fire on the Vorwarts building (the editorial offices of the SPD's newspaper). On 14 and 15 January the Communist Party's daily *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag) carried two articles, one by Rosa, "Order reigns in Berlin" and one by Karl, "Despite Everything!" Rosa's article contains a cool and precise evaluation of the causes of the defeat:



Karl Liebknecht

"The contradiction between the powerful, decisive aggressive performance of the Berlin masses on the one hand and the indecisive, fainthearted vacillation of the Berlin leadership on the other."

It ends with the immortal words, "Order is restored in Berlin! You stupid lackeys! Your 'order' is built on sand. Tomorrow the revolution will 'rise up again clashing its weapons', and terrify you with the clarion call: I was, I am, I shall be." Karl's article likewise expressed the same optimism in the dark hour of defeat:

"Whether or not we are alive when it arrives, our programme will live and it will reign in a world of redeemed humanity. Despite everything!"

In the film Karl and Rosa read these passages to one another without conviction, perfunctorily. The atmosphere is of unrelieved defeat. But this mood is von Trotta's not Luxemburg's.

The brutal savagery of their deaths is powerfully and movingly shown, right down to the dumping of Rosa's battered body into the Landwehr canal. As the ripples die away the film ends in deep despair - powerful to the last but with a message that is not Rosa Luxemburg's.

Go to see *Rosa Luxemburg* and be stimulated by a beautifully made film, powerfully acted. But be inspired to turn again to the works of this wonderful woman for whom life was far from being in vain, who left an imperishable legacy to the working class, her works, and her indomitable spirit. She stands with the greats in the tradition of revolutionary Marxism. A part of this tradition is her and Karl Liebknecht's last struggles and their sacrifice. It is a tradition that today still inspires others to struggle and if necessary to die under the same banner.

Rosa Luxemburg, directed by Margarethe von Trotta is currently showing at the Lumiere cinema, London and will be showing at selected cinemas in other cities in the near future. ■

by Dave Stocking



Barbara Sukowa as Rosa, addressing an anti-war rally

workers power

FREE ELEUTERIO GUTTIEREZ CLASS PRISONERS WAR

THE CAMPAIGN TO Free Eleuterio Guttierrez, a jailed Bolivian miner, has made a good start. On 20 September a meeting of miners in the Broad Left agreed to support the campaign and the Durham Miner is going to carry an article on Eleuterio in its next issue. The North East Justice for Mineworkers' Campaign, voted not only to support the campaign, but also to immediately communicate their protest to the Bolivian Embassy in London.

Various Labour MPs have also agreed to take up the case with the Bolivian government. The imposition of the State of Siege in Bolivia makes it all the more important to take up this case. The majority of miners and militants arrested during the recent protest march to La Paz have been released, but Eleuterio remains incarcerated in jail almost a year after his arrest, with no date set for a court appearance.

An MRCI delegation which was in Oruro recently visited Eleuterio in the San Pedro jail. Conditions there were appalling. The prison is an old Spanish fort, with very few modern facilities. Tiny cells are massively overcrowded. There is little protection against the freezing weather of the high Andean plateau.

Sitting in the bleak open courtyard of the prison, with an armed guard close by, Eleuterio explained the background to his case. He worked for 12 years as a miner in the Bolivar site in Oruro. Later, having studied on his own in the evenings, he qualified as an assistant topographer in the same mine. He was one of the leading militants in the mine and was elected regularly as a delegate to the Bolivian Miners' Federation congresses.

He was also well known in the region for his work in the struggle to nationalise the privately owned Totural mining site. The miners' union having won the struggle for nationalisation of this site were faced with a situation where the technicians in the mine were boycotting and obstructing plans of Comibol to take over the mine. (At this time the miners' union in Bolivia had a majority on the board of the state mining corporation Comibol). As a result Eleuterio was asked by the union to use his skills as a topographer to prepare the necessary surveys. For two months Eleuterio worked at the site, without pay, to ensure the success of the project.

Not surprisingly Eleuterio's activities earned him the enmity of

the bosses and their parties in Oruro. No doubt the fact that he stood as a candidate for Oruro in the 1985 national elections on the list of POR (Lora), an organisation which proclaims itself as Trotskyist and revolutionary, further marked him out for special attention by the authorities.

STATEMENT

In the middle of the general strike of September he was arrested and charged with stealing theodolites and levels from the mining offices. The sole 'evidence' against him was provided by a well known petty-criminal from Oruro - one Victor Rufino. This 'star witness' claimed to have seen two figures jumping from the window of the technical office and, from a distance of 25 yards, in heavy rain, heard the name "Eleuterio" being used. Rufino later withdrew a second more elaborate statement saying he had been pressurised to give it by the Oruro police!

The police, who failed to find anything in a search of Eleuterio's house, originally claimed he stole the equipment to raise money to pay the electoral fine of Guillermo Lora (who it seems must have sent out his instructions from the prison where he was at the time for failing to achieve enough votes to avoid a fine that could not be paid!).

So weak is the case against Eleuterio that they have not dared to bring it quickly to court - but neither will the authorities allow the miner out on bail preferring to keep a well known militant locked up. Eleuterio meanwhile is deprived of earning even the tiny wage paid to miners in Oruro. He cannot even afford legal representation. His wife and children have to survive in a country where there is no social security and one in the grip of a dramatic economic crisis. Wages average at 25 dollars a month. Yet a single short taxi ride costs 35 dollars!

Eleuterio is one of the many miners, internationally, who is languishing in prison because he has put up a militant fight in defence of the interests of his class. Like other miner class war prisoners in South Africa and in Britain, Eleuterio deserves our full support. Campaigning materials for use in trade union branches, Labour Parties etc. are available from the Free Eleuterio Guttierrez Campaign c/o BCM 7750, London WC1 3XX.

CLASS PRISONERS WAR

A picket had been called of the Bolivian Embassy in London for 30 September to protest his first year in jail without trial. A fund has been set up in Oruro both to help support Eleuterio's wife and family and to pay for legal and campaigning activities to get his relief. Any donations will be sent on by the Free Eleuterio Campaign to Bolivia. Get your Labour Party/trade union body to act now!

■ Free Eleuterio Guttierrez!

■ Free all those imprisoned and internally exiled under the state of siege!



Oruro, Bolivia's mining centre, home town of Eleuterio

THE GUILDFORD FOUR

TWELVE YEARS AGO three Irishmen and an Englishwoman were arrested for the pub bombings in Guildford and Woolwich. A year later they were handed out the longest sentences in British legal history.

They did not plant the bombs. At the time only their families, a few voices on the far left and the Republican movement argued this. Fewer still defended them whether they planted the bombs or not. Gradually as the orchestrated hysteria died down more and more people came to realise their innocence.

In 1977 an IRA active service unit admitted their role in the bombings and provided detailed evidence of this. It became obvious that the Guildford Four were convicted only by forced confessions, the intimidation of defence witnesses and wilful ignoring of cast-iron alibis. Despite all this their plea for a re-trial was turned down in 1977 by a no-jury Court of Appeal.

A travesty of British justice? No, more its trademark. The Guildford Four were among 16 people between 1974 and 1976 who were conspired against by the British state so as to further their dirty war in the Six Counties. The Birmingham Six were also among the victims.

Why did it happen and why does it continue to be ignored? Simply

TERRY FRENCH



Terry French during the great strike

KENT MINER TERRY French got a four year prison sentence during the miners' strike. His crime - defending the right to a job.

This 'crime' earned him the hatred of the Coal Board. They knew he was a militant and stood at the forefront of the strike. They were out to sack him. The police knew of his role as well and were gunning for him.

Terry has suffered badly in prison. The prison authorities have consistently mistreated him. Attempts to send him reading material have been blocked. Parole has been denied, despite Terry never being 'in trouble' with the warders.

Now his painful saga has been given an even more cruel twist by the vindictive authorities. During an authorised weekend's leave from open-prison Terry visited the TUC Congress in Brighton. This was not in contravention of any prison rule. Yet, on his return, he was punished for this 'political' act.

MOVED

He was moved out of open prison and into Wandsworth, where he was locked for 23 hours a day in his tiny, miserable cell. British prison conditions are infamously bad. Terry is receiving no relief from them.

This treatment shows the reality of British justice. It is a class justice which wreaks spiteful revenge on all workers who fight for their rights against the bosses.

Every militant in the labour movement must raise Terry's case and continue to protest against the imprisonment of him and the other miners jailed because of their role in the strike.

RELEASE JAILED MINERS!

REINSTATE VICTIMISED MINERS!



because in carrying out its war of national oppression against the anti-unionist population the British state considers all tactics legitimate, all Irish people as potential enemies.

Justice is on the side of those who fight this oppression as much as those who are victims of it. Many (unlike the Guildford Four) IRA supporters are locked up in British jails for carrying out legitimate acts of resistance. They too deserve our support.

Anyone who is outraged by the sheer hypocrisy of British justice should campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of Paul Hill, Carole Richardson, Gerard Conlon and Patrick Armstrong. Socialists and anti-imperialists must take up their case in the Labour Party and trade unions. It was, after all, a Labour government and a Labour Home Secretary who presided over this outrage.

For information, publicity and speakers contact and affiliate to the FREE THE GUILDFORD FOUR CAMPAIGN, BM Box 6944, London WC1 3XX.

PICKET THE HOME OFFICE
in support of
THE GUILDFORD FOUR
Monday 6 October, 5-6pm

Back the sacked miners - affiliate

THE NATIONAL JUSTICE FOR MINeworkers CAMPAIGN

Organisation

Address

Enclosed Affiliation Fee - National Organisation £50

Regional Organisation £25

Local Organisation £5

Cheques payable to "National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign" please

Please return to National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, c/o NUM Durham Mechanics Association, 26 The Avenue, Durham DN1 4ED

