

# Workers' ACTION

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THE Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions will be calling a weekly series of two-day strikes, starting September 3rd, according to the recommendation from its general purposes committee on August 14th.

This action must be fully supported. But it is not enough, and the union leaders' tactics risk letting militancy dribble away in small doses. An all-out engineering strike must be planned.

The two one-day strikes so far, on August 6th and 13th, have been well supported. The overtime ban since July 30th, much more difficult to keep solid than the one-day strikes, has also been well supported. This shows that engineering workers are ready for action if there is any lead from the unions.

The support has come in despite a feeble claim, and despite a lack of effort by the union leaders to publicise and build up the action.

But the Engineering Employers' Federation is determined not to give in easily to the claim for £80 minimum time rate for skilled workers, £60 for unskilled, one hour reduction in the working week with progress to 35 hours by 1982, two days extra holiday, and a common implementation date on April 1st, 1979.

According to AUEW President Terry Duffy, over 100 firms have agreed to the claim in full already. But these are likely to be the firms who had already conceded most of the claim's demand in local agreements, or who have specially pressing orders. The employers' federation has said it will expel firms which settle. Engineering order books are at a very low level, profit margins and cash flow are tight, and generally the bosses are in an aggressive mood.

Although the one-day

## ENGINEERS: Now for an all-out strike

strikes have got a good response, workers will soon get tired of token actions which do not really bite. Selective strikes have been suggested by the union leaders as a possible further tactic, but in the hands of the present right-wing leadership of the main engineering union, the AUEW, this tactic could be used to split up the struggle and bleed militancy.

An all-out strike, building on the momentum de-

veloped in the one-day strikes, is the way to force the bosses to terms. On that basis it would be possible to go forward to win a really worthwhile claim next year, with automatic protection for wages against inflation and an immediate 35 hour week — demands that give a lead to the whole working class and point to a socialist way out of the crisis.

Also necessary is an effort to build conscious support for the struggle. In

too many places there have not even been mass meetings or shop meetings to discuss the claim and the one-day strikes. The one-day strikes have not been used to organise meetings, rallies or demonstrations. Often there have not even been pickets at the factories which have come out, let alone flying pickets to factories not joining the strike.

The bosses are fully aware of what is at stake. The workers must be too.

## Lambeth says: we can fight the cuts

THE LABOUR movement in the London borough of Lambeth has decided to go for a fight against the cuts.

A special conference of the four Labour Parties in the borough on July 29th called on the council Labour Group to reverse its policy of a 4½% across-the-board cut in this year's programme. (The Tory government has cut £3 million off Lambeth's rate support grant).

Council leader Ted Knight has said he accepts the decision of the conference and will argue for it at the Labour Group's next meeting in September.

The conference reflected the anger of Labour Party activists against the cuts, and against the lack of consultation on the original decision to cut.

The debate began to clarify the way ahead. The strategy of a supplementary rate increase was rejected as being just another form of attack on workers' living standards. Activists argued that the decision to cut was a major obstacle to building a mass campaign in Lambeth and only its reversal will lay a principled political basis for a united front against the Tories.

Since the conference, the Trades Council has called a meeting on August 29th to launch a cuts bulletin and has invited affiliated organisations and local political and community groups to take part. The shop stewards of the local council workers' unions have met to discuss

setting up a joint stewards' anti-cuts committee.

The key task in the months ahead will be to coordinate all those fighting the cuts, and publicise the issues in the area. The conference called for:

- a campaign of street meetings,
- the use of the council's publicity machine to highlight the issues,
- speakers to trade union and tenants' meetings,
- contacting others to fight on an all-London basis,
- A DAY OF ACTION (including a march to Westminster) in November, when next year's rate support grant will be fixed.

The campaign must argue for the following policies:

- No cuts in services, no cuts in jobs.
- No rent and rate rises.
- Lift the interest burdens on councils. Nationalise the banks and finance houses without compensation.

### Socialist Organiser

special issue on the fight against the cuts in Lambeth. Out now, only 5p. Order from: Socialist Organiser, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16. Enclose 15p to cover postage

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## FUND DRIVE

Our August fund is lagging, with only £35 in by the last issue. Since then we have received:  
London WA public meeting collection..... £14.52  
North London ..... £10.00  
Total to date ..... £59.52  
We need £140.48 to reach our monthly £200 target by August 28th. Send money to Fund, WA, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD. Cheques payable to Workers' Action.

### Birmingham stewards say:

## NO RETREAT ON THE CLAIM

300 AUEW convenors and stewards met in Birmingham on the 13th, and voted overwhelmingly to insist on no retreat on the claim. On the 20th — the last in the series of one-day strikes — there will be a march and rally in the city.

Engineers in Sheffield are also holding a mass meeting on the 20th.

In Birmingham on the 13th, Lucas, GKN, all the Leyland plants and all the big factories were shut down. Unfortunately union leaders at all the big engineering firms decided against mounting pickets,

but there were pickets at Longbridge.

In Oxford, one factory where about 50 workers went in to work on the last one-day strike (August 6th), the BL Cowley Body Plant, was shut down this time.

There was also a solid response in Coventry. Shop stewards at Rolls Royce, Coventry, are blacking 30 out of 700 Rolls Royce subcontractors who did not support the Confed. strike.

In Liverpool, Leyland, Plessseys, and other big factories were 100% out. On Tyneside

the Vickers factories closed. In Leicester, at Goodwin Barsby, a subsidiary of BL, workers who voted against the strike on the 6th came out on the 13th.

In several places the one-day strike on the 13th was also supported by non-unionised factories where pay is nevertheless fixed according to the Confed. rate.

However, union leaders have been free with dispensations from the action. In Leicester, dispensation has been granted to Dunlop and Metal Box because they have

separate negotiating bodies, and to Marconi because workers there opted out of the national agreement in exchange for staff status. In addition, the right wing District Committee has supported an appeal to the AUEW Executive for dispensation for Wildt Mellor Bromley, which has "urgent deadlines to meet to have machines ready for the vital international exhibition in Hanover later this year".

This sort of division can only weaken the action — and often weaken it at its sharpest cutting edge.

## AUSTRALIA

## Fraser's men take on the unions

AT THE END of June, there was a near general strike in Australia in reply to the arrest of several trade unionists in the state of Western Australia. The union bureaucrats, however, then called off action in return for minimal fake-concessions.

That cowardice has quickly been rewarded. Malcolm Fraser's Liberal federal government has introduced new laws giving it power to sack civil service workers, to retire them early, or stand them down if they go on strike. Over 100 workers have been suspended as they have taken industrial action against Fraser's laws.

A reader in Australia has sent us this report on the arrests in Western Australia:

Two union officials and almost 50 shop stewards and rank and file workers were arrested following charges laid against them under the Western Australia Police Act, which forbids public meeting, (even of 3 people) without the consent of the Western Australia Police Commissioner.

Laurie Carmichael and Jack

Marks, two officials of the metalworkers' union AMSWU, were arrested following their return to the Western Australia capital Perth, after having addressed a strike meeting in Karratha, in Western Australia's far north-west Pilbara region. Police in Karratha then arrested other unionists who had been at the meeting.

Spontaneous stoppages occurred throughout Australia as the arrests became known, with some 30,000 unionists stopping work in Western Australia alone.

In the AMWSU, the Seamen's Union and the Waterside Workers' Federation (the dockers' union) there was very strong support for an immediate indefinite stoppage, until the charges were dropped, and possibly even until the Police Act was repealed.

Officials of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU — equivalent of the TUC) denounced the arrests, and pledged that "The Australian trade union movement will not stand idly by when union officials and members are deprived of their basic liberties because they are performing their union duties".

But then they announced that there was no possibility of the ACTU calling a national stoppage of all unions over the

issue until the outcome of the court hearing was known. Instead the ACTU confined itself to:

- backing stoppages called by individual unions and Trades and Labour Councils (TLCs).
- mounting a publicity campaign, meekly "informing all affiliates of the situation" and requesting financial assistance,
- and a mild pressure-politics campaign.

TLCs in the States of Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland called 24-hour protest stoppages on 21st June, when Carmichael and Marks went to court. Only the New South Wales and Tasmanian State TLCs scabbled on that date.

Maritime unions, covering seamen, dockers and so on, decided to make 21st June a national stoppage, thus closing all ports for the day. But the AMWSU did nothing to press for further action.

Then the ACTU claimed a victory when the court hearings were adjourned and the Western Australian government allegedly "reviewed" the Police Act.

The futility of this course of action was soon demonstrated, with an announcement by Western Australia Premier Sir Charles Court that he

intends to introduce draconian anti-union laws in the immediate future. These include proposals to:

- outlaw the closed shop;
- abolish union 'preference' clauses in awards;
- make court-controlled ballots for union elections and strike votes mandatory.

He has described any idea of government-union talks as "a useless exercise". What's more, the Western Australia Government is also funding a private company being set up to break strikes, to act as a "general security agent" and to compile dossiers on "communists and left-wing troublemakers". The company, Assistance and Security Pty. Ltd., is controlled by millionaire Liberal Party activist Ric New. The Western Australia Government has reportedly paid the company \$1815 already, to end a 2½ week flour strike by using a truck convoy to break through picket lines.

Our correspondent also describes the background to the Pilbara strike.

The Australian version of Britain's 'Social contract' — 'Wage Indexation' — has resulted in substantial declines in real wages since the Whitlam federal Labour Government intro-

duced it in 1974.

But there is just one snag in all this for the ruling class — the unbroken strength of the Australian labour movement. When the Whitlam government moved too slowly in slashing working class wages and living and working conditions, it was summarily sacked by the Queen's Australian representative, Governor-General Kerr, on 11th November 1975. Whitlam was replaced by Malcolm Fraser's Liberals, after an all-out campaign to head off general strike moves in response to Kerr's action.

Workers reacted angrily to Fraser's attacks. A national stoppage was held in 1976, when the Liberals began dismantling Medibank, Labour's national health scheme. This offensive was also sidetracked by Labour bureaucrats, who misled unionists into channelling their anger into holding on until Labour won parliamentary office again.

Until recently, the still-born Medibank action was the high point of active working class opposition to Fraser. Now, however, the tide is very obviously beginning to turn.

Telecommunication and postal workers, seamen, wharf labourers, metal workers, public transport workers, hospital workers and civil servants have all taken ind-

ustrial action in recent months in pursuit of either wage claims outside 'Indexation' limitations, or in protest against anti-working class legislation — or both — and we are preparing for further action.

Pilbara iron-ore miners are no exception to the rest of Australian workers. Their wages have not increased in purchasing power since 1974. Their jobs are under threat.

In April this year, 350 workers lost their jobs at a Pilbara pelleting plant when Japanese business interests declined to enter into further contracts and the plant was closed. Pilbara miners decided to strike when the region's sole employer, Hamersley Iron, decided not only to knock back their log of claims, but to counter it with proposals including a 150% rise in rents for company houses (no alternative accommodation is available), and a reduction in holidays for each day spent on strike.

During the strike, their union officials have been arrested, miners' wives have been sacked from casual jobs, and people in at least one Pilbara town has been subjected to a light plane flying overhead and blaring out over loudspeakers: "Get back to work, you bludging bastards".

## DEFEND THE CHARTER 77 PRISONERS

ON THURSDAY 9th August, the Czechoslovak ambassador in London refused to meet an official Labour Party delegation protesting at the arrest and forthcoming trial of 10 members of the 'Charter 77' democratic rights movement in Czechoslovakia.

Czech socialist exiles reckon that the arrests are part of the general campaign to silence protest in Eastern Europe before the 1980 international conference of governments on democratic rights, in Madrid, the follow-up to the Belgrade and Helsinki conferences. They predict that an attempt to smash the Polish protest movement will be made in the autumn. The forthcoming Prague trials are particularly important in this context, as a test of international opinion.

The 10 arrested, as well as belonging to Charter 77, were also members of the Committee in Defence of Unjustly Prosecuted Persons (VONS). The purpose of VONS is "to monitor the cases of persons who are being prosecuted or imprisoned for the expression of their convictions, or who have fallen victim to arbitrary police or judicial action". Since its founding in April '78, it has produced 114 communiques on cases which would normally pass unnoticed. They base their communiques solely on public documents which come from open legal proceedings.

The 10 arrested face charges of 'subversion', and sentences for this vary from three to ten years. The accused range from Petr Uhl, a revolutionary Marxist, to Vaclav Maly, a Christian

clergyman. Three, Olka Bednarova, Jiri Dienstbier, and Ladislav Lis, were prominent members of the Czechoslovakian CP before the Russian invasion.

Despite these arrests, the Charter 77 campaign has not been crippled as the State had hoped. Already 12 new members of VONS have been announced, and the Charter's bulletin, edited by Petr Uhl before his arrest, has produced a new issue. However, the international defence campaign is vital to ensure that the Czech authorities release all the ten Chartists.

In Britain, a Charter 77 Defence Fund has been set up, and donations can be sent to Reg Race MP, House of Commons, London SW1.



Charter 77 meeting in Prague. Photo: Labour Focus on E. Europe.

## BY LAWRENCE WELCH

ANOTHER EFFORT to preserve the privileges of Rhodesia's white settlers: that is the outcome of Thatcher's manoeuvrings at the Commonwealth conference in Lusaka last week, where her proposals for new talks met with the unanimous support of the Commonwealth leaders.

Six proposals were worked out:

- Britain has a legal responsibility to grant Zimbabwe-Rhodesia legal independence under black majority rule.
- All parties to the conflict must be involved in the settlement.
- The settlement must include a democratic constitution including safeguards for minorities.
- There must be "free and fair elections properly supervised under British Government authority and with Commonwealth observers".
- The Commonwealth welcomed Britain's readiness to call all-party talks.

• A major object of the settlement must be to "bring about a cessation of hostilities and an end to sanctions as part of the process of implementation of a lasting settlement".

These proposals are to be implemented in several stages, with: (1) a September summit; (2) on agreement of a constitution, the immediate transition to a sovereign republic of Zimbabwe; (3) financial compensation for settlers wishing to leave; (4) a ceasefire to coincide with the elections.

Bishop Muzorewa, although initially reluctant, has agreed to attend the summit. Ian Smith has cautiously welcomed Thatcher's plan. It is likely that Sithole and Chikerema will also attend the talks, as will representative of the Rhodesian Front.

Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, the leaders of the Patriotic Front, have given qualified support to the proposals. Mugabe has agreed with the principle of

"free and fair elections", but insists on the total dismantling of the Rhodesian Army.

The fate of the Rhodesian Army is the lynchpin of the negotiations. At present, control by Muzorewa's government over the armed forces is purely formal. Real power rests in the hands of the white commanding officers. One of the entrenched provisions in the constitution is that the existing institutions of the State — the judiciary, the public services, and the security forces are to be "maintained in a high state of efficiency and free from political interference".

When asked after Muzorewa's installation, "who will run the war?", Ian Smith replied: "The same people who've been running it all along — the army and the airforce and the police".

Thatcher's way out of this problem is British control of the elections. She quickly denied that British troops would be sent in, but as the big-business magazine *The Economist* has pointed out,

the plan "will probably need more than the presence of a British commissioner and some British and Commonwealth election-watchers; it may also call for some supervisory soldiers, not necessarily British but at least firmly under British command".

Nigeria's nationalisation of BP in response to its supply of oil to South Africa, was not an altogether unwelcome move for Thatcher. Foreign Secretary Carrington mildly condemned its timing as regrettable.

But it served to show the right wing of the Tory party that for Commonwealth agreement to be reached, concessions must be made. In the light of Tory policy on selling off BP, the Nigerian move is not of great concern; there is no dispute about compensation. In time the Nigerians will possibly sell back oil to BP.

While Thatcher has about-faced on her initial stand, and has apparently adopted a new version of Owen's policy, she can still easily shift back. If Nkomo

and Mugabe back out at any stage, we can expect that Thatcher will then try to get the backing of the Commonwealth to bypass them and push ahead as quickly as possible for new elections in Rhodesia.

Whatever form of settlement may result from the Tory plans, it is sure to ignore one fundamental fact: the black working class and peasantry.

Colin Legum in *The Observer* described his visits to the refugee camps which contain at least 150,000 refugees: "One has only to talk to the women in these camps, as well as to the young military commanders, to realise that a revolutionary minded new generation of Zimbabweans has developed during the long struggle".

In the long term, it is they who will determine the future of Southern Africa. We must continue support for them in demanding: No recognition, no lifting of sanctions, and trade union blacking of any military assistance to the Smith-Muzorewa regime.

**ZIMBABWE:  
ANOTHER  
ATTEMPT  
TO  
SAVE  
WHITE  
PRIVILEGE**

# 5,000 march for Troops Out

THE LARGEST demonstration in Britain since 1972 against the presence of troops in Ireland took place in London on August 12th. Over 5,000 took part in the march originally organised to call on the government to "commit itself to a policy of withdrawal".

At least 80% of the demonstrators, however, marched on a 'Troops Out Now' contingent. The 'official' section of the march was backed by the Young Liberals, the Communist Party and a handful of Militant supporters, and attracted only five labour movement banners from Barnsley, Hammersmith and Kensington, Ealing, and Tower Hamlets Trades Councils and Acton UCATT.

The 'Troops Out Now' contingent, headed by a large group of Provisional Sinn

Fein supporters and supporters of UTOM, and including about 800 under the banners of the SWP, was larger in both size and official labour movement backing. The 'Socialist Organiser' contingent of about 400, mobilised by the paper's appeal for the march which was signed by many prominent trade union and Labour party figures, attracted the largest official labour movement backing.

SO's contingent, backed by WA, included groups from North Islington, Selly Oak, Hornsey, Hemel Hempstead, Norwood, Moss Side, and Hackney North Constituency Labour Parties; Coventry, Haringey, and Hackney Trades Councils; the NUJ's Book Branch, and T&GWU's Central London 1/524 branch, as well as a number of LPYS branches.

The other labour movement bodies represented on the 'TON' contingent were T&GWU 5/293 (Cowley), Camden NUPE and Tameside Trades Council.

'Socialist Organiser' campaigned with a special appeal for labour movement bodies to support the 'TON' contingent, stressing that "Labour cannot leave the cause of Irish freedom to the Liberals", and that it was to the shame of the labour movement that the Liberals were the first to take an initiative, by calling the demonstration.

The 'Socialist Organiser' appeal was widely circulated in the movement, though in some areas its wider circulation was hampered: police in Leicester stopped comrades distributing it in the streets on the grounds that they were "distributing

subversive literature which is racially discriminatory to the army".

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency boycotted the march, standing on the pavement with placards and shouting slogans denouncing the marchers for "tailing the Liberals". The 'Socialist Organiser' marchers drowned them out with chants of "Troops out now: support the Irish resistance".

Though still small, the

official labour movement backing for sections of the march shows that it is possible to organise sections of the movement to take up the call for 'Troops Out Now'. Workers Action will be pressing for that first step to be carried on, urging Socialist Organiser to initiate a call for a labour movement conference on Ireland, and to draw other socialist groups into its organisation.

## Barricades in Derry

TO MARK the 10th anniversary of troops being sent onto the streets, and the 8th anniversary of internment, there was also a demonstration in Belfast, and barricades went up briefly in Derry.

The Belfast march, organised by Provisional Sinn Fein, ended with a 5,000 strong rally at which armed IRA men spoke: "The British Army know that they are the cause of the battles. The violence will continue as long as they are here — as long as they continue to send young soldiers to their deaths as generals sit back and play war games".

Prudent in the face of the militancy of the Catholic population, the Army did not intervene. Protestant Unionist

bigots were outraged, and the Ulster Defence Association announced plans for "a positive paramilitary role".

While the IRA — and Catholics suspected, on whatever slight evidence, of aiding the IRA — are ruthlessly hounded, the UDA remains legal, despite its undeniable connections with many sectarian assassinations. Indeed, there is a large overlap in membership between the UDA and the British Army's part-time Ulster Defence Regiment.

Far from maintaining the peace in Northern Ireland, the British Army is maintaining the war — and maintaining the sectarian set-up that leads to war.

The 'SO' contingent. Photo: Eric Harrison.



## RACIST WITCH HUNT IN BIRMINGHAM

BRIDGET PARSONS, a maths teacher at Swanshurst school in Birmingham, has been suspended from her job and faces the sack when school governors meet later this month.

Parsons was one of 7 anti-racist demonstrators who had a total of £1,755 fines and costs imposed on them after a picket of Pollyanna's night club in March.

Last November, the club was served with a non-discrimination order under section 59 of the Race Relations Act. The management responded by stating on regional television that it intended to continue with its 'quota' system of restricting the entry of non-whites. A little later a Sikh complained to the police that he had been refused entry, apparently for wearing a turban. The police declined to take any action.

The police did, however, accept drinks from the club's staff, with whom they appear to be on very cordial terms. As a result of this, the Birmingham Action Committee against racism in clubs was formed in February, and set about organising a regular Saturday night picket of Pollyanna's.

On 31st March, about 120 people turned up at 10 pm outside the club. The 2 police officers on duty at the time testified that the pickets were "noisy" but good-humoured rather than aggressive. Nobody was physically prevented from entering the club, although many did turn away after talking to the pickets.

The mood changed with

the arrival of Inspector Percy Poston. He stated in evidence that before he even entered the street where the picket was taking place he had decided "that these demonstrators were acting like animals". He approached Bridget Parsons, who was holding a banner, argued with her, and — as he later admitted — ended up grabbing her by the throat. Meanwhile, another policeman, Inspector Thomas Summerville, was inside the club. He called in the SPG.

In court, Summerville made no secret of his friendship with the club owners, Don and Eddy Fewtrell, and of his personal attitude towards the demonstration: the action was "misconceived" and the charges of racial discrimination "misguided". After all, said Summerville, the club had a coloured bouncer on the door.

The 7 demonstrators arrested were bundled off to Steelhouse Lane police station by the SPG. On her arrival there, Parsons saw a demonstrator on the floor, surrounded by police. Thinking that he was being beaten up, she rushed forward.

A scuffle ensued, and Parsons was dragged away along the floor, and flung into a cell. She was later accused of breaking a policewoman's rib, although no medical evidence for this has ever been produced.

Parsons was found guilty of threatening behaviour, obstruction, and assault causing actual bodily harm to a woman PC. The other 6 were found guilty of

threatening behaviour and obstruction. The magistrates did not appear particularly concerned that the evidence from Poston and the other policemen in court was riddled with contradictions.

One of the demonstrators, for instance, was apparently arrested twice on the same night by 2 different policemen! The fines ranged from £190 up to £540 for Parsons.

At this point, Birmingham's ultra-right wing local rag, *The Evening Mail*, enters the story. On Thursday 26th July, the day after the trial ended, the *Mail* carried an editorial calling for Bridget Parsons to be sacked. The *Mail* had never mentioned the report by the Commission for Racial Equality, and never criticised the police's racist practices.

The nearest the paper got to telling its readers the truth about the club was when it stated that Bridget Parsons "conceived" the club to be "operating some sort of colour bar".

Several more witch-hunting articles appeared in subsequent issues, and Bridget Parsons was suspended on July 30th. The Committee against racism in clubs, along with Rank and File Teacher and the Socialist Teachers' Alliance is building a campaign to defend Parsons. An emergency NUT meeting has been called and a public meeting is planned for later this month.

For more details, contact: CARIC, 8 Park Avenue, Birmingham B12 9RU.

JIM DENHAM

## Nazis hammered in Stockport

AS THE National Front turns towards Nazi thuggery in a big way, Manchester NF has been doing its poor best to keep up with events.

Of late they have taken to driving 30 of their thugs around Manchester to attack left-wing paper sellers, and perhaps even distribute a little of their own filth. On Saturday July 28th they showed up in Salford and after a few minutes leafletting went to the 'Church', a local left-wing pub, where they started threatening 4 SWP members, and informing them that they were 'here to stay'. These comrades escaped in a car after the local landlord called the police.

The next Saturday, August 4th, there was a stronger left-wing presence in Salford, with about 15 SWP and Workers Action sellers. But the Front decided to 'do' Stockport that day.

Arriving minutes after SWP paper sellers had left they distributed a few leaflets, pushed a few kids around, and retired to the 'Bull's Head' (which has a Nazi landlord). Emerging from the pub suitably refreshed they returned to Stockport precinct at about 3.45. They made the big mistake of pushing into an off-licence queue at the Co-op, arousing the ire of local youth who knocked the hell out of them and hospitalised one, Douglas Notley, who, eyewitnesses told Workers Action, was still chanting "National Front" as he was being carried to the ambulance.

On August 11th, SWP and Workers Action supporters distributed leaflets to local youth urging them to defend the Stockport precinct, and maintained a presence there until 4 o'clock. A few Nazis slunk down, slunk around, and slunk back to the Bull's Head.

Although this was a considerable victory, the Front poses a serious threat in Stockport, since youngsters are joining the NF for free drinks in the Bull's Head and the Blue Waterfall disco in Fletcher Street, owned by one Michael Cowley, another Nazi.

It is also probably not coincidental that an Asian man was recently attacked and robbed by a youth who had 'come out of a club in Fletcher Street', according to the Manchester Evening News. The youth wore badges on the shoulder of his tee-shirt: two Stockport NF members wear their badges like that.

On Sunday 5th (the day after the Front's hammering in Stockport) the 'Ghulam', an Indian restaurant in Rusholme, was invaded by 20 racists who insulted the staff, injured the manager, and stole £150. Police took 20 minutes to arrive, predictably enough. The manager told WA that the attackers were all white and over 20, and a few were wearing combat jackets.

This is another blatant example of Nazi thuggery turning into outright gangsterism, and WA supporters will be pressing for effective working-class defence of all areas against the Nazis as a priority.

MICK WOODS

## Salford cuts

IF YOU LIVE in Salford, and one of your kids comes home telling you that they have been mowing the grass as part of an 'Environmental Studies' project, blame the cuts.

The grass in Salford's green and pleasant school grounds is going to be cut less often, windows will be cleaned less often, and locks will soon appear on school phones.

Don't forget to wrap your children warmly, and to give them torches in winter, as heating and lighting have to be further cut.

Gather jumble together, Salford PTAs, because your school funds will soon be diverted from providing a minibus to making sure your kids have pencils and paper — capitation is to be cut by 30%. With galloping inflation, in real terms this means a cut of more like 60%. Bring back the slate, you may well be crying!

And don't think only the kids are going to pay for the massive tax handouts to the rich. Adult education classes will be limited to 120 for the whole of Salford, and the cost is going up from £6 per class to £7, with no extra classes on the cheap rate (2 for 1).

The secondary schools may set up 'job readiness' programmes in the third year, and don't be surprised if they describe caretaking, cleaning and maintenance work to you — all these support services are going to be cut. Actual teacher numbers will be maintained — so is Chief Education Officer John Barnes to be congratulated on this?

No — he is just another Houdini. When the crunch comes he, as other administrators do for whoever is in power, turns to you, his real paymaster, and says "My hands are tied, my hands are tied".

What can you as parents do to protect your children's right to good education facilities?

Bring the subject of education cuts up at your union branch meetings; organise pickets of the education offices; join forces with other school PTAs and occupy education offices. Go in groups to petition your local councillors to demand a reversal of the cuts.

If nothing is done, then further cuts will be made — in fact, they're already promised.

LINDA YOUD  
Salford NUT

## WV purge

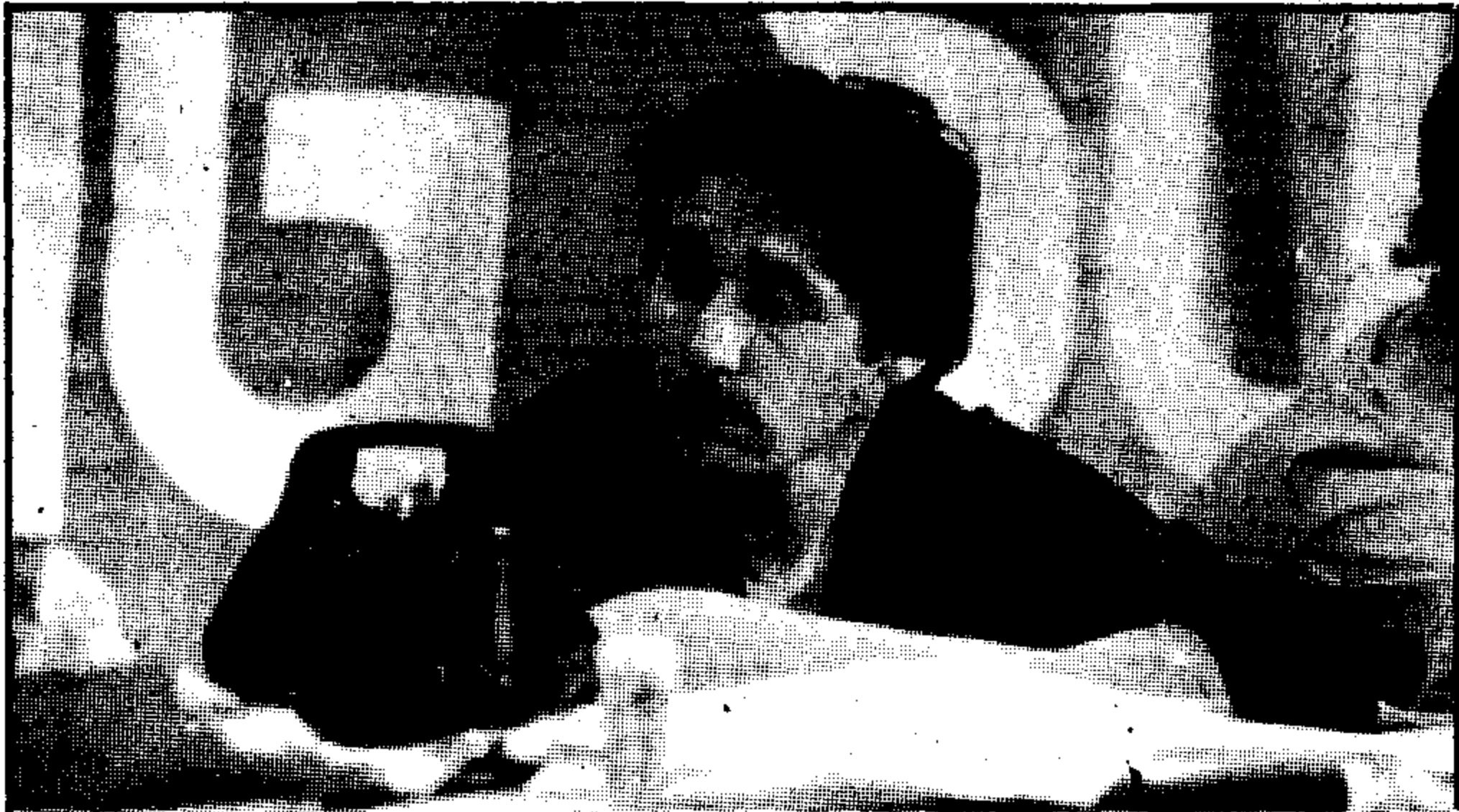
SWP MEMBERS in Manchester Women's Voice have tried to close down one of WV's most active branches in the area, Moss Side. The reason was that the Moss Side group had several active Labour Party members in it, and only a couple of SWP members.

To try and assert their control over WV, the Manchester SWP members decided that they would 'expel' one member of Moss Side WV who'd actually been given a membership card. They also decided to bar from WV the other non-SWP members who'd been active in the Moss Side group, but did not have cards.

But the decision hasn't been carried out. The local Women's Resource Centre said that it wouldn't provide rooms to the group which tried to shut down Moss Side WV. There were other protests too, and the SWP decided to think again.

Moss Side WV is carrying on with its activities, and the whole affair has been taken up with WV nationally. Activists in WV should register their protest against such bureaucratic threats of exclusion, which try to overturn the decision of WV conferences that the group is not merely a women's section of the SWP.

# YS MAJORITY VOTES DOWN SUPPORT FOR TROOPS OUT



This year's LPYS conference (photos by Stephen Slater).

ABOUT 230 delegates and 600 visitors attended the 18th National Conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists on 28/29 August, held under canvas at the LPYS summer camp in the Forest of Dean. The smaller attendance (40 fewer delegates than last year, and only half the number of visitors, despite a small growth in the YS) was not surprising. The conference had been postponed from its traditional Easter spot because of the General Election.

But this year, as at last year's conference, *Workers' Action* emerged as the clear, genuine, revolutionary opposition to the *Militant* majority. And this year *Militant* were forced to take our ideas seriously, by arguing against them politically and not, as in past years, attempting to ignore them or just resorting to abuse.

Most significant was the Ireland debate. Mick Woods moved an emergency reso-

lution from Moss Side YS calling for support for *Socialist Organiser's* appeal for a labour movement contingent on the basis of Troops Out Now for the August 12th demonstration. He challenged *Militant* to give concrete evidence that they really support the immediate withdrawal of British troops by mobilising for the march.

Woods argued that it was the duty of British socialists not simply to criticise the Republicans, but to provide active support for their struggle against the Army and State of the British capitalist class. But *Militant* voted down the resolution — and failed to turn up on August 12th, except for three or four paper sellers.

In the debate, *Militant* posed as the 'serious' Marxists concerned with constructing a real proletarian movement in Ireland, as against the 'ultra-left' who do nothing to try to overcome 'sectarianism' (i.e. the simple Republican violence of the wing Loyalist m... Speaking in Youth Affairs, er (Edinburgh) raised the und... when he attac... document, the for Young V... exemplifying wrong with M... ception of a Tr... gramme: a seri... ate demands... gether with glo... of what sociali... like, without... tween the two... Brewer point... practice this ha... to put up no... against the rec... aghan govern... the election, w... aghanites wer... to get re-elect... of their record... icising Callag... to fall in line w... abstract propa...

## BATTLE LINES SET ON LABOUR DEMOCRACY

THIS Conference moves a 'vote of no confidence' in the present leader of the Labour Party, Mr James Callaghan.

"It is clear from his recent attack on trades unionists at the National Executive Committee meeting on 23rd May 1979, and his statement that he could not support, neither should the Labour Party support, moves by the trade union movement to thwart Tory Government policy, that he has no intention of leading the rank and file..."

"He is not competent to lead this movement to a socialist programme and should be asked to resign..."

Thanet East CLP's resolution to this year's Labour Party conference names names, and sets out some of the issues behind what will be the big struggle at Brighton in September — democracy in the Labour Party. However, dozens of other resolutions do take up the questions of the accountability of the Labour Party leader, re-selection of MPs, and how the manifesto is drawn up.

These issues have become the main focus for the widespread dissatisfaction at the record of the last Labour government and its anti-working class actions paving the way for the Tories.

A dozen resolutions on the agenda call for the Labour leader to be elected by the Party, not just by Labour MPs. Resolutions from Thanet West, Newham NW, Stockport South, Hammer-smith North and Birmingham Ladywood CLPs call for the annual conference to elect the party leader.

Another five resolutions from CLPs back a different view, pushed by the Labour Coordinating Committee's paper, *Labour Activist*. These resolutions call for the party leader to be elected by an 'electoral college' composed of MPs, parliamentary candidates, CLP delegates and 500 delegates from unions and other affiliated organisations.

*Labour Activist* argues that election by conference was overwhelmingly rejected last year because the unions were opposed to it. Secondly, a vote at conference would give a disproportionate voice to the union's block votes,

while the LCC's proposal would 'give more or less equal weight to the trade unions, constituencies, and MP'.

In reality, electing Labour's leader at the conference is the best way to make him or her accountable for carrying out the policies decided at conference. Half-way houses like an electoral college would extend accountability much less.

There are fifteen resolutions calling for the automatic re-selection of MPs; in a section of the agenda included because the National Executive decided to waive the three-year rule. The best of these resolutions, from Crosby, Leicester South, and Manchester Ardwick CLPs, call for the implementation of the NEC Re-selection Working Party's Minority Report, which combines provision for automatic re-selection with retention of a constituency's right to move re-selection at any time it sees fit. Other amendments would have the effect of limiting constituencies' rights to one re-selection, 18 months after a new Parliament is elected.

Two dozen resolutions call for the Labour Party manifesto to be determined by a joint meeting of the NEC and Cabinet or Shadow Cabinet. The resolutions point out that under pressure from the last government a number of party policies were simply dropped from the Manifesto at the election.

Callaghan is attempting to line up union leaders to vote down all these proposals. The fight for an extension of democracy in the Labour Party shows widespread disaffection over the record of Labour's leaders in the last five years. But with most left-wing CLPs' attention absorbed by the democracy issue, the resolution book is weak on plans to organise the movement for a fight against the Tory government.

The section of the 1979 Conference agenda devoted to 'Future policy and party development' has resolutions of two types: vague right-wing ones endorsing the

'Concordat' as a way to 'broaden the base of Labour's electoral support', and vague left-wing ones calling for Labour to fight elections on a 'socialist programme... based on Clause IV part 4 of the [Labour Party] constitution'.

On the most immediate issues of Tory government attacks, only 'renationalisation' of concerns de-nationalised by the government is covered by several strong resolutions. Over 45 motions from CLPs, together with one from the AUEW (TASS) and one from the Amalgamated Union of Textile Workers call for such concerns to be renationalised without compensation.

The keynote resolution on cuts, from the GMWU, calls "on the whole labour movement to give backing to a TUC political and educational campaign in defence of public services and in favour of the positive use of public spending and the extension of the public sector". Though the GMWU resolution and a number of others go on to say, "This political campaign must be accompanied by a determination to resist cuts imposed by the Tories whether at national or

local level", nothing is said about what practical steps to take.

Tory plans to force councils to sell council housing are opposed by over a dozen resolutions, but actual defiance is called for only by Basingstoke CLP's resolution, which "urges all Labour councils to defy Tory legislation... and give full support to all councils making this stand", and Coventry North-East CLP's: "... instructs Labour-controlled councils ... to resist any attempts by the Tory government to sell council houses".

A number of resolutions oppose Callaghan's denunciation of NUPE's campaign against pay beds. Leicester West CLP calls on "the National Executive Committee to approach NUPE and CoHSE with a view to organising a joint campaign in the labour movement to abolish 'pay-beds' as the first step in a campaign to clear private medicine from the NHS for all time".

On unemployment, the TGWU's resolution calls vaguely for a "major reduction in working time", while the AUEW Engineering

Section does not even bother to raise its policy for a 35 hour week, and just gives the government a bit of 'good advice' on how to manage capitalism, asking it "to take steps to reduce the present level of unemployment by reflating the economy to improve purchasing power".

A resolution from Birmingham Perry Barr CLP tries to give some political answers, calling for a 35 hour week, a national minimum wage, a scheme of public works, and the nationalisation under workers' control of firms going bankrupt. A resolution from Chester-le-Street CLP provides policies for organising: it supports "the setting up of day centres for the unemployed as a first step and urges the labour movement to organise the unemployed within official trade union structures to help unite employed and unemployed in the struggle for full employment".

Many other aspects of the attacks on the working class are barely raised. Only one CLP, Streatham, "calls on the Labour Party, the NEC and the Parliamentary Labour Party to support all campaigns and demonstrations

organised in defence of the 1967 Abortion Act", in response to the Corrie Bill.

Another CLP, Birmingham Edgbaston, is the only one to urge a real campaign against the National Front, calling on "the NEC to take a leading role in mobilising the movement to oppose the National Front and other fascists on the basis of 'no platform for fascists'".

The question of police racialism and police activity against the labour movement, urgent after the events at Southall, is taken up strongly by two CLPs, Manchester Moss Side and Edinburgh Central. Both CLPs say: "The expansion of the police force's anti-working class activities under the last Labour government has now paved the way for the Tory government to gear up the police force for future use against all who dare to defy the Tories' repressive policies. Conference demands:

- The scrapping of the Special Patrol Group, the Special Branch, and other similar units,

- A full public enquiry into police action in Southall in May 1979,

- the ending of police harassment of black communities".

Other resolutions which the platform are likely to find offensive have, however, been dealt with. Resolutions from Brent East and Norwood CLPs calling for troops out now and self-determination for Ireland were both chopped on the grounds that the CLPs had not paid their full affiliation money. In the case of Brent East, the shortfall was... £5!

Perhaps the NEC wanted to avoid the embarrassment of finding for the sixth year running that they had 'no time' to debate Ireland. But a weaker resolution from Hemel Hempstead CLP is on the agenda.

Delegates should support the fight to get Ireland fully discussed — with all the viewpoints represented. A fight for democracy in the Labour Party which ignores Transport House bureaucrats carving up their opponents on key questions like Ireland will be a very poor fight indeed.

NIK BARSTOW

### Democracy must begin on the left

JAMES CALLAGHAN and his trade union bureaucrat allies, like David Bassett of the GMWU, have made it clear that they are out to organise the forces of the Labour Right for the coming battles over Party democracy. And the Campaign for Labour Victory, led by ex-transport minister William Rodgers, who also organised Gaitskill's battle against unilateral nuclear disarmament in the '60s, has put out a call for a 'fight against the lunacy of the left'.

On the left, the major organising force, apart from *Socialist Organiser*, will be the Labour Coordinating Committee, set up last year by several people close to Wedgwood Benn. The LCC has circulated model resolutions for the Party conference. After the conference, in November, it will be holding its first Annual General Meeting. On the same weekend there will be a big Labour rank-and-file conference also sponsored by the Institute for Workers' Con-

trol, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the TGWU, NUPE, the National Register of Tribune Groups, and the ILP.

In its moves to get organised, the LCC has circulated a draft constitution and is electing an EC. Unfortunately, both the EC election (by postal ballot) and the adoption of the constitution are to happen before the AGM.

Three supporters of *Socialist Organiser*, Nik Barstow, John Bloxam, and Peter Tebbutt, have been nominated for the EC. Their election address states:

"The LCC must be fully democratic, with the AGM sovereign and no 'bans and proscriptions'... The LCC must remain an open forum of the left inside the Party and a campaign alliance for rank and file Labour activists... We will continue to argue for a democratic and fighting body, and for policies taken up by the papers *Socialist Organiser* and *Workers' Action*".

They have submitted con-

stitutional amendments, focusing on two key issues:

- The LCC should be controlled by the membership — through the AGM — not by the Executive Committee.

- The LCC should be an open, campaigning alliance. At present the LCC are trying to make LCC membership conditional on accepting a policy statement produced this March — after the LCC had been in existence and recruiting for some months — without any consultation with the membership.

The left can hardly mount a strong fight for democracy in the movement if it does not also have democracy in its own ranks. It can hardly fight the right wing with sufficient energy if it is also trying hard to keep down the more militant section of the left wing. The LCC's failure to come up to what is necessary here underlines the need to build *Socialist Organiser* groups now, so that a hard left wing is ready to meet Callaghan's offensive.

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unite Clause 4 faction may have in it.

In the debate on women's rights, a resolution from Southampton was defeated which for all its shortcomings clearly called for a YS campaign nationally on the issue. The resolutions which were passed, while containing many correct demands, called for no concrete action.

In the debate on organisation, Selly Oak and Leeds SE YS moved a resolution supporting the demands of the Campaign for YS Democracy. Militant's reply to this boiled down to saying that as Clause 4 (who support CYSD) are bad in the Labour student organisation NOLS (as indeed they are), therefore the YS leadership, in their defence of the present structures of the YS, are beyond reproach.

After the conference, CYSD supporters held a meeting which was small but allowed fruitful discussion. Later in the week, at the YS summer camp, Workers Action supporters held a meeting on 'Organising Labour's Left' which was a great success, both in terms of the discussion and the attendance. Over 60 comrades attended, with roughly 50 from the Militant tendency.

NEIL COBBETT



Gordon Brewer

# The truth on Kronstadt

ALASDAIR JAMISON reviews 'Kronstadt', by V I Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Monad, £1.50.

SINCE MARCH 1921, when Red Army troops stormed the Kronstadt naval fortress, near Petrograd, anti communists of the right and the Anarchist 'left' have gleefully used this event to claim that the Bolshevik government, led by Lenin and Trotsky, was quite willing to employ force to settle differences in the workers' movement and thus began the reign of bureaucratic terror, in the Soviet Union, years before Stalinism came to power.

The revolutionary tradition of the Kronstadt sailors of 1917, whom Trotsky called the "fighting crusaders of the revolution", is invoked to suggest that the power-greedy Bolsheviks cynically turned on the people who had made the revolutionary seizure of power in Petrograd possible as soon as they became 'awkward'. It's a powerful and romantic image. Staunch revolutionaries refusing to be cowed by a new parasitic elite and sacrificing their lives as a last act of working class independence before the onset of the bureaucratic ice age. Unfortunately for the purveyors of this myth, the facts fail to fit their requirements.

In early 1921, although on the face of it the civil war was over, large White forces still existed on the borders of the Soviet Union and elsewhere. Internally, peasant revolts against the rigours of War Communism had brought 'Green' armies of tens of thousands out against the soviets. As Pierre Frank points out in his introduction, "...the Bolshevik leaders were inclined to believe, with good reason, that the civil war would resume in the wake of incidents inside the country or on its borders".

Indeed, White emigres began to collect volunteers, money, weapons and food supplies under the slogan "For Kronstadt" as soon as the rebellion began, and Western newspapers leaked the plot claiming that there was an anti-Bolshevik uprising in progress in Kronstadt, over two weeks before it actually began! Thus despite the radical sounding slogan of "Soviets without Bolsheviks", "Even if one concedes that the rising was carried out by workers and sailors acting in full independence, on their own initiative, and without any relations with counter-revolutionaries, it must be recognised that from the moment the rising was launched, all the enemies of the Bolsheviks hastened to join it", (Alfred Rosmer).

Although Rosmer could not know it, at the time he wrote, the rebellion was actively nurtured and nourished by SR and Menshevik agents inside Kronstadt. The rebels were clearly seen by Russian reactionaries as an armed wedge to be driven into Bolshevism, hopefully with deadly results. During research for his book 'Kronstadt 1921', modern American historian Paul Avrich — no friend of communism — discovered a document, in the archives of Colum-

bia University, which has been reprinted in full along with the present collection. Its very title, "Memorandum on the Organisation of an Uprising in Kronstadt", indicates its content, and it concludes that the coming uprising will "thus deliver to Bolshevism one of the heaviest blows that could befall it". Claims that this document is a Bolshevik fabrication can be dismissed, since it was not uncovered until half a century after the event and by a non-communist at that.

Paul Miliukov, Kadet leader, and one of the most class conscious enemies of the Bolshevik revolution also saw that the slogan "Soviets without Bolsheviks" could be used to defeat the one party able to defend the working class conquests of the Russian Revolution, and open a counter revolution which could eventually overthrow the power of the soviets themselves and restore capitalist rule.

Anti-Bolshevism was able to strike roots easily among the naval garrison of 1921, which was the same garrison as that of 1917 only in name. The communist sailors of 1917 had been drafted, in waves, to the civil war fronts and, by 1921, were either dispersed or dead. They had been replaced largely by peasants — the sons of those who felt squeezed by the food gathering policies of War Communism.

Trotsky illustrates this point: "When conditions became very critical in hungry Petrograd, the Political Bureau more than once discussed the possibility of securing an 'internal loan' from Kronstadt, where a quantity of old provisions still remained. But delegates of the Petrograd workers answered: 'You will get nothing from them by kindness. They speculate in cloth, coal and bread. At present in Kronstadt every kind of riff-raff has raised its head'. That was the real situation. It was not like the sugar sweet idealisations after the event."

Stepan Petrichenko, one of the central figures of the rebellion, was forthright on this point too: "Three quarters of the Kronstadt garrison were natives of the Ukraine, some of whom had served with the anti-Bolshevik forces in the south before entering the Soviet navy." Thus the rebellion is exposed as counter revolutionary in content and consciously so in its inspiration. Lenin summed up the meaning of Kronstadt in an interview for the March 15th 1921 edition of the New York Herald Tribune. "If people abroad exaggerate the importance of the rising in Kronstadt and give it support, it is because the world has broken up into two camps: capitalism abroad and Communist Russia."

This book is a good buy as the question of Kronstadt is often, needlessly, seen as a hot potato by many modern Marxists. The book reads well and any bitterness which it might have suffered through being a selection of extracts is amply overcome by the introduction, supplementary material, and notes. It sets the Kronstadt rebellion firmly in its place as a tragic but essential postscript to the establishment of working class power in the Soviet Union.



Starvation was widespread in Russia after the Civil War. But the Kronstadt garrison grabbed privileges.

# OUR TITERS

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o: Militant Mentmore 3PN. BARSTOW



After leftists marched in Tehran, Islamic militants rampaged through the city.

# Iran: the conflicts sharpen

ACCORDING TO first reports of the results of the elections in Iran for an assembly to consider the Islamic draft constitution, 60 out of 75 seats have been won by supporters of ayatollah Khomeini. Supporters of ayatollah Shariat Madari, who favours a return to the 1906 constitution, won 12 seats despite announcing a boycott of the poll.

Kurdish nationalist leader Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou is also reported elected, although the Iranian Kurds main leader, Sheikh Ezzedin Hosseini, had called for a boycott. The Assembly is due to convene on August 20th.

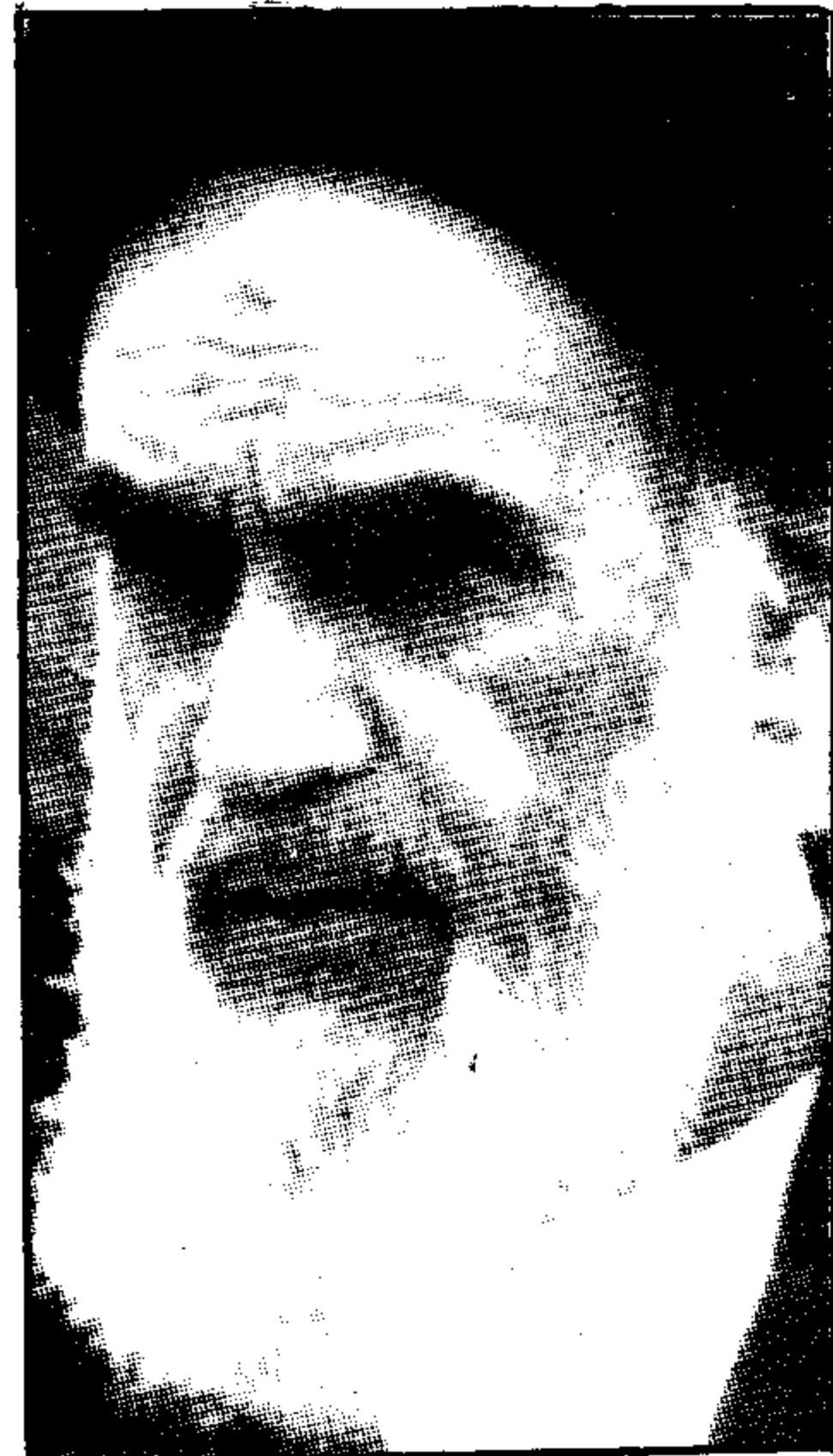
The hold of Khomeini's Islamic demagogy, and the surviving credit from his struggle against the Shah, is still strong among the most backward sections of the Iranian people. But increasing tension in Iran testifies to the fact that opposition is growing and the divisions within the regime remain acute.

According to the correspondent in Iran of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, fear of a military coup or civil war is widespread.

On 12th of August, tens of thousands took to the streets of Tehran to protest against Islamic press censorship. Khomeini supporters attack-

ed the march, but were heavily outnumbered.

The following day, 30,000 Islamic militants marched. They attacked the premises of the left-wing Fedayeen movement and of the Moscow-line Tudeh party, and the university library.



Khomeini faces growing opposition

The left-wing protest was a response to new restrictive press laws, the closing down of newspapers critical of Khomeini, and the arrest of several members of the staff of the newspaper *Ayandegan*. *Ayandegan* was threat-

ened once before, in May, when Khomeini made a speech denouncing it, but it survived with an increased circulation. This time, according to the *Guardian*, Islamic militiamen broke up a workers' sit-in at the newspaper's offices.

The press curbs came after strong criticism in some newspapers of the running of the assembly elections. Although two-thirds of Iran's electorate are illiterate, voters had to write out the name of their chosen candidate on the ballot paper. Polling station staff 'helping' the illiterate voters generally wrote in pro-Khomeini names.

The main secular middle-class party, the National Democratic Front, called for a boycott of the election, as did the bourgeois National Front and ayatollah Shariat Madari. In Kurdistan only a 10% poll was reported, and in the mainly Arab-populated area of Khuzestan, where the people have also been demanding regional autonomy, the turnout was also low.

The national minorities are a major force in opposition to the Islamic regime's attempt to reconstruct a strong bourgeois state in Iran. And Khomeini also sees working-class militancy as a threat: in a speech on 8th August, he denounced the opposition for organis-

ing "strike after strike, occupation after occupation, march after march..."

In Ahwaz, 14 members of the Iranian Socialist Workers' Party are still in jail.

In the air force, technicians (who played a big role in the overthrow of the Shah) are on strike against the restoration of the old officer system.

One political party is still trying to patch over the bitter clashes between Khomeini and the workers: the Tudeh party. On 17th July they joined a pro-Khomeini demonstration, which had slogans like "The leftists are Savak agents and enemies of the Koran". In a press interview, Tudeh leader Kianouri said:

"Our logic is a Marxist logic. The main thing for us is to uproot American imperialism. We support everyone who attacks it. The press? To give freedom to counter-revolutionaries is not democratic... Strikes: they would help imperialism..."

All the Tudeh's protestations did not stop their offices being attacked during the pro-Khomeini rampage on the 13th. And they will not save them from being swept away when the Iranian workers rise up against Khomeini.

COLIN FOSTER

# Herbert Marcuse

THE INFLUENCE OF HERBERT MARCUSE, who recently died at the age of 81, on the student movements of the late '60s, was greatly exaggerated by the bourgeois press. In France, after the events of May-June 1968, a newspaper asked radical student activists about books that had influenced them: they hardly mentioned Marcuse.

Even in West Germany, where Marcuse had more influence, his ideas were not a guide to the movement's action. When Rudi Dutschke came out with the strategy of a "long march through the institutions" — the revolutionary students, after establishing a base in the universities, were to build bases in other spheres of society, one after the other — Marcuse (in *Counterrevolution and Revolt*) just passively endorsed the idea. Marcuse frankly acknowledged that for him, "There is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet" (*One-dimensional man*).

Marcuse did not give answers. But his ideas gained some currency because he spoke more directly than others to the feelings and frustrations of the radical students. The students, exploding into political activity, found that the official socialism of the Stalinist and social-democratic parties was petty-minded, conservative, and content with the most minimal definition of socialist aims. The revolutionary Marxists were small minorities, and even those small minorities were often clumsy and awkward in their relation to the radical students.

Marcuse spoke directly of the stifling of humanity by capitalist commercialism, the hollowing of bourgeois democracy and tolerance, the subtle conservatism of bourgeois objectivity, the futility of politics that was whittled down to constructive reforms within the existing system.

## by Martin Thomas

He told the students that Socialism was not just the nationalisation of the means of production, that it needed "the disappearance of the State, the Party, the Plan etc. as independent powers superimposed on the individuals". The only future worth fighting for, he insisted, was one of radical human liberation, including sexual liberation.

For some, Marcuse's critique of bourgeois society and of reformism, despite its mystified form, was a stepping stone to Marxism. Elsewhere, the irrationalist streak in Marcuse was fused into the worst by-products of the student radicalisation, especially Mao-Stalinist parts.

At the age of 20, Marcuse took part in the German revolution of 1918-19. His active political involvement ended there, but the basic Marxist programme of self-liberating working-class revolution, which he lived and experienced then, structured the framework of his thought for the rest of his life, though often in curious and almost unrecognisable ways.

He returned as an academic Marxist in the 1930s, a member of the so-called 'Frankfurt School' together with Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Like many other radical intellectuals at the time, they were distanced from the workers' movement. To accept bourgeois society, wallowing in depression and sliding towards fascism, was unthinkable; but the major force in apparent revolutionary opposition to bourgeois society, the Stalinist movement, was dominated by crude bureaucratism which repelled all independent and critical thought.

Most of the uncommitted left intellectuals eventually gave some sort of support to Stalinism, seeing it as the expression, for better or for worse, of actual socialism and actual class-conscious politics. Distinctively, Marcuse and his colleagues refused to bow before the accomplished fact in this way. As early as the 1930s, Marcuse denounced Stalinism's narrowing-down of the content of socialism: "Without freedom and happiness in the social relations of men, even the greatest increase of production and the abolition of private property in the means of production remain infected with the old injustice" (*Philosophy and Critical Theory*).

The condemnation of Stalinism was not a condemnation of Bolshevism. For Marcuse, Lenin represented "the dialectical method, with its uncompromising 'spirit of contradiction'", against the revisionism of Bernstein and Kautsky (*Reason and Revolution*).

However, the way that Marcuse and his colleagues resolved their dilemmas was by radically denying Marx's and Lenin's idea of the unity of theory and practice — indeed, by raising the *disunity* of theory and practice to a principle.

In 1965, looking back over his intellectual development, Marcuse wrote: "Precisely at that time [in the '30s], beaten or betrayed, the social forces in which freedom and revolution were joined were delivered over to the existing powers... The new period saw the suppression, crippling, and neutralisation of the classes and forces that, due to their real interests, embodied hope for the end of inhumanity" (*Negations*). But his conclusion was that theory should speak out all the more angrily against existing reality. "Theory will preserve the truth even if revolutionary practice deviates from its proper path" (*Reason and Revolution*). This was what Marcuse and his colleagues meant by the name they gave to their work, "critical theory".

After Hitler's victory in Germany, Marcuse and his colleagues moved to the USA. They bitterly detested American capitalist civilisation, and expressed that hatred in their writings — though, it must be said, in sufficiently speculative form to allow them to maintain a comfortable existence through the fiercely anti-communist late '40s and '50s. Marcuse worked for the State Department, on Intelligence Research, and then held university posts.

Marcuse and his colleagues first set about analysing fascism. For them, "the fascist state was fascist society, and...totalitarian violence and totalitarian reason came from

the structure of existing society, which was in the act of overcoming its liberal past and incorporating its historical negation...This abolition was not restricted at all to the totalitarian states and since then has become the reality in many democracies (and especially the most developed ones)" (*Negations*).

They saw the way "bourgeois freedom became unfreedom" as a direct reflection of the economic transition from free enterprise to monopoly capitalism, thus failing to grasp the importance of specific political forms and specific political struggles. Their special task, as they saw it, was to trace the reflection of this transition in culture. Adorno wrote a massive study on 'The Authoritarian Personality'. The whole school believed advanced capitalism was developing a culture able to integrate or neuter all protest and discontent.

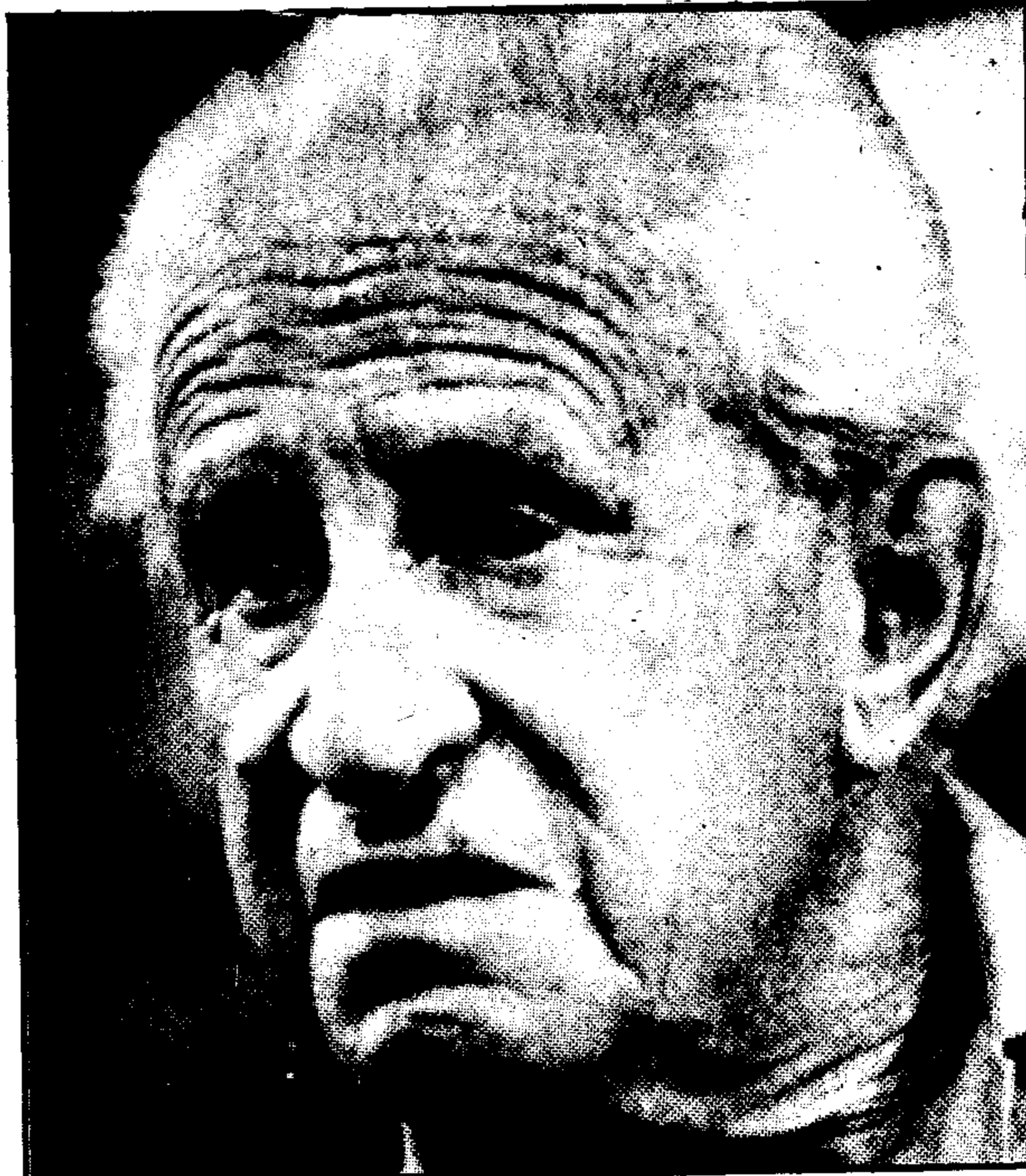
While his colleagues went off into aesthetics (Adorno) or epistemology (Jurgen Habermas), Marcuse, however, focussed on current social questions.

He wrote a book on *Soviet Marxism*, analysing the way the Russian bureaucracy had turned Marxist phrases into socially conservative incantations. Marcuse's view of the social nature of the USSR, however, always remained vague: sometimes he took up the bourgeois theory of a 'convergence' of the USSR and advanced capitalism, in *One-dimensional Man* he wrote that "Inasmuch as this change [the overthrow of the ruling strata] would leave the material base of society (the nationalised productive process) intact, it would be confined to a political revolution".

More importantly for his later influence, Marcuse wrote *Eros and Civilisation*, an attempt to construct a revolutionary perspective of sexual liberation on a Freudian basis; *One-dimensional Man*, on "the ideology of advanced industrial society"; and an essay on *Repressive Tolerance*.

Freud argued that all civilisation is necessarily built on repression of sexual instincts. In *Eros and Civilisation* Marcuse coined a distinction between a basic repression or modification of the instincts which is indeed necessary for any civilisation, and *surplus* repression enforced by a society of exploitation and class domination.

He linked surplus repression to alienated labour: "Men do not live their own lives but perform pre-established functions. While they work, they do not fulfil their own needs and faculties but work in *alienation*. Work has now become *general*, and so have the restrictions placed on the libido".



Herbert Marcuse

After the abolition of alienated labour, Marcuse argues, work as free creative cooperation can become an expression of "non-repressive sublimation" of sexual instincts. This means "a change in the character of work by virtue of which the latter would be assimilated to play — the free play of human faculties." Marcuse also argues that forms of sexuality today seen as 'perversions' would be an integral part of a liberated sexuality.

In *Repressive Tolerance* Marcuse denounced bourgeois objectivity: "...if a newscaster reports the torture and murder of civil rights workers in the same unemotional tone he uses to describe the stockmarket or the weather, or with the same great emotion with which he says his commercials, then such objectivity is spurious..." He defended the violence of the oppressed: "...the violence emanating from the rebellion of the oppressed classes broke the historic continuum of injustice, cruelty, and silence for a brief moment, brief but explosive enough to achieve...progress in civilisation."

He drew vague and thus politically dangerous conclusions about "intolerance" against the Right being necessary as an "emergency measure".

In *One-dimensional Man* he argued that modern capitalist civilisation was transforming all protest into containable technical problems within the system. Given the economic expansion of capitalism (which he saw as likely to continue smoothly, unless perhaps automation subverted the capitalist economy of labour-time), this containment could continue indefinitely. The working class was snugly incorporated within the system.

Against this background, Marcuse insisted on the duty

of Reason (capital R) to uphold critical concepts of freedom, happiness, justice, against the demand of bourgeois culture that all concepts be defined precisely and "operationally".

In the closing paragraphs of the book, and only there, Marcuse points to one prospect of action. "The traditional ways and means of protest" are "ineffective" and may serve only to strengthen illusions. "However, underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and unemployable."

"They exist outside the democratic process; their life is the most immediate and the most real need for ending intolerable conditions and institutions. Thus their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not..."

"The critical theory of society possesses no concepts which could bridge the gap between the present and the future; holding no promise and showing no success, it remains negative. Thus it wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal."

For Marcuse, critical theory was tied to objective reality to the extent that it had to reflect "real possibilities". Yet the definition of "real possibilities" becomes very arbitrary when it is divorced from any concept of how the possibilities can be made realities. Thus when Marcuse speaks of Reason, he means *himself*. Only Marcuse's commitment to (his interpretation of) classical Marxism serves as a check on his speculations.

The analysis of the supposed integration of the working class shows the scientific deficiencies of Marcuse's method. Uncritically he lists bourgeois sociologists' evidence on this theme, then glibly generalises that in the conclusion.

Engels once pointed out that in the sweeping construction of his system, Hegel typically resorted to forced arguments, sometimes mere word-play. With Hegel, "not only a creative genius but a man of encyclopaedic erudition", these false arguments are only the outworks of a series of powerful insights. For German philosophers after Hegel, however, the system building sophistry often loomed larger than any real insight. Martin Heidegger, Marcuse's teacher in the 1920s, is an example: his writings are endless speculations on Being, in which references to the Greek or other ancient roots of words play the role of decisive arguments.

Marcuse imbibed that tradition, and often he is like the German philosophical socialists ridiculed by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto: "beneath the French [socialist] criticism of the economic functions of money, they wrote 'Alienation of Humanity', and beneath the French criticism of the bourgeois State, they wrote 'Dethronement of the Category of the General', and so forth... [they saw themselves as] representing, not true requirements, but the requirements of Truth; not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of Human Nature, of Man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy."

The student revolt was not a confirmation of Marcuse's views on "the outcasts". Indeed, it was precisely because the students were *not* outcasts, because snug integration into bourgeois society was so much a reality for them, that some of them found Marcuse relevant.

But the conclusion which a few students drew was that they should *mimic* being outcasts. Through them, Marcuse's ideas flowed into the worst forms of elitist and pseudo-populist politics.

Despite his ideas on 'repressive tolerance', it seems that Marcuse did not deny the important difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism: "By and large, Marxian theory has a positive evaluation of the role of bourgeois democracy in this transition — up to the stage of the revolution itself...it would be fatal to abandon the defence of civil rights and liberties within the existing framework" (*Essay on Liberation*). Yet some radicals went on from Marcuse's vagueness to conclude that societies like the USA or West Germany were fascist, and also to adopt Stalinist forms of intolerance.

Marcuse did not regard any sort of wild lashing-out as valid revolutionary activity. He retained, for example, a classical Marxist attitude to individual terrorism. By critical theory, he did not mean irrational opposition to *all* existing reality. "What is to be abolished is not the reality principle; not everything, but such particular things as business, politics, exploitation, poverty" (*Love Mystified*). Yet some students concluded that action must be negative at all costs, disrupting the system and shocking the Establishment.

Marcuse believed that "the working class is still the historical agent of revolution"; "The radical transformation of a social system still depends on the class which constitutes the human base of the process of production. In the advanced capitalist countries, this is the industrial working class". Believing that the working class had been neutered, he concluded: "a revolution is not on the agenda", and "the student movement is not a revolutionary force, perhaps not even an *avant-garde*".

Young people unwilling to accept Marcuse's programme of opposition without hope, however, concluded that the students and the outcasts were the new revolutionary class. Turning away from the working class, they were diverted into all sorts of wild projects.

After denouncing the lack of revolt against the system for thirty years, some of Marcuse's colleagues shied away from that revolt when it came. Jurgen Habermas, for example, denounced the revolutionary students as "left-wing fascists". Marcuse, on the contrary, sided clearly with the student rebels. That will always stand to his credit. But his ideas and his writings (with the possible exception of *Eros and Civilisation*) will not live on.

A new book, *Beyond the Fragments*, by Hilary Wainwright, Sheila Rowbotham, and Lynne Segal\*, sets out many of the main ideas of the socialist-feminist current in the women's movement. Pat Longman takes up the debate. This will be the first in a series of articles in WA.

A NOTICEABLE FEATURE of the last few years has been the number of people who have rejected the Leninist conception of the party and looked for other forms of organisation. This rejection has been particularly prevalent within the women's movement where such ideas were able to gain acceptance partly because of the left's initial hostility to the movement. The socialist-feminist current which appeared during the time of the Working Women's Charter Campaign laid down its aim as producing a synthesis of socialism and feminism. For some time the ideas of the socialist-feminist current remained vague; the book entitled "Beyond the Fragments", and particularly the essay by Sheila Rowbotham, is to be welcomed, for in some ways it makes the task of coming to grips with the criticisms that many socialist-feminists (and others) have of the left easier.

Sheila Rowbotham's article "The Women's Movement and Organising for Socialism" is written from a viewpoint in which the class struggle is largely absent. Her polemic against Leninist forms of organisation takes the form of a struggle for libertarianism against authoritarian forms of organisation. Her rejection of the need for a revolutionary party flows from her dismissal of the need for a revolutionary theory and a rejection of scientific Marxism. She is an idealist and, as I hope to show later, inherently reformist.

Although she sometimes sees the need for organisational structures, she consistently dismisses the political role of the party; and although she warns against extreme subjectivism, she nevertheless raises subjectivity to the highest level and sees it as the guiding force for political activity. For Sheila, Leninism can't provide guidance for building an organisation because it excludes the experience of women's and the working class's struggle. It negates the politics of experience which the women's movement encapsulates. A necessary precondition for properly relating to the working class is, according to Sheila Rowbotham, an open and flexible approach to other people's subjective experiences.

Sheila Rowbotham's anti-Leninism and anti-Trotskyism flow from her experience of left organisations. However, one of the problems of the essay is that the criticisms of Leninism and Trotskyism become difficult to disentangle from her criticisms of particular organisations. Therefore, the lack of democracy within the International Socialism Group (now SWP) is proof that Leninism is inherently undemocratic. Its turn to democratic-centralism in the late 1960's is given as the reason for its inability to take up the question of women's oppression, not its underestimation of the political role of the party and its workerist attitudes. Sheila Rowbotham is unable to understand this because the importance of the political programme is the very thing she dismisses herself.

Sheila Rowbotham joined the International Socialism Group in the 1960's when it had a loose federalist structure. The reasons she cites for doing so are specifically its political openness and flexibility. Organisational and political flexibility is needed to respond quickly to the class struggle. However, sometimes it can be used as an excuse not for providing a lead to the class but for tailending it and capitulating to backward and chauvinist ideas. Sheila rejects the idea that democratic centralism can provide flexibility and the maximum unity in action so that political theories can be tested in struggle. She does not see that the absence of such unity leads to inertia and a lack of political focus. Such a disciplined and unified political approach can only be achieved, of course, by the maximum of accountability and democracy possible. Democracy is absolutely vital to a well-functioning political organisation. Without it political debate is stifled and political lessons remain undrawn.

Sheila replaces political theory by an almost religious and mystical belief about subjective experiences. Talking about the women's movement, she says:

"We have stressed for instance the closeness and protection of a small group and the feelings of sisterhood. Within the small group it has been important that every woman has space and air for her feelings and ideas to grow. The assumption is that there isn't a single correctness which can be learned off by heart and passed on by poking people with it. It is rather that we know our feelings and ideas move and transform themselves in relation to other women. We all need to express and contribute...Our views are valid because they come from within us and not because we hold a received correctness. The words we use seek an honesty about our own interest in what we say. This is the opposite to most left language which is constantly distinguishing itself as correct and then covering itself with a determined objectivity."

Sheila Rowbotham appears to believe that the less well thought out ideas are and the more spontaneous the better. Difficulties are experienced by women because of our conditioning, particularly in analysing ideas and articulating our thoughts. However, the last thing we need is to glorify these difficulties and mystify them under the guise of sisterhood. Sheila Rowbotham sees subjective experiences as being pure and honest. However, she never questions where this subjectivity comes from in reality; subjective attitudes can be extremely dangerous and reactionary. In Sheila Rowbotham's view all ideas are valid because they come from within us. Conclusions can therefore logically never be drawn as there is never any attempt to evaluate what is correct or incorrect. Also, her emphasis on building pre-figurative forms of society in our everyday lives comes dangerously close to lifestyle politics and a concept

# Making reformist politics out of love and honesty



Analysing, debating, voting, striving for objectivity and correctness: It's wrong, argues Sheila Rowbotham, "our views are valid because they come from within us".

that we don't have to fight for socialism, living it is good enough.

Sheila's search is not for revolutionary theory but for a moral standard for the left. Honesty and love are stressed above all else. What is meant by these terms is never defined. However, in one place she does dismiss entrism as being dishonest. Presumably the struggle against the right-wing leadership of the Labour Party by Trotskyists, on whatever wrong premises at times, for the last 30 years can be denounced by Sheila Rowbotham together with the Transport House bureaucracy and red-hunters as just a "deceitful operation".

Sheila Rowbotham's critique of the far left is not only that they are too politically intransigent and not open enough. She believes that Leninist forms of organisation no longer fit the British situation. In fact she reiterates the old right wing argument about the seeds of Stalinism being inherent in Bolshevism:

"But there is no need to stop here. It must also be admitted that the Bolsheviks, even before Stalin, have a lot to account for, and that Leninism destroyed vital aspects of socialism even in creating a new kind of left politics." She quotes approvingly E.P. Thompson's dictum "Leninism was a specific product of very special historical circumstances which seemed to be irrelevant to this country and at this time and which could often entail anti-democratic and anti-libertarian premises."

Sheila Rowbotham never defines what these special circumstances are or what is meant by democracy.

Her belief that the Leninist party is inherently undemocratic and unable to incorporate the ideas of the women's movement is given further weight by her criticisms of Marxists' inability to fully understand the nature of women's oppression.

"Under Marx and Engels' influence communists dismissed crucial questions about sexual oppression, control over fertility and the cultural subordination of women as a sex which other contemporaries in the socialist and feminist movement recognised. This is not to dismiss the inspired leaps made by Marx and Engels theoretically or to forget that Lenin was much more sympathetic than some of the Bolsheviks towards women's oppression. It is not to deny that Trotsky paid more attention to cultural aspects of subordination though he stopped short at sexuality. But they were not omniscient."

It is undoubtedly true that Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky didn't write the last words on women's oppression and that there were people who had a much deeper understanding of how female sexuality is repressed and who

fought for gay rights. However, any attempt to weigh up the Bolsheviks' contribution to the fight for women's liberation has to be seen in a historical context. They mobilised thousands of women workers to fight for their liberation, and achieved a revolution which did more for women's rights than anything previously. The wealth of material that survives from this period, particularly concerning the building of the mass communist women's movement in Russia, has been borrowed by many left organisations and by many feminists in helping them to work out a strategy for women's liberation.

Her critique of the Bolsheviks and the Leninist party leads her to demand an autonomous women's movement; she means more than the recognition of the need for women to organise separately. Her idea implies a struggle for women's rights which is separate and distinct from the struggle for workers' power. She criticises the linking of the mass communist women's movement to the party:

"But the outcome of the debate around the organisational power of women's sections in Communist Parties had been partly preempted by the approach which had prevailed from the 1890's in the Second International towards the women's movement of the day. The oversimplified and sectarian dismissal of all autonomous forms of feminism with the insistence on the Social Democratic Parties as the only place for women's agitation isolated many socialist women from the more radical currents within feminism. This necessarily curtailed their capacity to question the Marxist theory of the 'woman question' or to challenge the hegemony of the male leaderships of the Social Democratic Parties. The tighter discipline of the Bolsheviks and the acceptance of democratic centralism cut off the possibility of appeal outside the parties. Under Stalin of course all forms of inner party democracy in the Soviet Union perished and with them the women's sections. This had international implications."

The mass communist women's movement was fighting to build a revolutionary movement of working class women; it was largely successful. Sheila seems to be suggesting that they should have been less concerned with this aim and more concerned with relating to sections of the radical feminist movement in Russia who undoubtedly hid their petit-bourgeois reformism under a veneer of radicalism. Their hostility towards the Bolsheviks was not because their ideas on sexuality were a little limited, but because they were working class revolutionaries.

Does Sheila Rowbotham's reference to the male leaderships of the Social Democratic Parties also mean that there is something called men's politics and women's politics and that male politics have a greater tendency to be suspect? The German social democratic party was reformist, but was it because Karl Kautsky was a man. Was it because Rosa Luxemburg was a woman that she was revolutionary? Note also the jump from Bolshevism to Stalinism as if one was the logical extension of the other. Sheila Rowbotham does acknowledge elsewhere in her article the problems of isolation and backwardness that the Russian Revolution faced, but primarily she attributes the degeneration to the Bolsheviks' pernicious form of organisation.

It is quite noticeable how much more sympathetic Sheila Rowbotham is towards the ideas expressed in Eurocommunism:

"Eurocommunism has opened up the issue of autonomy in a different context from the classical stress on the party in Leninism. Its supporters stress the need to make alliances rather than the vanguard role of the party. This expresses actual changes in practice of which the British Road to Socialism was a part. It involves a different approach to the transition to socialism. This means that many feminists in Britain regard their membership of the Communist Party and the women's movement as less contradictory than belonging to either Trotskyist groups, who believe (with tact or without it) that they should play a vanguard role, or to the Socialist Workers Party whose version of the vanguard amounts to themselves plus a well screened working class in struggle. I think the radical importance of Eurocommunism is that it opens up the possibility of rethinking together a strategy of socialism in advanced capitalism which includes members of the CP."

The criticisms of the party and the dismissal of political theory have as their basis the rejection of the revolutionary role of the working class. All the stuff about learning from experience, cosiness, love hides a hard reformist kernel. Sheila Rowbotham emphasises time and time again that the personal is political. But she seems to mean more by this than how we relate to each other and the need to take up all forms of oppression. She primarily sees socialism as something that grows out of us and which we build in our everyday lives — it is not something that we have to fight for and strive for by a political struggle.

Eurocommunism can adapt to feminism and to the ideas of the autonomous women's movement because it dismisses completely the central and revolutionary role of the working class. The working class becomes just one of the allies of the women's movement and part of the broad democratic alliance. All of it is linked to a thoroughly reformist strategy that the road to socialism will be accomplished peacefully and through the ballot box.

The working class and women play the role of voting fodder and their struggle is relegated to the needs of the Parliamentary strategy, which in Italy has taken the particular form of the historic compromise.

Sheila Rowbotham's adaptation to bourgeois feminism fits snugly with the theory of the anti-monopoly alliance. The tragic part of it is that Sheila Rowbotham ends up implicitly supporting the political current which above all others stifles and destroys the self-activity of the working class. Its anti-Leninism ends up with the most authoritarian and undemocratic procedures. And at the end of the day the belief that self-activity is politically central is still held primarily by those who relate to the Trotskyist tradition — the very tradition that Sheila Rowbotham is so antagonistic towards.

We will be continuing our serialised translation of Karl Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg's debate on the mass strike next week.

\* £1.25 from *Beyond the Fragments*, 2a St Pauls Road, London N1.

# Talbot workers set for a long fight



THE TALBOT/Chrysler workers at the Ryton and Stoke plants in Coventry are now entering their 7th week of strike action, demanding a better pay rise than the 5½% offered by the bosses.

Tension between pickets at the Ryton plant and the bosses has been growing since the annual holiday ended two weeks ago. Forces of up to 100 police have been used to allow non-union managers into the plant. The large number of pickets present has succeeded in causing delays of one to two hours for people entering or leaving the plant.

Most white collar workers have been refusing to cross the picket lines since the beginning of the strike, despite threats of the sack and/or loss of wages. Maintenance workers in the AUEW have agreed to support the production workers, and on Thursday 9th ACTS, APEX and ASTMS also formally agreed not to cross the picket lines.

At the Stoke plant only 10 people out of 3,400 voted

against the continuing the strike at a mass meeting on Friday 3rd.

Chrysler bosses have announced a shutdown at the Linwood plant in Scotland, which depends on Stoke for 'Avenger' engines.

There are moves for blacking at the docks. A delegation saw TGWU leaders at Transport House who said that they could not do anything because of 'a difficult legal position', but Talbot workers should approach individual groups of dockers.

Flying pickets have been sent to South Wales, and Newport dockers agreed to 'turn a blind eye' to Talbot goods supposed to go to Iran, without formally blacking them.

The strikers have also been promised support from Liverpool dockers and Liverpool Trades Council, and South Wales miners have pledged financial support.

Send donations to the strike fund c/o W. Brooks, Transport House, Short St, Coventry SV1 2LS.

NICK LAWRENCE

## Kelloggs stay out

AFTER 6 weeks, the official dispute at Kellogg's, Trafford Park, continues, even though USDAW bureaucrats and the company made a deal which included 3 weeks' pay for the dispute and the claim to go to arbitration.

However, this deal was rejected on Sunday at a mass meeting by an overwhelming majority of the workforce of 1800, despite a press-orchestrated campaign for a return to work.

The stewards have resolved to set up a support committee. They have also reported that all of Kellogg's operations in Europe have now been affected by the dispute, and that they are contacting the trade unions at Kellogg's plants in America.

All donations to: USDAW D78, c/o Mr. A. Birchenough, 1 Chatsworth Road, Sretford, M32 9QF.

NOTE: As a result of a misunderstanding over the phone, WA 148 reported in error that the Kelloggs workers were sitting in. In fact they have been locked out and are picketing the factory. We apologise for this mistake.

## £3m cuts - but a Daimler for the Mayor

AT A TIME when Brent Council is cutting £3 million off the expenditure budget for this year, the Labour-controlled council has announced that it intends to splash out £38,000 on a Daimler limousine for the Mayor. The car is no Ordinary Daimler either - it has a number of non-standard extras such as a colour television and a cocktail cabinet. The leader of the Labour Group, John Lebor, has defended the purchase of the car on the grounds that it is a valuable asset which will appreciate with time.

However, it has caused widespread disgust in the local labour movement, and several of the left-wing councillors face censure by the Labour Group for defying a three-line whip and refusing to vote in favour of purchase of the car.

JOHN COSBY

## Union leaders let PO off the hook

WITH £1 billion less in their bank account due to unpaid bills, the Post Office are reeling from the three-month dispute over pay with SCPS and CPSA members. But union leaders have been giving the Post Office a let-out by balloting SCPS and CPSA members on a pay offer that does not meet the union's claim.

The result of the CPSA ballot is due out later this week. Even though the SCPS vote gave a 300 majority against the offer, many expect that CPSA members have been persuaded to accept - but with a substantial minority against.

The original CPSA and SCPS claim was for the same percentage rises as the equivalent grades in the Civil Service got in April, plus a 6% enhancement for super-annuation, plus payment of productivity money due.

The offer made by the Post Office gives very little new money in comparison. There is 9% from April 1st, 1979, plus 2¼% from 1st July for moving the pay settlement date from April to July, plus a minimum of 5½% for accepting the first steps towards a Post Office-wide restructuring of grades.

While the offer is substantially less than the claim, it cannot be regarded as a defeat. But the real lesson of the dispute is the need to win full rank and file control of strike action. This will be crucial in the battles ahead to stop the hiring-off of the profitable parts of the Post Office.

# WORKERS' ACTION

## LOW PAID WORKERS Cheated by Clegg

THE RESULTS of the Public Sector workers' Comparability study, which were accepted back in March by the four unions involved (NUPE, T&GWU, GMWU and CoHSE) has clearly shown it up as the biggest sell-out of the year!

Alan Fisher of NUPE has claimed that the Comparability Study has given a rise of just under 20% to the Public Sector workers, when the 8.9%, which was won in March, is taken into account. But the truth is very different.

For a start, the whole rise will not actually reach people's pay packets until next April, a mere 18 months after the date for a wage settlement. Fisher and Co have been very quiet about this. Secondly, for most of the workers involved the total rise comes nowhere near the 20% that Fisher thinks he has got us.

In the Health Service, the domestics have got 3.8% (£1.76 a week) from this Comparability Study, which still does not bring their basic wage before tax over the £50 mark, let alone the £60 minimum basic wage which NUPE is supposedly fighting for. The same is

true for kitchen porters and catering assistants. The shift and departmental porters did slightly better. They broke the £50 mark but didn't reach a 20% rise, and got nowhere near the £60 minimum wage.

The only people who broke through the £60 minimum wage are the middle and senior supervisory grades, who also received the biggest percentage increases. The top grades got 16.9% increases (£9.92 a week). The Study's recommendations leave the lowest paid even lower paid compared with other groups in the Public Sector, but the official union structure seems to consider the recommendations to be O.K.

The unions do not seem even to be considering taking any action. Instead, NUPE is trying to push bonus schemes onto all its members, saying this is the only way they are going to get more money.

Many of those involved in the Low Pay Campaign were looking to this Comparability Study to give them the £60 minimum wage, and are now very disillusioned with the award and with the union leadership.

Because of the lack of fight there is a very dangerous mood amongst these workers, a feeling that if the Government refuses to pay them a decent wage then they will just chuck in the job, without any attempt at a fight.

NUPE is playing into the Government's hand by pushing for bonus schemes, instead of a decent basic wage. The Tories' plan for widespread cuts will be directly aided by this strategy. Also many of the most militant members who would have been very important to a successful campaign against the cuts may become disillusioned and drift away.

It is now up to the militants in the public service unions to draw out the lessons about supposedly impartial pay studies and about ending struggles in return for vague promises - and to show that the answer is not to drift away, but to fight.

Claims for £80 minimum, a 35 hour week, and many fringe benefits are due to go in for public service workers in November and the following months. We must make sure we're not cheated this time.

CHARLIE SARELL  
NUPE shop steward  
Leicester Royal Infirmary

## A dangerous deal at the Times

NATSOPA chapels (office branches) at Times News-branches vote this week on a proposed deal to end the lock-out which began on 30th November last year.

The other unions have already accepted the deal, and the Times bosses are pressing for the papers to restart publication in September. The NATSOPA executive is also backing the deal and urging its members at the Times to accept.

But NATSOPA chapel officers have voted to reject the deal. It provides for reinstatement of all workers as soon as the deal is accepted, to be followed by negotiations on outstanding issues. The negotiations are to be completed in time to allow 'publication of the national newspapers not later than four weeks after reinstatement and the supplements [TLS, TES, etc] not later than six weeks after.'

But the deal's provisions also include:

- Staffing to be negotiated after reinstatement. (In the 8 months of the lock-out, many Times workers have drifted away to other jobs, leaving the workforce seriously below strength).

- Any issue not settled within six months of republication to be 'resolved' by 'an independent chairman', 'with the assistance of two assessors'.

- A guarantee of continuous production. A new disputes procedure with a pro-

viso that: 'It is agreed and accepted that there shall be no stoppage of work, threat of stoppage, interference with normal working or other industrial action taken before and while both parties adhere to the aforementioned disputes procedure'.

- Operation of new technology, not including the most controversial area, direct input of articles and ads through computer type-setting. Operating agreements to be negotiated at chapel level after reinstatement.

To sweeten the deal, the Times bosses are offering a £500 lump sum to each worker, and a 10% pay rise on top of the generally agreed Fleet Street increase of 10%.

Despite the serious dangers in this deal, it does show the Times bosses on the defensive. An article in the 3rd August *New Statesman*, written by an anonymous correspondent apparently close to the Times management, says: 'There must be some considerable apprehension about job prospects in the management suite... What TNL have got is worth having, but it is certainly not worth £25 million and the damage done to the standing and viability of the titles by their prolonged disappearance from the new stand.'

This has been achieved by the unions doing little more than sitting and waiting. What could a fight do?

## SACKINGS THREAT AT ROVER

HOPES of a militant fight against job cuts and sackings at British Leyland's Rover Solihull plant received a bad setback last week. On Wednesday 8th, a mass meeting of workers from the SD1 (saloon assembly) narrowly rejected the shop stewards' recommendation for work-sharing with no loss of pay and an all-out strike when the cutbacks begin.

The bosses want to cut jobs in the SD1 by 1400 (over 40% of the workforce), and to cut production by a

third, which will obviously mean speed-up for the remaining workers. BL say that some of the redundant workers can be taken on at the nearby Land-Rover plant and at Triumph in Canley. But this wouldn't be for more than a few hundred out of the 1400.

Although the mass meeting effectively voted to accept voluntary redundancies, there is no doubt that the company is going to have to sack workers to reach its de-manning targets. The meeting did re-affirm

opposition to that.

The bosses are preparing an onslaught against manning levels throughout BL. Their first objective is to destroy mutuality agreements that prevent any unilateral imposition of manning levels by the company. For a successful defence of jobs and conditions, mutuality must be defended at all costs, and militants must continue to fight for a policy of work-sharing with no loss of pay, despite the setback at Rover.

JIM DENHAM

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, 25 per column inch - payment in advance. Send copy to Events, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

FRIDAY 24-MONDAY 27 AUGUST: Workers' Action weekend school, in London. Sessions on Ireland, Eurocommunism, the General Strike, Gay Liberation, the women's movement. Inquiries to WA, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD. Open sessions: • Friday 24th. Workers' Action-IMG debate on Revolutionaries and the Labour Party. 8pm at the Hemingford Arms, Offord Rd, London N1.

• Saturday 25th. Showing of the film 'Harlan County', 7.30pm at the Hemingford Arms, and social. Entrance £1 (to go to WA fund).

• Sunday 26th. Debate on socialists and nuclear power, with speakers from WA, IKL

(Austria) and Spartacusbund (W.Germany). 8pm at the Metropolitan, Farringdon Rd/Clerkenwell Rd.

Saturday 1-Wednesday 5 September: Right to Work march, Liverpool to Blackpool. Inquiries to 265a Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

Wednesday 5 September. Lobby the TUC. London coach leaves Euston 7.30am.

Friday 8 September. London Workers' Action meeting: 'Building a labour movement campaign for troops out of Ireland'. 8pm at the Hemingford Arms, Offord Rd, N1.

Sunday 9 September. Edinburgh Socialist Organiser public meeting to call for a cuts conference. Sponsors (in personal capacity): Ron Brown MP, Ian Christie (Lothian region LP secretary), Tom Fenton (Executive, EIS), Bill Taylor (Lothian regional councillor), and Willie Roe (Edin-

burgh district councillor). 7.30pm at the Trades Council Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

Monday 10 September. Picket Barnet Court House, High St, Barnet, to support the Southall defendants. Donations to Southall Defence Fund c/o ANL, PO Box 151, WC2.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY 12-13 OCTOBER. 'Critique' conference on the socialist alternative and in defence of Rudolf Bahro. At Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., London. Speakers include Zhores Medvedev, Ernest Mandel, Rudi Dutschke, Hillel Ticktin, Andre Gunder Frank, Ernesto Laclau, Michel Raptis, etc. Registration £5 for two days, £2.50 for one day, from Critique, 31 Clevedon Rd, Glasgow G12 0TH.

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