

the next step

No 32 February 1983

review of the Revolutionary Communist Party 20p

Unemployment and the labour movement

3
Million

**BRITAIN
ISN'T
WORKING**

2
Million

1
Million

**LABOUR
ISN'T
FIGHTING**

Inside: Bermondsey- let's finish with Labour p5
Coventry needs communism p4
Greenham gals go round the outside p18

1974

1976

1978

1980

1982

Revolutionary Communist Party



Activities

Publications

LONDON

LIVING MARXISM

A series of discussions to celebrate the Marx centenary 1883-1983

Speaker: Frank Richards

Thursday 3 February

The Marxist theory of capitalist crisis: is it still relevant today?

Thursday 10 February

The dictatorship of the proletariat: is it an outdated concept?

Thursday 17 February

British Marxism —

a revolutionary critique

Thursday 24 February

Marxism and labourism

Thursday 3 March

Marxism, the working class

and the revolutionary party

All meetings will be held at

Camden Library, Regents Park

Branch, Compton Close,

Robert St (Warren St tube)

at 7.30pm

Cost: £1 per session or £4

for the series. For further

details contact Anita Lloyd

on 01-274 3951

BIRMINGHAM

Wednesday 2 February

Europe and America: the

drive to World War Three

Wednesday 16 February

The crisis in Eastern Europe

Wednesday 2 March

Tories Rule Not OK — but

Labour is no alternative

All meetings will be held

at Digbeth Civic Hall

at 7.30pm

COVENTRY

Monday 7 February

Ending the war drive —

peace camps are not the

answer

Monday 14 February

The Soviet Union: is there

life after Brezhnev?

Monday 21 February

The crisis and the working

class: the shape of things

to come

Monday 28 February

South Africa — the cracks

begin to show

Monday 7 March

Why the RCP?

All meetings will be held

at the Hare and Squirrel,

New Union St, at 7.30pm

SHEFFIELD

The crisis in the labour

movement

Thursday 10 February

Behind the collapse of

British industry

Thursday 17 February

The alternative capitalist

strategy: Labour's solution

for the bosses

Thursday 24 February

Building a new rank

and file: workers' struggles

today

All meetings will be at 7.30pm

See the next step sellers

for venue

LEEDS

Thursday 10 February

Who needs the Labour Party?

Speaker: Fran Eden

Prospective parliamentary

candidate for Bermondsey

Thursday 24 February

Women and the trade unions

See Leeds Other Paper

for details

LIVERPOOL

Friday 25 February

The Soviet Union: is there

life after Brezhnev?

Speaker: Frank Richards

Swan Hotel, London Rd,

Liverpool 3, at 7.30pm

the next step supporters group

meets every Monday evening

Contact sellers for details

BERMONDSEY

Hate the Tories? Fed up

with Labour? Campaign for

the party that really fights

for the working class. For

details of the campaign, phone

Fran Eden on 01-274 3951

Wednesday 16 February

Bermondsey needs

revolutionary communism

Speaker: Fran Eden

prospective parliamentary

candidate

Rotherhithe Civic Centre

Albion Rd, SE 16

at 7.30pm

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS Junius Publications 1983



The Soviet Union on the move
what drives it
and where it is going
Frank Richards Due out in May

← in May

The Irish Freedom Movement handbook

an anti-imperialist's
guide to the Irish war

Mick Hulme Due out in March



← in March

The Workers Against Racism handbook

fighting racism
in the workplace,
in the unions,
on the streets

Judy Harrison Due out in April



← in April



Reclaiming our unions
a new direction
for trade union activists
Mike Freeman Due out in April

← in April

the next step every month

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Why we are not 'popular'

THE RECESSION HAS exposed all the rottenness of capitalist society. The industrial areas of Europe and North America are a decaying wasteland. Half the population of the Third World is slowly dying of malnutrition and disease. To preserve their way of life, the world's great powers are rearming with both nuclear and conventional weapons of unprecedented destructive capacity. In every country 'shoot-to-kill' is the policy of ruling classes desperate to keep their grip on society in face of enemies at home or abroad. Because of the weakness of its competitive position, the British capitalist class exhibits in a particularly striking way all the sordid features of an endangered bourgeoisie prepared to maintain its rule by any means necessary.

There are two distinct responses to the crisis in British society prevalent on the left of the labour movement. One seeks to mobilise public opinion against the most objectionable features of capitalist rule, hoping to remove them through mass campaigning. Above all it seeks to be 'popular': the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is its model. The other aims to mobilise the working class against capitalism with the objective of destroying it and establishing a new system of society that is capable of providing for everybody's needs. This approach involves selecting issues which polarise opinion — on the side of the working class or on the side of the capitalist state: the Irish Freedom Movement is one example of this sort of campaign.

Cruising with the petit bourgeoisie

The 'popular' approach tries to unite people of all social classes against some extreme manifestation of the barbarism of decadent capitalism. The current favourite targets are Cruise missiles, Margaret Thatcher and mass unemployment. A closer look at these campaigns reveals that the unity of the labour movement with other sections of society in these campaigns is achieved through the left's acceptance of the politics of the middle classes as their basis.

Over the last couple of years the anti-war movement in Britain has increasingly narrowed its focus from nuclear weapons in general, to American Cruise missiles in particular. The success of the Greenham Common protest underlines this shift of emphasis. The reason for this is that the left which controls CND has discovered that whereas few people in Britain are opposed to British militarism, many are hostile to US nuclear missiles. Thus a recent MORI opinion survey published in *The Sunday Times* revealed that 54 per cent of all people questioned opposed the siting of US Cruise missiles in Britain; only 23 per cent were in favour of Britain renouncing its nuclear weapons (23 January). The pollsters did not even bother to ask about opposition to Britain's machine of conventional terror, recently so effective in slaughtering Argentinians and Irish people. But CND's market researchers are well aware that this is not a 'popular' issue.

Hence CND opposes Cruise missiles because this is 'popular'. Opposition to Cruise missiles is 'popular' because sections of the British ruling class — certain generals (Field Marshall Lord Carver), bourgeois politicians (David Owen), bishops (Runcie and Hume) — are opposed to British dependence on this, particular, highly expensive, US-controlled, weapon system. Indeed sections of the ruling classes in most European countries are also against

Cruise because of the growing tensions within the NATO alliance. Many middle class people follow this point of view out of their perception of how the true interests of Britain can best be defended and their personal fears of being incinerated.

Wider and still wider

For the left in CND the central concern is 'to keep it broad'. Leading Communist Party member in CND Jon Bloomfield found the recent CND national conference in Sheffield 'seriously at fault in ignoring the role of the church' which was 'exceptionally important' in popularising the cause (*Communist Focus*, December). He was delighted that the conference gave a warm reception to Conservative Party opponents of Cruise missiles. Keeping CND broad means keeping it in step with a public opinion which reflects the views of middle class churchgoers and Tory voters.

The left follows the same basic approach in its other campaigns. Leading Communist Party theoretician Sam Aaronovitch recently put forward the strategy of an alliance of the left with the Liberal Party and the Social Democrats against Thatcher (*Tribune*, 31 December). Other reformist intellectuals such as Professor Eric Hobsbawm have also been discovering progressive elements for an anti-Thatcher alliance within the SDP (*Marxism Today*, December). However even this approach is not broad enough for another Communist Party leader — Peter Carter — in his strategy for the forthcoming People's March for Jobs. He warns of the danger of an 'anti-Tory orientation' — it would create 'enormous problems of winning breadth'. He reckons that even Tory voters can be won to action on unemployment around a slogan that 'Government makes full employment a first priority'.

The Communist Party carries the 'popular' approach to its logical and almost absurd conclusion. But the strategy itself is common to the British left. At the beginning of the year all the various organisations listed their priorities for 1983. The former International Marxist Group (now the Socialist League) was typical: No 1 — Stop US Cruise missiles; No 8 — Defend the oppressed (and even this did not include the Irish) (*Socialist Challenge*, 14 January). What unites the left's campaigns is the middle class dream of a Britain free from the nasty characteristics that have come to the surface in the recession. Their vision is of a Britain with an independent (preferably, but not necessarily non-nuclear) defence policy; with a government preferably under a Labour or SDP/Liberal alliance Prime Minister, but at a pinch, under a decent sort of Tory like James Prior; with unemployment at an acceptable one million rather than at a potentially disruptive three or four million. The role of the left is to subordinate the labour movement to the goals of the petit bourgeoisie.

Remember Spain!

The historical example of 'popular' campaigning which today's left follows is that of the 'broad anti-fascist unity' of the 'thirties. Led by the Stalinist communist parties, the leading sections of the working class in Europe joined forces with the middle classes to protect bourgeois democracy from fascism. Anti-fascist unity was not organised around the needs of the working class to resolve the capitalist crisis through socialist revolution. Unity was based on the concern of the middle classes to sustain or

restore less coercive forms of bourgeois rule than fascism.

The Stalinist 'people's front' strategy was a disaster for the working class. The consequences in Spain are currently the subject of a serialised television documentary, itself heavily influenced by the reformist view of the Civil War. The problem in Spain was not that the working class went too far and provoked Franco's military coup d'état. The problem was that the left held back the working class and restricted its goals to salvaging the bourgeois republic. Instead of leading the working class to take power, the left handed it over to defeat at the hands of a savage dictatorship.

In Britain the consequences of 'anti-fascist unity' were less dramatic, but in terms of their ideological legacy scarcely less profound. The left led the labour movement into the Second World War under the banner of 'anti-fascism': it subordinated the working class to the objectives of British imperialism. 'Anti-fascist unity' cemented the ideological subservience of the British working class to the British state. The fact that the left celebrated this catastrophic defeat of international working class interests as a victory for the British labour movement underlines how serious a defeat it was. The fact that 40 years later the Second World War is still seen by the left as British Labour's finest hour shows how the left has failed to throw off the legacy of its past defeats.

Writing of the betrayals of the reformists in the 'thirties, Trotsky commented on their proclivity for choosing the lesser evil among different bourgeois politicians and different forms of bourgeois rule:

'To them it is a question of under whom to starve. To us, on the contrary, it is not a question of under which conditions it is better to die. We raise the question of how to fight and win.' (*What next? Vital questions for the German proletariat*, 1932)

Fifty years later, the reformists are still making the same choices. And Trotsky's question retains its relevance — how to fight and win today?

Fighting the Falklands Factor

The British ruling class manipulates public opinion to rally society in support of its objectives. In wartime this is particularly important — and Britain has been at war in Ireland for the past 13 years. The ideological significance of this only dawned on the left last year when the British state went to war in a more overt, but more limited engagement in the South Atlantic. The media use war to present a threat to the interests of the state as a threat to the whole British people. They thus whip up maximum backing for the Government and isolate potential opposition. The Thatcher Government has been particularly successful in mobilising the more backward sections of the working class behind her militaristic postures in the Six Counties and the Malvinas — and in marginalising working class resistance on these issues.

The left's 'popular' preoccupations have left it paralysed before Thatcher's truly populist onslaught. There is no way that the left can mobilise public opinion against British imperialism. Hence its various factions simply adapt to popular prejudices and denounce the IRA and deny the rights of the Argentine people to occupy the Malvinas. The more reactionary sections of the left have attempted to come to terms with Thatcher's post-Falklands success by devising new ways for the left to appropriate what they call 'national-popular' sentiments by

emulating the left's Second World War patriotism. Watch *Marxism Today* for further developments.

We have a different response to the ruling class offensive. We campaign around issues which can provide a focus for working class resistance against the British state. During the Falklands War, for example, we campaigned in support of Argentina's claim to the Malvinas, against British imperialist interference. During the Irish War we have consistently campaigned in support of the Irish liberation struggle against British rule. These are not popular causes. Indeed, they are by definition *unpopular*. They divide people according to the class position they uphold. In Britain, ruling class and middle class people are 100 per cent united in support of Britain against the Argentine people and the IRA. Many working class people go along with the bourgeois view on these issues. Thousands do not — and they can be drawn towards a position which clearly expresses their class interests in solidarity with the oppressed against the British state.

Divide now — rule later

The British left is weak and isolated. Its weakness is most clearly revealed in its unwillingness to take an independent stand against bourgeois public opinion. Above all, the left fears the accusation — usually levelled by the leaders of the official labour movement — of being 'sectarian' or 'divisive'. Today the working class is sorely in need of the sort of political clarification that can only come through the sharp clash of contending organisations' different points of view on the class struggle. Yet, 'disunity' and 'sectarianism' (a term usually used to characterise positions different from those held by the official labour movement) are often seen by the left as the major problems it faces. The left's response to this fear of political demarcation is always to move towards the parties and traditions of the past. The call for unity today invariably means unity on the terms of the Labour Party and its essentially middle class politics.

The left's quest for popularity leads it inexorably in a right-wing direction. Its failure to build a base of support among working class people leads it on a desperate search for influence in other sections of society. The left's great mistake is to imagine that it can build mass campaigns, incorporating the middle classes, before it has secured its foundations in the working class. As a result, the left adopts more and more right-wing positions to win ever broader middle class support — and moves further and further away from the working class.

Today the first priority must go to building working class support for campaigns which express working class politics. It is not that we are against mass campaigns. We are not even opposed to mass campaigns supported by middle class people, including film stars and academics, so beloved of CND. It is simply that to be of any use to the working class, any campaign must be based on *working class politics*. This is what is distinctive about the Irish Freedom Movement.

The IFM puts forward a very clear position on the Irish War — and it appeals to British workers to take sides against the state. The movement is not closed to vicars or generals, but we are not prepared to modify its politics one iota to accommodate them. So far we have had few applications from such quarters. But we are getting an increasingly positive response from British workers. This is the only sort of popularity that really matters.

COVENTRY NEEDS COMMUNISM

Where have all the jobs gone?

THEY USED to tell the story that if you got off the bus at Pool Meadow, somebody would take your hand and tell you where the job was. Even in the 'thirties Coventry was expanding. In the 'fifties and 'sixties tens of thousands of workers came from other parts of Britain, Ireland and abroad to the town where everybody had a future. Today official unemployment levels in Coventry stand at 17.5 per cent for men and 13.5 per cent for women.

Coventry's economy is based on manufacturing cars and motors; since the late 'seventies it has virtually collapsed. By the end of last year, less than 14 per cent of Coventry firms were working at full capacity.

Coventry workers were once known for their high wages. Today those workers who still have jobs are amongst the worst paid in the country. Coventry men over 21 earn the second lowest average wages in the country. How has Coventry's labour movement responded to this onslaught?

Participation

'Popular planning for social need' is the Trades Council's slogan. Local Labour councillors and union officials think that what went wrong with the last Labour Government was that they weren't consulted enough. As a result, the Government failed to make Labour's alternatives popular enough. Taking as its inspiration the failed motorcycle co-op up the road at Meriden, the Trades Council wants to give workers more say in their own exploitation. Their dream is that workers should have the same rights as shareholders, they should be involved in drawing up investment plans and deciding what to produce. The harsh reality to which these illusory alternatives lead is workers' participation in curbing union rights, holding down wages and sharing out redundancies.

Workers from Rolls Royce at Parkside have seen the future Labour offers – and they know it stinks. Managing director Peter Burden has keyed into the support for participation amongst Coventry union officials. Burden needs to increase productivity by 70 per cent over the next two years, if his plant is to stay competitive. But how can he achieve this aim? Through redundancies, wage freezes, and shop floor speed-ups. Burden drew the shop stewards into consultation and participation exercises. He showed films, held group discussions and told them what things were like in Japan. The unions were trapped into making the sacrifices Rolls Royce demanded. Veteran Communist Party convenor Phil Higgs played a full part. 'It was not the time for a last ditch battle', he told a *Financial Times* reporter (19 August).

Patriotism

'Participation' has been one response to Coventry's crisis, another is the appeal to put Britain first. When Maho, a new machine tool firm came to town, Labour MP George Park warned that a German firm was a long-term threat to British interests. Redundant engineering shop steward Gordon Lee is pushing a 'Jobs for Britain' campaign in factories in Coventry. But when Britain comes first, the working class always takes a hammering.

Workers at firms like Talbot have followed the lead of their patriotic convenor Dave Edwards. This man is

It is now nearly three years since the Revolutionary Communist Party started work in Coventry. We first began to build up a local base around our support for the cause of Irish freedom and our opposition to racism. In March 1981 we hosted the Coventry Conference – a gathering of trade union supporters of the hunger strikers' struggle for political status in the H-Blocks of the Six Counties. Later that year we attracted the hostility of the local labour bureaucracy – for our advocacy of workers' defence against racist attacks in the city.

As the recession has struck harder and harder against jobs and living standards throughout the West Midlands, the RCP has played an active role in workers' struggles against redundancies and wage cuts. The fight for working class interests in Coventry means a relentless struggle against the Labour Party. That's why Coventry needs communism – and why we need even more members and supporters in 1983.

a staunch supporter of Labour's alternative economic strategy, import controls and all. Indeed, he hopes to be a Coventry Labour MP after the next election. Instead of fighting Coventry employers, Edwards wants to link up with them to fight their overseas competitors.

We have consistently opposed the bosses' offensive in Coventry and challenged the reformists' compromises in factories, on picket lines and at public meetings. Our message is that participation and patriotism are strategies that lead to the same result – defeat for Coventry's workers. Our interests are independent of firms like Talbot, BL and GEC. We can only go forward by fighting against them – not by consulting, participating or planning with them. Pam Lawrence



Harmony for some

COVENTRY achieved notoriety in mid 1981, when racists murdered two Asians. Local newspapers had always boasted that Coventry was 'colour-blind'. Were there not black footballers in the local team?

The City Council, race relations industry and police moved to cover up the deep cracks that had appeared in their facade of 'racial harmony'. And they have been quite effective. When Sir George Young, junior Tory minister for race relations, visited Coventry in August 1982 he remarked on how hard and how successfully the police, voluntary organisations, Community Relations Council and community leaders had worked to soothe the troubles of the previous year. He congratulated Coventry for not having suffered 'the minor recurrences that have sadly happened in Toxteth'. City leaders today claim that Coventry is a model of race relations. Local expert Canon Berry returned from Miami a few weeks ago declaring that Coventry could teach that riot-torn city a thing or two.

Jobs for the boys

The Community Relations Council has played a key role in the cover-up. It is in the Labour Party's pocket. Its chair is Parshotam Joshi, official interpreter for Foleshill ward. Asian organisations

protested loudly when he gave a £7000-a-year community relations job to prominent Labour councillor Arthur Waugh. Joshi's other appointment went to Zia Butt, the leader of his Labour Party ward. This clique has done nothing to fight racism in Coventry, it has put a lot of work into restoring the city's image of racial harmony. But the racist attacks continue. On Christmas Day the windows of a big Indian club in the town were smashed. Asian families in areas like Stoke are continually harassed by racist insults and attacks.

Labour councillors' sympathy has extended to trying (unsuccessfully) to get the families moved. WAR's approach has been to push forward the sort of practical work which has succeeded in areas like Wood End. The Asian families living there have suffered a history of serious racist attacks. A campaign initiated by WAR with the active assistance of socialists and people in the area, halted the most recent series of incidents there.

Mistakes at Masseys

IT WAS NO surprise to WAR activists in Coventry when the Commission for Racial Equality exposed racist practices at Massey Ferguson's tractor plant last December. Massey Ferguson is only one of the many engineering firms in Coventry that discriminate against black workers. Massey Ferguson made the mistake of allowing their discrimination to become too obvious. Only six of the 6800 workers there were black. During the course of the CRE's investigations, this number increased to ten – in a town where ten per cent of the population is black.

John T, an anti-racist worker at Massey Ferguson told the next step how discrimination works in practice:

'The management doesn't advertise for jobs. It waits for applications to come in. People only find out about vacancies through their family and friends. So, because Massey have never made any effort to take on black workers news of jobs never reaches them.'

Even when black workers do manage to get into firms like Massey Ferguson, their prospects are limited. Their isolation, and the indifference of the unions, makes them reluctant to protest against discrimination in wages, conditions and promotion.

Even the CRE accused the unions of apathy. The TGWU convenor claimed that the allegations were lies. But he could not deny that a racist foreman who rejected an Asian job applicant because he 'did not want coloured workers', still holds his position. The situation at Massey Ferguson is an indication of the wider problem that workers face throughout Coventry. The AUEW and TGWU leaders who refuse to recognise discrimination when it stares them in the face, and refuse to take a stand against racist harassment and attacks, are unable to defend their members from capitalist attacks. In the last few years, more than 2000 workers have lost their

jobs at Massey Ferguson. Last year the unions called off an occupation of the plant after management had received enough applications for voluntary redundancies to enable them to withdraw their threat of compulsory sackings. Hundreds more workers are due to lose their jobs. The experience of Massey Ferguson shows that as long as workers tolerate the existence of racism in their ranks, they are tolerating divisions which weaken them in the face of bosses' attacks. Far from being a side issue, the question of defending black people's rights is central in building a class fight-back against the attacks being suffered by workers in Coventry. Jenny Graham

War and a British City

COVENTRY is no stranger to military conflict. When Britain declared war on Germany in 1939, the IRA declared war against Britain – and Coventry was the scene of one of the first engagements. The bomb attack went wrong and several civilians were killed and injured. In the ensuing storm of anti-Irish hysteria two Irishmen were hanged.

In November of the following year the German air force launched a series of devastating bombing raids on Coventry. Hundreds were killed and thousands were rendered homeless. Workers suffered terribly – not least because of the inadequacy of shelters and firefighting equipment in the city which major armaments factories made an obvious target for attacks. The authorities managed to ride the storm of working class anger. Having united the city against the Irish in 1939, they succeeded in uniting it against the Germans in 1940.

November 1940 is commemorated by an annual Peace Week; in recent years this has become a great CND celebration. Britain's stand against Germany is an occasion for celebration for CND – its supporters oppose American, not British, militarism. When Coventry became involved in yet another war last year – the HMS Coventry was one of the first ships to be sunk in the South Atlantic – local CND activists stood up for Britain. Leading Labour patriot Dave Edwards called for sanctions against Argentina. Prospective Militant MP David Nellist tried to hedge his support for the fleet by condemning Thatcher and Galtieri equally. Coventry's 'nuclear-free' Labour Council flew its flags at half-mast in mourning over a setback to British imperialist aggression against Argentina and the Malvinas.

That Coventry's peace campaigners and Labour bureaucrats should refuse to uphold the democratic rights of Argentina against British imperialism came as no surprise to RCP supporters in Coventry. Ever since our branch began in Coventry the same people have been refusing to support the Irish people's struggle for self-determination against British imperialism. The Irish War is another conflict which has made its mark on Coventry. Members of Coventry's substantial Irish community have been imprisoned in connection with the armed struggle against British rule over the last decade. Hundreds more have been harassed under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

For us the campaign to stop war in the future begins from the struggle against militarism and oppression. For workers in Coventry the activities organised by the Irish Freedom Movement against the British occupation of Ireland and the use of the PTA in Britain provide an excellent start.



'There is always likely to be reluctance to sustain a disciplinary sanction against a person who is prepared to make the right noises on request'
(The Times, 12 December)

Tatchell's democracy and ours

As the Bermondsey byelection campaign gets underway, prospective RCP candidate Fran Eden has challenged prospective Labour parliamentarian Peter Tatchell to debate the question — 'their democracy or ours?'. Helen Swift examines Tatchell's 'radical but democratic' credentials.

PETER TACHELL first entered the public eye when, as the already selected candidate for the Bermondsey constituency in November 1981, he wrote an article for *London Labour Briefing*. This run-of-the-mill Labour left piece championed extra-parliamentary political campaigning and called for 'imaginative and defiant forms of protest to challenge the government's moral and political right to rule'. In a quiet week, this gave Fleet Street a very convenient stick with which to beat the Labour Party leadership. Ever ready to appease the caterwauling of media reaction, Michael Foot proclaimed that Tatchell had not yet been officially endorsed as a party candidate, and never would be. A little over a year later, Tatchell was re-selected by the Bermondsey party. Foot

then graciously withdrew his embargo on Tatchell's candidature. Tatchell may not have prevailed over Foot's dead body, as the Labour leader once insisted he must (and as some unkind commentators suggested he did), but he did triumph over the corpse of his own past radicalism. The price of Tatchell's success was his outspoken recognition of the subordinate relationship of extra-parliamentary campaigning to the authority of Parliament. As Tatchell told the final selection conference, he stood for 'peaceful social change with the consent of the electorate'. He was *radical* certainly, but above all, he was a *democrat*. Having got down on his knees to plead his deference to the sovereignty of Parliament, Tatchell appeared to have greatly enhanced his prospects for ever getting a seat on one of

its lower benches.

Tatchell then discovered that if you get down on your knees before the British political establishment, you get kicked in the teeth. Not satisfied with his subservience to the sacred rule of the House of Commons, the press next insisted on his total repudiation of extra-parliamentary activity. Resourceful reporters dug up an introduction Tatchell had penned to a new Socialist Society pamphlet in which he called the mother of parliaments an 'elitist charade'. Worse he claimed that 'nowhere in the world has radical social change ever been accomplished by Parliament'. The spectre of a Tatchell bent on 'radical social change' by means of conspiracy and dynamite once more hung over Britain.

The hapless Tatchell fought back yet again in the style he knows best — to grovel more. Far from seeking to overthrow the state by conspiracy, he claimed he had been the victim of one. Fiendish sub-editing by that living flashback to May '68, Robin Blackburn, had made Tatchell's democratic socialism sound a bit too radical. Tatchell reassured the nation that the word 'alone' had been left off the end of the key sentence; the Labour Party breathed again. Not by Parliament *alone*? In fact, nothing can be achieved by Parliament alone — not the invasion of the Malvinas, not curbs on trade union rights, not cuts in social services. But Parliament alone is Tatchell's current objective. Hence, any suggestion that he is equivocal in his respect for this institution must be firmly rebutted.

Bourgeois democracy a barrier

Tatchell claims to stand for the interests of the people of Bermondsey, but he has become increasingly well known for his orthodox reformist views on aspects of the British constitution. As a matter of fact, parliamentary democracy is not of great concern to the people of Bermondsey. They are more interested in jobs, housing, nurseries — and serious political

issues like racism and Ireland. But Tatchell is more preoccupied with getting a seat in Parliament than with representing the interests of his prospective constituents.

For Tatchell, getting into Parliament means publicly declaring his allegiance to its authority. But the authority of Parliament is a barrier to the defence of Bermondsey workers on every front. To workers who want jobs, Parliament declares that industry must shake out labour and become competitive. To workers who want decent homes, the Commons says that central and local government must make cuts in public expenditure — especially on housing. To working class women who want child-care facilities, Westminster explains that the recession requires more women to return to the home, work part-time or not at all, and make their own arrangements for looking after their children. British parliamentary democracy has just passed a law — the Nationality Act — which reminds all blacks that they are second-class citizens. It is about to renew another law — the Prevention of Terrorism Act — that removes all democratic rights from Irish people in Britain at the whim of the Home Secretary. Parliamentary democracy is sham democracy. But for Tatchell it reigns supreme.

Our democracy

The Revolutionary Communist Party takes a different view of Parliament. We are prepared to use the platform it provides as far as possible. But we are prepared to defy it — as a facade disguising the pursuit of ruling class interests — whenever working class needs demand this.

For Tatchell, the aspiring parliamentarian, nothing can happen until the Labour Party wins a majority in the House of Commons. Fran Eden, by contrast, believes that the workers of Bermondsey cannot afford to wait. Tatchell's fight against the Tories might, just might, begin in the Palace of Westminster in 1984. Fran Eden's fight has already begun on the streets of Bermondsey.



Women for communism

The RCP's Bermondsey branch has been campaigning for abortion rights and nursery provision in the area. Bermondsey Labour Party women's representatives have been too busy explaining why they won't support our initiatives to do anything to defend women's interests.

GUY'S Hospital is supposed to cater for the needs of people in its locality which includes Bermondsey. However, the already restricted access to abortions at Guy's is now being curtailed even further. Cuts in services have meant a three- to five-week waiting list for abortions. In addition, Guy's 'prefer' to take women in the earliest stages of pregnancy — up to twelve weeks. Thus by the time some women reached the top

of the waiting list Guy's refused to take them. The hospital has reduced the number of abortions it carries out by approximately 20 per cent.

On 12 January last, 20 local people supported a picket of the hospital exposing its record on restricting abortion and demanding that it improve services to provide for the needs of local women. Hospital workers and local residents joined the lively picket outside the

hospital.

Ironically, some women couldn't make it to the picket because they didn't fancy dragging their kids along with them and had no access to any childcare facilities.

Women need nurseries

Bermondsey has less than 180 local authority nursery places. There is the usual plethora of 'self-help' and part-time care ranging from 'home from homes' to playschemes and community nurseries. But none of this meets the needs of women in the area. If you're lucky enough to find a job, this lack of facilities probably means you won't be able to take it up and in fact some firms won't even consider employing you if you've got children. In the Surrey Docks area, 25 out of 33 firms said they only employed women who were single or past childbearing age.

Token gestures

Southwark Council's approach to the lack of facilities for women is the same as that of the GLC. It provides encouragement and even finance to self-help schemes. Two recent examples illustrate the consequences of this approach.

The South London Women's Hospital has been threatened with closure in 18 months time. This means even less provision for abortions and the loss of further jobs in the area. Rather than encouraging a fight against its closure, the GLC has offered £2½ million to bail out the Wandsworth District Health Authority. Here we need to get the local labour movement — workers in factories and offices nearby and in the hospital itself — to fight this cut. We'll be calling for strike action, not abandoning the struggle before it starts.

The GLC has also decided to fund a nursery project on Rockingham estate

in Bermondsey. The initial idea came from workers on the estate and was taken up by the local tenants' association. They wanted facilities which suited the needs of people on the estate which included provision for under-fives and at least five paid full-time workers. Instead, the GLC has helped to subsidise another scheme way short of full nursery provision, staffed by the parents themselves.

Women in Labour

We are fighting for free 24 hour nurseries paid for and run by the state. To push this campaign forward we decided to hold a protest outside Tooley Street Social Services department on Wednesday 19 January. We invited Bermondsey Labour Party's leading women representatives to join us.

Anne Ward (Southwark Council) didn't want to make it. She told us to be realistic, to get our priorities right and that there just wasn't enough money around to provide for everyone. Ward believes that all forms of protest are counter-productive 'except for Greenham Common'.

Sue Goss (chair of Southwark's Women's Committee) just couldn't do it. Her position entitles her not only to extend provisions, but to allocate the cash; she told us that 'the context of your picket makes it difficult'. What she really meant was that it exposes Labour's failure to fight for these facilities. Goss told us that she was looking forward to a new Labour government.

We are looking forward to carry on the fight for women's rights in Bermondsey — now and after the by election. Nothing less than the RCP's election manifesto will do for the women of Bermondsey.

- Free abortion on demand.
- Free 24 hour nurseries.
- No to all cuts in services and opposition to all redundancies.
- No to all discrimination against women.

BERMONDSEY

Docklands redevelopment BARGEWAYS IN THE SKY

The Olympic Games, a vertical take-off airport, an overhead railway, a bargeway to Europe — all these and much more have been proposed as projects for the 8.5 square mile area left vacant by the closure of

London's docks. As a substantial chunk of this area is in Bermondsey docklands redevelopment is certain to be a central issue in the forthcoming by-election. Paul Saunders reports.



PLANNING FOR Docklands is now in the hands of the Tory Government-backed London Docklands Development Corporation. Set up in July 1981, this body aims to promote major private capital investments in the construction of offices, luxury housing and facilities for yachts and executive recreation on the waterfront. The LDDC is hotly opposed by the Labour Party — both because of the nature of its planning projects and its centralised administrative structure.

Prospective Labour MP Peter Tatchell wants to turn Docklands into a 'garden city', with 'low-rise houses surrounded by gardens and tree-lined streets' (*Labour Herald*, 14 January). He also plans 'a major new industrial estate, based on new scientific industries and linked to polytechnics' for the Surrey Docks site: this 'would be a seed-bed for new inventions and alternative technologies, creating an industry of the future and local prosperity'. The riverside Tatchell wants turned into a bargeway, from which barges could leave for Europe, hence also cutting down the juggernaut traffic in the area. Tatchell also wants control over Docklands redevelopment to return to local representatives, where it lay under the last Labour Government. Before we look further at the current controversy over Docklands, it is useful to examine Labour's past attempts at urban planning in the area.

Docklands destroyed

The docks have been in decline throughout the twentieth century. Modern ships require more space, both in the water and for storing containers on land. With its access to road and rail, Tilbury, in the lower reaches of the Thames, provided a good alternative to the upper docks. Since the Second World War, both trade and dockers have moved steadily down river. Containerisation in the 'sixties enabled the dock employers to rationalise labour on a large scale. Between 1969 and 1973, for example, the number of London dockers was cut by almost a half, from 23 000 to 12 000. In 1970, the Labour Government approved the closure of the Surrey Docks in Bermondsey. Now there are only a few hundred dockers left in London, mainly in the Royal Docks on the north bank of the river, which are scheduled to close shortly.

The official labour movement at every level, from the Government, to the local MPs, to the national and local trade union officials, cooperated fully in the rundown of the docks. Transport union leader Jack Jones worked closely with Tory MP Toby Lower's Port of London Authority (PLA) to secure the final closure of the docks. The union leaders made no attempt to link up with other dockers and other sections of the TGWU or other unions to force the authorities to save jobs or provide satisfactory alternatives. The best they could manage was to negotiate severance pay; by securing what seemed like substantial sums for some workers with long service records, the union divided the workforce and undermined resistance to redundancies. Many dockers left with only a pittance.

When the unions finally called strike action it was always too little, too late; designed more as a gesture to contain dockers' anger than as a real offensive against the PLA. At best, the officials used industrial action to negotiate higher

severance pay. At worst, they blocked it from the beginning — as, for example, when the Royal Docks were threatened with closure in 1978. *The Times* commented that 'although there is considerable anger within the docks, local officials of the TGWU, the biggest union in the ports, said that any unofficial action now would be irresponsible and "industrial suicide"' (7 July 1978). Not taking coordinated industrial action certainly turned out to be 'occupational suicide' for tens of thousands of London dockers.

It's workforce chronically demoralised by the fatal capitalist realism of its trade union and Labour Party representatives, the Surrey Docks closed quietly in 1970. Many dockers were bitter — especially with their local MP, Docker Gordon Long summed up the workers' views:

'Mr Mellish joined the fight too late. Feeling is running very high down here. We expected more from him. After all, Labour is in power and the Government could have prevented the docks closing.' (*South London Press*, 17 April 1970)

A Labour government in power; a local MP who proclaimed himself 'the dockers' friend'; a union under a militant left-wing leadership — all betrayed the Bermondsey dockers. No wonder people in the area have grown cynical about Labour politicians.

Labour's last plan

Having played a full part in the devastation of the docks, the Labour Party now embarked on a bold experiment in urban planning. The Docklands Joint Committee, set up by the Tories in the early 'seventies, was carried on by the Labour Government after 1974. Including representatives of the five borough councils covering Docklands, the GLC and local community groups, it was a model for the sort of 'democratic accountability' currently being promoted by Tatchell. This structure — and the Docklands Strategic Plan drawn up in 1976 — remains the basis of Labour's alternative to the Tory LDDC today.

The plan was ambitious. Labour intended to raise the declining population of docklands from 56 000 to 100 000 over a 20-year period. It aimed to create more than 20 000 new jobs and build 23 000 houses in the same period. It's five year targets were 10 000-12 000 jobs and 6000 houses. The Labour Party

intended to achieve these targets through a combination of public spending — largely on infrastructural projects (housing, transport, etc) — and private capital invested in new industry:

'The Docklands Strategic Plan costed out the total development of £2038m at 1975 prices, of which £1138m was to come from the government and £900m from the private sector. The private sector's contribution was expected to be relatively small over the first 10 years of the plan, increasing later as infrastructure works were completed.' (*Who develops London's docklands?*, September 1981)

What were the fruits of this scheme to revive capitalism in Docklands?

By 1981, 800 jobs had been created — while a further 8500 disappeared, bringing the total unemployment in the docklands boroughs up to 80 000. Of the 6000 new houses planned, only 1300 were built. The catastrophic failure of Labour's plan for Docklands contained a crucial lesson for the party, which it has clearly failed to learn. The decay of the Docklands — like the decay of the North-East, Merseyside and South Wales — is a symptom of the decay of British capitalism. Even when the economy was expanding in the 'fifties and 'sixties, massive public subsidies could not stop the rot in Britain's declining industrial areas. In today's recession the implementation of a systematic capitalist development programme in areas like Docklands, in a way that will provide the jobs and homes working class people need, is simply impossible.

Tory realism — Labour cynicism

The Tories understand the realities of the capitalist crisis. They appreciate that the only way that capital can 'develop' Docklands is through asset stripping, speculative building and catering for the needs of the luxury leisure market. There is no dynamic sector in British industry that can lead an area like Bermondsey to the new prosperity of which Tatchell dreams. The Tories also know that the serious business of screwing profits out of Docklands demands an efficient organisation with clear lines of authority and decision-making. Hence they have dispensed with the bureaucratic shambles through which Labour tried to plan Docklands. The LDDC is an agency determined to use public and private resources to maximum effect in the ruthless exploitation of whatever resources remain in Docklands.

The LDDC is a godsend to Bermondsey Labour Party. Its representatives can seize on the most offensive aspects of the Tory plans — luxury flats on Corbett's Wharf at £100 000 each, six Centre Point-style office blocks for Hay's Wharf — to expose Tory profiteering. Certainly Bermondsey workers are disgusted by these schemes. But they are also disappointed by Labour's failure to defend jobs and living standards in Docklands. Tatchell's stunts against the LDDC provide a convenient distraction from Labour's own sordid record.

The bogey of the LDDC and its speculative schemes provides considerable scope for the Labour Party to promote its alternatives. Essentially these involve a return to the 1976 plan with some of Tatchell's own visionary ideas for the area tacked on. Tatchell promises 'houses with gardens' — but how does Labour plan to build them? Most of the housing sites in Surrey Docks have now been transferred to the LDDC. The council wants to get out of its contract to buy the new houses being built there. But there is nowhere else to rehouse tenants from the Downtown estates, which are also due for transfer. Nevertheless, Southwark decided in December to refuse to buy any LDDC houses; and they have pulled out of Lysander's 'Southwark site' scheme. So they can't promise any houses — with gardens or not — unless a future Labour government provides the cash. Meanwhile they can blame the Development Corporation for all their failings — and restrict their 'fight' against Tory policies to a legal battle against the transfer of the 'Southwark site'.

In one final respect the LDDC helps out the local Labour Party. Although it has given up the sham accountability cultivated by Labour's committee it still recognises the usefulness of consulting the community. Hence it has set aside £2.5 million for a 'community support budget': £500 000 is allocated for grants to community organisations. This discreet LDDC payola helps to subsidise the Docklands Forum — a body which brings together all sorts of groups including the Newham Allotment Holders' Federation, the Joint Docklands Action Group, local religious groups and the trade unions. Lots of the sort of activists that provide the rather frail backbone of the Bermondsey Labour Party are thus indirectly on the LDDC payroll. Hence the LDDC not only funds private speculation — it also funds the 'community' opposition to its profiteering. This is the extent to which the Tories have Docklands sewn up — and a true measure of the cynicism of Labour's resistance to their plans.

A real alternative

There is an alternative way to defend jobs in Docklands. It begins from throwing out Labour's grandiose plans for a dockland utopia of the future. Capitalism cannot develop Docklands. But the capitalists and their state can be forced to sustain jobs and living standards if their every attempt to attack them is met with concerted action now — not with illusory schemes for the future. The devastation and demoralisation of Bermondsey under Labour means that there is much lost ground to make up. We can make a start by supporting a candidate who is prepared to give a lead in the defence of working class interests.

BRITAIN'S ONLY ANSWER SHOOT TO KILL

THE COLD-BLOODED MURDER of seven Catholics in the course of the last two months has drawn attention to the shoot-to-kill policy of the British Army in Ireland. Confirmation of the existence of a 'covert anti-terrorist unit' with a shoot-to-kill policy by senior officers of the Royal Ulster Constabulary led the *Irish Times* to comment on a 'major divergence from security policies prevailing for the last six years'. This is altogether false. The so-called 'anti-terrorist' squad has long been operational. Early last year the British Army's own journal boasted that 'The RUC's own Special Patrol Group has a well-deserved reputation for speed of response' (*Armed Forces*, March 1982). The shoot-to-kill policy is as old as the Irish War itself.

Politics and military strategy

Since British troops first invaded the Six Counties of Ireland in 1969, imperialist strategy has undergone considerable modification. At the outset the British plan was to maintain Stormont as its regional parliament. The government promised reforms never came. The introduction of Internment in August 1971 only accelerated Stormont's inevitable demise. Since the collapse of Stormont in March 1972 the British ruling class has alternated between trying to make straightforward Direct Rule acceptable and attempting to construct a facade of power-sharing which would give local politicians a role in the administration of Direct Rule.

In fact Whitehall has long recognised that the only alternative to Direct Rule is the reunification of Ireland. Since the whole object of the military occupation of Ireland is to maintain its partition, the only issue at stake for British imperialism is how to administer Direct Rule most effectively.

The most important aim of Direct Rule is to destroy the Irish liberation movement. To realise this objective the British military feel free to shoot, torture and maim. The recent spree of murders by British forces may well have been a response to the success of Sinn Féin in last year's Assembly elections. But it was a response that had been tried and tested through the experience of the past 13 years.

As early as 1969 the Cameron Committee set up by Westminster to inquire into disturbances in Derry found the RUC 'guilty of misconduct which involved assault and battery (and) malicious damage to property in the streets in the predominantly Catholic Bogside area'. This early outburst of spontaneous state violence has been replaced by a well-controlled and well-calculated system of terror. Britain's terror machine was built to order by Brigadier Frank Kitson, the well-known expert in counter-insurgency appointed as Belfast Army Commander in 1970. Kitson's approach was straightforward:

'Translated into normal terms, the aim of the government is to regain if necessary and then retain the allegiance of the population, and for this purpose it must eliminate those involved in subversion.' (F Kitson, *Low intensity operations*, 1971)

The elimination of 'those involved in subversion' has become the principal aim of the British military.

The British Army had been in occupation less than a year when its General Officer Commanding made the first direct acknowledgement that the troops would not hesitate to shoot their opponents. Lieutenant-General Freeland warned in April 1970 that the army would shoot petrol bombers on sight. Selected marksmen were equipped with the army's latest night-sight rifles. 'I will not elaborate on this', said Freeland, 'but you do not want to get in the way of me' (*The Times*, 4 April 1970). This was no empty

The British Army's recent orgy of assassinations in the Six Counties has led many in Britain to speculate on the emergence of a new hard line security policy. As David Douglas reports, the policy is now around 13 years old.

threat: within three months British soldiers shot dead three civilians in riots. By November the soldiers were instructed not to wait and see what was being thrown at them, but to shoot first! (*The Guardian*, 2 November 1970).

Enter the SAS

The British military has always tried to maintain a facade of legality during the Irish War. Although British soldiers have shot down dozens of Irish people in cold blood, the elimination of freedom fighters has generally been left to covert units like the SAS or locally-raised secret units. Operating under the name Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF) these units unleashed a reign of terror in 1971 and 1972. Dozens of people were shot dead. After each assassination the army claimed they were fired on first. In no instance were weapons produced to substantiate these claims. All witnesses deny the civilians were armed. And the army statements often underwent a metamorphosis — first denying all knowledge and then admitting responsibility.

The assassinations continued into 1973 and by the middle of the year rumours began to filter through to the media that army operations were directed specifically at killing the 'top thirty' IRA leaders (*The Times*, 17 May 1973). Six unarmed IRA men were murdered in February and another one in May. *The Guardian* reported that two criminals — the Littlejohn brothers — had been hired to assassinate prominent IRA

men, including the Chief of Staff of the IRA at the time (*The Guardian*, 9 August 1973).

The assassination teams played a particularly important role in South Armagh. British imperialism faced considerable resistance in the region and in 1976 the Wilson Government decided to unleash the murder squads on the border area to knock out the top ten IRA leaders. The reign of terror brought considerable results. One SAS officer claimed in December 1976: 'We got four of them. The other six were chased down South' (cited in T Geraghty, *Who dares wins*, p201).

Ulsterisation

To keep up appearances British imperialism has always been careful to keep its shoot-to-kill policy well in the background. As a key part of British strategy to legitimise its domination over Ireland, the army has always been cast in the role of defender of the 'rule of law'. *The Times* recently emphasised this point, warning that British imperialism cannot afford to be seen in its true light:

'For if suspicion were converted into belief, and belief into knowledge, that the civil power in Northern Ireland had resorted to countering the armed subversion of lawful order by its own perversion of lawful means, then not only would the confidence of the nationalist community be lost for ever, the moral basis for Britain's presence in the Province would vanish.' (5 January)

In other words, the British Army must do its utmost to keep its dirty tricks out of the glare of publicity.

It was the job of Harold Wilson's Government to implement policies which would safeguard the 'moral basis' of imperialist domination. In 1974 the Labour Government launched its policy of *criminalisation*. In April 1974, Mervyn Rees, the Northern Ireland Secretary announced his intention to reinstate 'normal policing' and to promote 'law and order', instead of a 'war time' climate in the Six Counties. To portray the war as a police problem, Rees abolished special category status for republican prisoners of war and proceeded to launch a publicity campaign to brand them as common criminals.

Thus the real criminals used the power of the state to endow their terror with legitimacy, while portraying the resistance of the oppressed as acts of crime. To complement this approach, the Labour Government also adopted the policy of 'Ulsterisation'. In 1977 the RUC was designated as the main security force in the Six Counties, and the fiction of a local conflict in which British troops were innocent victims was reinforced.

Ulsterisation has given a new form to the shoot-to-kill policy. The indigenous Loyalist security force of 10 955 in 1970 was almost doubled by 1980. Repression has been given a local flavour — one step removed from direct British involvement. Thus many of the assassinations of Irish freedom fighters since 1977 have had a degree of Loyalist involvement. The summary execution of a three-man IRA service unit in 1978 was carried out by a team composed of SAS and RUC personnel. In 1980, the assassination campaign waged against prominent H-Block activists was carried out by Loyalist freelancers, ostensibly without the knowledge of the British Army. However, nobody was in the least bit surprised when a UDA member convicted of murdering John Turnley told the court that he had been working with the SAS.

British policy remains essentially the same. All that has changed is that Kitson's instructions to eliminate 'subversives' are now carried out more discreetly. But the outcome — dead nationalists — has not changed. Every expression of nationalist resistance is met by the force of arms. Thus Sinn Féin's electoral successes last November were followed by the announcement that the RUC would get an additional £14 million to increase its full-time members by 500 and its reserve squad by 300. Not surprisingly, the year 1982 ended with an upsurge of state violence. RUC squads vented their anger on nationalist families living on council estates and sought every opportunity for shoot-outs with their (preferably unarmed) republican opponents.

Britain out of Ireland

Liberal critics of British imperialism often object to particular aspects of military domination. Instances of torture, the use of plastic bullets and legal frame-ups are often denounced as inconsistent with the principles of British democracy. This attitude is at best hypocritical or blind and at worst an apology for British imperialism. For as long as the occupation of Ireland continues to provoke resistance British imperialism will rule by the force of arms. Britain's ruthless terror and murder campaigns are not the arbitrary acts of crazed militarists. They are the outcome of a security policy rationally worked out in Whitehall. Every successful assassination helps to enforce Partition and sustain Britain's domination over Ireland.

We call on all our supporters to campaign actively on behalf of the Irish liberation struggle. Every victim of the occupation army must be avenged by a resolute campaign fighting for Britain's defeat.



Some recent victims of British murder squads: (top) Tony Harker, Stephen McConomy, Eamon Bradley; (middle) Gervais McKerr, Sean Burns, Eugene Toman; (bottom) Michael Tighe, Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll

ALL LABOUR'S SOLUTIONS share certain themes. They all accept the right of the British state to determine the future of the Irish people. And with their condemnations of the armed struggle of the republican movement, all Labour left politicians deny the right of the Irish people to establish their own forms of government, independent of British rule. Indeed the central concern of all recent Labour Party initiatives is to confer legitimacy on the institutions of British domination and the myths of British democracy. Let's take Frank Allaun first.

Labour for Ulster?

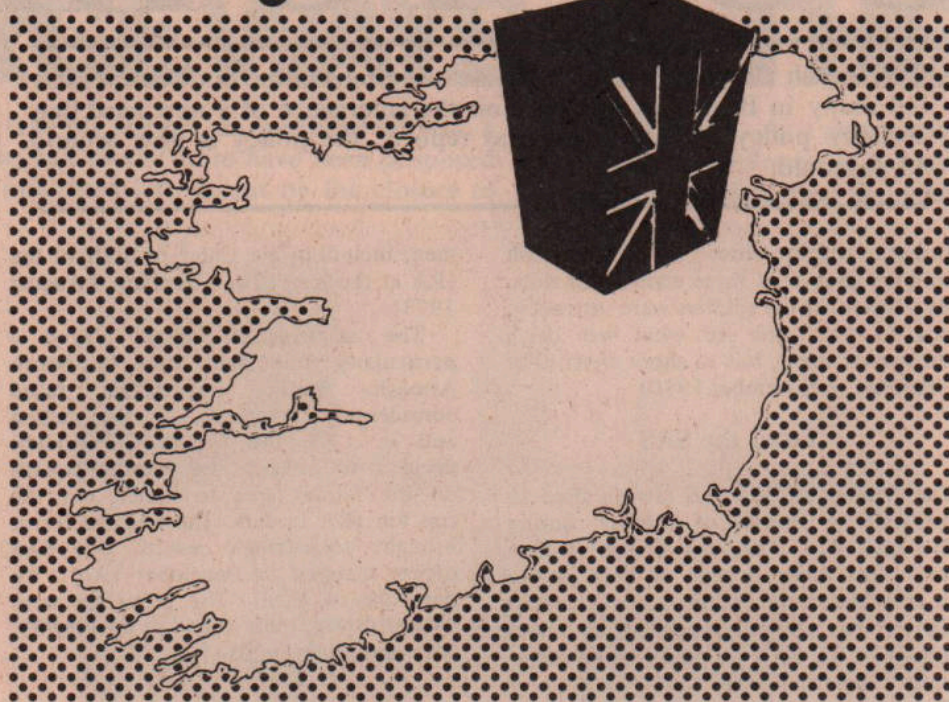
Salford MP Allaun has been a left-wing voice on Labour's national executive for longer than most people can remember. For the last couple of years he has given his personal backing to the notion that the Labour Party should extend its organisation to include the occupied Six Counties of Ireland. Allaun has linked up with the Campaign for Labour Representation, a front for an obscure Stalinist faction in Ireland. Its main political activities include writing letters to the British press, publishing a cyclostyled periodical from a Belfast address and competing with orthodox Unionists for the support of Loyalist trade unionists. Until recently, nobody took the idea of Labour politicians going to the Six Counties – for any other purpose than to visit the troops and approve the concentration camps – very seriously. But an impending general election, following constituency boundary changes unfavourable to Labour, prompted a re-assessment. Allaun reckons Labour could pick up three seats in Belfast and another elsewhere to boost its strength at Westminster.

The campaign to get Labour across the water has already made considerable headway. Labour's 1981 special inquiry report on Northern Ireland was drafted by a close sympathiser with the cause. The final draft included an extra amendment inspired by Frank Allaun and the CLR, agreeing to hold a conference with the trade unions in the Six Counties to consider appropriate forms of Labour representation. The Militant Tendency wants the union bureaucracy in the occupied territory to launch the Labour Party – rather than have it parachuted in from London; but it too supports the idea of a 'conference of Labour' to consider the matter further. Allaun now intends proposing to the January national executive that it begin to set up Labour Party branches in the Six Counties.

Allaun's scheme has little chance of success. The trade union bureaucracy in the Six Counties only survives by scrupulously abstaining from 'politics' while discreetly upholding the British connection. As one official told the *Morning Star*, 'it is impossible to get involved with the political structure here without blowing the whole movement apart' (6 January). Northern Ireland trade union leader Terry Carlin immediately stated that Allaun's plan 'was not something with which unions wanted to get officially involved'. They had written to the national executive to say that they were not prepared to host a conference on Labour representation. Other Labour politicians in Britain have pointed out that the Catholic-based Social Democratic and Labour Party is a fellow member of the Socialist International. Labour's intervention could only appeal to Protestants – it would thus be 'sucked into the sectarian politics of Northern Ireland', commented Walsall MP David Winnick.

The real significance of Allaun's scheme lies more in what it reveals about a leading British socialist's outlook on Ireland than in any prospect it has of being implemented. Allaun begins from the assumption that the Six Counties are part of the United Kingdom. The only question is how they can best be integrated into the political establishment. It is not simply a matter of Labour's electoral expediency – Allaun is also concerned about how to contain the political instability of the occupied area. This is

THE LABOUR LEFT'S IRISH POLICY Any solution –



so long as it's British

The Labour left has more solutions to the Irish War today than it has excuses for staunchly upholding a decade of British military coercion. Ken Livingstone wants to play Lloyd George to the republican movement in new treaty talks; Frank Allaun wants the Labour Party to set up shop in Belfast and Derry; Clive Soley wants to remove all possible barriers to the functioning of the new Ulster Assembly; and lots of Labour councillors want to make sure that Irish people in Britain can vote for them and whatever solution their party finally chooses to impose on Ireland in the future.

the central theme of the CLR: the best way to pacify the Six Counties is to draw them into the 'normal' processes of British politics. The Labour left's plan to branch out into Ireland reflects its desire to legitimise the integration of the Six Counties into the United Kingdom.

James Prior, roll on

Labour's front bench Irish spokesman Clive Soley shares Allaun's objective, but not his approach. As MP for Hammersmith, Soley has long taken an interest in Irish affairs. Last year he resigned from his front bench office in a storm of publicity when his senior, Roy Hattersley, refused to oppose the Prevention of Terrorism Act in Parliament. A few months later he quietly resumed his post. What principles will guide his line on the PTA this year? We wait with interest. In the meantime Soley has found a new cause: he is campaigning against the disqualification of SDLP deputy-leader Seamus Mallon from the new Ulster Assembly.

Mallon is now barred from the Assembly because he was appointed last year to the Dublin senate by outgoing Taoiseach Charles Haughey, in a cunning ruse to embarrass the British government. As an honorary member of government of a 'foreign' country, Mallon is ineligible for a seat in the Assembly. Soley wants the Tory Government to allow Mallon to take his seat so that at least one obstacle to the SDLP's participation in the latest British-imposed 'solution' to the Irish War could be removed.

Like many on the Labour left, Soley is aggrieved that the nationalist people of Ireland have little faith in British democracy. 'That view must not be given substance', he insists (*Financial Times*, 30 December). For Soley, the ban on Mallon only encourages the widespread view among Irish people that British democracy is a sham. In

fact Soley's immediate problem is likely to be soon resolved: Mallon's Dublin appointment lapses this month with the formal takeover of Garret FitzGerald's new government. But Soley's enthusiasm for legitimising British domination over Ireland has not flagged. His latest cause is the promotion of an all-Ireland 'anti-terrorist police force'. (*Observer*, 16 January) This measure would simply ratify the existing state of affairs where the repressive apparatus of the Twenty-Six Counties is closely integrated into the British terror machine in the North to maximise the repression of the republican movement. Soley's measure would have the value of exposing the reality behind the token independence of the 'Irish Republic' – that Britain dominates the whole of Ireland. Ironically Soley views this measure to consolidate British domination over Ireland as a step towards Irish unity!

Irish voting

One of the growth areas of Labour Party activity on Ireland is its response to the Tory threat to remove the right to vote in British elections for Irish people living in Britain. This response reveals much about the Labour Party's response to the Irish War.

Every time the republican movement launches a successful attack against Britain – Warrenpoint, Hyde Park, Regents Park, Ballykelly – some Tory backwoodsman crawls out to scream for the disenfranchisement of the Irish in Britain. There are two possible responses to this. One is to recognise that it is not a practicable proposal – even the Tory party conference refused to take it up – and that its objective is simply to stir up anti-Irish prejudice. The best way to deal with it therefore is to give full support to the Irish liberation struggle and to fight any attempts under the PTA to curtail activities of those who sympathise

with it in Britain. This is our approach.

The Labour Party sees the matter differently. In the past its representatives have simply tried to out-do the Tories in strident denunciations of the Irish freedom fighters. In this at least they remain consistent. However, a new element has crept into Labour's reaction, especially since it lost much Irish support in Britain over its gutless performance during the 1981 hunger strikes. Labour activists have recently seized the opportunity of Tory threats to Irish voters to launch a campaign to rebuild the traditional alliance between the Irish community and the Labour Party. In areas where there are substantial numbers of Irish voters – Hammersmith, Islington, Hackney and Haringey in London, Manchester and Coventry – constituency parties and local councils are to be found actively campaigning against a non-existent threat to Irish voting rights.

The fact that Irish people have the vote in Britain reflects the historical domination of Ireland by Britain. The 1801 Act of Union fused Ireland to Britain – and until 1949 even the inhabitants of the Twenty-six counties enjoyed the dubious benefits of British citizenship. The continuation of Irish voting rights in Britain and the absence of any immigration regulations between the two countries has ensured a free flow of labour as required by British capital, as well as being an administrative convenience. Most Irish people's central concern is to have the right to a say in the political future of their own country – not to preserve a token of their subordination to Britain.

We uphold the right of anybody who lives in Britain to vote in elections here. But that is not the point of the Irish voting rights controversy. The central issue is the right of the Irish to self-determination and the persistence of the British state in denying that right. The Labour Party's position in the controversy indicates that it is more concerned to maintain the legacy of British domination than to defend the Irish people's right to national freedom.

Livingstone's surrender terms

This brings us finally to Ken Livingstone, whose GLC has recently added the Irish community to its 'ethnic minorities' gravy train. Livingstone is currently the leading exponent of the 'negotiated solution'. The vital clue to grasping Livingstone's approach is that he always uses words like 'we', 'us', 'our' when discussing Britain's role in Ireland. 'After thirteen years of war' he often declares 'we have failed to bring about a solution in the Six Counties'.

Who is 'we'? Not the Irish – they have never had the chance to form their own government without British interference. Not the British working class – it has had no independent role in Irish politics for more than half a century. 'We' can only mean the British ruling class to which Livingstone has appointed himself Irish adviser, and if only the Government would let him, negotiator-in-chief. What are Livingstone's terms? To the republican movement he has made himself very clear – stop the bombings, lay down arms and pursue the mandate given by the Assembly election. (Like Soley, Livingstone is a great respecter of the democratic process of the Assembly elections). Livingstone's terms to the British state are much more favourable. He is on record as opposing plastic bullets and being in favour of the withdrawal of troops. But this is evidently not a precondition for negotiations: only the republican movement is obliged to renounce military methods *before* talks can take place.

Livingstone is regarded by many Irish people and British socialists as having something new to offer in terms of the Labour Party's Irish policy. Our advice is – listen to Livingstone not the *Sun*. His Irish policy is as old as the Labour Party – he condemns the liberation struggle and upholds Britain's right to determine the future of Ireland. The real friends of Irish freedom in Britain are not to be found on the left wing of the Labour Party.

Mick Kennedy

The Prevention of Terrorism Act

A cause for solidarity

Just how useful the Prevention of Terrorism Act can be to the British ruling class was made clear last December when it was activated to prevent the Sinn Fein delegation to London. Since its introduction in 1974 more than 5500 people have been detained under this repressive law. In March, the PTA will come up before Parliament for its annual renewal. Frank Richards outlines the case for making action against the PTA a key priority for anti-imperialists.

BRITAIN'S continued domination of Ireland depends on its success in confining the war to the Six Counties. The British ruling class knows that as long as there is no domestic opposition to its rule in Ireland it can pursue its war in whatever way it sees fit. As long as the government faces no internal disruption and no threat that the violence might spill over into Britain it can apply its full measures to smash the Irish liberation movement.

The war at home

To ensure that domestic consensus persists the British ruling class has waged a successful campaign on the home front. Backed up by both major parties in Parliament and the considerable powers of the media, the British state has managed to convince the majority of the population that it really isn't fighting a war in Ireland but protecting the democratic wishes of the majority against a bunch of violent and deranged criminals. The success of the criminalisation of the republican movement was clearly shown during the H-Block hunger strikes of 1981. While people throughout the world marched in their tens of thousands in solidarity with the H-Block men there was virtually no protest against Thatcher inside Britain.

Critics of British rule in Ireland have generally feared to raise the issue of the war. They have isolated particular aspects of British oppression — such as instances of torture and discrimination — and have called for their removal. At present the main example of this approach is the Labour left-inspired campaign against plastic bullets. Plastic bullets are an objectionable aspect of British oppression. But at a time when a much publicised 'shoot-to-kill' policy exists and Irish freedom fighters are being hunted down and murdered with lead bullets, the futility of a narrow anti-plastic bullets campaign is clearly apparent. Any campaign, however well-intentioned, presents no challenge to imperialism if it refuses to take a stand on the issue of war.

Yet it is the very issue of war which the British left is always ready to ignore. The Irish Freedom Movement takes an opposite view — every activity and every initiative must be approached from the point of view of popularising the cause of Irish freedom among British workers. That's why it is essential that we devote our resources to fighting around issues which challenge the ability of the state to conduct its colonial war in Ireland. In this respect fighting the PTA becomes central — for it is through the PTA that the ruling class conducts the Irish War inside Britain. Through the operation of the PTA the war acquires the greatest immediacy for British workers.

The IFM's assessment of the PTA is controversial. The supporters of a conference on the PTA organised by the Connolly Association on 5 February (including members of the Communist Party, Labour left and Troops Out Movement) treat the PTA as an unnecessary piece of legislation that encourages rather than fights terrorism. The Connolly Association seems to share the ruling class obsession with terrorism. Its newspaper noted that 'it cannot be said the Act has much effect in preventing terrorism. For this reason it is necessary to organise opposition to the Act.' Obviously British imperialism can easily live with this sort of opposition.

But even more radical sections of the left — including people who really want to challenge British imperialism — are confused about the PTA. Thus in 1978 the predecessors of the present Troops Out Movement wrote in their paper:

'Merseyside UTOM has published a short guide to the Act, demanding that this most repressive piece of legislation passed in modern Britain outside wartime be scrapped.' (*Troops Out*, November 1978)

On the contrary — it is only in its wartime context that the PTA has any meaning.

Why the PTA?

Since its introduction in 1974, only 96 people — less than two per cent of the 5500 detained — have been charged under the PTA. For many of its liberal critics, this is proof that the PTA has not done what it was intended to do — catch and convict 'terrorists'. They are mistaken. The PTA was never meant to convict IRA bombers — existing criminal law is more than adequate for that. Instead, the PTA has played a central role in the British state's strategy of criminalising anyone who supports the republican movement and its objectives. It has been used to harass and terrorise Irish workers and anti-imperialists in Britain. Convictions are irrelevant — what matters for the British state is that an atmosphere is created where discussion of the Irish War is difficult and mass protest next to impossible.

During the ministerial broadcast in which he announced the introduction of the PTA, Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins justified the power to exclude people to the Six Counties on the grounds that 'it is from there that the infection comes.' The 'infection' is the resistance movement against British imperialism. In the eyes of the British state, the carriers of the infection are the Irish people. Prevention means keeping England, Wales and Scotland immune from the effects of war. That's why most of the detentions under the PTA occur at the point of entry to Britain.



Another PTA picket at Paddington Green, London's special Irish detention centre

British democracy? Not if you're Irish

The original Prevention of Terrorism Act was rushed through Parliament in record time without any opposition in 1974. It gave the Home Secretary the power to ban any organisation 'appearing' to him to be involved in 'terrorism'. The Act specifically named the IRA — it became an offence to give support, raise funds or hold meetings on its behalf.

The Labour Government introduced broader powers of proscription to provide legal backing for the harassment of any Irish people in Britain, not just those directly involved with the republican movement. Under the new terms it became an offence to support 'terrorism' in general — rather than simply the IRA. What constitutes support for 'terrorism' is left to the judgement of the police. It can include selling anti-imperialist propaganda or collecting money for relatives of republican prisoners. The commonest offence however is just being Irish.

The second section of the PTA gives the state powers of exclusion from the country. Anybody the Home Secretary 'believes' — on the basis of police reports which are not open to any legal challenge — to be involved in 'terrorism' can be deported. The country for the purposes of the PTA is Great Britain — not the United Kingdom. Thus Irish people can be expelled from Britain either to the Twenty-six or Six Counties, or — like Adams, Morrison and McGuinness — kept out of Britain.

Part three of the PTA deals with powers of detention. The police can arrest and detain anybody for 48 hours without issuing a warrant or making any charge. They can then apply to the Home Secretary for authorisation to hold a prisoner for a further five days, again without making any charge. A prisoner can be photographed and fingerprinted without his consent.

The 1976 Act added another element to the state's repressive powers. It became an offence not to become an informer. Anybody is obliged to pass on information of 'material assistance' in preventing 'acts of terrorism' or in catching 'terrorists'. Silence now carries a penalty of up to five years' imprisonment.

The PTA also gives the police the right to stop and search anybody they suspect of involvement in 'terrorism'. Anybody's home can be raided on the order of a police superintendent. Under the PTA Irish people living in Britain have no democratic rights at all.

More than two-thirds of all detentions have taken place at ports and airports at Liverpool, Stranraer and London. In Liverpool, where more than a quarter of the detentions have taken place, there are anti-terrorist squads at the port, the airport and the railway station. Bridewell police station in the city has specially designated cells for detainees.

The PTA also provides an ideal weapon for creating a climate of fear in the Irish community in Britain. Mass raids such as the ones carried out in London, Southampton, Birmingham and Liverpool in December 1979 have led to the detention of people whose only connection with the Six Counties is their birth. During the 1979 raids James Martin was arrested and detained for seven days.

Born in the Six Counties, his only safeguard against exclusion would have been another year's residence in Britain. But because he had lived in Britain for only 19 years he could be summarily expelled. Despite the fact that his three children had been born here, he was excluded to the Six Counties. He lost his job and his council house. On arrival in the Six Counties, the Loyalist-controlled Northern Ireland Housing Executive refused to rehouse him and his family. James Martin's case serves as an object lesson to anyone Irish living in Britain who wants to speak out against Partition. The threat of exclusion is a powerful weapon for silencing the opponents of imperialism inside Britain.

IFM Activities

SOUTH LONDON

Wednesday 2 February 6.00pm

SMASH THE PTA!

Mass lobby of Southwark Council
Southwark Town Hall, Peckham Rd, SE5

BIRMINGHAM

Wednesday 9 March 7.30pm

Public Meeting

DEFEND THE IRISH PEOPLE:

SMASH THE PTA!

Speakers: Eddie Caughey, the first victim of the PTA, and the IFM
Digbeth Civic Hall

BIRMINGHAM

Saturday 5 March 9.45am

Picket the Shadow Home Secretary,

Roy Hattersley

SMASH THE PTA!

Sparkbrook Labour Club, Stratford Rd

LIVERPOOL

SMASH THE PTA!

Victims of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in Liverpool: contact the Irish Freedom Movement. Phone 01-274 3951

HUNGER STRIKE
COMMEMORATION
MARCH
ORGANISED BY
SINN FEIN
BIRMINGHAM, 8 MAY

Miners in retreat Blame

SINCE ARTHUR SCARGILL won the leadership of the NUM thousands of workers have been waiting for the miners to lead the fightback against the Tories. Many militants have looked to the miners to provide the initiative that would lead to a broader struggle for jobs and pay among workers in industries like cars, steel and engineering. But the fightback has not come. Instead the miners have suffered more humiliating defeats under Scargill than they did under his predecessor Joe Gormley's right-wing leadership.

The Scottish miners acceptance of the closure of Kinneil colliery, the resignation of the South Wales NUM to cuts and closures in its pits and the acquiescence of the Kent miners to the major loss of jobs at Snowdown represent the successful culmination of a determined National Coal Board offensive. The fact that these defeats took place in the areas with well-established Communist Party leaderships helps to explain both the betrayals and their consequences for British Stalinists. Let's look first at the NCB's strategy to rationalise the coal-mining industry.

Coal board attack

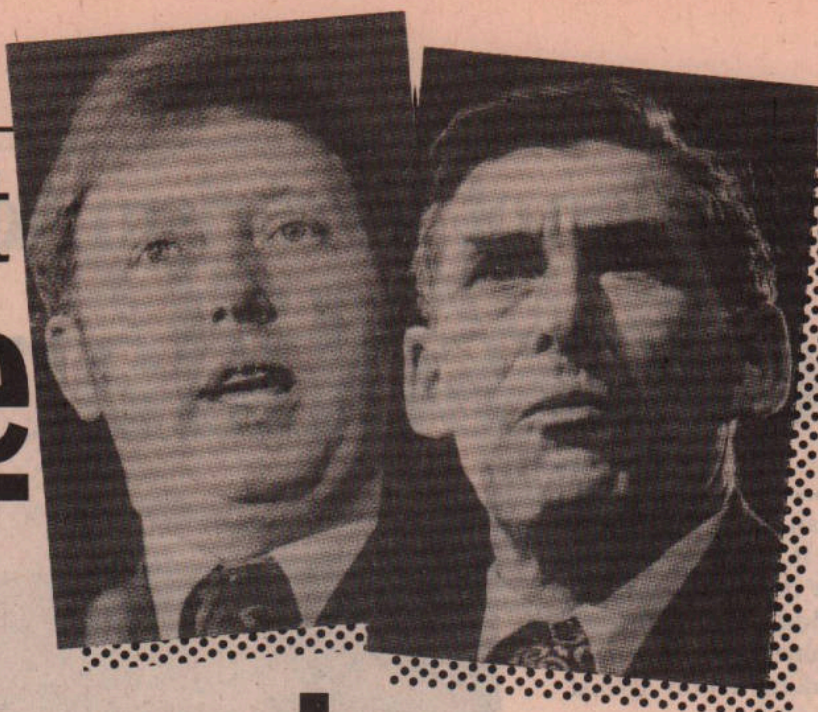
Over the past 30 years annual coal production in Britain has fallen from 200m tons to little more than 100m tons. The number of pits has dropped from 900 to 200. As mechanisation has advanced, manpower has declined — from 690 000 in 1950 to around 200 000 today. The brief period of optimism about the future of mining following the mid 'seventies oil crisis is now at a distant memory. The recession has devastated manufacturing industry — and hence the demand for coal from power stations, steel mills and factories. The result is massive stockpiles of coal at pitheads around the country.

The NCB has pursued a pragmatic strategy towards the NUM in its drive to ensure the viability of British coal mining. On the one hand it has been prepared to cooperate closely with the NUM in presenting to the Government an image of management and union united in the best interests of the British mining industry. Thus in 1981 the NCB colluded in a miners' national strike with the objective of winning more state subsidies for the industry. The Tories gave in and higher subsidies facilitated further investment in new collieries such as Selby in North Yorkshire; it also provided the cash to win union acceptance of schemes for redundancy and early retirement.

On the other hand, the NCB has always been ready to exploit the deep divisions among the NUM's loosely federated regions. In 1978 the board introduced productivity schemes which favoured areas with better geological conditions — the South Midlands and Nottingham (also areas with a tradition of right-wing leadership). As the recession has deepened differentials within the NUM have widened. The areas with the largest numbers of inefficient pits with the worst geological conditions (and the worst bonuses) became the target of the latest round of rationalisations. These areas were also the traditional strongholds of the left.

Tactical ineptitude

Over the past year, Scargill's tactics have played into the hands of the NCB, just as the broad drift of his policy has undermined miners' resistance to the Board's offensive. Last October Scargill feared that he would not win the endorsement of his members for his 31 per cent pay claim. This figure was based on his obscure calculation of what the NCB



Scargill and McGahey: British coal means jobless miners

not the miners

First in Scotland, then in South Wales and then in Kent — the leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers have thrown in the towel before the fight for jobs really got started. For the miners this has been a series of setbacks. For the working class, however, this episode has not been a total disaster: the betrayals of the NUM left promise to weaken still further the fatal influence of the politics of the Communist Party on the British trade union movement.

could afford — not on what miners needed to stay ahead of inflation. So, he linked the pay claim to opposition to the threat of closures — which he considered a more popular issue among miners — and appealed for backing for strike action on both issues. Most miners were not impressed by these shenanigans and — with the exception of the left areas (see table) — overwhelmingly rejected Scargill's call for action. The result of Scargill's manoeuvre was that the NUM was left without a mandate for strike action on the immediate issue of pay — or on the longer-term problem of closures.

The NCB was quick to seize its ad-

vantage. Immediately after the ballot result was announced, the Board opened discussions at area level on the future of particular pits. Here the NCB used the commitment of the NUM to the British coal industry to weaken miners' resistance to closures.

The left in the NUM has identified particularly strongly with 'the future of coal' ever since its rise to power in the union in the 'seventies. Left wingers like Lawrence Daly, Mick McGahey and Arthur Scargill criticised the old right-wing leaders for their complicity in the rundown of the industry. They wanted to help make British coal great again. To achieve this goal as the re-

CPGB - nearing the end?

The NUM is one of the few remaining unions in which the Communist Party of Great Britain still exercises considerable power. Its members and their fellow-travellers dominate the executives in Scotland, South Wales and Kent. Scargill, a former party member and a follower of the orthodox Stalinist line on issues like Poland, owes his position to CP support. The resignation of the CP's industrial organiser Mick Costello (for personal reasons) shortly after the Kinneil fiasco is a measure of the blow it represents to the party's standing in the unions.

The NUM debacle seems likely to accelerate the CP's long declining trade union influence. The fact that the party now has three members — George Guy (sheet metal workers), Ken Gill (AUEW-TASS) and Mick McGahey — on the TUC General Council is more a reflection of the natural progression of its ageing bureaucrats than of any increase in its strength at rank and file level. The decline of traditional industries has drastically eroded the CP's base. The shakeout in the docks and the motor industry has reduced its influence in the TGWU: in the AUEW its control now is only at district level. The CP only retains a foothold in the bureaucracies of small and declining unions: the building workers, sheet metal workers, tobacco workers, furniture workers and tailors.

The CP has relatively little influence in the recently booming public service unions. Here, it has been squeezed out by the Labour left. The younger generation of trade union officials can advance their careers in the bureaucracy better outside the CP than inside it, where they would have been a decade ago.

Inside the CP, however, the bureaucrats are in the ascendant. They tend to identify with the pro-Moscow faction against the Eurocommunists whose numbers are declining even faster than their own. The result is an increasingly acrimonious squabble aboard a slowly sinking ship. The party's national organiser stands on the bridge wringing his hands about the imminent demise of the *Morning Star* (now 25p for 6 pages) and trying to stir up the dead souls of British Stalinism. 'It is a fact', he wrote in December, 'in a certain sense an incredible fact... that many members still have not received their 1982 membership cards'.

the left,

cession bit they participated in an even more rapid rundown of the industry. In Scotland between 1978 and 1982 3600 jobs were lost and two pits — Lady Victoria and Belday — were closed down. In the same period South Wales lost 3100 jobs and four pits. In Scargill's own Yorkshire base, Barnsley lost 800 jobs, Doncaster 1000, South Yorkshire 1300 and North Yorkshire 1000; in all, seven pits were shut.

Scargill's defence of miners' jobs and living standards is based on his advocacy of the place of British coal above foreign coal and other sources of energy for British industry. But the NCB argues that British coal must be competitive: miners can see the stockpiles and recognise the gross inefficiency of the older and less productive pits. The NCB won the propaganda battle in the coalfields; the NUM's commitment to a viable industry was much more effective in justifying acceptance of closures than as a strategy for fighting them. The NCB thus began its latest programme of transfers, closures and redundancies in the areas where the arguments of the left had the strongest hold — Scotland, South Wales and Kent.

Votes for strike action for pay and against closures — October 1982

	% in favour
Scotland	69
Kent	69
South Wales	59
Yorkshire	56
National Average	39

Both Scargill and Scottish miners' leader Mick McGahey have long declared their determination to lead strike action against any attempt to close the Kinneil pit in West Lothian. The NUM argued that Kinneil could be made viable by means of an underground link-up with the Longannet field in Fife. The NCB argued that a tunnel under the Firth of Forth was not feasible for geological reasons: Kinneil would have to close. When the NCB announced the closure before Christmas the miners response was immediate: they came out on strike — some even occupied the pit over the bank holiday.

McGahey now discovered what Scargill had discovered in October: if you promote a policy to make British coal profitable, you paralyse resistance to the brutal measures necessary to achieve this goal. McGahey realised that enthusiasm for a strike was low. Instead of enacting its mandate and calling for strike action, McGahey's executive summoned a delegate conference to call off the action that had begun spontaneously. A shame-faced McGahey witnessed Scottish miners fighting one another in a Glasgow street as embittered Kinneil workers shouted 'sell-out'.

It was essentially the same story in South Wales and Kent. The South Wales NUM has consistently appealed to the Government to ensure the viability of its ancient coalfield through protection from steel and coal imports. The Kent miners put forward a plan to save Snowdown drawn up by a joint union-management team. In both cases, when it came to the crunch, the bureaucrats put the needs of the coal industry before the livelihoods of their members, and blocked industrial action to save jobs.

The setbacks of the past few weeks have exposed the catastrophic consequences of the left's approach to saving jobs in coal mining. However, if the betrayals at Kinneil and Snowdown lead miners to question the politics of their leaders, they will be better prepared for the battles that will lie ahead.

Russell Osborne



Unemployed,
Arbeitslos, Sans-Emploi

Capital's twelve million rejects

Unemployment is not measured in blatant acts of injustice or coercion — but in lifeless statistics. And unlike wage cuts or speed-ups in factories and offices, unemployment is experienced by individual workers in isolation. Sabena Norton reports on the scale of this, the most discreet form of capitalist oppression throughout Europe.

IN THE EEC alone almost 12 million people are now officially registered unemployed. The denial of the right to work to this vast section of the proletariat is the living evidence of the barbarism of capitalist society in the 1980s. The existence of a mass of unemployed people excluded from the productive life of society is also living proof of the bankruptcy of the official labour movement institutions. The failure of the trade unions to defend the right to work has given the bosses the green light to proceed. They are creating a pool of 'redundant' workers, and using it to fragment and weaken the working class as a whole.

Trade unions in retreat

One of the most visible consequences of the recession has been the accelerating decline of trade union organisation itself. Since 1979 the British TUC has lost more than two million (one sixth) of its affiliated members. The largest French trade union federation — the Stalinist dominated CGT — has lost half its membership since 1977. In Belgium a particularly severe process of rationalisation of heavy industry has created one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe. Trade unionism has been so severely afflicted as a result that rival Christian and Socialist unions have buried their mutual hostility and formed a joint contract with the government. Under the slogan 'solidarity' this unholy alliance is attempting to make drastic cuts in wages and state benefits acceptable among traditionally militant Belgian workers.

The trade union leaders have been harshly confronted with the consequences of their failure to defend workers' interests. They are turning to seek refuge in 'solidarity' with their governments and employers. Weakened by loss of membership, they are moving even closer to the state. In the process, they are distancing themselves even further from the concerns and needs of the rank and file workers. Rather than defending workers, the union leadership is assisting the bosses to reorganise the conditions of life for the working class in line with capitalist requirements.

Bureaucrats in panic

The case of the German metal workers' union — the IGM — provides a typical example of the panic of the union establishment. Traditionally the strongest union in West Germany, the IGM is now being hit hard. Output in metal

manufacture dropped by five per cent in 1982 alone. In the basic iron and steel industries production shrank by 15 per cent. One of the areas most severely affected is the iron and steel region of the Saarland bordering France and Belgium. After years of negotiated plant closures, unemployment in this region is now approaching the 25 per cent mark.

In December the Arbed steel concern — one of the biggest in the industry — announced new rationalisation plans. It intends to shake out the rest of its already massively depleted workforce and virtually cease operations in the Saar. Faced with the prospect of losing what remains of its Saarland membership, the IGM leaders made a deal which even Bill Sirs' grovelling before the British Steel Corporation cannot match. The union agreed to forsake redundancy pay-offs for several thousand sacked workers — in exchange for Arbed's promises to keep the rest of the workers on. The workers who kept their jobs had to sacrifice their Christmas bonus. The deal did much to improve the initially frosty relations between the IGM and the new conservative-led government under Helmut Kohl.

Back to child labour

The recession hit continental Europe later than Britain. Swingeing attacks on the working class of the kind experienced in Britain for more than five years are only now beginning. Despite its delay, the capitalist offensive in Europe is no less ferocious. Soup kitchens have been opened in the once prosperous steel city of Dortmund in West Germany. A quarter of the working population of the city are now jobless. Child labour in French and Spanish sweatshops is one symptom of the social decay of this 'advanced' capitalist society.

Since mid 1982 all European governments have set about reducing the customary living standards of the working class and destroying workplace organisation. Everywhere there are signs of a new hard line: the fall of the German government under Helmut Schmidt; Mitterrand's mid summer Cabinet reshuffle, followed by the introduction of a six month pay freeze; the near collapse of the four month old Fanfani administration; and the coming to power of Spain's pro-capitalist democrat Gonzales. All these developments indicate the drive towards austerity and class confrontation in Europe.

The test of strength

In each country the balance of class forces decides how far the bosses can go. In Italy workers recently launched a wave of mass strikes and demonstrations against Fanfani's package of cuts in wages and state services. This culminated in a widely observed one-day national strike on 18 January. Despite 11 per cent unemployment, the militancy of the Italian labour movement still presents a major obstacle to the employers.

In most other countries workers' resistance has been fragmented. Belgium stands out as the country where, after years of class collaboration between unions and the state in 'shaking out' industry, demoralisation runs particularly deep. In 1982, while real wages still held up in most European countries, Belgian workers suffered a 2.5 per cent cut in purchasing power.

In December, with the support of the unions, the Belgian government introduced a new law 'on pay, working time and job creation'. This marks a new breakthrough in the 'solidarity' strategy pursued by Belgian capital. Under the law maximum pay rises for 1983 are pegged at a rate of five per cent below the current rate of inflation. More vicious still are the regulations concerning working time and 'job creation'.

Governments throughout Europe have been eager to take up the idea of cuts in working hours which trade union bureaucrats everywhere have been parading as an alternative to redundancies. The Belgian experience shows what a sham this job creation method is. Far from protecting jobs, cuts in working time have been used in addition to redundancies in order to introduce flexible working times at reduced rates of pay. Under the new law, Belgian workers in major industries lucky enough to hang on to their jobs will work for only 32 hours a week. For the eight hours lay-off time they will receive only 60 per cent of the normal hourly wage. In Belgium the bosses' drive has gone further than elsewhere. But the same methods are being applied throughout the continent.

In Spain tight labour laws inherited from the Franco dictatorship, which provided at least a modicum of job security, are becoming a barrier to profitability. Recent labour 'reforms' — again dressed up as job creation programmes — are designed to eliminate this undesirable legacy. Small firms are now permitted to employ up to

50 per cent of their workforce as temporary workers. Such workers have no contracts, no holidays, no sick pay or social insurance. Since the law came into force in July, many smaller firms have already sacked their entire workforce and replaced it with casual labour — usually women and youths. For good measure, restrictions on homeworking and child labour have also been lifted.

Youth

The aim behind all these measures is very straightforward. The bosses want to create a pool of cheap and unorganised workers ready to take any job on any terms. In pursuing this objective, the state cynically exploits programmes purportedly designed to alleviate the plight of youth unemployment. Schemes like the British 'Youth Training' programme recently launched by Norman Tebbit and the TUC abound throughout Europe.

Youth unemployment presents a major threat to social stability in the recession. In Italy, Spain and France youths now make up almost half the unemployed. The control of unemployed youth is one of the major preoccupations of the bourgeoisie. Alongside blacks and immigrants of all ages, youths are today the main target for new repressive laws and ever widening police powers. By criminalising unemployed youth, the ruling class hopes to divide this potentially explosive layer from the older generation of workers. But repression alone is not conducive to social stability. Governments have been quite prepared to co-operate with the trade unions' and reformist parties' demands to 'do something' for unemployed youth. Work centres, job schemes and training programmes, run jointly by state institutions and trade unions, are springing up all over Europe. This is one of the areas in which the trade union bureaucracy's desire to participate in the management of the working class in the crisis finds unlimited scope for action.

Capital's industrial reserve army is twelve million strong. It is a powerful lever for use against the working class. But the unemployed can also become part of the working class's solution to the crisis. That depends on the labour movement throughout Europe fighting against the capitalists and their governments on behalf of the unemployed. The first step is to break the complicity of the official labour movement in the oppression of the unemployed.

THE WORKING CLASS Transformed

SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR the shape of the working class has changed almost beyond recognition. In the late 'forties the typical British worker was a male manual worker in manufacturing, or in basic infrastructural or service industries such as mining and construction, docks and railways. He probably wore overalls and boots at work and a flat cap to the football on Saturdays. Today it is much more difficult to visualise the average worker — the working class has become more heterogeneous. After the war two-thirds of workers were men; now only slightly more than half the employed working class is male. The working class now includes more than half a million blacks; thirty years ago there were only a few thousand. The proportion of workers engaged in manual labour in manufacturing and other basic industries has declined steadily through the 'sixties, and precipitately over the last decade. At the same time the number of white collar workers, especially in public services, has expanded rapidly; only in the last couple of years of deepening recession has employment in services begun to decline. If there is a typical worker in the 'eighties, he wears a collar and tie to work in an office in a town hall, government service or insurance company and watches football on television.

Heavy metal past

The decline of employment in manufacturing industry reflects the declining competitiveness of British capitalism. In the 'sixties employment was already beginning to contract — down to eight million by 1970. In the 'seventies, especially in the second half of the decade, the shakeout of jobs accelerated and a further 1.5 million disappeared. In the early 'eighties the collapse continued with the loss of almost another one million jobs up to 1982.

Two key industries — textiles and motors — indicate distinct patterns of decline. Both cotton and woollen textile production have been in decline in Britain since the turn of the century. The steady downhill course of these industries was interrupted by both world wars. But since 1945 nothing has succeeded in stopping the rot. It has accelerated dramatically since the recession began in 1974. After the Second World War there were around one million workers in the industry; in 1974 there were still 600 000; today the figure is around 300 000. Shipbuilding and steel have followed a similar, if less precipitous, path of decline. By contrast, the motor industry boomed in the post-war years. Car production increased astronomically and employment in the industry, although sometimes fluctuating wildly with demand, steadily rose — even up to the early 'seventies. The recession — particularly since 1979 — has caused a sudden collapse of the British motor industry as a result of falling demand and growing overseas competition. Employment in the industry has plummeted after a long period of growth. A similar, if less extreme, pattern can be seen in much of engineering and metal manufacturing industry.

Over the post-war period the state has been obliged to intervene more and more to preserve conditions for profitable capital accumulation in industry. The state in Britain has taken over coal mining, gas, water and electricity; the railways, the docks and air transport; steel, shipbuilding and sections of the motor and engineering industry. Employment in most of these industries, which have traditionally provided hundreds of thousands of jobs for male manual workers, has declined, in some cases over a long period, in others part-

icularly since the recession hit.

Workers in private manufacturing industry sell their labour power to a more or less clearly identifiable boss, represented at all times by managers, supervisors and foremen. They work with their hands in factories to produce commodities — which immediately become the property of their employer for sale on the market. In exchange workers receive wages, usually at an hourly basic rate, paid in cash weekly. Wages are fixed at a level sufficient to ensure that the worker and his family can be fed, housed and clothed and enjoy certain comforts — but not so great as to deter him from presenting himself for work again on Monday. Workers get wages which make sure they always remain workers; bosses make profits which, as long as they can sell the products of the workers' labour, ensure that they get richer and richer. The relations of exploitation are fairly clear in manufacturing — workers have long recognised a conflict of interests between themselves and their bosses. Even when these industries are nationalised and the employer becomes the state, market forces still rule workplace relations. Neither Tory nor Labour governments have ever hesitated to remind workers in the nationalised industries of the imperatives of capitalist profitability.

The decline of manual labour in the manufacturing industries provides part of the explanation for the lack of a working class response to mass unemployment. The hard core of the British labour movement has been decimated. The sort of workers who fought the employers to form trade unions, and who founded the Labour Party and later the Communist Party to fight the capitalist class are now in a minority in the working population. The ranks of the workers most known for their industrial militancy over the last 30 years — the miners, the dockers, the shipbuilding and car workers — are now vastly depleted and their unions have generally become cautious and defensive. They have become increasingly incapable of defending themselves, let alone the unemployed.

The new wave

The decay of British capitalism has been marked by the growth of the service sector. Employment in services grew only slowly in the boom years of the 'fifties — by about 0.5 million. As the economy stagnated in the 'sixties, service jobs expanded more rapidly, by 1.5 million to 11.5 by 1970. The service expansion continued into the recession, growing to more than 13 million in 1980 as industrial employment dropped. In the early 'eighties however total employment in services first stabilised and then began to decline. The inability of the service sector any longer to compensate for the shakeout of labour from manufacturing was a major factor in the upsurge of unemployment after 1979.

Two sectors in particular illustrate the dramatic rise in service employment — one in the private sphere, the other in the state sector. Insurance, banking and finance employed around 400 000 in the late 'forties; by the mid 'sixties there were around 800 000. The recession produced an even more dramatic rise: by 1976 there were more than one million workers in this area and by 1981, 1.2 million. Employment in the health services underwent an even more rapid rise in the 'fifties and 'sixties. At the time of the establishment of the NHS in 1949 it employed around 0.5 million workers; by 1974 there were 1.0 million.

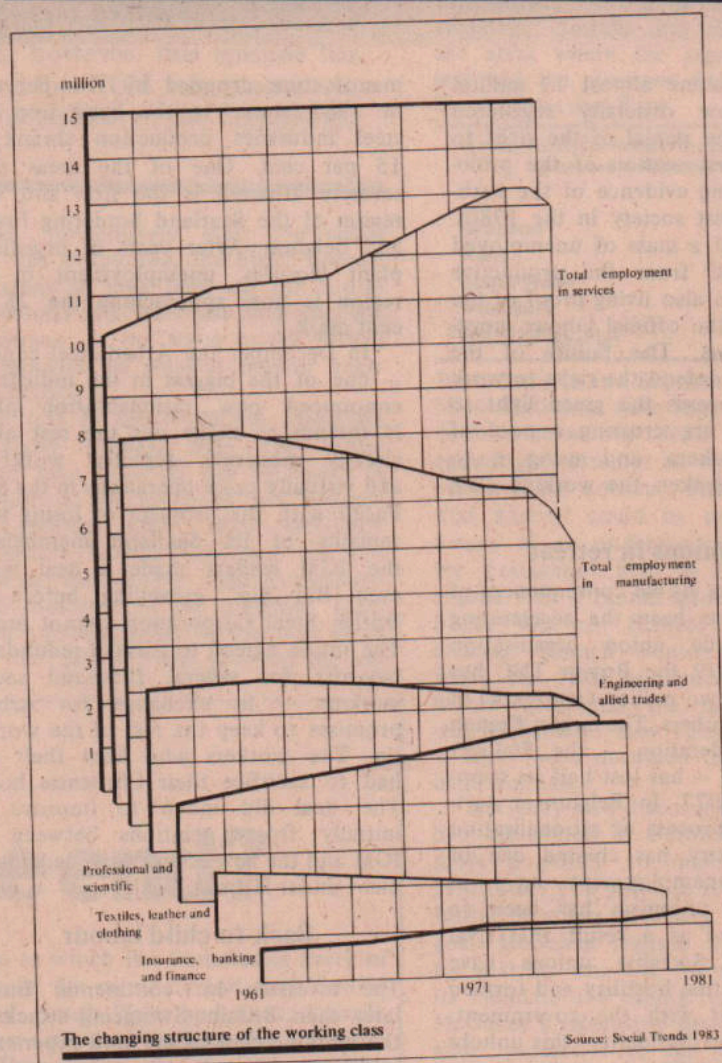
The extension of the NHS slowed as the recession provoked a squeeze on public expenditure: however employment

Unemployment Why so little response?

Ten years ago an unemployment level of four million would have been unthinkable. For thirty years the number out of work had been below one million; for much of the 'fifties and 'sixties it had stayed well below 500 000. Yet the official jobless total passed one million in October 1975, two million at the end of 1980 and three million in January 1982. Most unofficial estimates put the current level at around four million. Even the most optimistic economic forecasters do not expect unemployment to return to levels generally accepted as normal throughout the post-war years in the foreseeable future.

A decade ago it would also have been unthinkable that society could contain a permanent pool of three or four million unemployed without a major breakdown in social stability and public order. Yet, to the relief of the employers and the government, and to the dismay of many trade unionists and workers on the dole, mass unemployment has become an acceptable fact of life. For the most part the working class has not fought back against mass unemployment. Why not?

To answer this question we look first at the modern working class and examine how it is being transformed according to the requirements of British capitalism. The recession has accelerated trends long at work in changing the nature of the jobs people do and the character of the people doing them. A closer look at the unemployed themselves and their relationship to workers who still have jobs provides important clues to an understanding of why mass unemployment has become tolerated.



continued to grow — in 1981 1.3 million people worked in Britain's hospitals.

The boom in service employment is closely linked to the proportion of white collar workers. Although the service industries include some manual workers — in transport and communications, hospitals and schools and in local government — the majority of workers in this sector are white collar. Indeed the proportion of white collar workers in manufacturing industry has also increased, from 16 per cent in 1948 to 27 per cent in 1977. The service sector is also the major growth area for women's employment — notably in recent years in part-time jobs.

Unlike workers in private manufacturing, service workers do not exchange their labour power against capital in the production of surplus value. They are paid out of revenue, a deduction from the surplus value produced in industry. Although some face traditional employers in banks and insurance companies, most service workers are

directly confronted with the state as their employer. Traditions of paternalism and attitudes of service to the community all help to obscure the exploitation of workers in this sector. Thus, even though wage levels are often low and conditions in some areas very poor, a sense of working class solidarity in antagonism against the capitalists and their administrators is often weakly developed among service workers.

The rise of white collar workers and the service sector provides another part of the explanation for the lack of working class reaction to unemployment. The working class has been growing in recent years in sections where trade unionism has traditionally been weak and a political identification with working class organisations even weaker. Although public service unions have become more militant in recent years, most workers in services remain unfamiliar with trade union traditions and backward in political outlook.

THE UNEMPLOYED Marginalised

OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS the working class has received three hammer blows in succession. The cumulative effect has left the labour movement reeling under the impact of mass unemployment. First, the traditional manufacturing and nationalised industries went into an apparently terminal decline from the mid 'seventies: textiles, steel, shipbuilding and the docks remain the biggest contributors to the dole queues in the 'eighties. Then the more modern manufacturing industries — cars, engineering, chemicals — took a nose dive in the late 'seventies. Finally in the early 'eighties the service sector began to stagnate and then to contract. The shakeout of public services in particular promises to have an increasing effect on unemployment levels in the months ahead.

The redundancy trap

Redundancy is nothing new to manual workers in Britain's long declining industries. Especially for unskilled manual workers at the fringes of the labour market — in smaller firms involved in textiles, shipbuilding or the docks in chronically depressed regions of the country — redundancy has been a familiar part of working life through the post-war period. One of the earliest signs of impending crisis, and of the government's recognition of the need to begin to restructure industry and the labour market, was Labour's 1965 Redundancy Payments Act. This introduced the payment of token sums roughly proportionate to length of service when a worker was made redundant. Many workers got nothing, and most got little, but some got what sounded like big sums of money. The object of the new scheme was to undermine workers' resistance to redundancies in increasing numbers — and it was successful.

More important than severance pay

to most workers pushed out of the declining industries was their expectation that they could fairly easily find work elsewhere. This was the experience of workers for 20 years and more after the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands of workers lost their jobs in textiles, shipbuilding, the mines, the railways and the docks. But they mostly succeeded in finding work in the more dynamic sectors. In the 'fifties and 'sixties they drifted into expanding industries — motors, chemicals, construction. Later, in the 'sixties and 'seventies, they moved in growing numbers into services. Many workers' first experience of the problem of unemployment was the lengthening time it took to find a new job after losing their old one. In 1973 it took an average of 11 weeks, by 1978 it had increased to 17 weeks and by 1980 it was 20 weeks; a year later it had passed six months.

Redundancy was commonplace in the declining industries, but it was by no means unknown in the more dynamic areas of the economy. The motor industry absorbed more labour in the 'fifties and 'sixties but transient rises such as that following the Suez crisis in 1956-57 led to thousands of redundancies in the Midlands. Seasonal variations in demand for cars produced fluctuations in employment up to the 'sixties. Redundancies also took place from time to time in the booming engineering and electrical industries according to market and corporate requirements. For example the GEC-AEI merger in 1967 caused major redundancies in a generally expanding sector. Just as in the declining sectors, workers tended to accept that their jobs depended on company fortunes and rather than put up any resistance moved on to seek work elsewhere.

The problems began in earnest when redundancies began to become large scale and systematic rather than small

and occasional. However, workers' long experience of 'something turning up' led them still to approach redundancy notices with a view to negotiating the best possible redundancy deal to tide them over while they searched for a new job. But when more and more workers could not find another job and the meagre severance pay ran out they began to form up in ever lengthening dole queues. And by the time you discover you can't find another job, it's too late to fight to save the last one. Hence workers' long record of acceptance of redundancies led them down the slippery slope to the acceptance of mass unemployment.

The service cushion

The expansion of service employment has cushioned the impact of the recession on the working class. If the service sector had not increased its workforce since 1970 unemployment today would be between five million and six million, not three million to four million. The cushioning effect of service employment acts on a regional as well as a national level. Unlike traditional manufacturing, which tends to be concentrated in certain geographical areas, services are fairly evenly spread around the country. This has had the effect of evening out the regional distribution of unemployment and preventing extreme, and politically destabilising, regional disparities.

There is a striking contrast with the 'thirties when some traditional industries were devastated and the service safety net was much less well developed. In the northern town of Jarrow, for example unemployment reached 72.9 per cent in September 1935. (The Tories subsequently fiddled the figures by combining Jarrow with neighbouring Hebburn — this brought the level down to 39.6 per cent.) As Jarrow depended on shipbuilding, so nearby Consett half a century later depended on steel. But more people in Consett worked in various public services than worked in its massive steel works. Hence when the works were shut down in 1981 unemployment rose to 18.4 per cent, bad enough for Consett's workers, but way below the level in Jarrow in the 'thirties.

Consett's unemployment level was exceeded in 1981 by another former steel town Corby, with a level of 19.8 per cent. But even this was only eight per cent above the national average of 11 per cent. Equally significant is the fact that in the region with the lowest unemployment, the South East, the rate of joblessness was running at eight per cent (a 100 per cent increase in five years) — only three per cent behind the national average. In the 'thirties unemployment in cities like Coventry and other parts of the West Midlands never exceeded five per cent while it topped 40 and 50 per cent in parts of Scotland, Wales and the North. This is why Norman Tebbit's father could get places on his bike and why today's unemployed youth cannot. Migration from the North East for example, which proceeded steadily in the post-war years, has slowed down in the recession.

Service employment has provided a vital bulwark against the recession, particularly in areas where the industrial collapse has been greatest. The incomes of many families have been kept above the poverty line by wages coming in from a family member working in the public services when others have lost jobs in manufacturing. Even though an unemployed man is more likely to have an unemployed wife, many families have become reliant on the earnings of women in services. The sight of men with prams doing the shopping while their wives work, often part-time, has become commonplace in industrial areas.

The other side of the coin of booming service employment is that the bulk of the modern working class has been relatively little affected by mass unemployment. At least until the last couple of years, the jobs of service workers were secure and they were able to maintain their wages at a level just about sufficient to keep up with rising living costs. Especially in the public

sector, mass unemployment and market forces were little use to the authorities as levers against their employees. As late as 1981 those workers best placed to use industrial muscle against the state — the miners, power workers and gas and water workers — succeeded in winning pay rises well above the going rate in private industry. Public service workers — in the civil service and the NHS — have displayed a growing readiness to take on the government to defend their wages and conditions. But there has been little evidence of growing class solidarity of public and private sector workers or of employed and unemployed workers against the state. Indeed the divisions and differentials have increased.

Atomisation

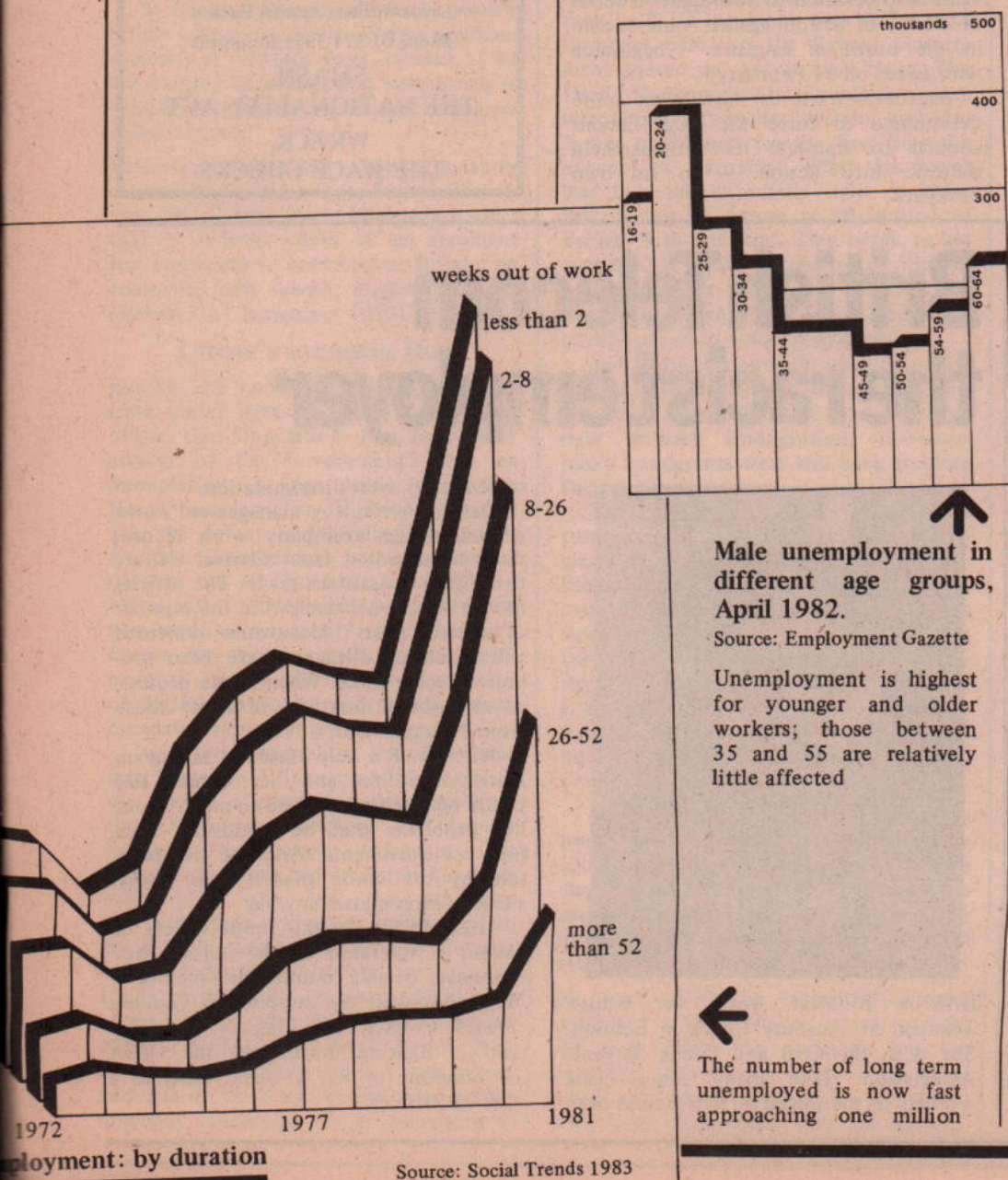
The unemployed are isolated from the labour movement. They have become concentrated at either end of the age spectrum of the working class. In October 1980 unemployment among the 16-24 age group averaged 16 per cent — an increase from nine per cent in 1979. Among the over-sixties the rate was 11 per cent (from eight per cent in 1979). However among the age group 25 to 60 the unemployment level was on average slightly less than six per cent (from four per cent in 1974). Unemployment has particularly hit the young, many of whom have never had the opportunity to join a trade union. At the other end of the scale, many older workers have been pressed to take early retirement and squeezed out of the labour force — and out of the labour movement, often after a lifetime's involvement in both. A TUC survey in 1980 of trade union facilities for the unemployed elicited only 27 replies from its 110 affiliates. Of these 23 allowed unemployed workers to retain union membership, some at reduced rates, but few provided any special facilities.

The other big growth areas for unemployment are groups of workers which have always been marginal to the labour force and neglected by the organised labour movement — women and blacks. Between 1975 and 1980 unemployment among women rose by more than 200 per cent (compared with a 60 per cent growth for men). Blacks make up four per cent of the unemployed, but only two per cent of the working population.

Why has the labour movement not responded to unemployment? Because, in a sense, the official labour movement has not been affected by unemployment. The recession has so far had little serious effect on male white workers in the age range from 35 to 55, if they are in white collar jobs and especially if the jobs are in public services. Such workers are the dominant force in today's labour movement. Their jobs have been fairly secure and their unions fairly effective in securing wage rises to keep them abreast of inflation. The typical member of the dole queue is a young, unskilled, unqualified, manual worker — and twice as likely to be female or black than a worker with a job.

In the 'thirties the unemployed were instantly identifiable. They wore cloth caps, mufflers and clogs and stood around on street corners in depressed areas of the country. Today the unemployed are much less recognisable. Because they are everywhere, they are to be found nowhere in very large concentrations. They have retreated from the streets to watch day-time television: they have become invisible.

The recession has transformed the working class. The changing needs of capital have changed the structure of the working class. Old divisions — between white collar and manual workers, between male and female workers — have been reinforced in new forms. Divisions which were of little significance 30 years ago — between white and black workers, between employed and unemployed workers have acquired a new significance today. Overcoming the divisions forged by capital in the ranks of labour will be a central task in the rebuilding of a labour movement capable of fighting for working class interests.



300 march against race checks



Basil Gwatidzo (inset) a Zimbabwean student threatened with deportation tells Sheffield WAR supporters to keep up the fight for all victims of Britain's racist immigration laws

ON SATURDAY 15 JANUARY 300 people took part in a Sheffield day of action against the race checks and the Nationality Act, called by WORKERS AGAINST RACISM. Local WAR organiser Bob Radcliffe described the demonstration, which was followed by an action conference, as very encouraging — 'It showed the strength of feeling amongst trade unionists in this area about the current attacks on black workers'.

Over 30 labour movement organisations supported the event, including

seven NUM branches, Rotherham steel works joint crafts committee, all the local dole office and health union branches and a significant number of Labour Parties. Support from the black community included the Asian Welfare Association, the Bangladesh Welfare Association and the Yemeni Workers' Association. Martin Robinson, chairman of the All-Sheffield Health Workers Joint Shop Stewards Committee, was amongst the speakers at the opening rally outside Hallamshire Hospital.

A significant feature of the day was

the commitment made to smash all immigration controls. Delegates at the afternoon conference voted overwhelmingly against any form of immigration or nationality laws — Tory or Labour. They also resolved to coordinate a series of weeks of action against state racism in the north of England — beginning with Leeds on 14 February.

Sheffield WAR is now even more determined to force the local Labour council to translate its anti-apartheid rhetoric into action — in its own backyard.

LEEDS WEEK OF ACTION

14-19 February

WAR video, exhibition, meetings, debate

Leeds Workers Against Racism

phone 01-274 3951 for details

**SMASH
THE NATIONALITY ACT
WRECK
THE RACE CHECKS**

Police out of Hackney!

ON 12 JANUARY Colin Roach received a fatal shot-gun wound in the entrance to Stoke Newington police station. The police say it was suicide. Local black youth — particularly in view of the recent 'shoot to kill' episode in Kensington — think otherwise. Forty-seven people have so far been arrested in confrontations outside the police station, by militant black youth demanding to know the truth.

The Labour Party advocates of police accountability in London are desperate to keep things under control. At an angry meeting of local black people in Hackney after Colin's death, Paul Boateng — Greater London Police Committee chairman — did what he knows best; offered money for the purposes of conducting an endless inquiry into the affair. The unfortunately named Brynley Heaven, chairman of Hackney Council's Police Committee, followed suit. Backed up by

Les Skeates from the local Communist Party, he stressed that it was even more urgent now to set up a democratically elected police authority in London.

At a time when the police have declared war on black people, these gentlemen still want to make peace with them. When even Whitelaw admits that over 6000 firearms are issued to the police each year — and one in five in the Metropolitan police force are trained to use them — they are still trying to improve police-community relations.

In Parliament the Labour Party has expressed its horror at the methods used by the security forces in Ireland spilling over to Britain. But since they have always condemned the liberation struggle and supported the forces of law and order in Ireland, they have no right to complain. Black youth in Hackney do not need advice from hypocritical civil libertarians; they need the police out of Hackney.

British Telecom the racist employer



HASNA BEGUM works for British Telecom at Finsbury Circus in London. She is in the Civil and Public Servants Association. Like many other black workers in the postal service she has been

subjected to overt discrimination.

Despite having (by management's own admission) an exemplary work record, she was demoted from Clerical Officer to a Clerical Assistant grade. The official excuse was 'a contraction in the number of clerical posts'. Meanwhile numerous white, junior colleagues have been promoted in her place. When Hasna protested she got a mouthful of racist abuse from her supervisor.

With WAR's help Hasna is taking on British Telecom and her union. Her CPSA representative cared so much about her problems that he could not even find her documents. And she has been told by the union that it's not really a trade union matter anyway.

It is! As long as this subtle variety of racism is tolerated by the unions they will never be able to unite their members. WAR has won the support of Camden Trades Council for Hasna's campaign and is fighting throughout the CPSA in London for her re-instatement as a Clerical Officer.

Who needs immigration controls?



Last month Shaukat Darr, a TGWU busman from Leeds, won his fight against deportation. The intervention of Workers Against Racism was decisive in forcing his union and the TUC to take up his case.

Such action is rare. Even rarer is a trade union that actively fights all immigration controls. In the first month of the new Nationality Act Judy Harrison examines the pernicious effect of the official labour movement's support for 'non-racist' immigration controls.

EVERY TRADE UNION in Britain supports immigration controls. In the immediate post-war period the TUC pleaded with successive governments to halt the 'open door' policy that suited British bosses at the time. In recent years when immigration has all but ceased, the unions have merely called for quotas in certain sectors like catering. Today the TUC bureaucrats are more sensitive about 'race relations'; their language has changed but the message is the same — immigrants are at best a problem, at worst a threat to British jobs.

The unions' standpoint is consistent with that of the Labour Party. The 1982 Labour Programme pleaded that Britain's tiny island was full up:

'In the near future it will not be possible for the economy to provide jobs for significant numbers of workers from overseas... We will continue the admission of workers only in exceptional categories (eg to meet a need for skilled workers).'

Left-wing MP John Tilley recently assured Tory right winger Ivor Stanbrook that 'the Labour Party has made it clear that it believes there is an argument for immigration controls in Britain on economic and labour market grounds' (*Hansard*, 11 November 1982).

Labour's anti-racist face

But has the Labour Party made its position clear? Ever since the Tories took office the Opposition has been very critical of the Government's line on immigration. A high point in Shadow Home Secretary Roy Hattersley's career was the defeat of Whitelaw's proposals on the immigration rules governing spouses. On 16 December Labour joined forces with 51 Tory rebels to vote out the new rules by a majority of 18. Labour's excuse for choosing such strange parliamentary bedfellows was its disapproval of Whitelaw's 'racist and sexist' recommendations on arranged marriages.

And the Nationality Act that came into force on 1 January 1983 has been the subject of outspoken criticisms from the Opposition benches. The Labour Party is particularly indignant that a seven centuries old tradition has been violated by the Act; the automatic right of children born on British soil to British citizenship exists no longer. Labour is pledged to repeal the Nationality Act when it next returns to office.

On the face of it, the Labour Party has adopted a radical anti-racist stance. It is actively promoting black councillors and has three black prospective parliamentary candidates. It is promising a

wide-ranging package of equal opportunities policies. And yet — as the Tories mercilessly keep repeating — the last Labour Government drafted the current Nationality Act.

Labour's Nationality Act

Whitelaw has clearly explained the purpose of the Nationality Act. As he says, the old 1948 Nationality Act became outmoded because it encouraged people to think that 'despite the immigration laws to the contrary... they had a right of entry to the United Kingdom' (*Hansard*, 28 January 1981).

This is a problem of which past Labour governments have been keenly aware. For instance, in 1967 a lot of East African Asians thought that because they held UK passports they had a right to come here. So the Labour Government passed an Act to stop them. The 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act introduced a 'voucher' system, and also firmly established for the first time the concept of 'patriality'. What this meant was that the automatic right to enter Britain was in future to be limited to British 'kith and kin'. This began to get round the tricky problem of British nationality law which had accorded the status of 'citizen of the UK and colonies' to millions of ex-colonial subjects.

But it did not entirely solve the problem. In 1971 the Tories refined Labour's legislation. By 1973 there was very little new primary immigration. However, many immigrants were still keen to bring their dependants over.

The 1974-79 Labour Government turned its attention to this issue. Virginity tests, X-rays, fishing raids by the Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit, mass detentions and deportations were some of the methods it used to stem the trickle of dependants. But increasingly, the Government sensed that something else was needed — a new nationality law. Immigration control minister Alex Lyon served notice of the Government's intentions:

'Within the next year or so, we shall define a British citizen for the first time. A British citizen will have free right of entry. Anyone else, whether a Commonwealth citizen or alien, will have to subscribe to the immigration rules which will be redefined so that they accord with our needs for labour.' (4 March 1976)

By April 1977 the Home Office had published a Green Paper which set out the new ideas. The emphasis was on patriality throughout; 'there must be a more meaningful citizenship for those who have close links with the United

Kingdom'. And a new type of citizenship — 'British overseas citizenship' — was suggested for all the rest.

Tories honour Labour's pledges

Labour did not get the opportunity to follow through the Green Paper's recommendations. But the Tories have fulfilled their 1979 election pledge and done it for them. With some minor modifications Labour's proposals are now law. The new Act works as follows:

there are three categories of citizenship: British citizens, citizens of dependent territories and British overseas citizens.

- only 'British citizens' have an automatic right of abode in Britain
- only patrials automatically qualify for 'British citizenship'
- only 'British citizens' are automatically entitled to state benefits and full civic rights.

Children born in Britain will not automatically qualify for naturalisation if their parents are not 'British citizens'. 'British overseas citizens' will, in many cases, be stateless.

Certain exceptions have been made, consistent with the emphasis on patriality. Falkland Islanders and Gibraltarians, although from dependent territories, will have automatic right of entry to Britain. Citizens of Hong Kong (a more problematic case) will not, but will receive one concession — a 'British' stamp in their passports.

The immediate consequences of the Act are:

- an increase in the naturalisation fee to £200
- widowed or divorced wives of British citizens are no longer automatically entitled to citizenship
- greater discretion by the Home Secretary to refuse citizenship to anyone 'not conducive to the public good' — with no right of appeal.

Within five years, anyone not naturalised under the new Act will experience great difficulties in becoming a British citizen.

A question of control

The Nationality Act is not principally about stopping primary immigration. That happened a long time ago. It is about controlling the influx of dependants and exercising greater internal control over immigrants already here. Although the state does not discount a future 'East Africa crisis', it is mainly concerned to stabilise the existing situation and cut the cost of maintaining the existing immigrant population. The current introduction of race checks into hospitals and doles is an extension of the new nationality legislation into the sphere of social services to achieve the latter aim.

British capitalism needed a new Nationality Act because, unlike most EEC countries, it did not recruit its cheap foreign workers on a contract labour system. Rather, it actively used the Commonwealth connection to import labour from its ex-colonies and — for purposes of political expediency — accorded these workers citizenship status. Britain is therefore not so easily able to rid itself of workers surplus to the employers' needs, or keep them separated from their families, without changing their citizenship status.

Labour's hypocrisy

The Labour Party was the architect of these changes, but for the time being it is trying to disown its past. This is to be expected from a party in opposition desperately trying to score a few points, and cynically courting the black and 'middle ground' vote. But it creates a lot of difficulties. The Labour Party is firmly committed to controlling immigration, including introducing a new Nationality Act the minute it has repealed the old one — Roy Hattersley told the House of Commons he 'did not wish to suggest a Nationality Act was not needed' (29 January 1981). The Labour Party also has a problem in clarifying exactly what it objects to in the Act, anyway.

The Labour Party generally opts for some vague criticism such as that the law is 'too complicated'. This is also a favour-

ite argument of the race relations quangos like the Commission for Racial Equality, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and the National Council for Civil Liberties. All advocate a new, less complex, shorter Act to be passed by the next Labour government. However, this is an unlikely prospect. The Nationality Act is complicated for a good reason; Britain's long, sordid track-record of carving up its colonies — and 'de-colonising' them at the opportune moment — has left a very complicated situation. The Nationality Act is the appropriate legislation for the world created by British imperialism.

Has the sun set?

According to the Labour Party, British imperialism is a thing of the past. Indeed, according to Tony Benn, Britain is an oppressed nation — ruled by US imperialism. From this standpoint, it follows that Britain is perfectly entitled — nay, duty bound — to protect itself from foreign threats to its interests; Argentina, cheap imports and — immigrants.

The Labour Party sees the difference between its immigration controls and the Tories' as one of *purpose*. Its controls, unlike Thatcher's, are for the purposes of constructing a socialist, planned economy. Furthermore, they are non-racist (and non-sexist) because — well, because it says so in the Labour Party Programme.

Electioneering on race

For black workers, immigration controls are all the same, whichever government is enforcing them. Deportations in the interests of building a future socialist Britain are no less barbaric than those conducted in the name of free enterprise. Tory and Labour governments, alike, use their particular interpretations of what is good for 'the nation' as the ideological window-dressing for what capitalism needs.

As a general election approaches, each party is busy dusting down its traditional decorations. The Tory backwoodsmen are reminding Whitelaw and Thatcher what gets them votes. As another Tory rebel MP, Tony Marlow, said about the spouses debate, 'politically there are at least ten citizens, and probably many more, committed to effective immigration control for every paid-up fan of women's lib' ('Why I will vote against my party', *Daily Mail*, 15 December 1982).

His advice to Whitelaw: forget all this sexism nonsense, all this pandering to the European Convention on Human Rights, and stick by the 1979 election manifesto pledges. Those pledges included not only a promise to restrict (not liberalise) the entry of male husbands and fiancées, but also a statutory register of dependants and quotas. Whitelaw, reeling from his parliamentary defeat, has made a gesture in this direction — and has replaced the 'wet' Timothy Raison with right winger David Waddington at the Home Office.

Meanwhile, the Labour Party is soft-peddling on the race issue, projecting its concern for a multi-racial Britain and attacking the 'excesses' of Tory strategy on this, as on other issues. In reality, the British state needs both approaches. It needs the carrot of 'integration' to promote social stability as much as the stick of a hard line on immigration. The only class that needs neither is the working class.

Smash all immigration controls

The working class has no need to consider what is good for 'the nation'. It does not own any of it. Workers do not need to calculate whether Britain can afford any more immigrants; they are not the cause of mass unemployment and social deprivation — capitalism is. And it suits the capitalists to keep workers divided along national and racial lines.

For over 20 years — ever since the 1962 Immigration Act — the official labour movement has allowed the state to do just that. The TUC in the factories, the Labour Party in Parliament; together, they have kept worker divided from worker. The Nationality Act is the consummation of 20 years of class treachery. Workers need unity, not immigration controls. Smash them now!

Hackney's Labour Party

The 'positive discrimination' fraud

HACKNEY HAS BEEN a Labour borough for decades and has had an equal opportunities policy since 1979. But, as a recent inquiry by the Commission for Racial Equality revealed, it has consistently discriminated against blacks.

In May 1981 the 'new left' in the Labour Party took over at the Town Hall, under the leadership of Anthony Kendall. Judging by the number of full-page advertisements the council has placed for black trainee managers, Kendall is serious about promoting equal opportunities. For the first time ever Hackney has a black mayor, Barbados-born Sam Springer. Forty-two black organisations now receive council grants, employing more than 100 workers. A new 'Ethnic Minorities Business Programme' has been launched, and an equal opportunities sub-committee set up between the council and the unions.

All this is good news for a handful of black businessmen and professionals, but what about local black workers? More than 70 per cent of black youth are unemployed. Their only alternative to the dole queue is a 'wage' of £23.50 on a temporary Manpower Services Commission scheme. Black workers fortunate enough to have a job suffer severe discrimination. In a borough where approximately one third of the population is black, the proportion of black workers in council jobs is generally less than one fifth even in the lowest paid grades in which blacks are concentrated.

Employment of black workers by Hackney Council, 1982 (Total workforce 7000)		
	No employed	Per cent of total workforce
Senior officers	38	4.8
Higher admin grades	65	8.6
Lower admin grades	91	13.3
Clerical grades	49	18.8
Typists	14	23.0
Trainee grades	19	4.6
Manual workers f/t	469	19.0
Manual workers p/t	180	18.4

Until 1981 there were no black dustmen, one of the best paid manual jobs in the borough. Only 9.4 per cent of engineers are blacks. On the other hand, 30.5 per cent of home helps and 71.1 per cent of residential home assistants are black, most of them women.

Black families are dumped on the most rundown estates — like Stonebridge, Lea View and Holly Street. Here, between 60 and 80 per cent of the tenants are black, whilst hardly any live on the newer estates in Hoxton. Three quarters of black families are forced to live in the private sector, paying extortionate rents to slum landlords or getting increasingly into debt on their mortgages.

The council that cuts

The council acknowledges there is discrimination and has resolved to change things. But how? It has no plans to expand employment in the borough. In fact, it is currently debating whether to axe one third of the council workforce as an alternative to raising the rates by 50 per cent. When the last major industrial employer, Lesney's toy firm, the council's only suggestion was a co-operative — to save 100 jobs. Nor has it got any plans to expand the housing stock, with 15 000 already on the waiting list; or to renovate the 50 per cent of council properties in urgent need of repair. Hackney Council actually underspent on housing by £6 million last year. Like every other Labour authority, it can only foresee more cuts while the Tories are in power.

This would seem like a bad time to make promises to the black community.

The Labour Party is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for blacks, including positive discrimination in employment and housing. But it is even more committed to rescuing British capitalism from its crisis — which means fewer jobs and homes to go round. How can one thing be reconciled with the other? Hackney Council thinks it has found the answer. Tony Prescott investigates.



Police-community dialogue in progress outside Hackney police station

Yet, there is a logic to the council's anti-racist rhetoric.

In Hackney, as elsewhere, the local political establishment was forced to pay more attention to race relations when riots broke out on the streets. Pitched battles between black youth and the police in Dalston in the summer of 1981, the emergence of a local 'no-go' area in Sandringham Road — and other manifestations of social tension — caused alarm at the Town Hall. The council's first priority was to affirm its support for the forces of law and order: 'The Labour Party supports the police wholeheartedly in its major function of prevention and detection of crime' (*Hackney Council's draft election manifesto* 1982). But it also recognised the urgent need to win some backing for the civil power inside the black community itself. As Kendall put it recently, 'the patience of black people has been tried in this borough and is running out' (*Hackney Gazette*, 3 December 1982).

Unable to provide the things that could really ease black people's frustrations, the council has opted for the alternative of giving at least some local blacks a stake in the system. The £1.5 million it paid out to black community groups in 1982 and the extra £1.25 million scheduled for 1983, come with numerous strings attached. The recipients of these hand-outs have to submit detailed job descriptions for official approval, make repeated representations to the council and compete with scores of other applicants. No grant is guaranteed beyond one financial year, to allow the council maximum control in circumscribing the activities of any one group.

The council helps those...

Most of the money made available is obtained from the Government's Partnership/Urban Programme fund. When Hackney first became a Partnership authority in 1978, there were only a handful of black groups, mainly based around Hackney Commission For Racial Equality

— itself highly dependent on the council for funding. Today, there are 42 ethnic minority organisations vying for state cash. They include not only black and Asian groups, but also Turkish, Cypriot and Jewish organisations which stand to receive more than £800 000 between them this year. The council has also made effective use of Section 38 of the Race Relations Act and Section 11 of the Local Government Act (1966) respectively to advertise and finance a number of 'ethnic minority' posts.

All this investment reaps dividends in more ways than one. It provides the council with an anti-racist image for election purposes, and it binds a layer of black activists closer to the local state machine. It also helps provide local services on the cheap. Known as 'pump-priming', the practice of injecting small amounts of money into voluntary organisations to stimulate 'self-help' schemes is warmly approved by the Department of the Environment. Tory minister Sir George Young congratulated Hackney on its endeavours in this field recently. The £1.25m budgeted for black groups in 1983 is expected to provide nine training workshops, 21 educational and cultural centres, 18 social work schemes, five creches and a new church. All will be staffed by very cheap or voluntary labour, operating from converted, disused premises. No wonder Kendall says 'my plea to black organisations is to get involved from the outset' in the council's self-help schemes. They are helping him shift the burden of providing essential social services away from the council, onto the backs of the working class.

A lot of workers in the borough recognise this and are suspicious of the council's 'Hackney goes local' campaign — the title Kendall has given to his plans for decentralising council responsibilities into the voluntary sector. Many trade unionists rightly see the campaign as a smokescreen for attacking council jobs and breaking down workplace organisation by using volunteers as scabs.

Labour's role for blacks

But the political confusion bred by the equal opportunities policy has made it difficult to resist the process. Every time an objection is raised to 'pump-priming', the council can claim it is only trying to help blacks help themselves. Things have gone even further inside the Town Hall. When NALGO stewards raised objections to the manner in which 28 new managerial posts for ethnic minorities had been created — without adequate consultation over their pay and conditions of service — the council wheeled out its heavy artillery, prominent black councillor Patrick Kodikara. Kodikara provided a smokescreen for the council's sham anti-racist policy by screaming 'racist' at anybody who opposed it. When sackings have been justified on the grounds that the individual is out of step with the council's equal opportunities policies, the unions have been split over what attitude to take. Hackney is fast discovering that invoking 'equal opportunities' is a powerful way to divide its workforce and that middle class black politicians are very useful allies. It has already embarked on a series of attacks on council workers which include

- sacking 300 workers from the Direct Labour department
 - instigating disciplinary proceedings against militants
 - refusing to honour negotiations over reducing the working week
 - breaking down accepted agreements.
- Now it has a new weapon in its arsenal.

For all its breast-beating 'self-criticism', the council in fact accepts no responsibility for racial discrimination in the borough. If it did, it would do something about it — instead of demanding that white workers should make sacrifices. Real equality of opportunity is not about one group of workers giving up the little they have to 'help the less fortunate'. It is not about levelling everyone down to the same depths of poverty.

Fight racism, fight Labour

But what is the alternative to Labour's cynical equal opportunities exercises? How can we fight racism at work and on the estates in a way that unites rather than divides workers? Hackney Workers Against Racism has begun to show how.

First, we place the blame for racism back where it belongs — on the council. We demand of Hackney's Labour Council

- no cuts
 - no redundancies
 - no rent or rate rises
- and an expansion in jobs and housing to meet the needs of all workers in the borough, black and white.

Second, we take direct action to deal with racism in the labour movement. Where council employees are known to pursue racist practices, or where — as at Millfields dust depot — NUPE members operate a virtual colour bar, it is up to trade unionists to take disciplinary measures. Active racists should be ousted from their positions of responsibility or even expelled from the union. *But under no circumstances should the council be asked to sack them.* We are not in the business of helping our employers make redundancies.

Third, we mobilise against police and fascist harassment. Few black families make use of the council's 'racial harassment monitoring system' because it works hand-in-glove with the police. Nor do they have much faith in the council's new police committee, which is more concerned with helping the police 'prevent crime' than defending black people from police brutality. *Local labour movement organisations should refuse to cooperate with these quangos and defend the black community instead.*

SATURDAY 26 MARCH

'MAKE HACKNEY INTO A REAL ANTI-RACIST ZONE'

Demonstration: Assemble 11am Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street
Plus Conference and Benefit

No race checks in doles and hospitals

Smash the Nationality Act

Police out of Hackney

Organised by East London Workers Against Racism

Women and the trade unions

Stalinists fall out



One symptom of the advancing disintegration of the Communist Party of Great Britain is the debate currently raging in its ranks on the relationship between feminism and the trade union bureaucracy. Kate Marshall reports.

ON ONE SIDE stands Beatrix Campbell; on the other, Barbara Switzer. Campbell is well known as a feminist journalist on the London trendy listings weekly *City Limits* and as co-author (with *New Statesman* deputy editor Anna Coote) of *Sweet Freedom*, a recent radical best-seller on the history of the women's movement in Britain. It is less well known that she is a member of the executive committee of the Communist Party — she introduced her contribution to a large Socialist Society meeting during the South Atlantic war as 'the women's slot', not as the policy of the Communist Party (CP). Campbell is a leading representative of the fast declining Eurocommunist faction in the party.

Barbara Switzer is national organiser for the white collar section of the engineering workers' union AUEW-TASS. Although a long-term fellow traveller with the CP she was recently the left's candidate for one of the token women's seats on the national executive of the Labour Party. In the controversy over the role of women in the unions Switzer stands up for that section of the CP which identifies its interests with the trade union bureaucracy. This faction also backs the Soviet Union against all comers (including the peasants of Afghanistan and the workers of Poland). And its supporters despise the petit-bourgeois feminist Eurocommunist elements within the CP with the sort of hatred Stalinists usually reserve for those who challenge them in the name of the working class.

Unsisterly exchanges

Campbell opened the latest episode in a long-running feud between feminists and trade union bureaucrats in the Stalinist camp with an article in *The Guardian* last August. She condemned trade unions and trade unionists as sexist and asked in effect — what use are the unions for feminists? Campbell reasserted her widely publicised demands for positive discrimination for women within the bureaucracy and for a feminist incomes policy (9 August). Switzer replied in the *Morning Star* on 7 September: the essence of her response was the question — what use are feminists to the trade unions? She heaped scorn on feminist proposals for positive action in favour of female officials and upheld the CP's traditional allegiance to free collective bargaining against incomes policy of any sort.

A rancorous debate has raged ever since in the *Morning Star*'s women's page and correspondence columns. Campbell and Switzer themselves set the tone of the discussion. Campbell sneered at

'token women who'd rather be one of the lads'; Switzer jibed at a point of view that 'can help the anti-trade union camp of Thatcher and Tebbit'. The feminists came off with a bad mauling. Although *Marxism Today* — the last bastion of Eurocommunism in the party — gave some support, only two letters in the *Morning Star* took Campbell's side. Significantly, no trade union women backed her. The only one who might previously have been expected to side with Campbell — Eurocommunist sympathiser Judith Hunt — has been squeezed out of Switzer's union by its orthodox Stalinist leadership and has had to join all the other displaced radicals on the GLC payroll. By contrast, 17 letters and five articles by prominent women bureaucrats backed Switzer's position. When Campbell criticised 'left/sectarian trade union officials', her article was greeted with a barrage of condemnation as 'diversionary, divisive and sectarian'; it was slammed for being 'pompous, self-righteous and full of obscure formulations' — it was also both 'reactionary' and 'ultra-left'.

Both sides made some valid points. The feminists are right to point out that the trade unions have failed to advance the interests of women. It is true that unions do not organise their meetings and activities to allow for the full participation of women workers and that union policies do not appeal much to women. On the other hand, the bureaucrats are correct to maintain that feminism seeks to reinforce, rather than overcome, the division between men and women workers in the unions.

Divide and rule

Both sides, however, in their promotion of a narrow sectional interest, miss the point. Trade unions cannot defend women workers because their leaders are imbued with reformist politics. The union bureaucrats assume the existence of capitalist society in perpetuity and try to make the best of it. Hence they accept that women have to do the housework — and that they come second when it comes to jobs, wages and conditions. At the same time, union leaders recognise that women workers now make up more than one third of the workforce and they are keen to recruit them to their declining ranks. Hence they are prepared to make ringing declarations of support for equal pay, equal opportunities and equal rights. The limit for the bureaucrats is what the capitalist system can afford: in today's recession that limit is soon reached. When women keep on demanding their rights, the bureaucrats say —

'be realistic — the country can't afford it'. When all workers' jobs and conditions are threatened, the bureaucrats' traditional response is 'women first'.

Both Stalinist factions look to the state to advance the interests of women workers. Both uphold the official labour movement's 'alternative economic strategy' as the way forward for the working class. The disagreement over a feminist incomes policy arises from a difference of emphasis within the reformist counter-crisis programme. Indeed the current debate mirrors a division within the labour movement as old as incomes policy itself. There are those (usually on the right) who explicitly uphold the principle of wage restraint. And there are those (usually on the left) who vehemently oppose 'incomes policy' in the name of free collective bargaining, but always settle for the same thing wrapped up as 'the planned growth of wages', 'the Social Contract', or the 'national economic assessment'.

Campbell is in revolt against the 'macho-militancy' of traditional trade unionism just as many public service union leaders used to resent the 'industrial muscle' of their colleagues in manufacturing unions. Campbell looks to the state for a 'reform of industrial action' to redistribute income in favour of women; she offers government regulation of wages as the solution to the problems of low pay. Switzer defends the existing order in which trade union leaders negotiate wage rises for their members without direct government interference. But the union leaders depend on the state for almost everything — to consult with them, to appoint them to a thousand quangos, to subsidise their educational work, even to collect their dues in many sectors. The bureaucrats, — and both the Eurocommunists and the traditional Stalinists — rely on the state to implement their alternative economic strategy of reflation, devaluation and import controls. Hence, whenever the state has seriously pressed the union leaders to agree to an incomes policy they have accepted — and the opposition of bureaucrats like Switzer has rapidly crumbled. The manoeuvres of Switzer's boss (the CP's leading trade union figure, AUEW-TASS general secretary Ken Gill), in securing the TUC's full backing for the last Labour Government's Social Contract, reveal that the Stalinist bureaucrats are just as dependent on the state as the feminists.

In reality, neither incomes policy nor free collective bargaining can defend women workers' wages. Campbell invites the state to hold down men's wages and allow women's to rise. The only possible result of this strategy could be to undermine resistance to state attempts to cut the wages of all workers and to divide women even further from men. Switzer's position is equally reactionary. Another leading CP woman bureaucrat, Tobacco

Workers' Union deputy general secretary, Terry Marsland, expanded her argument in defence of free collective bargaining:

'All of the traditional trade union arguments in bargaining become irrelevant. No account is taken of the profitability of the enterprise and the contribution the workers have made to the employers success.' (*Morning Star*, 28 December)

If the firm is doing well, free collective bargaining allows unions to negotiate a good deal. If it is doing badly, by this logic, workers should take their share in their employer's failure and accept a wage cut. This is by no means to reduce the argument to an absurdity — this very conclusion has been imposed on many workers (and especially many women workers) through the reformist logic of their leaders since the recession began to bite.

A different approach

Campbell's feminist attack on the trade unions is full of the usual ideological preoccupations (the sexism of individual workers and officials) and the usual organisational solutions (positive discrimination, women-only meetings). It contains no element of any strategy to defend women against the bosses — or even against the betrayals of the bureaucrats. Switzer's defence of the unions is a defence of the status quo in the official union movement.

Switzer herself boasts of the 'very rich tradition' of 'democratic practices' in the British labour movement. The tradition of the union with which she is now linked — the AUEW — is so democratic that it excluded women from membership until the end of the Second World War. But for Switzer things are always getting better. She writes of the 'progress' made over the past ten years: 'Many unions have taken positive steps to improve the position of women'. This simply is not true. In many respects the position of women is worse today than it was a decade ago. As a result of the recession and the failures of the unions more women are now out of work, women's wage differentials are greater — and access to abortion and nurseries has been reduced.

The defence of women workers demands a strategy quite different from either Campbell's or Switzer's. As a first step, we need to get the unions off their knees before the state and force them to stand up and fight the employers and the government, on behalf of all of their members. If unions fought for women's rights to work, to abortions and nurseries, they would have less difficulty in getting women to participate in their activities. Both the feminists and the bureaucrats are a barrier to this approach because they both begin from what is possible for women when capitalism is in crisis, instead of from what is necessary for the working class.

GREENHAM COMMON

Women and peace

Today's women's movement has become closely identified with the cause of peace. But what sort of peace does it want? The 'peace' of the world as it is today minus a few American cruise missiles and perhaps without a few other nuclear weapons? For Britain that means a 'peace' that allows it to carry on its war against the Irish people, to send its gunboats off to the South Atlantic or anywhere else where British interests are threatened and to continue the exploitation and oppression of millions of people at home and abroad on which the tranquility of the British way of life depends.

Or does the women's movement want to see the sort of peace that could only come through the overthrow of the forces for militarism and barbarism in today's world — the capitalist class, in particular our own especially rapacious section in Britain? The time for a choice is approaching and the omens are not good. Women's organisations have opposed wars from the First World War right up to the present. But they have often tried to stand aside from the violent clash of conflicting interests and proclaim an autonomous, pacifist, commitment. However, when war breaks out class forces polarise and everybody has to take sides — there is no autonomous position on a battlefield. When it comes to this critical choice the women's movement has a bad record. Its domination by the outlook of the middle class has led it, for the most part, to take the side of the capitalist class — whether in Britain and Germany in 1914 or in Ireland today. The women of Greenham Common show every sign of following their feminist predecessors into supporting imperialist war.

On Greenham Common:

Leo Abse

(LABOUR PARTY)

'It is through such demonstrations affirming the importance of life that we may be able to ensure the continuance of the family.'

'The women who were demonstrating were bringing to our notice the moods that they share privately: a capacity to nurse and nourish, to care, tolerate, improve and preserve and demonstrate a set of values contrary to the machismo of men now insanely conquering outer space in phallic warships and pre-occupied with phallic missiles. Too often men have no time for the interior life — the inner space that is the creative centre of women. These women show fullness, warmth and generosity, which are the psychic analogues of a woman in pregnancy, childbirth and lactation. Women who present such aspects are far different from the Prime Minister. The women at Greenham Common reaffirmed family values. The self-image is not that of an Amazon Queen, which is how most people see the Prime Minister.'

(Hansard, 17 December 1982)

VI Lenin

(BOLSHEVIK PARTY)

'The whole of social life is now being militarised. Imperialism is a fierce struggle of Great Powers for the division and redivision of the world... How will proletarian women oppose this? Only by cursing all war and everything military, only by demanding disarmament? The women of an oppressed and really revolutionary class will never accept this shameful role. They will say to their sons:

'"You will soon be grown up. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to war, and not by pious wishes, but by defeating and disarming the bourgeoisie".'

(V I Lenin, 'The "disarmament" slogan, October 1916, *Collected Works*, Volume 23, pp98-99)

Women have to



Namibian women can't camp out for peace: they have no choice but to fight imperialism



Greenham gals go round the outside

NOBODY FROM Greenham Peace Camp or its supporters challenged Leo Abse's characterisation of their campaign because it is in line with their own message: 'We are for peace because we are women; we are excluding men because they are violent'. In reality however there is no natural connection between gender and violence.

Women and peace — no link

If 'war is the continuation of politics by other means' then it follows that women will tend to be absent from it. The exclusion (in general) of women from military service in imperialist countries has more to do with their exclusion from political life and confinement to the family than with any biological abhorrence of war. Where women have become involved in politics — in strikes, revolutions or national liberation struggles — then they have automatically got involved in violence.

In most capitalist countries bourgeois and middle class women, except for the odd 'Amazon Queen', are mainly pre-occupied with looking after their families. This experience conditions their attitude to war. Many see it as irrational: they have created life, and the slaughter of their offspring in wars seems a cruel and

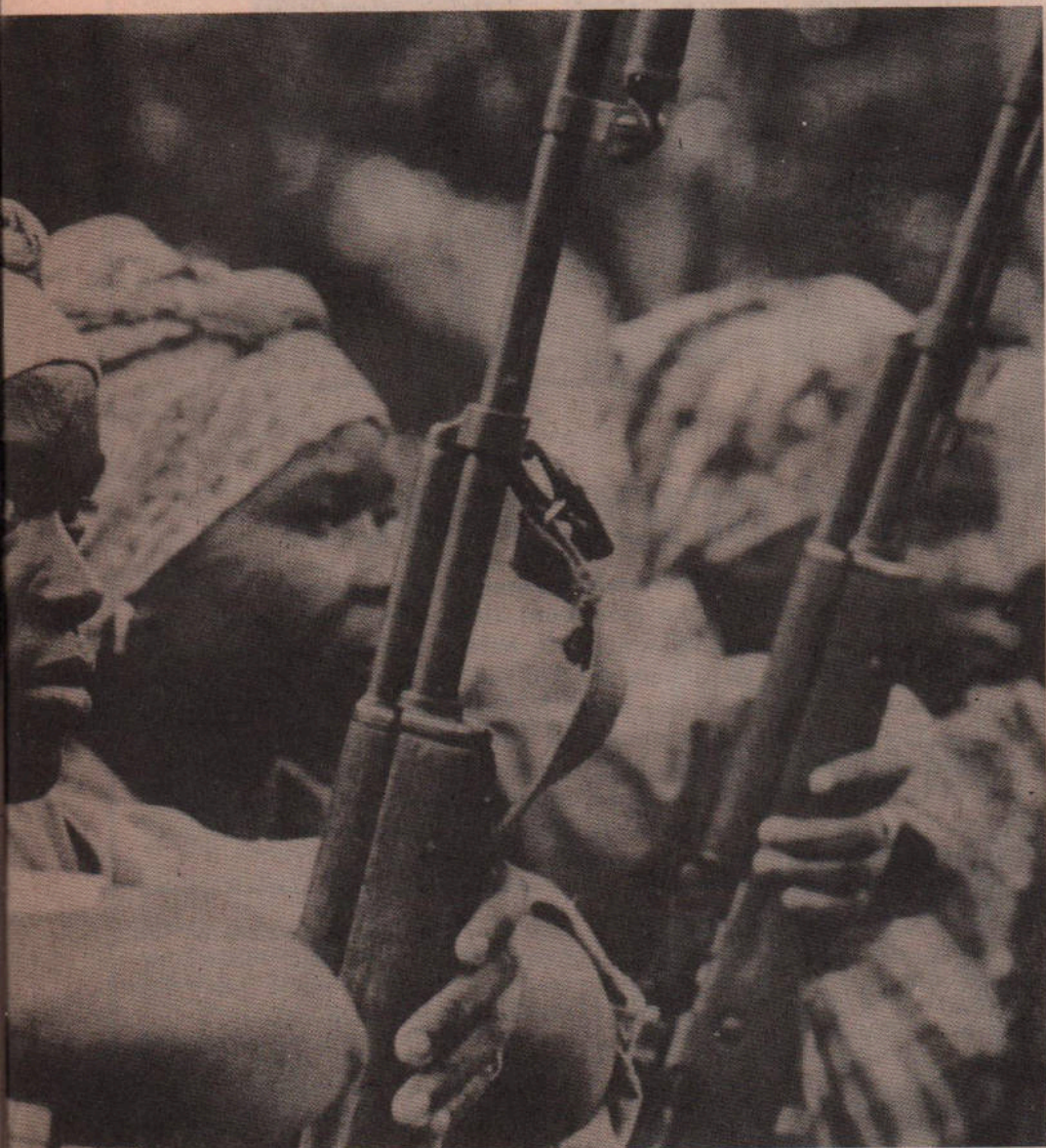
unnecessary consequence of conflicts over which they have no control.

Working class women tend to take a different view. Workers do not have the luxury of abstaining from any conflict. They are forced to take sides. In a strike they can fight the bosses, or they can scab. In imperialist wars women workers can only defend themselves by fighting a war against the ruling class. In anti-imperialist wars working class women support the forces fighting for national liberation. Working class women do care about their children, but they don't want peace at any price. In the coming war women will not be able to stand on the sidelines and say, 'I am neutral: I will not fight'.

Feminism and pacifism — true allies

There is a natural connection, however, between the women's movement and the peace movement. Both are led by middle class individuals who reject working class politics and working class violence: revolution. Pacifists are people who say 'I don't want to die', for they have no great cause to fight for. Trapped between the violence of the picket line and the violence of the baton-charge, they express the isolated petit-bourgeois view of the future. Feminists have a similar outlook: 'I am a unique individual, with my own

take sides too



personal experiences which are under-rated by men'.

Feminisation

The 'feminisation' of CND reflects the turning — in of the petit bourgeoisie on itself. The liaison reflects the weaknesses rather than the strength of the two movements. For the last three years, the women's movement has lacked a unifying cause and direction. Now it has found a receptive audience amongst those concerned to rid Britain of American missiles. In the process the women's movement has come full circle in its approach to bourgeois morality and the family. Ten years ago it was clenched fists, YBA wife badges and burning bras. Now feminists are adorning the fences of Greenham common with teddy bears, baby clothes and family photographs. Adding their own distinctive emphasis — that cruise and Trident are phallic symbols, 'toys for the boys', and that nuclear war is the logical extension of the age old problem of male violence — feminists have breathed new life into an ailing CND. The campaign was barely ticking over from one annual, national demo to the next. But the women's movement has done something more for CND than merely liven up its image.

Left out

From their tents in Berkshire, members of the women's peace movement have become national celebrities. Their recent fortnight in prison, for refusing to be bound over, was greeted as a heroic martyrdom. The GLC rolled out the red carpet, built a statue and provided wigwams in its own front garden. Labour MPs raised emergency motions in the House, and the media lapped it up. The women put themselves forward as the true upholders of law and order. Their occupation of the base was lawful because they were trying to prevent the crime of genocide being committed. Far from breaching the peace, they were trying to maintain it. And they were motivated by the highest principles — to save the lives of the Queen, the judiciary

and humanity. The British establishment could easily tolerate this sort of stuff.

Despite the reactionary politics of the Greenham protesters — pro-law and order, pro-Britain and pro-family — many on the British left have interpreted the rise of feminism in CND as a shift towards militancy. In fact, the opposite is true. At the 1982 CND conference in Sheffield, every motion from the radical left, whether it called for a general strike or for opposition to British imperialism wherever it strikes next, was defeated. The cretinous 'peace canvass', which the left opposed, was passed instead. The only 'victory' for the left — winning a commitment to getting Britain out of NATO — was passed very narrowly and will have no effect on an autocratic leadership which is resolutely opposed to it.

Throughout the conference, Greenham girls were loudly applauded whatever garbage they uttered. For tolerating the physical discomfort of camping out for a year, they were rewarded with seats on the national committee of CND. Well-known left wingers from the Labour and Communist Parties were turfed out to accommodate them.

CND has succeeded in presenting a

WORLD WAR I

Feminists at war

'International sisterhood' proved incapable of withstanding the pressures of national chauvinism. The women's movement in all the major European countries split between large majorities who took the side of their national bourgeoisie and small minorities who opposed the war from a working class point of view. The division in Britain between the suffragettes who pinned white feathers of cowardice on objectors to the war and the few women who followed Sylvia Pankhurst's anti-militarist stand is fairly well known (see *Real freedom*, p 101). Here we look at the impact of the war on the feminist movements of America, Germany and Russia.

TODAY THE women's movement of Europe is united against the USA; during the First World War American feminists united against Germany. Feminism and pacifism linked up in the Women's Peace Party, led by Jane Addams and Crystal Eastman: by 1915 it had 25 000 members. Eastman argued that women 'are mothers, or potential mothers, and therefore have an intimate sense of the value of human life' (W L O'Neill, *Everyone was brave: the rise and fall of feminism in America*). Another leader argued that the existing 'peace movement is over-masculine; I think it would be an excellent idea to have the next demonstration conducted by women alone'.

Pacifism to patriotism

Given the late entry of the US into the war (1917), it was possible for pacifist sentiments to survive in the USA long after the war began in Europe. But by June 1916, the atmosphere had changed. The government organised a 'preparedness parade': a WPP counter-demonstration

was violently attacked, and the participants arrested. Anti-war propaganda was banned, and the few who managed to resist the war fever laid low or helped out with civilian relief. Addams toured the country giving lectures on how to eat cheaply and conserve food. The majority, however, took a less equivocal position. Prominent Massachusetts feminist Mrs Glendower-Evans 'suddenly discovered she had been pro-Ally in her heart from the beginning, even though she had only realised it when America entered the War'. O'Neill comments that most other women's organisations pledged their support to the government and that 'the war turned out to be enormously popular with middle class women'. The government was swamped with requests for a role for women in the factories, hospitals and administration to aid the war effort. American feminists went so far as to call for a complete mobilisation of men so that all women could get the chance to do their bit.

'As far as many women are concerned, the connection now between maleness and violence is so ineradicable that if men 'do something' for peace, it is likely to lead to war with the forces of law and order.' (*New Statesman*, 3 December 1982)

A war with the forces of law and order is the last thing that CND wants. It would lose its treasured support in the churches the media and the political establishment. Worse, it might further embarrass the electoral prospects of CND's closest ally — the Labour Party. For women who really want peace, however, a war with the forces of law and order in Britain is inescapable, for they are also the forces of militarism.

There is nothing progressive about the Greenham Common protest. It celebrates a view of women which derives from the inferior position of women in the bourgeois family. It presents a view of peace as the status quo of a viciously militarist society. Working class women have nothing to gain from supporting CND and its peace camps. Their place is alongside men in organisations fighting British oppression and militarism — whether it is in Brick Lane or Brixton, the Malvinas or the Six Counties.

Kate Marshall



American feminists carry the stars and stripes to a peace congress during the First World War

(continued from page 19)

Other American feminists took their patriotism to its logical, racist conclusions. The National Association of Women's Suffrage Associations became notoriously anti-immigrant. Mrs Catt 'did not hesitate to say that loyal American women, if given the vote, would more than counter-balance the disloyal and pro-German elements'.

Before the war, American feminists maintained that, as women, their commitment to human life was sacred. When the USA joined the war, however, they discovered an even higher commitment — to the American ruling class. This commitment justified their wholehearted approval of the destruction of human life on an unparalleled scale. It was the same sad story in Europe.

Fatherland — and motherland

German imperialism was in a much weaker position than America. It was right at the centre of inter-imperialist rivalry in the pre-war years, and as a consequence, nationalism and chauvinism had been extensively cultivated by the ruling class. A strong women's movement did arise, but it had a tradition of adapting to popular prejudices about the family, foreigners and abortion. By the time Germany went to war, the women's movement was right behind it.

The women's movement came under concerted right-wing pressure from the 'Anti-League'. Composed of a number of reactionary political organisations and white collar unions worried about the threat of women taking their jobs, it campaigned against women's emancipation. It opposed feminism on the grounds that it divided the German nation and that it was led by foreigners, especially Jews. One of its leading members put it like this:

'We meet Jewry everywhere in the women's movement. The women's movement, the peace movement, Social Democracy and Jewry; these four are intimately related to one another, they are international and work in an anti-national spirit.' (R J Evans, *The feminist movement in Germany, 1894-1933*)

In response to this sort of chauvinist attack, the women's movement became increasingly vociferous in its defence of the family. It supported measures to increase the birth rate and it dedicated itself to uniting the nation. Denouncing the militant wing of the movement for women's emancipation became the key way in which the majority moved to respectability in the eyes of German society.

When the war broke out, only the tiny Women's Suffrage League condemned the German invasion of Belgium: it lost members as a result. The rest of the mass German women's movement supported the war effort. The unconditional backing of the Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine helped the government to suppress the small number of pacifists, whilst it drew many feminists into state welfare and education organisations.

In Germany working class women's opposition to the war was marginalised as a result of the grip of chauvinism on the mass of feminists and social democrats. However, it was a different story in Russia. Just as in Germany, the feminist current in Russia was dominated by the intelligentsia. But there was relatively powerful working class support for women's emancipation. The result was the fragmentation of the women's movement on the eve of war. Feminist leader, Vera Zasulich, sided with the Tsar, arguing that a German victory would weaken western democracy and make the class struggle more difficult. Menshevik women vacillated between patriotism and opposition to the war. Only future Bolsheviks Zelnik, Balabanova and Kollontai took a position of opposition to the war and chauvinism. At the same time they upheld the necessity for class violence against the Russian ruling class.

With the support of Lenin, these women called an International Conference of Women in Berne in March 1915. Their aim was to build on anti-

war sentiments amongst women workers and turn these towards revolution. The conference was small, and many who attended — including the entire English delegation — were not prepared to back the Bolshevik line of civil war and revolution. They simply wanted to denounce the war. Nevertheless the Bolshevik women used the conference to publish their view internationally. Kollontai went on a speaking tour of Europe in late 1915, denouncing the war in four languages. Her slogan was 'the enemy is at home'.

Working class women in Russia were receptive to Bolshevik politics. The working class in Russia was one-third female in 1914; by 1917 women made up half of the proletariat. Their wages were much lower than men's and they faced the problem of rampant inflation more directly than the men. Spontaneous food riots during 1915 and 1916 came increasingly under Bolshevik influence. In 1917 Bolshevik women were calling for an end to the war and for the release of jailed workers. They began to agitate amongst the troops demanding that they stop firing on demonstrating workers, and use their weapons against the ruling class.

In response to this upsurge of working class women, the feminist movement was revived in an attempt to contain it. As women began to see that revolution was the only answer to their poverty and oppression, the feminists intervened to lead them towards bourgeois democratic solutions. They launched a new organisation — the National Council of Women — which called for a democratic republic, and for the continuation of war until victory.

In March 1917 bourgeois feminists called a demonstration for women's right to vote. A female militia led the 40 000 strong march, carrying banners proclaiming: 'A woman's place is in the Constituent Assembly' and 'War to Victory'. One Bolshevik was beaten up for heckling, but the working class women on the march were reported to be sympathetic to their anti-war slogans.

The Bolshevik approach to peace

The evolution of the international women's movement during the First World War reveals much about the nature of feminism. So long as an all-class women's movement is under little pressure, diverse political views can co-exist within it. Once it comes under pressure in the form of war or revolution, such a movement will either split along class lines — as it did in Russia — or serve to channel working class women to the side of reaction — as it did in Germany, Britain and the United States.

At least in Russia the forces of reaction were fighting a losing battle. Stiles argues (in *The women's liberation movement in Russia 1860-1930*) that 'it is clear that the Bolsheviks never had any real competition as organisers and propagandists amongst women of the lower urban classes in 1917.' The Bolsheviks published a paper — *Rabotnitsa* — with a circulation of 50 000, aimed at working women. Their propaganda work, which continued right up to the revolution, was fiercely polemical against feminism and other movements which had fostered chauvinism in the working class. It sought to build up the anti-war sentiments which were spontaneously supported by proletarian women and organised women to take the future in their own hands. The Bolsheviks organised women to oppose the high prices in the shops and the appalling conditions at work. The editors of *Rabotnitsa* spent most of their time amongst the women in factories, laundries and shops. Through combining propaganda work with organising action against the ruling class and its war the Bolsheviks recruited masses of working women to their organisation, while the feminist movement stagnated. The Bolsheviks' approach to the questions of women's liberation and war was one of the reasons why the working class made its first successful revolution in Russia. We should emulate them in the course of making the second.

Kate Marshall



Peace women call for peace on British terms

IRELAND

What price peace?

In 1976 the Women's Peace Movement (later the Peace People) in Ireland attracted widespread support in Ireland and Britain. However, the evolution of this movement showed that women who want peace cannot escape the harsh choice posed by every war — peace on whose terms? The peace women's choice of Britain's terms — the unconditional surrender of the republican movement — ensured their rapid loss of support in the nationalist community from which they came. Before their demise, however, they performed some useful service for their imperialist paymasters.

THE WOMEN'S PEACE Movement was born out of one of the most harrowing tragedies of the Irish War. On 10 August 1976, unarmed IRA volunteer Danny Lennon was shot dead at the wheel of a car, after a chase by the British army through West Belfast. Out of control, the car careered into Anne Maguire and her four children. She was badly injured and three of her children killed; whether by the car or by stray British bullets never became clear. Anne's sister Mairead Corrigan and another West Belfast Catholic Betty Williams immediately launched the Women's Peace Movement.

Rise and fall

The cry for peace found a ready response in the Catholic ghettos of the Six Counties. They had been ravaged by seven years of army repression, and by a wave of sectarian assassinations, carried out by Loyalist paramilitaries. Within days thousands of people, predominantly women and children, joined mass demonstrations for peace in Belfast, Derry and Dublin. But within weeks the mass support of the nationalist people melted away. Only days after the Maguire tragedy, British soldiers shot 12-year old Majella O'Hare in Armagh: the Women's Peace Movement remained silent. When troops killed 14-year old Brian Stewart in the Turf Lodge district of West Belfast, a few weeks later, the peace women refused to condemn the army. They had to be escorted out of an outraged meeting of local residents which included Brian's mother, a former peace marcher.

The Women's Peace Movement won massive publicity and the support of the British establishment because it defined peace as a British victory. Its pleas for peace — and its condemnations — were directed exclusively at the republican movement. Peace meant the IRA laying down its arms — not the British troops getting out of Ireland. The peace women won the patronage of the international ruling class. The Norwegian government gave them £200 000; American backers still sustain the token community work of the movement to the tune of £25 000 a year. In 1977 Corrigan and Williams were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize — they pocketed £37 000 each. The London police opened Trafalgar Square — long banned for 'Irish' demos — to the peace women and Joan Baez sang pacifist feminist praises to the campaign. But the embrace of the establishment only increased the estrangement of the peace women from the Irish people. When the

Queen invited them for drinks on the royal yacht during her Jubilee trip to 'the province' their fate was sealed.

Less than six months after the launch of the Women's Peace Movement it had already outlived its usefulness to the British ruling class, as the *Observer* noted:

'It is a telling paradox that both the movement and its leaders receive more recognition the further they are from Northern Ireland ghettos, where they are viewed with increasing cynicism if not downright detestation.' (2 January 1977)

Yet, in those few months, the peace women played a useful role for the real warmongers in Ireland.

By their friends...

The supervisors of British terror in the labour movement welcomed the peace women's outspoken denunciations of the IRA and their encouragement to informers. Direct Ruler Merlyn Rees congratulated them and explained their function:

'They have shown the way. It requires courage to speak out, to accuse... The terrorists can only be beaten with the cooperation of the entire population.'

The British Government saw the Women's Peace Movement as a campaign they could use to isolate the republican movement from the nationalist population. Tory Irish spokesman Airey Neave claimed that 'recent events have shown that there is massive support in Northern Ireland from both Catholics and Protestants for a determined anti-terrorist campaign'. His conclusion was that 'the time is ripe to smash the Provisional IRA'. When Roy Mason took over from Rees in September 1976, he claimed that the IRA was 'reeling', citing as evidence 'the mass movement for peace indicated by public demonstrations in Ireland and Britain'.

Fortunately, the Women's Peace Movement was a flop. The liberation struggle has proved more durable than both the movement's corrupted leaders and their British backers — Neave was executed by the INLA in 1979 and Mason is still in hiding, lest he share a similar fate. But the Women's Peace Movement still stands as an example of the consequences of women using the slogans of peace to conceal taking sides in a war.

Niamh Eardley

Chris Harman, *The lost revolution*, Bookmarks, London, 1982, pp326, pbk £4.95.

TWO events shaped the course of working class history in the twentieth century: the victory of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 – and the defeat of the German revolution between 1918 and 1923.

Communism aborted

The defeat of the mass insurrection of German workers in the Ruhr and Saxony in the summer of 1923 marked the end of the post-First World War revolutionary upsurge in Europe. The working class vanguard had already been crushed in Hungary, Austria and Italy. Now the most powerful section of the European movement had been neutralised. The Bolsheviks were relying on the German revolution to break the isolation of the Soviet Union and assist in socialist construction. The events of 1923 dashed these hopes.

In the Soviet Union the revolution fell prey to the bureaucratisation of its leadership under Stalin. And Stalin's clique took advantage of the climate of confusion and recrimination following the German defeat to consolidate its domination over the Communist International. Although the Comintern leadership bore considerable responsibility for the Ruhr defeat, Stalin and his faction heaped the blame on the leadership of the German Communist Party, the KPD. They ousted Heinrich Brandler and installed Ruth Fischer and Arkadi Maslow as the new leadership.

The KPD, two years earlier the world's biggest communist party with 360 000 members, was effectively destroyed. However, as the only alternative to the discredited Social Democratic Party (SPD), the KPD retained working class support. Its leaders simply followed the Moscow line – with disastrous consequences as the fascist movement grew in strength in Germany.

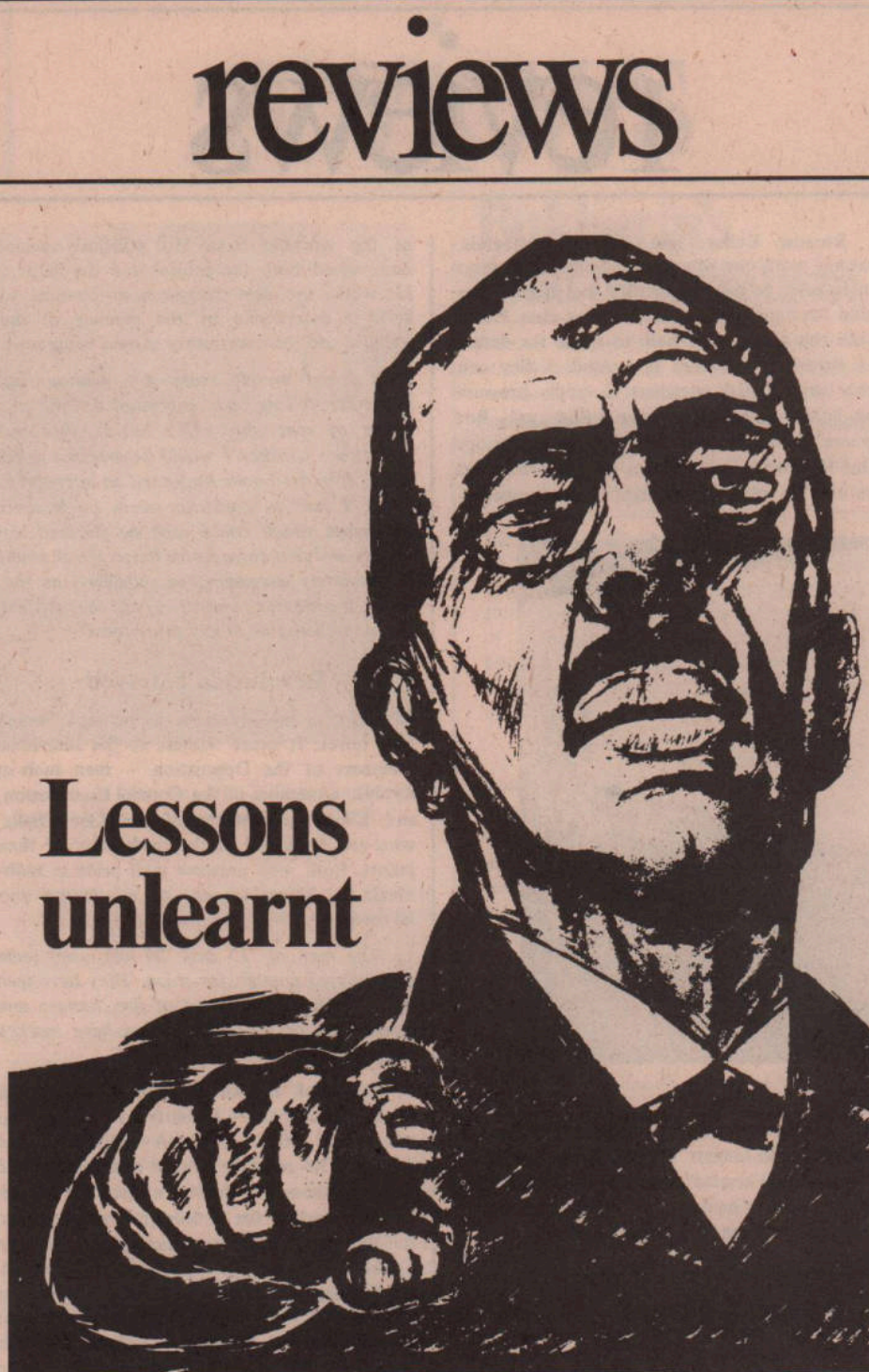
The crime of opportunism

The defeat of the German working class resulted from the immaturity of its leadership. The merit of Harman's book is that he approaches the issue from this angle and attempts to trace the failures of the revolutionary left between 1914 and 1923. *The lost revolution* makes a refreshing change from the superficial vulgarity of much left-wing history of the working class movement. It is well researched, interestingly written and tries to account for the tragedy of the German revolution by a careful study of events. However, Harman falls short of identifying the real political problems that prevented the establishment of a competent revolutionary leadership in Germany.

Harman begins to grapple with the problem by pinpointing crucial weaknesses in the politics of leading German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg. He recognises that her unwillingness to break with the SPD and form an independent revolutionary party before 1919 undermined the revolutionary movement. *The lost revolution* concludes that 'the tragedy of the German revolution was that a party capable of harnessing and coordinating (workers') energy did not come into existence until it was too late'. So far so good. But what Harman cannot explain is why Luxemburg compromised with the reformists, and how an independent party could have been formed. The fact that Luxemburg and Liebknecht did not break from the SPD during the First World War, as Lenin advocated, was a symptom of their lack of political independence from the reformists. Harman's inability to perceive this is no doubt a result of his own leading role in an organisation which has also proved incapable of building a party politically independent of reformism – the Socialist Workers Party. His account of the early KPD thus remains empirical and inconclusive.

Pacifism

Although she possessed a genuinely revolutionary spirit and a class hatred for the SPD's right-wing leadership, Luxemburg underestimated the impact of the First World War on the German working class. She failed to develop a clear strategy for forging a new working class leadership. On the most crucial political issue of the time – the question of imperialist war – Luxemburg sought compromise with the left wing of the SPD. The Spartakusbund, the organisation she formed together with Karl Liebknecht in 1915 to put forward anti-militarist propaganda, was a step forward. It was a break from the chauvinism of the SPD leadership. But instead of advancing the revolutionary policy of turning the imperial-



Karl Liebknecht – German revolutionary murdered by social democrats in 1919

ist war into class war against the bourgeoisie at home, Spartakus adopted the pacifist slogans of the radical peace movement. By calling for a 'negotiated peace without annexations', Spartakus effectively separated the question of peace from the question of class power. The significance of the Spartakusbund's failure to advance a coherent proletarian opposition to the war escapes Harman. Indeed he apologises for their compromise with the pacifists, using the familiar opportunist argument that Spartakus was isolated.

However, the events of 1918 and 1919 prove that this faint-hearted approach held back the movement – with fatal consequences for the German working class. Instead of giving a revolutionary direction to the growing movement of workers and soldiers against the war, Luxemburg and Liebknecht lagged behind. Eventually they were overtaken by a mass movement that broke through the barriers put up by reformism. But the masses found the leading German Marxists of the day unprepared for battle.

Radical reformism, 1916

In 1916, under the pressure of mass strikes and demonstrations, the left wing of the SPD broke away to form the new Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD). These radical reformists sought to distance themselves from the openly chauvinist SPD leaders. The consequence of their radical demands was to contain, rather than lead the movement. The USPD called for an early peace settlement – a demand which expressed disgust at the hardships of war and fear of defeat, not a class perspective for destroying the causes of war and oppression. Instead of challenging this reactionary approach Spartakus chose not only to remain organisationally part of the USPD – but to hide its political differences with the left reformists. A crucial opportunity to fight the betrayers of the working class was wasted. Harman misses the significance of these developments. When the working class was breaking with reformism in action, the actions of the potential leaders of the labour movement

served to dissipate this challenge.

The consequences were disastrous. In 1918 and 1919 the USPD mediated between the revolutionary workers' and soldiers' councils and the counter-revolutionary SPD government under Friedrich Ebert. Given the confusion reigning among the more advanced workers, Ebert was quickly able to move in and annihilate the movement with the aid of the imperial officer caste and monarchist paramilitaries. Luxemburg and Liebknecht were murdered in January 1919, only weeks after the German Communist Party (KPD) was finally born.

Workers disarmed

Most accounts of the German revolution under-rate its potential. Academic historians argue that it came to nothing because the workers wanted only peace – not a social revolution. This interpretation is belied by the resonance the revolutionary slogans which Spartakus eventually adopted in late 1918 received among the workers – and by the long and bitter struggles spanning the period up to 1923. It is true, however, that due to the lack of leadership there was no focus for the struggle for independent working class objectives. The social force that was able to define the horizons of the movement was the petit bourgeoisie: peasants, lower officers and other middle class layers – above all, the labour bureaucracy. Their aim was to establish a bourgeois democratic regime which would provide them with greater stability and material security – not to smash capitalism.

This crisis of leadership overshadowed the formation of the KPD. Whilst it broke organisationally with the SPD, it never followed up its break with a thorough critique of reformism and an honest appraisal of the defeats of 1918 to 1919. Harman, however, takes the organisational independence of the KPD at face value. He does not examine the party's programme or the strategy of its leadership to see whether it had really broken from reformism. Hence his account of the subsequent development of the KPD, although rich in historical detail, misses the essential point. The

KPD never completed politically its break from social democracy.

Blaming the workers

Moreover, Harman adopts the view established by liberal and Stalinist historians, that the problem with the KPD was *ultra-leftism*. This misconception mars his assessment of the founding conference of the KPD in early January 1919.

The formation of the KPD was not the result of a conscious political strategy. It was only after the USPD had refused to hold a national emergency conference, to clarify the perspectives for the revolution, that Rosa Luxemburg decided to establish an independent party. At its first conference, Luxemburg and Liebknecht correctly argued that the fledgling party should use the impending National Assembly elections as a platform for elaborating the party's programme and cohering its supporters. But the impatience of the majority of delegates – the natural response to the immediate experience of violent upheaval in the preceding two months – carried the day. Luxemburg and Liebknecht were defeated. The conference decided to boycott the elections and failed to adopt a clear programme. For Harman, the problem with the conference was the 'putschist' mood of the left wing.

'Putschist moods' are of the essence in revolutionary situations. With good leadership much revolutionary impatience can be given positive direction. In January 1919, when social democratic ministers were organising the massacre of revolutionary workers, it was not surprising that the spontaneous response of militants was to blow up parliament, not campaign for seats in it. To persuade them that the fragility of leadership and objective circumstances necessitated a period of consolidation, and perhaps, a tactical retreat, required a leadership far-sighted enough to unite the party around a coherent set of medium-term objectives. Luxemburg and Liebknecht failed the test and, as Harman's account of the conference proceedings illuminates, they gave up fighting for their line, abdicating the responsibility of leadership. It was the vacillation of the leaders – not the mood of the rank and file – that betrayed the German revolution.

The tragedy of the German working class is of far more than merely historical interest. To active workers today it is a warning of the consequences of failing to make a resolute break with left-wing reformism. It is not surprising that *The lost revolution* avoids drawing out these political lessons. They are an indictment of the opportunist tailing of the Labour Party that is the substance of SWP politics today.

Sabena Norton

Groping in the dark

Kevin Kelley, *The longest war: Northern Ireland and the IRA*, Zed press, 1982, pp364, pbk £6.95.

THE LONGEST WAR is a book the Troops Out Movement would have been proud to have written – if only they could have got it together to write it. Although Kevin Kelley is an American his book bears all the hallmarks of the radical British liberal.

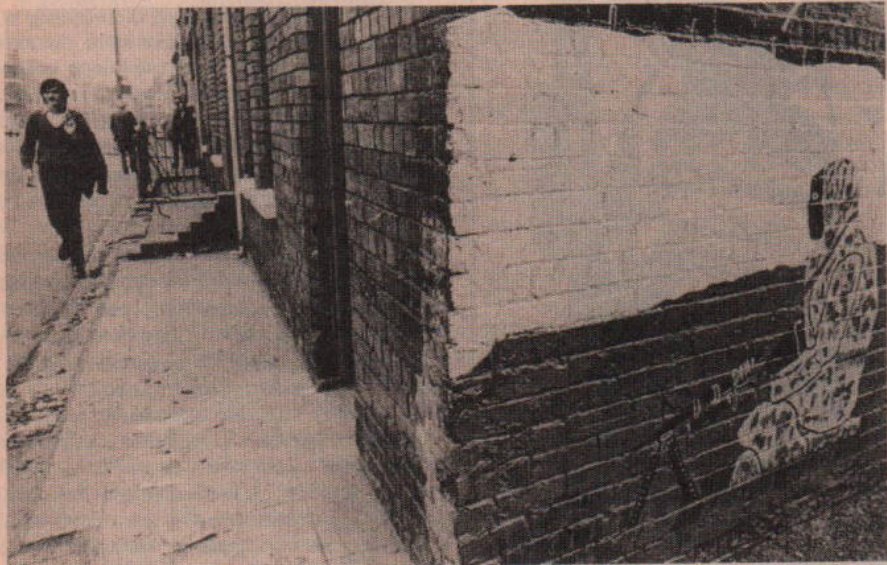
Kelley's detailed account of Ireland's struggle for freedom – particularly the last 13 years – is marred by his inability to explain what social forces are at work in Ireland. Thus he explains important events in recent Irish history, not by analysing the conflict between British imperialism and the Irish people, but with superficial and subjective generalisations.

A good example of Kelley's approach is the way in which he attempts to explain the tensions that have developed periodically within the republican movement. When Britain partitioned Ireland in 1921, the decision on whether or not to approve the new 'Free State' led to a split within the republican movement. The 'Free Staters' compromised with British imperialism, took their seats in the Dail, and launched an offensive against the anti-treaty forces of the IRA. To Kelley, these developments were the results simply of a conflict between the 'moderates who had gone too far to turn back' and the defenders of Wolfe Tone's republican ideal. Kelley fails to expose the class interests that lay

continued on page 22

continued from page 21

behind the 'moderation' of one side and the 'idealism' of the other. The Home Rule struggle suited the Irish national bourgeoisie whilst it provided elbow room for its own capitalist inclinations: when it came to the crunch they preferred to compromise with Britain rather than back a volatile military struggle against the imperialists. The failure of the anti-Treaty forces to sustain a consistent resistance to the British solution right from the start reflected their own petit-bourgeois social basis. Although some of the more radical elements invoked Tone, Pearse and even Connolly to justify their opposition to the Free State government, most made their peace with Britain's stooges within a decade of Partition. The key problem of 1921 was not Collins' moderation or de Valera's idealism, but the weakness of the Irish working class, socially and politically.



Similarly, Kelley's assessment of the most recent major split in the republican movement (in 1970) demonstrates an equally simplistic view. In his account 'socialist' ideas surfaced in the minds of IRA leaders imprisoned for their part in the failed bombing campaign of the late 'fifties. These ideas solidified as the 'stages theory' and appeared to offer a way out of the impasse which the movement had reached. Kelley is right – the border campaign did fail, the IRA did reach an impasse and the military struggle was downplayed. But why? Again, the answer lies not in the subjective inclinations of Cathal Goulding and the proponents of the stages theory, but in the changing class structure of modern Ireland. Growing in size and becoming more organised, particularly in the South, the working class in the 'sixties became – at least potentially – the decisive force in the anti-imperialist struggle. This potential was never realised – not because of the dogged determination of the militarists as Kelley suggests – but because the republican leadership was still dominated by the petit-bourgeois outlook of traditional republicanism. The stages theory was not a collection of ideas from the heads of a few 'socialist' individuals. In the classic Stalinist mould, it provided the justification for opportunists to manipulate the anti-imperialist aspirations of the nationalist community for their own reformist aims.

Kelley's approach prevents him from reaching any clear conclusions about the prospects for victory for the Irish people in the war. This is most obvious when he addresses the question, 'Why does Britain stay?' Groping in the dark, he comes up with four possible explanations – all wrong. First, a British withdrawal would mean the loss of trade with the Twenty-six counties; second, Britain would lose profits from the Six Counties – remember John Zachary DeLorean? Third, Kelley turns to the insidious threat from the Kremlin. Finally, unperturbed by the fact that no evidence exists for any of his explanations, Kelley comes up with a fourth – Britain stays lest the British working class pick up 'seditious ideas of its own' from the example of its defeat by urban guerrillas in Ireland. This point at least has the merit of seeking an explanation of why Britain stays in the consequences of a British withdrawal in Britain itself. The victory of the Irish people would mean the disintegration of the United Kingdom and the destabilisation of the state that enforces capitalist relations throughout Ireland and Britain. That is why Britain stays. But the Irish people will not win without the 'seditious' assistance of the British working class – that sedition will have to be spread at home first before it can be reinforced from Ireland.

reviews

Because Kelley, like all British liberals, cannot work out why British imperialism stays in Ireland, he cannot identify the social forces vital for removing it – the working class. Faced with the question of how to speed the defeat of British imperialism in Ireland, Kelley can only urge British socialists to 'apply pressure on behalf of a British troop withdrawal'. But where? And how? For Kelley, as for the Troops Out Movement, the working class in Britain has no role to play in the fight against imperial-

ism. His political outlook determined both the subject and the form of his work: the class struggle is its content, his style is determined by the urgency of that struggle and the uncertainty of ever being read.

I asked myself every day, without any particular feeling, but engrossed by the problems of rent, my wife's health, my son's education, whether I would be arrested in the night. For my books I adopted an appropriate form: I had to construct them in detached fragments which could each be finished separately and sent abroad post haste; which could, if absolutely necessary, be published as they were, incomplete, and it would be difficult for me to compose in any other form.

Revolution betrayed

Midnight in the century is perhaps Serge's best novel. It bears witness to the individual members of the Opposition – men such as Ryzhik, a member of the Control Commission, and Elkin, ex-president of the Kiev Cheka, who are disdainful of the mediocrity of their jailors. Both men preserve their pride as individuals no longer as part of a cohesive social force.

The men of '17 and '20 will never seem emasculated enough for them. They have seen the promised land, tasted of fire, hunger, and conviction: of the truth. These have marked them forever.

The book is also vivid with ironic detail of the bureaucracy's inability to plan, and its stultifying effect on both individuals and society. The engineer Botkin is successful and smug, so successful that he is fortunate enough to be selected for a foreign trade mission; unfortunate enough to come across a Bulletin of the Opposition in Paris. He finds it compelling reading not because of its working class politics but because its technical critique of industrialisation corresponds exactly to his trained notion of inefficiency. Botkin fails to destroy his notes and ends up in the Gulag. He dictates the Bulletin from memory and so it reaches the exiles in Siberia.

Midnight in the century provides much more than pathos and historical irony. Rodion is imprisoned, not for being a member of the Opposition, but because as a worker he questioned the day to day workings of the bureaucracy in his workplace. His file reports him as a 'pernicious agitator, dangerous demagogue, Trotskyist. Knows how to make the masses listen to him.' Rodion is not a naive worker counterposed to the tired and cynical intellectuals: he is the embodiment of revolutionary energy. It is he who answers their question, 'What is to be done if it is midnight in the century?' He simply says, 'Midnight's where we have to live then.' He alone is not ready fatalistically to see himself as a man of the past. Rodion's allegiance lies with the working class and a new revolutionary party – not with a memory:

'History is something we make, we are historical too, like all the poor devils... There is no certainty that this machine will stop and crumble one day by itself. It must be destroyed. Another revolution. We will make

ism. Readers new to contemporary Irish history will find *The longest war* interesting by virtue of its factual content, but those expecting an anti-imperialist analysis will have to wait for the Irish Freedom Movement handbook.

Guy Ross

The writer as witness

Victor Serge, *Midnight in the century*, Writers and Readers, 1982, pp242, pbk £6.95.

ON 17 NOVEMBER 1947 Victor Serge died in exile in Mexico. Born in Brussels on 30 December 1890 into a poverty stricken family of exiled Russian anarchists, he records that from an early age he felt he was living in a 'world without possible escape.' As a young man in Paris his friends were the 'Bonnot Gang', the Tragic Bandits: young anarchists who inverted Proudhon's dictum that 'property is theft' by robbing as many banks as possible. Within a year most were dead in shoot-outs or on the guillotine. Serge himself endured the French prison system for five years as a political prisoner.

Testament to revolution

During the First World War he took part in the Barcelona insurrection, but it was the Bolshevik revolution that changed his life. By 1923 he was a member of the Left Opposition. Between 1923 and his death, he never capitulated to the bureaucracy and he never rejected the Bolshevik revolution. Four years before his death he wrote the following testament:

'I have undergone a little over ten years of various forms of captivity, agitated in seven countries, and written twenty books. I own nothing. On several occasions a press with a vast circulation has hurled filth at me because I spoke the truth. Behind us lies a victorious revolution gone astray, several abortive attempts at revolution, and massacres in so great a number as to inspire a certain dizziness. And to think that it is not over yet. Let me be done with these digressions; those were the only roads possible for us. I have more confidence in mankind and in the future than ever before.'

Serge regarded his career as a creative writer as an enforced one – enforced by his exclusion from political activity. It was nevertheless a political task to chronicle the heroic struggle

one, and in a very different way. I don't know how, but it will be very different. But first, escape from them'.

Victor Serge may have returned to the theme of 'a world without possible escape', but in Rodion it is an exemplary theme. He begins his task with words whispered to a woman worker on a building site: 'Listen, he said softly 'do you know what we are? Have you ever thought about it?' In this book, Serge has captured Rosa Luxemburg's ringing call to struggle: 'Every revolution is destined to failure, except the last one.'

Alan Harding

A protégé of Stuart Hall

Paul Gilroy and others, *The empire strikes back: race and racism in 'seventies Britain*, Hutchinson, 1982, pp234, pbk £5.95.

FOUR YEARS AGO sociology professor Stuart Hall wrote *Policing the crisis*, a book which won considerable influence in academic and reformist circles. Hall's thesis was that the crisis had provoked trends towards increasing state authoritarianism in Britain which created problems for the existing means through which the ruling class won popular consent for the existing social order. Hence the state sought to re-establish consensus through manipulating news and information and creating 'moral panics' around issues such as 'mugging', 'crime', 'law and order'.

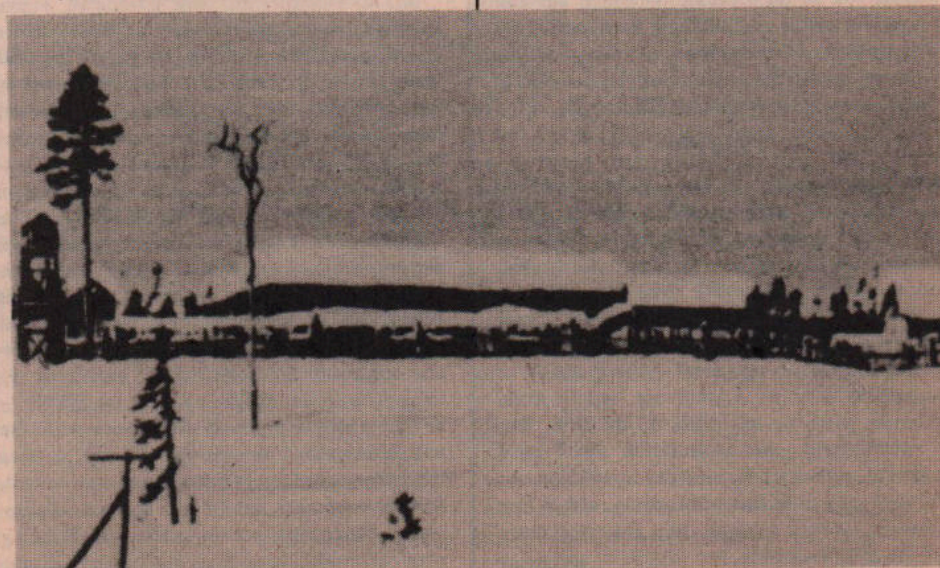
Bad news

As a former editor of *New Left Review* and close sympathiser with the Eurocommunist trend within the Communist Party, Hall is a veteran of 'ideological struggle' disembodied from any anti-capitalist political activity. The consequence of his 'intervention in the battleground of ideas' around the emergence of 'the strong state' was to encourage a series of reformist academics to undertake studies of the permeation of the bourgeois media by bourgeois prejudices. Hall's work also provided reformist politicians with some theoretical justification for their strategy of 'struggle within the state' for accountability and community control. The politics of Hall's esoteric theorising became clear in the post-1981 riot controversy about policing. The response of his acolytes to police repression was not to attempt to mobilise against it, but to plead for the restoration of non-coercive forms of capitalist domination. Through Labour's police committees they offered their services in the task of restoring public confidence in the police.

Paul Gilroy, the main contributor to the latest collection of essays from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, personifies the consequences of Hall's approach – the book is replete with sycophantic acknowledgements to the Centre's former director. Gilroy is adept at the radical posturing and academic obscurantism for which his master is renowned; he is also a paid employee of the GLC's police committee support unit.

Gilroy introduces the book with some theoretical points:

'The class relations which inscribe the black fractions of the working class function as race relations... Race is the modality in which class relations are experienced.'



Concentration camp in Siberia

Whatever this means, it is not explored further. The main concern of the book is not racial oppression but the ideology of racism. It proceeds to examine 'schooling in Babylon', 'commonsense racist ideologies', 'ethnicity studies', etc. The preoccupation of this group of middle-class academics with the finer points of dub reggae and Rastafarian dress stands in



Hackney: black youth confront the police

marked contrast to the concerns of young black people about the impossibility of getting work and the certainty of police harassment on the streets.

Anti-working class

One theme unites Hall and Gilroy: their pessimism and their lack of confidence in the capacity of the working class to fight racism in Britain. Both view the working class as being spontaneously nationalist and chauvinist; they see the racism of the trade union and Labour Party leaders as something they are constantly pushed into by their working class members. In reality it is the labour bureaucracy which is the agency for disseminating reactionary ideologies in the working class. For the past century the leadership of the labour movement has identified its interests with British imperialism and its state. The Labour leaders and the union bureaucrats have always backed Britain against foreign armies, foreign imports – and foreign immigrants. Rank and file workers have often followed this chauvinist lead. But they at least have the *potential* to take an anti-racist stand. As the response of some workers to the introduction of the new race checks in the hospitals and dole offices shows, some workers appreciate that they have more in common with black people than they have with the British state.

Gilroy rejects 'the white working class'. But he is happy to take a job under the patronage of the party that has disgraced the British working class through its consistent support for immigration controls and its endorsement of police terror against blacks in Britain. County Hall provides a comfortable seat from which to moan about the racism of the working class and to patronise the resistance of the black community.

Joan Phillips

Hitting out at the hardcore

Robert Taylor, *Workers in the new depression*, Macmillan, November 1982, pp212, pbk £7.95, hbk £20.

ROBERT TAYLOR, labour editor of the *Observer*, has assembled a mass of information on unemployment and the labour market. His object is to assess the various ruling class strategies for restoring British capitalism to prosperity. He is clearly a concerned man since he spends large chunks of his book bemoaning unemployment, low pay and inequalities at work. This effusive humanity, he places at the service of a more hard-headed and partisan concern. This is made clear when he states that inequalities 'constitute a massive barrier to social cohesion and justice as well as an incalculable obstacle to the creation of a more dynamic and prosperous society'. His objective is to target for attack those 'key groups of workers in the core of the labour market' – public sector workers and those who make use of their craft skills to defend themselves – who are insulated from 'the harsh

realities of the recession'. Why should they prosper while everyone else has to suffer?

Target: workgroups

Ever since the Second World War the growing complexity of British industry has required the devolution of bargaining authority from the central union bureaucracies to the shopfloor and has allowed workplace organisation to pass outside their formal control. The employers have gone along with, and even encouraged, this trend to such an extent that a 1978 Warwick University survey found the number of stewards working full-time on trade union business paid for by their employer was far higher than the size of the full-time union bureaucracy. Indeed many employers were happy to see closed shops established and themselves took on the responsibility for collecting union dues under the 'check-off' system. The corollary of these developments has been a loss of direct control by the unions themselves which is a source of potential instability and makes it more difficult for the government to influence work practices in the interest of the capitalist class as a whole. This underlies Tebbit's softening of his anti-union rhetoric and Thatcher's marked reluctance to crow over her victory in the NHS dispute: the Tories are well aware that the authority of a compliant TUC was the crucial factor in derailing the train drivers and the hospital workers. The real battle for the employers now if they are to raise productivity and cut wages is not against the unions as such but against workplace organisation. Taylor sets up the target carefully: 'the trouble lies not in trade union restrictive power but in the tenacity of the work group'.

Five years ago, in happier times, Taylor wrote a celebration of the status of trade unions in British life entitled *The fifth estate*. Today, like many of his colleagues in the liberal middle class, he is not only concerned but deeply troubled. He despairs of the Labour Party, correctly observing that it has been taken over by public service trade union leaders and middle class constituency activists. He is concerned, not that the Labour Party has become useless in defending the working class, but that it has become so feeble that it can no longer contain it. Taylor is deeply pessimistic – the only hope for British capitalism is an incomes policy but the Labour Party is too weak to deliver labour movement support for it. 'The future looks bleak' is the theme with which he concludes virtually every chapter. When the future looks bleak to a professional exponent of class collaboration in industry turned advocate of state attacks on sections of the labour movement, it must hold something positive for the working class.

Gareth Evans

Letters

Due to lack of space we have been unable to print letters from our readers in this issue. Tell us what you think of the next step. Write to RCP, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX.

reviews

Bukharin's road to socialism

Richard B Day (ed), *N I Bukharin: Selected writings on the state and on the transition to socialism*, Spokesman, 1982, pp416, hbk £20.

BOOKS ABOUT Nikolai Bukharin, the principal economic theoretician of the Bolshevik Party, always raise two questions. First, what was the significance of his role in the debates on Soviet industrial policy in the 'twenties? Second, do his theories of capitalism and the state give us any insights into the workings of capitalism today? The publication of this book is to be welcomed for making available in English for the first time many of Bukharin's most important articles.

From NEP to five year plan

Bukharin is remembered as the most ardent supporter of Lenin's New Economic Policy. For Lenin, the NEP, which allowed for the growth of the private market in the Soviet economy, was a necessary retreat. This concession to the private capitalist sector was seen as a temporary measure designed to restore the shattered economy. However, for Bukharin, the NEP became a long-term strategy for socialist advance. For Bukharin the only way forward for the isolated Soviet state was through a policy of conciliation towards the peasantry. Bukharin's objective was to utilise market relations to encourage the peasantry towards socialism.

The development of industry was not neglected in Bukharin's scheme, but it depended on the development of peasant agriculture: 'The more quickly accumulation occurs in our peasant economy, the more quickly it will occur in our industry'. To Bukharin the barrier to industry's growth was demand, and significant demand could only come from the peasant's ability to pay for industrial products. Hence Bukharin favoured a policy of lowering industrial prices to stimulate peasant consumption and dependence on domestic industry.

This policy ignored the backward state of Soviet industry. The real problem was not so much a lack of demand as an inability to supply the requisite goods to the market. Unless a more direct policy to develop industry were adopted – as advocated by Preobrazhensky and the Left Opposition – increasing peasant demand could only exacerbate shortages, strengthen the black market and private traders and precipitate a breach in the Soviet Government's monopoly over foreign trade. Bukharin glossed over the growth of capitalism in the countryside which would accompany his slogan to the peasantry: 'enrich yourselves, accumulate, develop your farms'. Instead, he fostered the illusion that, by having some control over the provision of credit, the Soviet state could rely on peasant self-interest to overcome private property relations and engage them in the struggle for 'a classless, communist society'.

Tragically these mistakes, embedded in the policy of the Soviet regime under the dual control of Bukharin and Stalin, had catastrophic consequences. While Bukharin was writing lyrically about the 'Road to socialism and the worker-peasant alliance' in 1925, and at the same time, assisting in the crushing of the Left Opposition under Trotsky, a serious crisis was brewing. This came to a head at the end of 1927. The failure to develop industry to an adequate degree forced on a grain procurements crisis: the peasantry, angered at receiving insufficient industrial goods in exchange for their produce, began to withhold their output from the market, threatening starvation in the cities.

This signalled the end of the policy of conciliation – and the end of Bukharin's pre-eminent role in the Soviet leadership. As the leader most identified with the policies which had strengthened the kulaks (the more prosperous peasants) and thus endangered the regime, Bukharin had to go. The bureaucracy, under Stalin's control, initiated forced collectivisation, the 'liquidation of the kulaks



Bukharin in 1925

as a class' and the industrialisation programme of the first Five Year Plan, begun in 1929. Thus emerged the foundations of the Soviet regime we see today. Contrary to the views of Bukharin's political biographer, Stephen Cohen, Bukharin's ideas for the development of Soviet society, far from being a 'communist alternative to Stalinism', in fact prepared the way for Stalin's repression.

From 'state capitalism' to reformism

Bukharin's errors of economic policy were based on his revisionist economic theory. His contribution is summed up in his work on 'state capitalism'. Generalising from the experience of war, particularly in Germany, Bukharin formulated the theory that a new stage of capitalism had arrived, where the state had merged with the major capitalist corporations and had taken control of the national economy. As a result, the 'anarchy of capitalism' – the crises resulting from the absence of planning owing to the market mechanism – was suppressed on a national scale, and capitalist competition came to take the form of military struggles among the imperialist powers in the world market. This theory, first formulated in his article of 1915, *Toward a theory of the imperialist state*, permeates all Bukharin's later works.

While it was a striking formulation – and one which did appear to correspond with reality – the theory was based on a fundamental revision of Marxism. At one level, Bukharin was simply exaggerating the degree of state economic controls during the First World War. He believed that the state could actually plan production within the national territory, and interpreted the peculiar circumstances of a war economy as the normal mode of operation for contemporary capitalism. He failed to appreciate that private property in the means of production still existed, and that competition – based on the existence of private property – was only modified and regulated in so far as the capitalists would put up with this for the sake of their own survival during war.

More importantly, however, Bukharin's theory was based on the notion that the cause of capitalist crisis was a 'lack of planning' and market imbalances. As he wrote in 1928, he thought that Marx saw crises arising 'from the impossibility under capitalism of maintaining correct proportions among the different elements of the reproduction process, including the relation between production and consumption'.

In fact, such disproportionalities were secondary in Marx's theory. If anything, Marx saw such disproportions in the market as *permanent* features of the capitalist market system which, when they reach serious degrees, are a consequence rather than a cause of the crisis. The capitalist crisis is generated through the accumulation process. Continued accumulation leads to a fall in the rate of profit and then an interruption of investment which halts capitalist growth.

For Bukharin on the other hand, once crises were abolished in the national economy, through state planning, the only obstacle capitalism then faced was a possible economic breakdown owing to the burden of war production. Capital accumulation would encounter no inherent barriers if the 'problem' of market demand was overcome by the state. This superficial analysis underpinned his view of the development of the Soviet economy.

Bukharin's work deserves close attention. Not because Bukharin was a great revolutionary theorist – he wasn't, despite his stature in the Bolshevik Party – but as a reminder that 'economics' is no technical or academic concern cut off from reality. From Soviet economic policy in the 'twenties to reformist alternative strategies in the 'eighties, Bukharin's theories have exerted an important influence. This book is expensive at £20, but the cost of Bukharinism in practice is higher still.

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