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## AS JONES PREPARES MORE WAGE CUTS STEEL JOBS FIGHT BETRAYED

The deal signed last week by steel union leaders with BSC is nothing more than an employers' charter - opening the door to a further wholesale onslaught on jobs, wages, manning levels and shop floor agreements. Every management attack now carries the seal of approval of the trade union bureaucracy, who will use every ounce of energy trying to ensure no section of workers defeats the plan.

They do this in clear defiance of the militant determination of shop floor workers in the industry to defend existing conditions - as shown by strikes in South Wales and calls from mass meetings in many other areas for national strike action to confront and defeat BSC.

Instead, they bow to the management who are determined to foist the whole burden of the £8.4m per week losses (caused by the recession and the general profits crisis of British capitalism) directly onto the backs of steel workers.

### CHOICES

Just like the union officials who forced acceptance of the 8,500 Chrysler redundancies, the steel union bureaucrats saw that they had two choices. *Either* they could defend the conditions of their members by opposing the treacherous policies of the Wilson government and its support for the employers; *or* knuckle under and help the employers impose their solutions.

And because these officials see the mobilisation of the working class as a threat to their own bureaucratic positions, they chose the second course.

They now play a key role in implementing 40,000 redundancies. As BSC chief Bob Scholey cynically described their joint attack on the shop floor: "This agreement will strengthen the hand of local officials and management."

In other words, the union leaders are now seen by the employers as simply an extension of management with a better position to prevent expensive and dangerous confrontation between organised workers and a crisis-ridden capitalist class.

### PAY LAWS

Meanwhile the reactionary speech by Jack Jones, calling for another vicious year of wage cutting to follow on the present £6 pay laws, with flat rate increases again lower than the increase in the cost of living, has been publicised by a coordinated press campaign.

The present combination of



Jones

legislation and TUC collaboration has already put a stop to free collective bargaining. No longer do wage claims take into account factors like forced increases in effort, rising prices, or the legitimate aspirations of workers to improve living standards.

### INSTRUCTED

"Negotiations" now simply centre on the £6 figure, with all full time officials instructed to keep settlements within that figure.

Jones' latest speech then shows that just as the steel union bureaucrats see it as *their job* to assist management in sacking their own members and to produce a "viable" steel industry for capitalism, so Jones sees *his job* as blocking and defeating the justified wage demands of his members, whose living standards fall each day as a direct result of Wilson's Tory policies.

### HOSTILITY

But as these historic betrayals are prepared by the TUC leadership, the class hostility within the union rank and file to the policies of the Wilson government are just beginning to find some expression in the Labour and trade union bureaucracy.

Most difficult for these leaders to skate round is of course the huge 1½ million unemployment figure just announced - the real fruits of 2 years of Wilson

government.

All kinds of pious statements are now being made about this figure - while at the same time both Clive Jenkins of ASTMS and Gormley of the NUM have stated opposition to Jones' new pay cuts proposal.

Such statements and bureaucratic misgivings are of course only the first rumblings of a split in the united front of employers and reformist leaders which has predominated over the last year. They do not, in themselves, threaten the government. The call must be for these people to stop talking and start acting to defeat Wilson and Jones.

### VERBALLY

For months, the 'left' MPs have verbally opposed Wilson - even attacking ex-'left' Michael Foot the Employment Secretary. But not *once* have they been prepared to launch a campaign through the Labour and trade union movement to remove Wilson the right wing from office or even vote against their policies in Parliament.

In this sense, tomorrow's debate on government economic policy and the level of



Foot

unemployment is a test for the 'left'.

Any serious opposition to Wilson within the Labour Party must begin with a vote against his policies at the end of that debate.

As for those union leaders who claim to disagree with the Jones plan - not *one* of them has advocated the necessary alternative demand for a defence of working class living standards against inflation through a sliding scale of wages.

And while all sorts, from Jones to Scanlon to Bassnett have called for "selective reflation" and

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## SPAIN'S FASCIST PAY LAWS BROKEN

The mounting offensive of the Spanish working class has become an immediate threat not only to the life of the 'new look' fascist regime but to the class collaborationist plans of the Stalinist and reformist leaders.

During the last two weeks about half a million workers in Spain have been either on strike, locked out, or threatening imminent strike action. The strike wave which began in December in the motor industry (Chrysler) and electrical engineering industries (Standard Electric and Siemens) has spread to nearly all sectors. Most of the engineering sector is involved plus transport (the Madrid metro workers and the national railway workers), the Madrid banks, the Asturian coalmines which are at a complete standstill, the construction industry and many others.

### WIDER

Many of these strikes relate to wage demands, but have taken on wider aims. In Barcelona the death of a worker who was run over by a police vehicle during a demonstration, led to a wildfire spread of protest strikes in which about nine-tenths of the city's industry came to a halt. A separate strike of electrical workers in Barcelona produced a 24 hour complete power blackout.

A number of strikes in the private sector (in the construction industry, for instance) have already led to wage settlements which break the rigid wage controls which form the backbone of the regime's current economic policy. The settlements also contravene Spain's labour laws which ban organisations with which negotiations have been held.

In such a climate the regime has found its new sheep's clothing much too uncomfortable and has responded with wholesale repression. All strike threats in the public sector have been met with the call-up of workers into the army and the threat of court-martials. In this way it has temporarily stopped the strikes of the postal and railway workers. Meetings of other strikers (many of them in churches) have been broken up with police violence.

### BRUTALITY

The same brutality has been used against public demonstrations reaching a peak on the evening of January 20 in Madrid when the largest display of state repression since the civil war

attempted to stop a mass demonstration called jointly by the CP-dominated Democratic Junta and the Socialist Party dominated platform of Democratic Convergence.

The regime claimed this event as a success. But although the whole demonstration was unable to assemble as planned outside the main government buildings, tens of thousands of workers joined the demonstration and virtually the whole of central Madrid and all its working class suburbs were scenes of militant resistance to police attacks with batons, smoke and tear-gas bombs and water cannons.



CP Secretary Carillo

The regime has also resorted to wholesale arrests. On January 12th 23 trade unionists (claimed to be members of the CP) were arrested, some of whom were released several days later. On the 16th 120 Catholic trade unionists of Workers Fraternity for Catholic Action were arrested and accused of organising a general strike, and on the 19th were 55 labour lawyers.

### APOLOGY

The latter arrests produced such strong protests from other lawyers that the regime released the 55 with an apology. These events illustrate how the regime is haunted by the spectre of a political general strike.

But the same spectre also terrifies the leaders of the main working class parties. Both the Junta and the Platform have tried in published statements to minimise the political dimension which increasingly characterises the strike movement and emphasise that they are exclusively about the question of wages.

Equally, in restricting the demands of demonstrations to the

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# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## CIA DEMANDS CLOAK BACK

Mr. William Colby, Director of the CIA, demanded at the end of last week that the curtain should be brought down once more on the activities of his organisation and that there should be new legislation imposing heavy penalties for those who expose any of its clandestine activities.

Colby's arrogant request - made in evidence to the US Senate Committee on government operations which includes the CIA as an arm of the Presidency - comes after a carefully orchestrated international campaign by politicians and pressmen to resurrect some measure of public 'sympathy' for imperialism's most violent and sinister defender.

Among the measures Colby proposed was a return to the situation where the CIA was answerable only to the armed services committees in the Senate and the House of Representatives - committees which in years have been the creatures of the military chiefs and the weapons manufacturers.

### Committees

At present eight different Congressional committees have been taking evidence on the CIA's secret operations. 'Every one of the new projects that were subjected to this process has leaked into the public domain', complained Colby, and went on to request that new laws should be passed making it a criminal offence for staff members leaving committees of Congress to break their oath of secrecy.

But the obvious explanation why these committees have been leaking like sieves is that the CIA activities revealed to them have shocked even their conservative members and officials, propelling them to give 'off the record' details

to the liberal press.

And the sense of 'responsibility' felt by bourgeois journalists for the CIA's state secrets has been further eroded by the revelation that at least eleven news organisations, including Reuter's, contained journalists planted by the CIA to gather information and plant false news stories to their advantage.

Colby also backed moves in Congress to bring in laws which would make it a serious criminal offence for former CIA employees to publish anything - such as the names of CIA officials - that they learned in the course of their work, and for anyone to publish secret or classified information relating to the CIA.

### Protection

This demand for blanket protection of the CIA flows directly out of the world-wide campaign mounted against those publishing the names of CIA officials in US embassies abroad - on the grounds that they were endangering the lives of the innocent!

After the shooting of American



Phillip Agee - publishing CIA Addresses

embassy official Welch in Athens, following his being named as a CIA agent in a Greek newspaper, capitalist newspapers from London to Tokyo have spoken in chorus. Subsequent press revelations of the identities of CIA agents in Paris, Madrid and London have brought unanimous denunciations in their editorials.

### "Hero"

Welch was treated as a national hero and martyr by the US government, being buried with full military honours in Arlington National Cemetery, with President Ford in attendance. He has unquestionably been much more use to the CIA dead than alive.

This, plus the fact that the Greek police (backed presumably, by the full resources of the CIA), have made scant progress in tracing those who killed him, has raised in a new and sharp form the question who was responsible for his death?

The CIA's well-deserved reputation for devious and skillful handling of its public-relations problems has led to the suggestion



Sir Maurice Oldfield

that the CIA itself may have decided that a pawn would have to be sacrificed for the sake of the greater game. Such suggestions, needless to say, are rejected as 'scurrilous' by sources in Washington.

Be that as it may, the mounting press campaign in defence of the CIA must be rejected with contempt by the international workers movement. Colby admitted on television only last week that the CIA had prepared detailed plans for the murder of Fidel Castro and Patrice Lumumba, the nationalist leader killed during the civil war in the Congo.

### Murderers

What the demands for the 'protection' of CIA agents abroad amounts to is a demand that murderers, hooligans and their accomplices should not be identified, lest anyone should be outraged by their activities!

The demand by Labour MPs and left-wing organisations to Wilson that he put a stop to CIA activities in Britain points up the need for a struggle by the labour movement against all forms of spying and provocation by the ruling class and their 'intelligence' agencies.

According to recent press stories Wilson has been considering a secret report which recommends the setting-up of a single intelligence body in Britain, the 'National Security Agency', based in many respects on the CIA.

It would have access to the files and operations of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), MI5 (the counter-espionage service), all sections of the police and of the military intelligence departments.

The scheme, in that form, has been shelved mainly as a result of rivalries among the parties involved. One result has been the resignation of SIS chief, Sir Maurice Oldfield, who had hoped to head the NSA. The SIS, the most clandestine and reactionary section of the British 'security' apparatus, has had a hand in some of the most vicious conspiracies in post-war politics.

In 1970 they have a free hand to a plot organised from Britain for a military coup to overthrow the nationalist Gaddafi government in Libya and restore the oilfields there

to British and American interests. They are presently credited with planning British government support for the Sultan of Oman against liberation forces there.

Earlier, they backed the 1954 coup which brought the Shah of Iran to power, and in the late 1940s they collaborated with the CIA in a plot to invade Albania, removing the Communists and restoring King Zog to the throne.

The SIS, which provided much of the initial training and guidance for the CIA in the period immediately after the war, is just as willing as its big brother to intervene against the labour and socialist movement in this country.

Oldfield's likely successor as head of SIS is K.R.C. Pridham, Director of Communications at the Foreign Office - a pointer to the close relations that exist between the intelligence services and the 'public' departments of the capitalist state.



Ford



Colby

Another warning comes from the year-long fillibuster waged by senior civil service officials in many departments to obstruct the - extremely timid - proposals of the Labour government to relax the Official Secrets Act.

At present the Act makes it possible to prosecute anyone who publishes any classified information whether or not it is important or genuinely 'secret'.

The police-state legal powers which the civil service chiefs are struggling to preserve in Britain are, in fact, even stronger than those that Colby is demanding on behalf of the CIA.

## LEBANON

### CEASE FIRE NO ANSWER

The abatement of the Lebanon's murderous civil war following the cease-fire and agreement of 22nd. January can be nothing but a temporary hold-up in the bitter conflicts that lie beneath the surface in this focal point of imperialist intrigue and counter-offensive in the Middle East.

The state of Lebanon is a joint creation of French and British imperialism from the period after the fall of the Ottoman Empire when they were in a position to draw the state boundaries of the area. It was delineated in the 1920s following the predominance of a Christian bourgeoisie, specifically to provide a buffer against the Arab nationalism of Damascus.

Its independence was agreed in 1946 and has been maintained since as a necessary commercial centre for the Arab world while there is a separate Zionist state to the south. It is also a major focus in the Middle East of pro-imperialist political movements. One of these is the Phalangist, which was first founded in 1936 (on the model of the political organisation which provided the basis for Franco's rise to power in Spain).

### FASCISM

The Maronite Christians of Lebanon have thus adopted both the religious beliefs of the Western conquerors in the Crusades, and many facets of twentieth century ideology of fascism and forms of racialism.

The *Guardian* correspondent in Beirut the other day was shocked to hear the Phalangists after they had shot down some refugees in cold blood, say that Palestinian refugees were 'all thieves. And if they are poor it is their own fault. They breed like rabbits'.

Such phrases are the filthy stock trade of every right-wing demagogue from Wolverhampton to Munich and Madrid.

In Lebanon as elsewhere, such

smokescreen for the agents and friends of US imperialism and its local supporters.

### DIVISIONS

In Lebanon the carefully designed 'sectarian' constitution has maintained and intensified religious and other divisions, and was enforced in 1958 when it was last threatened by the arrival of US marines on the beaches of Beirut.

Such political arrangements, however, are of necessity unstable. The movement of Palestinian refugees into the country over the years (particularly after the military advances of the Israelis in 1967 and the massacre of the Palestinians in Jordan in 1970), has built up a population burning with hatred of national and class oppression.

The growth of commercial, academic and other organisations in an artificial Lebanese society has at the same time caused the growth of various left-wing political organisations such as the Progressive Socialist Party of Kamal Jablatt, the Communist Action Organisation of the Lebanon and a number of small groups claiming to be Trotskyist. Most of these groups are members of a 'Front of Progressive Parties and National Forces' which has played a major role in defending the Palestinians and poor Lebanese against the Phalangists.

### BALANCE

At the same time, the special character of the Lebanese state, with the careful balance of competing groups, has resulted in a very

is usually Christian but whose rank and file is often Muslim.

Thus the army has been useless to maintain the *status quo*. Instead the government has built up large-scale armed militias, not just of the Phalangists, but also of the so-called 'National Liberal Party' of which the leader is Caille Camoun, who is one of the major right-wing figures in Lebanese politics and who also happens to be the Interior Minister.

### MILITANCY

These forces could not just march up and down in the face of the growing militancy of the Palestinians and the politicisation of the Lebanese masses themselves.

On the 13th April last, the Phalangists gunned down a busload of Palestinians, murdering twenty seven. Tension grew throughout the month with the first steps of US sponsored Arab-Israeli detente.

As *Le Monde* correctly described the momentum of events on 22nd January:

If the Lebanese civil war was effectively set in motion on 13th April last, the hostilities only assumed their devastating scope in September, a few days after the signature of the Israeli-Egyptian agreement at Sinai".

### CHANGING

The internal developments of social and political forces in the Arab world were as always intimately tied up with the changing balance of forces as between pro- and anti-imperialist forces in the area as a whole.

The Phalangists aim was to finish the job started by the Americans and their Zionist friends, to hold back and defeat all those who in any way threatened the international power of capital.

Over the weeks since September, the battle has smouldered on from week to week with fighting mostly in the seafront area of Beirut between Phalangists and various left wing groups including Palestinian forces from the Popular Front organisa-

The significance for the Arab world as a whole was made clear by *Le Monde*:

"To tell the truth, the Arab leaders do not see the Lebanese conflict as a religious war...most Arab governments can be seen, in effect, as sympathisers, friends and general allies of the Christian militias of the Lebanon".

It was as if to confirm this assessment that after a number of days of bitter fighting, right-wing groups over-ran the Christian Palestinian refugee camp called Dbayic on 14th January, massacring the women, children and old men who still remained there.

### INTERVENTION

This event transformed the situation, forcing the intervention of the right-wing Palestinian forces and the mobilisation of left-wing militia forces in all parts of Beirut and the rest of Lebanon.

On 16th January, left-wing forces achieved some successes at the Christian village of Dumori to the south of Beirut, and on the same day, units of the Lebanese air force attacked Palestinian and left-wing groups.

This provoked a crisis that within two days led to the resignation of Muslim Prime Minister Karami, the man who a few short months before had been described as the last hope for unity in Lebanon.

It was at this point that the Phalangist forces began to move into areas of shanty huts and slums in Beirut in order to kill large numbers of the inhabitants, level out their houses, and drive whatever people and their possessions remained into the Muslim quarters.

### ZIONIST

Such techniques of course are the bread and butter of Zionist conquest and it is not surprising that a *Guardian* correspondent in Beirut found Phalangist militiamen engaged in their grisly slaughter who claimed to have been involved in the Zionist murders of Palestinian leaders in Beirut.

wrote:

"The hatred of the Palestinians by the Phalangists is extreme and expresses itself in other ways that do not bear repeating".

In this situation, with the threatened partition of the country and even of Beirut itself by the right-wing forces, the Arab bourgeoisie was forced to intervene.

### CEASE-FIRE

The settlement and cease-fire announced on 22nd January was not in any sense a simple victory for 'Syrian national interests' as portrayed in the capitalist press.

It was an attempt, (by no means certain to succeed) to preserve a part of the Middle East state structure that at this time is considered necessary to maintain the existing social and political relationships of the area, including some kind of *modus vivendi* with the Zionist settler state.

The Palestinians and their allies in the socialist movement of Lebanon have fought many heroic actions over recent weeks. In order to carry this struggle they will have to fight now not only for the Palestinians to obtain their national rights, but also for the poor and displaced of Lebanon to be allowed to return to their homes.

### SOCIALIST

In order to do this, they will have to develop socialist policies aimed above all to separate themselves from the treacherous varieties of nationalism which have held back the struggle of the Arab masses, the Baathists, the Nasserites and the supporters of Arafat.

They will have to develop the power of the camp militias and in the poor quarters of Beirut much beyond that provided by the newly arrived Palestine Liberation Army forces.

It is through the fight for socialist policies and the independent action of the masses that a defeat of Zionism and all those forces in the Arab world prepared to compromise with it and its imperialist

# CUBA: FIRST CP CONGRESS

## PART 2: CASTRO FALSIFIES HISTORY

The Congress has been prepared over the last three months by a campaign of gross falsification of Cuba's recent history in which the main participants have been Blas Roca and Fidel Castro.

A Communist Party was first established in Cuba in 1925. In a speech to mark the 50th anniversary of this occasion Castro delivered a eulogy of a member of the Central Committee of this party, Julio Antonio Mella. Mella has frequently been praised by the Cuban leadership for his individual acts of heroism, in particular when in 1925 he went on hunger strike while imprisoned by the Machado dictatorship and forced Machado to release him. It is only recently that Castro's eulogies of Mella have emphasised his role as a founder of the Cuban Communist Party.

### HEROIC

In fact Mella was continuously criticised by the party for exactly the heroic deeds for which he is now remembered in Cuba. Mella left Cuba in 1927 and, after a visit to Moscow, lived in Mexico and joined the Mexican CP. As far as can be judged from limited sources, he was expelled from the Mexican CP as a Trotskyist in 1928, though one report says he was readmitted to the party in 1929, two weeks before being assassinated, almost

certainly by an agent of Machado. His expulsion and conflict with the party are of course never mentioned.

Villena is another hero of the PSP praised by Castro. He was in fact forced out of the leadership of the party by Stalin through the delegate of the Comintern in Cuba with the help of the man who succeeded him as general secretary, none other than Blas Roca!

### DEAL

The First Communist Party, said Castro, 'played a key role in the general strike of August 1933 that put an end to Machado's tyrannical regime'. Indeed it did! In fact it made a deal with Machado to call off the strike in exchange for the granting of certain limited economic demands. The CP was unable to fulfill its side of the bargain since it failed to control the mass movement which was determined to oust the dictatorship and Machado fell against the wishes of the CP.

The party, said Castro, 'consistently applied in practice the principles of Marxism-Leninism' and implies plainly that this meant leading the struggle of the working class against all Cuba's bourgeois governments including that of Batista. In fact when Batista first gained effective power after a junior officers' coup in 1934, Blas Roca described him as fascist. Within 3 years he had become a



Blas Roca (black jacket) with other Cuban leaders.

democrat. Roca later wrote: 'When Batista found the path to democracy, the Party helped him'. In 1938 the party formed an informal alliance with Batista; in 1940 it supported him in the presidential election; and in 1942 two leaders of the CP (Marinello and Carlos Raphael Rodriguez) became for 2 years members of Batista's cabinet!

### MYTH

Castro also develops in his speech, as he has done for years, the myth that his movement was from the beginning Marxist-Leninist. This now includes the myth that he was always close to the PSP. He talks of 'our admiration for the Communists' conduct' when he was in the university. In fact the movement to which Castro belonged in the University (The Revolutionary Insurreccional Union) was openly anti-communist and helped the trade union leaders of the Authentic party in the 1940s to expel the PSP from the major trade union federation.

In the present contest of falsification in Cuba, Blas Roca runs Castro a very close second. In a speech in October he described

Castro's 1953 assault on the Moncada barracks as 'an extraordinary feat... an example of organisation, revolutionary valour and courage'; though 'it ended up in a tactical military defeat' this became 'an

extraordinary strategic political victory'. Many people may have forgotten, but Blas Roca certainly has not, what the PSP said of the assault at the time: 'We repudiate the putschist methods, peculiar to bourgeois political factions... the heroism displayed by the participants in this action is false and sterile... The PSP counterposed to the action a policy of 'civil liberties, general elections and the establishment of a National Democratic Front government'.

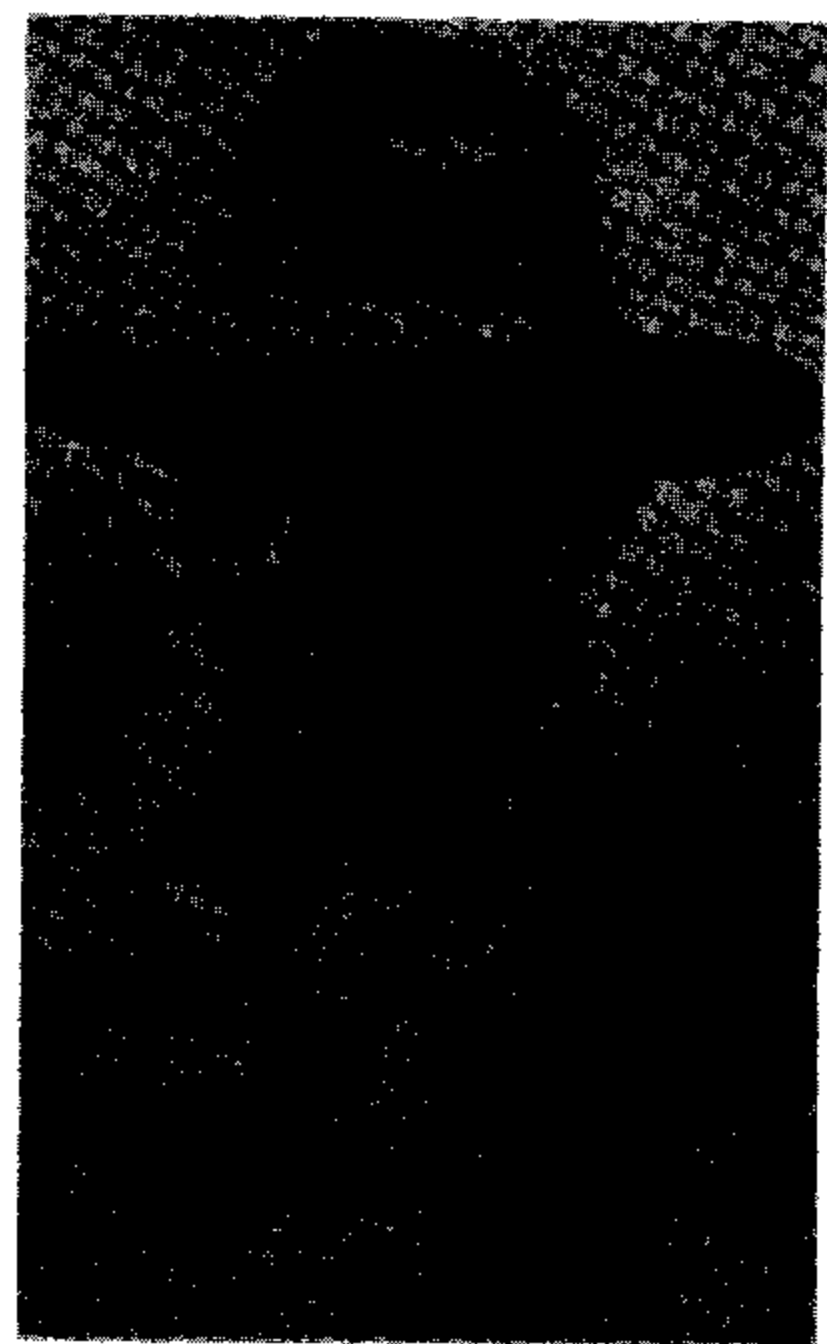
### LIES

This chorus of lies from the Cuban leadership shows that the context in which the first Congress of the present Cuban CP takes place is not some renewal of political life; instead it represents the culmination of ten years of attempts to erase political memories in the interests of cementing the bureaucratic control of the Cuban leadership.

### NEXT ISSUE:

### PART 3:

### THE CONGRESS ITSELF.



Mella

## THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

The Workers Socialist League was formed in December 1974 to struggle for the continuity of the principles of Trotskyism in Britain and towards the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

In the daily struggle to take the demands and principles of Trotsky's *Transitional Programme* into the trade unions, the WSL has been at the forefront of the fight for the sliding scale of wages, and work sharing on full pay - demands which at the T&GWU Conference were the only alternative to Jones' treacherous £6 pay plan and the wholesale acceptance of redundancies by the bureaucracy.

In the Health Service, WSL comrades have led the struggle for the sliding scale of NHS spending and for trade union committees to open the books of the Authorities, along with the fight to end all private practice - policies adopted by ASTMS National Conference.

In local disputes also, WSL comrades have tested and developed the demands of the *Transitional Programme*, putting forward in every case, the only real opposition to the Stalinists and the right-wing. Our struggle for the "open the books" demand in the motor industry has won a mass response.

At the same time we have put forward a policy to fight unemployment, calling for unity of employed and unemployed through the fight to mobilise the trade union movement.

The WSL is the only movement that fights consistently for transitional demands, going beyond mere trade union militancy to pose the political issues to workers.

While these practical interventions have developed the League's grasp of Trotsky's *Programme*, there has been a consistent drive to deepen and enrich the movement's understanding of the history and the present crisis of the Fourth International, as an essential part of any serious initiative towards its reconstruction.

We urge all readers who agree on the need for revolutionary leadership and the demands we put forward to find out more about the WSL and join our fight in the labour movement. Simply fill in the form below:

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## WHY ONLY 300?

Over three hundred trade unionists, including delegations from Triumph, Chrysler, and Rolls Royce, marched through the streets of Coventry on January 17th to protest against rapidly increasing unemployment in the city.

There are important political reasons why the march was so small. Though the demonstration was called officially by the local Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, the T&GWU, (the major union locally) was not represented by a single branch banner, and only one AUEW branch banner was in evidence.

### ABSTENTION

And the abstention of political organisations was shown by the fact that the only political banner on the march other than the 'Rank and File' banner was that carried by the 40-strong contingent from the Midlands area of the Workers Socialist League.

It was also WSL alone which defied the Confed's attempts to rule out 'political' slogans and shouted demands for a fight for work-sharing on full pay, opening the books of the employers, and nationalisation, alongside a fight to remove Wilson.

Indeed the Confed policy was very different - its leaders restricted themselves to pleas to Wilson for Coventry to be



Stoke stewards on the demonstration

designated an "Assisted Area" which - they claim - would direct more capitalist investment to the area and so reduce unemployment.

In a period of declining investment such a policy is quite clearly a fraud. Even more than this, however, it is a policy designed to line up the trade union leadership alongside local capitalists against the working class - of Coventry and elsewhere.

Although few workers could summon up much interest in this bankrupt perspective, it is a policy which has enthusiastic support from so called 'left' MP Les Huckfield.

### GEC

At a recent city centre rally of GEC workers the Tribune MP from Nuneaton said it was time 'Coventry people looked after themselves'. This narrow outlook goes hand in hand with the economic nationalism advocated by

the 'lefts'.

The low attendance at Saturday's demonstration will be used by all those (whether open enemies of the working class, cynics or opportunists) who claim that "workers won't fight" against declining living standards.

It will be used, as were the low attendances at Chrysler mass meetings, as a cover for those who refuse to lead a struggle for jobs.

As such therefore it is a deliberate blow against the working class, increased by the ludicrous forecasts of a 15,000 attendance made by Confed leaders.

The fight for alternative policies to the dismal protests of the local bureaucracy is clearly essential. A firm starting point is the programme fought for by the WSL on the demonstration, which clearly showed that the WSL alone has the perspective of defeating the bureaucracy and leading the struggle against unemployment.

## LETTERS

We welcome readers' comments and criticisms on Socialist Press articles. Letters should be addressed to the Editorial Board, c/o 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

## BACK ISSUES!

We have back issues available of both 'Trotskyism Today' and of 'Socialist Press'

## WSL EDUCATION CLASS

### OXFORD

Sunday, 1st February, 8.00

Lake St Community Centre.

'The building of the Labour Party'.



# 1 YEAR OF SOCIALIST PRESS



A year of principled struggle: some of the lead articles and theoretical material published in the first year of "Socialist Press"



# COVENTRY SACKINGS: DATELINE FEBRUARY 1ST



Morris

## CHRYSLER

Hundreds of Chrysler workers have shown their faith in the Labour government's "rescue" by opting for voluntary redundancy. At the Stoke engine plant the queue to get out was headed by reactionary T&GWU convenor Bob Morris, who had waited only to prevent any struggle against sackings before scuttling out of the plant clutching his company cheque.



Workers at the Stoke plant

A similar spectacle presents itself at Ryton where out of 770 enquiries about voluntary redundancy, 22 are from shop stewards - a clear indication of why no fight emerged from that plant's leadership against the government plan.

### SACKINGS

Thanks to such stewards, even in Coventry, where there are no jobs to go to and continuous sackings are taking place under the watchful eye of the trade union leaders, Chrysler have managed to ensure that no compulsory redundancies among hourly paid workers will take place in the first round of sackings at the Stoke plant on February 2nd. Some white collar staff however will be compulsorily sacked.

And in Ryton the government plan demands that an additional 1,000 workers over and above the applicants for voluntary redundancy must be thrown out of the plant on February 2nd.

At the company's Whitley headquarters 25 women employed at the Data Processing Department have been told they must go. Their union, APEX, has objected, on the grounds that some of the work done by the women is now being farmed out to office bureau. The women are particularly angered by the company's suggestions that they approach the bureau concerned in order to find work! "Why can't they keep us on?" is their obvious reaction.

### CRITICISM

Meanwhile, as Chrysler prepared for the first wielding of the jobs axe the Labour government's "rescue" plan is coming in for criticism from every side - except from the 'left' MPs and union officials.

Lord Ryder, Chairman of the National Enterprise Board, is reported to be furious - arguing that a major blow has been struck at the government's entire industrial strategy, and in particular at British

Leyland.

The Trade and Industry Sub-Committee of the House of Commons Expenditure Committee has questioned the viability of Chrysler UK despite the government's injection of £162m.

Eric Varley, who, it is widely rumoured, was against putting any money into the company, was sharply grilled by members of the committee last week.

Tory MP Maxwell-Hyslop argued that production of the Avenger would be more expensive at Linwood than at Ryton where, even with the Stoke engine plant nearby, production levels of 88% capacity were needed just to break even. With the Stoke engine plant 240 miles away, the costs would be greater.

### ATTACKS

Right wing Labour MP Pat Duffy has followed up his previous attacks on Labour's investment in British Leyland with the statement

"we want the taxpayer to get good value".

As Duffy has not been one of those who have called for nationalisation we are only to assume that he wants the car industry to collapse, leaving hundreds of thousands on the dole.

Such people must be driven from the labour movement and replaced with those who will put forward policies in defence of working class conditions and living standards.

It is clear that workers at Chrysler and elsewhere are expected to draw the conclusion from the campaign against the 'rescue' plan that they have been lucky to get a postponement of Chrysler's closedown, and that if there's any trouble that closedown can easily be brought forward. The fact that 8,500 redundancies can be portrayed as "lucky" shows the complete betrayal of Labour and trade union leaders.

There have now been several major reports on the British Motor Industry - one by the government's 'Think Tank'; the Ryder Report on BL; the first report of the Commons Expenditure Committee; and finally the Department of Industry's "The British Motor Vehicle Industry".

### ENQUIRY

There has yet, however, to be an independent working class enquiry into the future of the Motor Industry. And without full knowledge of the real state of the industry, car workers are at a clear disadvantage in fighting the current drive towards speed-up and unemployment.

Yet before the government made its decision to axe 8,000 jobs the unions at Whitley drew up their own plan for future production. The findings of this report

should be published as widely as possible and steps taken immediately for the establishment of an 'open the books' committee around which a campaign for a full workers enquiry into Chrysler can be launched.

There have recently been reports of resistance by French unions to the transfer of production of the Alpine to Ryton in Coventry. French unions at Simca must therefore be drawn also into the preparations of a full investigation into Chrysler International.

As we have argued consistently the Chrysler workers should demand to see the company's books. What plans are being prepared to speed up those workers who remain? What is to happen to the money handed over (with no strings attached) by the Labour government?

The next round of compulsory redundancies is fixed for June. Between now and then a policy must be hammered out around which a fight to reverse the situation can be organised.

Along with the campaign for the 'opening of the books' must be demands for no further sackings, work sharing on full pay, and nationalisation under workers' management. Those stewards who persist in support for the 'rescue' plan must be replaced by those who will resist any sackings.

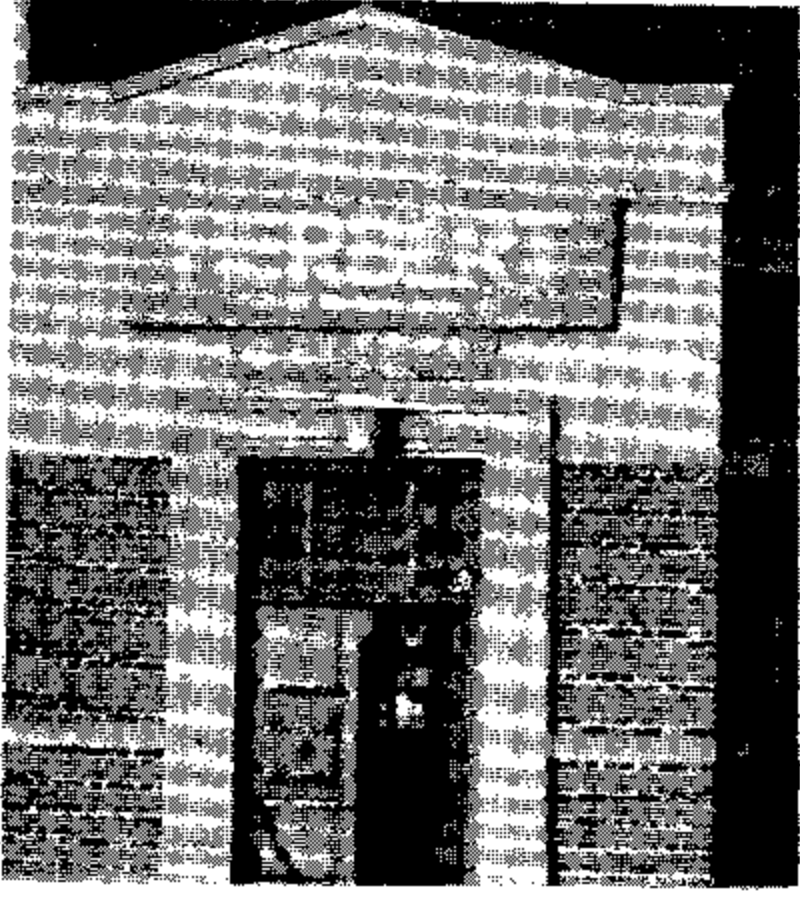
### FOOTNOTE

Another rat leaving the sinking ship is Lord Rootes. He was Chairman of Chrysler UK until 1973 when he severed connections with the company.

He is now chairman of Chrysler dealers Green's of Swindon.

Greens are giving up their Chrysler franchise and switching to Japanese Datsun cars.

## ALFRED HERBERTS



Simply to call for nationalisation in defence of jobs is not enough. This is the hard lesson in Coventry, where the nationalisation of machine tool manufacturers Alfred Herbert Ltd has not prevented 1,200 people from losing their jobs.

The first steps towards this defeat were taken when the union leaders, under pressure from the Labour government, took part in the preparation of a plan for the industry which involved 900 redundancies.

The first details of redundancies were announced in September last year and the leaderships of the various sites, few of whom had even consulted their members before completing the plan, quickly proved themselves incapable and unwilling to wage any fight.

There was no attempt to unify workers. Despite the fact that steps had been taken towards the establishment of a Combine Committee covering all plants, each individual union, at each site went its own way. This strengthened sectional consciousness, a clear factor in the defeat.

In any event union leaderships in the plants had no programme which could be the basis of a successful defence of jobs. Instead they placed total reliance on discussion with

NEB chief, Lord Ryder.

Although it was obvious that the Labour government was insisting on the sackings going through before it committed itself to any action no struggle was waged against the policies of the government.

### DEMAGOGY

No call was issued to the 'left' MPs such as Audrey Wise to implement their demagogic claims to oppose government policies, and for them to wage a real fight against these pro-capitalist policies.

There was no attempt by the union leadership to prepare a real alternative basis on which nationalisation could have been carried out. A committee should have been elected to campaign for access to the accounts, investment and production plans of Herberts.

A plan could then have been drawn up starting with no redundancies and instead a system of work sharing on full pay.

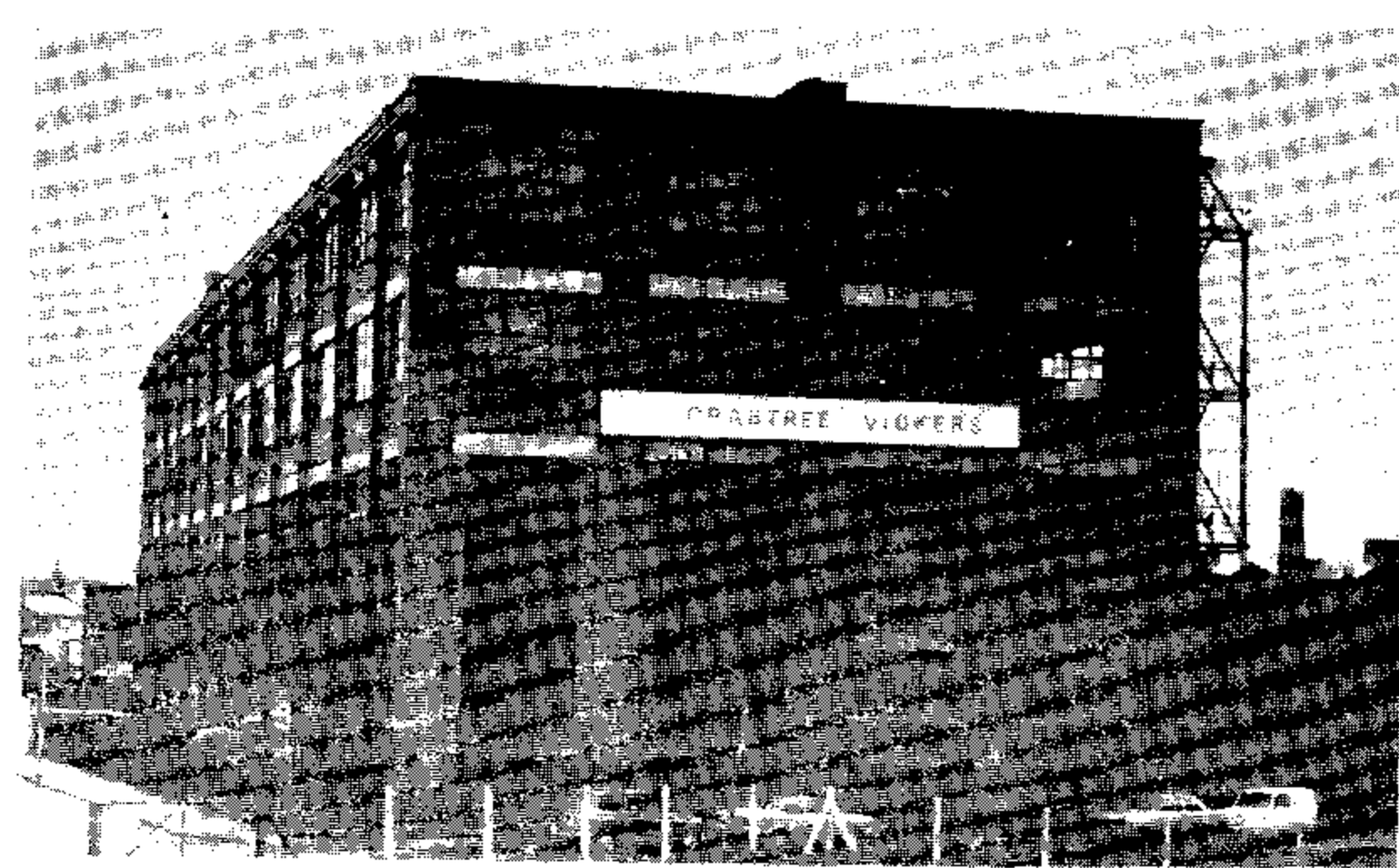
When this did not take place, and the Labour government did nationalise Herberts, it did so inevitably on the basis of restoring it to a position of 'viability' within the capitalist system.

The principle of redundancies has been accepted - but not enough workers have volunteered and so compulsory redundancies will take place on February 1st.

The lessons are clear. Nationalisation in itself will not save jobs and the situation facing trade union leaders is so stark that increasingly there will not even be a pretence of a fight.

The fight for workers' management must be carried through under new leadership.

## LEEDS FACTORY RUNDOWN



In Leeds the last two months has seen a gradual running down of the engineering firm Crabtree-Vickers. Every couple of weeks 50 or so workers have been made redundant - and the process is still going on.

The firm, part of the giant Vickers group, makes big printing presses which, in the present recession in the print industry, are unsaleable.

In opposing the redundancies repeated WSL leaflets into the plant have urged the shop stewards' committee to launch a campaign to force Vickers to open the books as first moves towards an all-out fight for nationalisation, beginning with calling a mass meeting of the factory to enforce official AUEW policy of opposition to all redundancies.

But the response from plant convenor Terry Jacques, AUEW

District President, was to announce in the local press his personal determination that "there will be no fight, no work-in and no occupation."

Having announced he was handing over his members bound hand and foot to the employers, Jacques went on to beg the management to tell stewards "what was happening" to the factory.

The sole action by the stewards to date has been to approach local MPs and the government to ask for help - which hasn't come.

The AUEW District Committee led by Jacques - a 'left' Labourite - contains a large 'broad left' group, all of whom are now paralysed in the face of large-scale factory closures and cutbacks in the Leeds area.

In line with complete refusal of the 'broad left' to defend jobs, the Stalinists of the Communist Party play a leading role in attacking the political independence of the

working class on the local Trades Council.

At the January 6th meeting Stalinist delegates voted down an ASTMS 507 branch resolution condemning TUC support for the Government's cosmetic "youth unemployment scheme".

Though delegates pointed out that the scheme was in line with local government cutbacks, replacing trade union labour with unorganised youth paid only pocket-money rates, the Stalinists were already up to their necks in the scheme through the regional TUC, and were actually assisting in distributing the Yorkshire allocation of finance under the scheme.

Stalinist principles are certainly cheap on the market - the amount they have to distribute in Yorkshire is the princely sum of 35 pence per week per unemployed!

As we go to press, we hear 250 more workers face the sack at Crabtrees.

# THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION



The Ivanovo-Vosnesensk Soviet of workers deputies.

## Part Two: 1905 - THE BIRTH OF THE SOVIET

by Ian Swindale

"Sire! We workers, our children and wives, the helpless old people who are our parents, we have come to you, Sire, to seek justice and protection. We are in great poverty, we are oppressed and weighed down with labours beyond our strength . . . Despotism and arbitrary rule are strangling us, and we are suffocating. Sire! Our strength is at an end! The limit of our patience has been reached; the terrible moment has come for us when it is better to die than to continue suffering intolerable torment . . ."

Dressed in their Sunday best, led by a priest, the workers of Petersburg crossed the bridges leading from the working class areas to the city to present a petition to the Tsar. The date was January 9th 1905 and on that day the roads to the Winter Palace led not to 'justice and protection' but to death. The Tsar's officers had planned a bloody massacre of the unarmed workers and their families in order to 'teach the workers a lesson'. But the snow covered streets around the Winter Palace turned red with the blood of the workers, a very different lesson was learnt in the working class districts from the one intended by the Csar.

### MASSACRE

The massacre of 'Bloody Sunday' took place at the height of a general strike in Petersburg in which over 100,000 workers were involved and which had brought the city to a standstill. The attack on the demonstration led immediately to the erection of barricades in the working class areas and the eruption of street fighting in various parts of the city. The rapid growth of capitalism in Russia at the end of the 19th century had not only led to an increase in the size of the Russian working class but had also led the workers into struggle against the employers. Starting very largely as purely economic struggles, these strikes became and more took on a political colouring. As economic crisis

followed economic crisis and hardship grew in the face of Russia's military defeats in the war against the Japanese, the working class more and more linked with their economic demands a call for a freely elected constituent assembly, a republic and a provisional government.

### POLITICAL STRIKE

Moreover, it was becoming clear to the workers of Petersburg that the way to fight for these demands was through the mass political strike. It was precisely a strike of this nature that led to the events of January 9th.

The capitalist class, themselves wanting to break out of some of the restrictions on expansion and profitability imposed by Tsarism, also wanted a Constituent Assembly. The disorders that took place in the early months of 1905 finally convinced them that the only way they would be able to continue 'peacefully' exploiting the working class was if Russia took on the mantle of bourgeois democracy. The capitalists themselves, however, were unable to carry out the revolution that would be necessary to put an end to the Tsarist autocracy.

Firstly, most of Russian capital was owned by foreign capitalists and the native capitalist class was therefore too weak as a class to lead a revolutionary movement.

Secondly, because of this, the Russian capitalists were afraid of the strength of the working class

and while they were prepared to support the more *unorganised* attempts of the working class to fight for the Constituent Assembly, they were not prepared to lead the working class into conflict with the Tsar. This did not however prevent the capitalists from presenting themselves as the champions of the working class.

Consequently, once the first wave of rebellion had died down towards the end of February 1905, the capitalists and their supporters in the intelligentsia began holding conferences and banquets to demand the setting up of a constituent assembly. The Tsar, however, was in no mood to listen to the pathetic pleas of a few intellectuals and textile manufacturers.

The Russian revolutionaries had long understood that the capitalist class would be unable to lead the fight for bourgeois democracy. That was why they could agree with the founder of Russian Marxism, Plekhanov, when he wrote in 1895 that: "the Russian revolutionary movement will triumph as a workers movement or not at all".

### CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Unlike the capitalists, the working class was not frightened to fight for a constituent assembly and a democratic republic because these would provide the working class with conditions much more favourable for the continuation of the class struggle.

The revolutionaries, therefore, in exile abroad or living an underground existence in the working class districts of the main industrial centres, greeted the events of January and February 1905 as heralding the beginning of the democratic revolution.

In the view of the Mensheviks, (the wing of Social Democracy from which Lenin and the Bolsheviks had split only two years earlier), any talk of socialism in the context of this revolution was quite premature. Because of the small size of the Russian proletariat the Mensheviks concluded that the best that could be hoped for was a parliamentary democracy in which the working class parties could represent the interests of the proletariat in the face of an expanding Russian capitalist class. Socialism, they said, could only be fought for at a later date when Russian capitalism had run its course.

Consequently, the Mensheviks were very careful not to upset the capitalists on whose good will they would very much depend once the democratic republic had been established.

strengths of the various classes for class dynamic of the revolution as it was unfolding, the Mensheviks first tried on the mantle they were to wear at a later stage of the Russian Revolution of loyal opposition to the capitalist class.

Lenin, in exile in Geneva, was greatly excited by events in Russia. He was convinced that the working class and the peasantry alone could bring about a constituent assembly.

### LENIN

But he stressed that such an assembly must not be merely a talking shop and he therefore argued that only a revolutionary provisional government based on the insurrection could ensure the setting up of a truly democratic and functioning constituent assembly. His slogan therefore, was for a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry".

Because Lenin recognised the importance of a bourgeois



Trotsky

democracy for the further development of the workers movement in Russia, and because he realised that socialism was not immediately on the agenda he was in effect arguing not for the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry but for the *bourgeois* democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

The workers and peasants would be the driving force of the revolution but the content of that revolution would be confined within the limits of a democratic republic within a capitalist framework.

This position was very different from that of the Mensheviks. Lenin would tolerate no soft attitudes towards the capitalist class, and he fully supported an insurrection by the working class to overthrow the Tsar. His slogan, however, was not without its defects, and the most successful critic of Lenin was Trotsky.

leading revolutionary to leave his exile in Geneva and return to Russia after the first wave of rebellion. He brought with him an understanding of the dynamics of the revolution, developed jointly with an old European socialist called Parvus, which, while still far from complete, went much further than any other Marxist of that time.

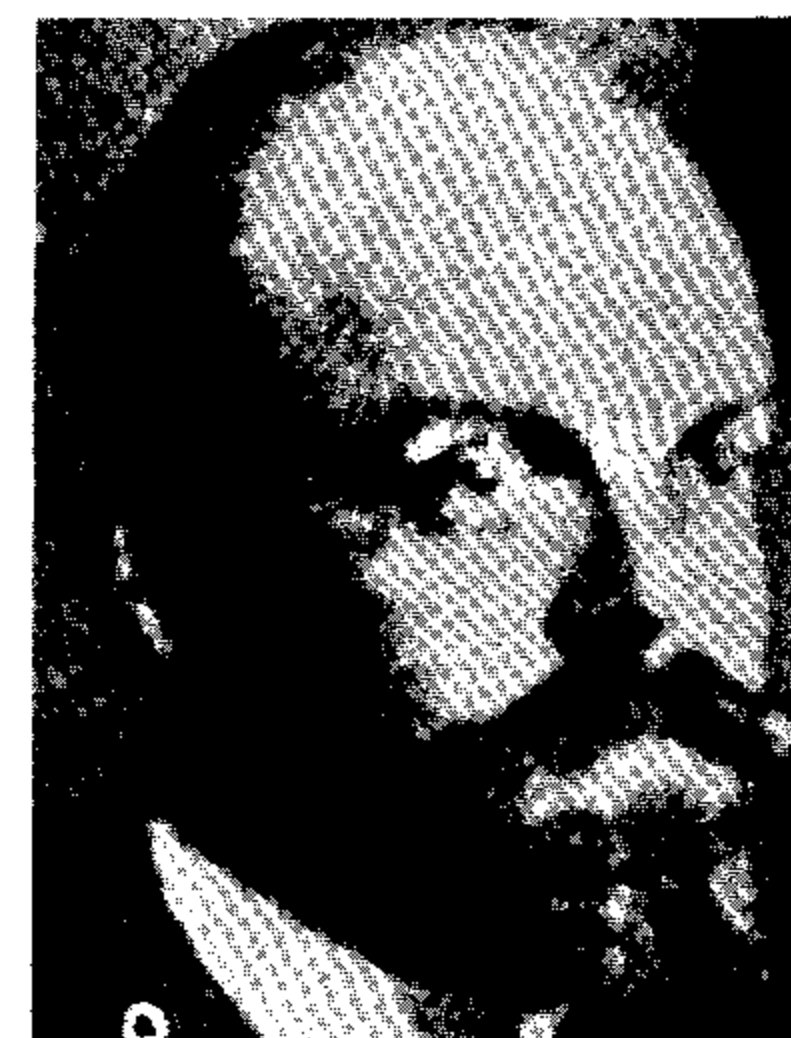
### TROTSKY

The question that Trotsky had been considering was this: Of course, the revolution is a bourgeois revolution and the working class is a small minority of the population, but the capitalists are refusing to lead the struggle and the working class has taken the lead in the struggle against the Tsar.

In the event of this struggle being successful is the proletariat to hand over its conquest to the capitalists? Isn't it more likely that the working class will wish to retain the power it has just won?

In other words, Trotsky was for the first time laying claim to power on behalf of the Russian working class. Parvus went even further and argued: "The revolutionary Provisional Government of Russia will be the government of a workers' democracy . . . As the Social Democratic party is at the head of the revolutionary movement . . . this government will be social democratic . . . a coherent government with a social democratic majority".

The period of relative calm through the summer of 1905 gave way in October to a fresh wave of strikes culminating in another extensive political strike. All the banquets and conferences of the bourgeoisie had not surprisingly failed to persuade the Tsar of the need for a more democratic regime. The Russian army was suffering further setbacks in the war with Japan.



Parvus

Then the typesetters in Petersburg's printing works went on strike for higher wages. The strike soon spread to other industries and almost immediately political demands for constitutional freedoms were added to the purely economic demands around which the strikes first started.

### RAILWAYS

On October 7th, workers on the Moscow-Kazan railway joined the strikers and within a week virtually the whole of the Russian rail network was strike-bound. The country ground to a halt. The post office and telegraph ceased to function and the workers marched round the city bringing out on strike any workers who remained at work.

The schools and universities closed and in many parts of Russia industrial and commercial life collapsed completely. The Cossacks came out on to the streets to harass and provoke the workers and immediately the workers began to erect barricades and raid gun shops.

Although the troops were able to overrun the barricades with apparent ease, the Tsar nevertheless gave way under the pressure of the strike.

Since the early days of October, the strike had been organised and coordinated by the Petersburg Soviet. This arose as a completely new form of workers' organisation, out of the strike committee of the printers.

When the Soviet held its first meeting on October 13th there were delegates from only one district, the Neva. However, when Trotsky addressed the Soviet two days later delegates from several more districts were present.





of delegates rose to around 500 and the decision was taken to produce a newspaper called *Izvestiya* (Tidings). The Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries each had three members on the Executive Committee of the Soviet but the main influence on the delegates was undoubtedly that of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

As the strike grew the role of the Soviet became daily more important. Most workers organisations were prepared to recognise the Soviet as the organiser of the strike. By thus placing many disconnected organisations under its control, the Soviet united the revolution around itself.

The military leader in Trepov, was eager to stop at nothing in putting down the strike and breaking up the Soviet. On October 14th he had posters pasted up all over the City, calling on soldiers to 'spare no bullets' in the fight against the strikers.

But on October 17th, when the strike was at its height and the first issue of *Izvestiya* appeared on the streets, the Tsar gave way and instead of unleashing the iron fist of Trepov, he appointed Witte as prime minister and issued a Manifesto promising a constitution, civil liberties, and universal suffrage. This Manifesto was also pasted on the walls of Petersburg — alongside the demand of Trepov to spare no bullets.

The publication of the Manifesto brought the Petersburg proletariat out on to the streets. In a huge crowd they moved towards the Technological Institute where the Soviet held its sessions, and then on to the University to listen to speeches.

**WARNING**

Trotsky was the fourth speaker on the rostrum. In his speech he pointed to this first great victory of the Russian working class but went on to warn that the Manifesto was in reality only a declaration of intent:

"But . . . do not hasten to celebrate victory: it is not yet complete. Does the promisory note weigh as much as pure gold? Is the promise of freedom the same as freedom? . . . Are the gates of our prisons open? . . ."

freedom's which were illusory. The middle classes hoped only for a constitutional monarchy and the Manifesto seemed to provide the basis for that. The workers were by and large republicans and socialists and therefore saw the manifesto as an indication that the regime was weakening and thus ripe for further assaults.

Since the continuation of the general strike offered at that point no further prospect of success, Trotsky urged the Soviet to call it off at its meeting of October 19th. The Soviet accepted this view unanimously and proposed a funeral procession on the 23rd to bury the dead of the revolution.

On the 22nd, however, it was learnt that the liberal Prime Minister, Witte, was so little in control, that Trepov had been able to plan the suppression of the demonstration. Very reluctantly the Soviet agreed to call off the procession, on the grounds that they should fight the Tsar on ground of their own choosing.

**NEWSPAPER**

The Soviet still kept much of the initiative, however. Firstly, it continued to publish its paper, *Izvestia*, which was edited by Trotsky. Each of the major printing works was raided in turn and ordered to print the paper.

Frequently, the managers of these works were quite willing to print the paper providing they were first "arrested" by the raiders. Working throughout the night, the paper would be printed and off the premises before the police realised what was happening.

One of the most important provisions of the Tsar's Manifesto was for freedom of speech. This was particularly important for the workers' movement since the strictest censorship laws had always applied, thus preventing the free dissemination of revolutionary ideas. The Soviet therefore resolved that:

"The Tsar's manifesto proclaims 'freedom' of speech in Russia, yet the Central Directorate of Affairs of the Press still exists, the censor's blue pencil is still in force . . . Freedom of the press still has to be won by the workers. The Soviet of

law, enforced by the workers of Petersburg.

Once the Soviet grew to represent the vast majority of the workers of Petersburg it constantly tended to challenge the existing legality by creating a new legality based on the interests of the working class.

Thus the Tsar was unable to find a single newspaper, except one produced by army printers, which would publish his Manifesto — while every day the printers printed thousands of copies of the socialist press.

When the reactionaries and the lumpen elements, supported by the police began preparations for a pogrom, the printers confiscated the pogrom literature, aimed at inciting riots against Jews, or socialists.

This freedom of the press led within days to the launching of three social democrat papers with a joint circulation approaching a quarter of a million as well as a

working class and soldiers and sailors. The revolt of sections of the Tsar's fleet further strengthened these fears.

The response of the liberals to these events, therefore was to swing their support once more behind the government. By November 26th the President of the Soviet, Khrustalev, had been arrested. The Soviet elected Trotsky to take his place, refusing to yield under the threat that hung over it and dissolve itself.

On December 2nd the Soviet published its economic manifesto calling on all sections of society to boycott the economy by refusing to pay taxes, withdrawing all deposits from banks and demanding payment in gold, and so on.

Within twenty-four hours the Soviet was arrested.

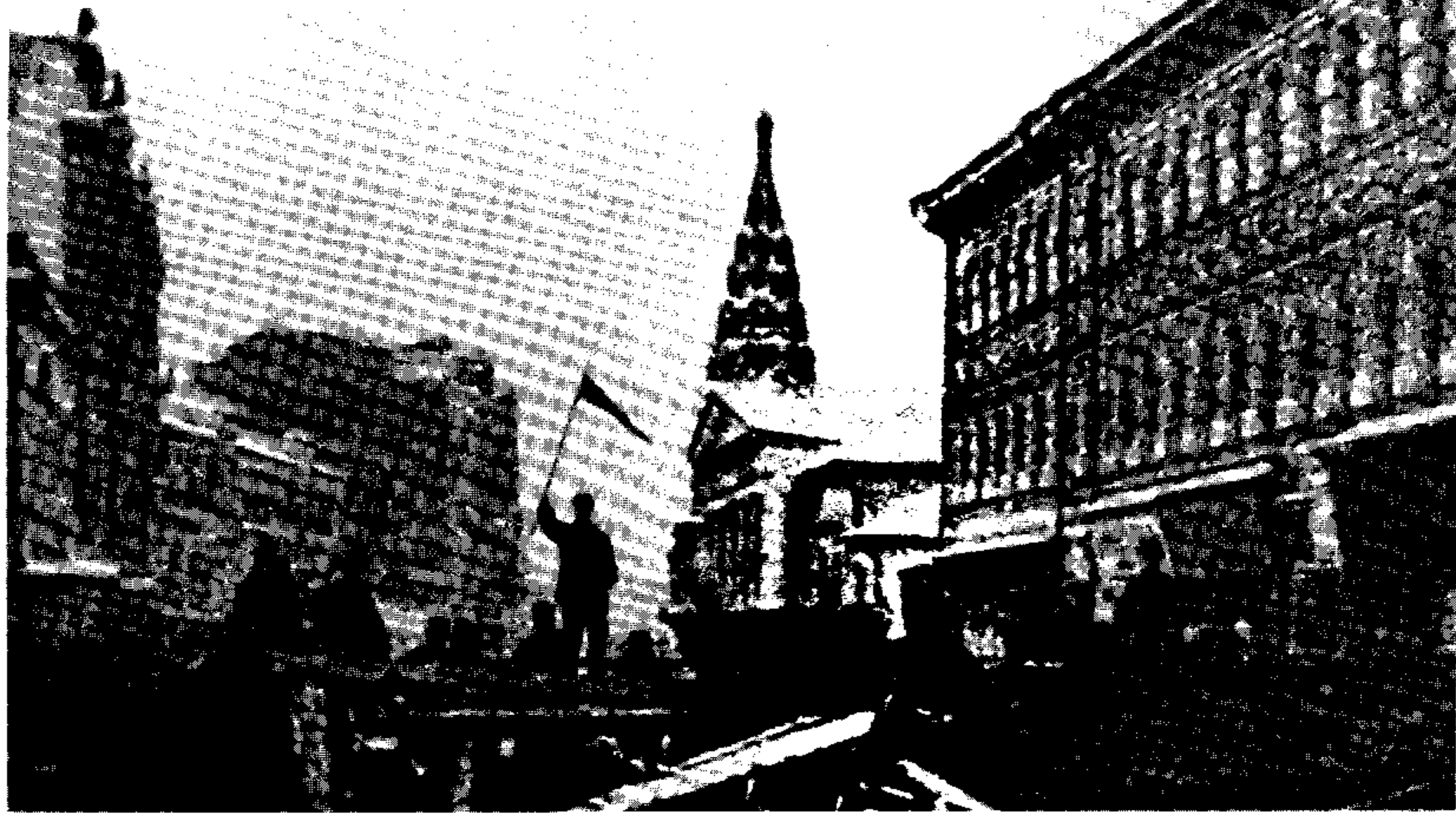
The trial of the members of the Soviet did not take place for a year and a half, but before that the final act of the 1905 revolution unfolded in Moscow. On 4th December the Moscow soviet endorsed the 'financial manifesto' and on the 7th

the first Soviet a year or two after his trial:

"The Soviet organised the working masses, directed the political strikes and demonstrations, armed the workers, and protected the population against the pogroms. Similar work was done by other revolutionary organisations before the Soviet came into existence, concurrently with it, and after it. Yet this did not endow them with the influence that was concentrated in the hands of the Soviet.

The secret of this influence lay in the fact that the Soviet grew as the natural organ of power of the proletariat as determined by the actual course of events. The name of 'workers government' which the workers on the one hand, and the reactionary press on the other, gave to the Soviet was an expression of the fact that the Soviet really was a workers' government in embryo.

The Soviet represented power insofar as power was assured by the



Barricades in Moscow streets, 1905.

paper of Social Revolutionaries. Within two weeks of the termination of the general strike, the workers of Petrograd once more stopped work to a man on the instructions of the Soviet. The reason for the strike call was twofold.

Firstly the Russian government had declared martial law in Poland on the grounds that the Poles had made a move towards secession.

Secondly the soldiers and sailors of Kronstadt had rebelled, and the rebellion having been put down, the leaders faced courts-martial and the death penalty.

The demands of the strike therefore, were an end to martial law in Poland and no courts-martial or executions of the Kronstadt leaders. By November 5th the government capitulated and on the 7th the workers of Petersburg returned to work with same unanimity with which they had stopped 120 hours earlier.

**NOT DEFEATED**

The importance of the November strike lay in the fact that it clearly demonstrated to the country as a whole that the proletariat of Petersburg was not defeated and that it was ready to fight. It also forged the first real links between the workers and the soldiers and resulted in the publication by the Soviet of the *Manifesto to the Soldiers*, which stressed the joint source of the grievances of the workers and soldiers and called for the unity of workers and soldiers in the struggle against the Tsar.

As the working class grew stronger and more organised, the liberal bourgeoisie grew more frightened. While they had been prepared to give support to the workers in the early days, (the founding conference of the Constitutional Democrats had voted support for the October strike) the liberals were fast coming to the conclusion that things had gone far enough.

In the words of Guchkov: "The time has come to call a halt, we are only adding fuel to a fire that will consume us all." What the liberals feared was that the workers' struggle would become the focal point of the struggle of the peasants for land, a struggle which had taken acute and violent forms during the months of October and November.

They further feared the consolidation of links between the

proclaimed a general strike in Moscow with the intention of transforming it into an insurrection.

In Petersburg, a fresh strike had begun on the 8th December but had collapsed by the 12th. Moscow therefore became the centre of the December uprising. Armed detachments of the revolutionary groups, known as *druzhinniki* raided gun shops and disarmed policemen. Soldiers were not touched for fear of alienating them.

Within three days however, the workers were becoming involved in armed clashes with troops. The *druzhinniki* continued their guerrilla warfare with the sympathetic support of the Moscow working class. The Presnya district became the focal point for this activity and the uprising was only finally crushed when troops occupied this district mercilessly killing workers and their families. With this the revolution of 1905 came to an end.

The reasons for the defeat of December were many. Firstly the collapse of the Petersburg strike left the workers of Moscow isolated in the face of counter-revolution.

Secondly, the working class in the main industrial centres of Russia had not succeeded in winning over the peasantry and the soldiers and sailors to the need for insurrection. At the same time the various Soviets that were established remained by and large isolated from one another instead of being centralised through a national all-Russian Soviet.

Thirdly, the failure of the working class to win over the peasantry to the revolution meant that the sons of the peasantry who comprised the vast majority of soldiers were still prepared to carry out the suppression of the uprising ordered by the Tsarist officers.

At the same time, however, the working class had made a number of gains. Firstly, the Autocratic state had been rocked to its very foundations, and although it still continued to stand, the workers now understood that the time would surely come when Imperial Russia would be overthrown.

Moreover, the revolution had developed an organisational form to carry out that task, an organisational form unique in the history of workers' struggle and one that would inevitably assume even greater importance when the Russian Revolution flared once more.

This is what Trotsky said about

revolutionary strength of the working class districts; it struggled for power insofar as power still remained in the hands of the military-political monarchy."

The defeat of the 1905 revolution meant a return to clandestine underground work for the members of revolutionary organisations and once more the leaders left the country for exile.

**THEORY**

It was during this period that Trotsky fully developed his theory of 'Permanent Revolution'. He attacked the Mensheviks for their kow-towing to the liberals and criticised the Bolshevik slogan of "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" because, in the event of the workers coming to power, such a policy limited the struggle within the confines of the bourgeois state.

In opposition to this Trotsky argued that the 1905 revolution had clearly demonstrated the complete inability of a class other than the proletariat to fight for a bourgeois democratic regime. However, the working class could not successfully complete the struggle unless they were able to win the peasantry for the revolution.

Moreover, Trotsky argued, having forged the necessary links with the peasantry and carried out the democratic revolution, the interests of the working class, socialism, would then be immediately posed; the revolution would not halt at the democratic revolution but would inevitably carry over directly to the socialist revolution.

1905 had shown that the working class despite its numerical weakness was the only class that could lead the revolution. But once that task had been completed, the numerical weakness of the working class would become a barrier to the development of socialism which could only be built internationally on the basis of the most advanced industrial countries.

The Russian working class would therefore be posed with the further task of fighting to extend the revolution to the main industrial countries of Europe.

Such were the lessons of 1905 as Trotsky saw them, lessons that were to be tested out at later stages of the Russian Revolution.



Striking workers march through Moscow, 1905.

The crowd cried out "Amnesty! Amnesty!" and Trotsky continued:

"Today hundreds of political fighters may be released, tomorrow thousands will be jailed . . . Is not the order 'Spare no Bullets' posted side by side with the freedom manifesto . . . Is not the hangman Trepov the undisputed master of Petersburg?"

Holding a copy of the Tsar's manifesto before the eyes of the crowd, Trotsky concluded:

"The Tsar's manifesto, however, . . . see! it is only a scrap of paper . . . Today it has been given us and tomorrow it will be taken away and torn into pieces as I am now tearing it into pieces, this paper-liberty, before your very eyes."

From this point on, the liberals were all for calling off the strike. They argued that if the struggle was not called off the newly won freedoms would prove illusory.

For the revolutionaries, however, it was these 'newly won

Deputies resolves that only those newspapers may be published whose editors ignore the censorship committee, refuse to submit their issues for censorship, and generally act in the same way as the Soviet in publishing its own paper. For this reason typesetters and other workers of the press will work only after editors have declared their readiness to put the freedom of press into practice . . . Newspapers which fail to accept the present resolution will be confiscated from their sellers . . ."

This resolution is highly significant. Since the beginning of the strike, the Soviet of Workers Deputies had organised the various workers organisations in the execution of the strike.

Now it was taking to itself functions of a very different character. It was now telling the employers what they could and could not do. As Trotsky points out in his book 1905, this resolution became the new press

# REVIEW MARXISM ON THE ATTACK

A REVIEW OF FRANZ MEHRING: 'ON DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM', New Park Publications, 50p.

by Adam Westoby

Franz Mehring's short essay comes to us today as fresh and incisive as when it was first published more than eighty years ago.

'On Historical Materialism' was written in 1893 in reply to bourgeois opponents of Marxism among the German intelligentsia, answering the attacks they had made on the basic works of Marx and Engels and on Mehring's own writings.

But from the first page it goes beyond merely replying, to give a clear and lively exposition of historical materialism.

Within fifty pages he covers an astonishing variety of examples: some of the essential 'technical' inventions which spread through Europe with the development of the capitalist mode of production - printing, gunpowder and firearms, new methods of weaving; the effects of climate and geography on economic development; the way that the religious and moral practices of nomadic tribes are thrown into chaos when their herds die and they are forced to settle; and the putrefaction of German philosophical idealism after Hegel, leading a more and more explicit pace with the bourgeoisie.

The common thread throughout the opposition between materialism and idealism. The bourgeois opponents of Marxism are united in one thing: their wish to rescue 'ideal' or 'spiritual' driving forces in human history, which can then be shown to act independently of, or even as causes of the main material and economic developments.

## NEW SHOOTS

Mehring insists that the materialist, scientific key to human history lies in searching out the ways in which the development of the productive forces lay down the necessary soil from which the new shoots of intellectual and 'spiritual' life grow.

Naturally, following generations of these plants also return to the earth from which they came, to form part of the future topsoil, but the human mind can no more make itself something permanently independent of material history than biological evolution could take place outside the limits set by geology and climate.

Mehring deals, for example, with the claim that 'Christianity', in all its different forms during the last two thousand years, has acted as any sort of single moral and religious force.

## CHANGED

"With every upheaval of the mode of production, the spiritual content of the Christian religion changed with varying rapidity. This has become clear even to the better bourgeois historians, such as Gustav Freytag, who emphasises that the Christian faith had already made great changes in the first century of its existence. It continually succumbed to these changes following the changes in economic development.

If one wanted to determine a spiritual content of Christianity common throughout all the changes in time, then one would have at the most a few lifeless formulae at hand, and scarcely that - formulae which at their best could not move a feather, let alone a world. As the world religion of a world empire, Christianity had to develop an unusual adaptability to the most varying economic conditions, and to their ideological requirements; in Italy, it took over many components of the mythology of antiquity, in Germany it took over equally strong components of the Germanic religions, in China the veneration of Confucius and the cult of ancestors.

And if the Bible was the book of books for the European peoples for more than a thousand years, if it had an extraordinarily lasting effect on the spiritual and religious conceptions of these people, then this did not take place because of its godly and unchallengeable truth, but precisely because of its countless contradictions". (p43)



Mehring

Without seeing this it is impossible to grasp how the same 'Christian belief' should both inspire the resistance of slaves and the poor to the economic collapse of the Roman Empire and become the ideological organiser of feudal society, as well as the main plank of state power, how 'Christianity' should justify both Papal exactions across Europe and the Protestant armies as they marched into battle against the Pope, how it should provide the banners under which both Cromwell and King Charles used pike and cannon to dispute their doctrines in the English bourgeois revolution and civil war.

Mehring simply demolishes the idea that 'Christianity' forms any constant ideal force in history - and as far as European history is concerned there is no body of doctrine which comes closer to being a candidate for such a role.

## ACCURACY

Like all great polemicists, Mehring wields his blade with economy and accuracy. First he neatly cuts off the numerous

swollen heads of his enemies and then - without personal malice, but just in order to demonstrate that the matter should be settled once and for all - he holds up their skulls and shakes them to show that there are really no brains in them.

But, as an historical materialist, he knows it is necessary to go further, so he also examines the insubstantial vapours with which their skulls are filled, to discover how even their smell and colour express - often in a quite direct way - the class interests and prejudices of the German bourgeois and petit bourgeois, disguising their ignorance with a thick dust of reudition and footnotes, their essential cowardice and lack of grace with vainglorious sallies into the field against 'oversimplification' and 'popularisation'.

## TEDIOUS

There is no need to describe any of Mehring's examples - their descendants can be found, as tedious as ever, in the corridors of any modern university.

Mehring's essay - here published in English for the first time - was written as part of the struggle (in the German Social Democratic Party) to build a socialist leadership of the working class, and that is what it remains.

There are few better primers in the method of dialectical materialism, applied to human history and the development of society, for workers studying for the first time the world view of Marxism. The present edition - though not cheap at 50p - has the advantage of a clear and literal translation.

The editors, however, have merely translated Mehring's own explanatory notes, and added references to some of the works which he cites. They have not given notes or a glossary to explain briefly people, dates or events which will not necessarily be known to British workers in 1976.

Who, for example, was Schopenhauer, or Louis XIV? Despite these faults, though, 'On Historical Materialism' will be of the greatest value to the cadre of

the Workers Socialist League in training ourselves and the new forces coming forward to build revolutionary leadership.

Printed with Mehring's essay is also an important letter from Engels to Mehring in 1893, congratulating him on the publication of his *Lessing Legend* - a treatment of German history which dealt with various reactionary and patriotic myths which had grown up around it.

## COMPARISON

It contains a comparison of the parallels and differences between the development of the French nation state ('a rare objective logic during the whole course of the process') and the belated, reactionary unification of Germany under the bourgeoisie (the outcome of a 'story of a continuous state of wretchedness').

Engels also makes the important point that he and Marx, in defending their discoveries against the sort of bourgeois critics with whom Mehring was struggling, put "the main emphasis, in the first place, on the derivation of political juridical and other ideological notions, and of actions arising through the medium of these notions, from basic economic facts."

This gave their adversaries opportunities to distort them, and to caricature Marxism as though it denied that ideology and consciousness had any effect upon history.

Mehring's work is a concrete refutation of all such accusations - as universal as they are trivial - in the way that it skillfully reworks the knowledge of history, literature and philosophy which he acquired as a bourgeois intellectual, consciously giving it a political edge and turning it to the preparation in practice of a revolutionary party whose task it was to equip the German working class to impart to Germany the greatest convulsion in its history.

The knowledge of historical necessity, in Mehring's hands, became a powerful lever to assist in breaking the chains of capitalist slavery.

# WHITE'S DEAL WITH RIGHT WING

The election of Tom White, leading member of the WRP, to a position of deputy senior shop steward in the recent elections in British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant was described by Stephen Johns in the Workers Press of January 24th as a "convincing victory" for the WRP and a "vindication of the Party's firm stand for trade union principles and socialist policies to meet the needs of the car industry".

It was nothing of the sort. In fact the vote took place as further evidence came to light of White's close collaboration with extreme right-wing communist witchhunter Reg Parsons.

In the elections Parsons enthusiastically backed White from the start, including him on his recommended list of candidates, a list which was carried continuously by the national press and television networks.

Despite White's belated statement objecting to his inclusion on the list he received the right-wing vote. As the ballot papers were counted it was clear that where Parsons had voted for Parsons' recommended list they had in most

the election with a completely incredible assertion - that the unprecedented six-day witchhunt carried out by the mass media against Alan Thornett had in fact been directed against the WRP! To quote Johns:

"The WRP and White were facing nothing less than a conspiracy at Cowley. The extreme right wing and their allies of the Tory press launched their witchhunt aimed principally against the party (our emphasis) six days before the elections. It continued right up to and during the voting."

## NO HOSTILITY

In fact in the whole deluge of lies and slander pumped out by the media there was not a single hostile word about White, as a glance at the capitalist press of that week will show.

Johns goes on to claim that the 526 votes cast for Alan Thornett show that Thornett has no basic support in the plant. White's vote of 1,117 is "more than double the vote of Thornett" says Johns. But not only was Thornett witchhunted - Leyland announced that they would not recognise him if elected and every national newspaper implied that a vote for Thornett would be a vote for a strike action to



White

In defending White, Johns proceeds to denigrate the meeting at which Thornett was elected as chairman of the 5/293 branch as a minority. "The party", he says, had not been diverted by "the results of small (in terms of participation) elections". (There were 142 workers at the meeting).

Every employer would agree with Johns. Every right-winger is opposed to votes at branch meetings because they know the branch is the arena in which the most class-conscious layer of workers fights.

ballot voting which is not only open to corruption by the bureaucracy, but invites the intervention of the capitalist press and the witchhunt.

Johns tries to explain the awkward problem of the content of White's vote, by claiming that they did not come from the right-wing but were "the votes of 1,117 trade unionists". But the 1,200 votes Parsons received as convenor also came from trade unionists. In fact most of them were the same trade unionists who voted for White - the right wing.

## ISOLATED

In any case, if 1,117 votes give White a mass base, then 1,200 votes must give Parsons a mass base - when in fact Parsons is isolated from every principled worker on the plant.

One thing is now clear, White is with Parsons all the way. We can give some examples of this.

On the day before the Deputy Senior Stewards elections, the 5/293 branch voted to send the branch committee to lobby the Regional Office with a branch resolution demanding an inquiry into the recent elections for the regional, national and executive committees - a move which directly challenged the right wing.

## LOBBY

The lobby was on Wednesday January 14th, the day after the election. On Tuesday afternoon every committee member, including

evening within an hour of each other, all the right wing, including White, withdrew. Somewhere a decision had been taken, and the line was drawn between those who were prepared to challenge the bureaucracy and those who were not.

## SPLIT

A similar position arose at a recent meeting where Parsons was criticised for splitting the inspectors' dispute which threatened to close the Assembly Plant. (Parsons had called a meeting of TGWU members only and had instructed them to work normally after a joint meeting had voted to continue the overtime ban).

When Parsons was attacked White defended him, saying that "Reg" had not wanted to split the inspectors but had been under instruction from the District Office.

## PRETENCE

It is clear that White cannot hold the pretence of a "left" position much longer. He will be forced continuously further into the open as struggles proceed and his position on the Ryder committee brings him into conflict with workers fighting to defend their jobs.

We said over a year ago that Healy was liquidating the WRP, this is clearly the case today. WRP members are asked to give large sums of money to a hopeless crisis fund which can solve nothing as Healy's unprincipled manoeuvres lose the movement the last remnant



# PLANS TO SLASH TRANSPORT

The future of Britain's transport system lies very much in the balance. The government and British Rail are discussing plans which could lead to hundreds of miles of track and thousands of jobs being lost.

The National bus network is also similarly threatened, with over 10,000 jobs facing the axe. This means non-existent transport services for many workers and, with a further fare increase on the way, prohibitively expensive services for others. All this on top of thousands of jobs lost.

The roots of the problem lie with the decline of capitalism and attempts of the Labour government to shore up the British economy at the expense of essential services. The working class are being made to pay through spending cuts in health, education, transport and social services.

## CLOSURE

In London, the travelling public are faced with closure of certain suburban railways and cutbacks from London Transport.

In December the GLC approved LT's budget, (subject to a further £6½m cut in revenue expenditure), giving a forecast deficit in 1976 of £113m.

This figure was based on an expected government grant of £38m (previously £53m). In fact,

only £36m was allowed.

As far as bus services are concerned London Transport have delivered a report to the T&GWU Central Bus Committee, outlining their policy in relation to their financial situation. They make it clear, however, that all figures are estimated and depend on several variable factors, notably the rate of inflation.

## CUTS

LT management have said that: 1. Recruitment is to stop at the September 1975 level of staffing.

As this figure is exceeded in some bus garages, some loss of jobs through "natural wastage" will occur.

2. Only 84% (possibly rising to 85½%) of scheduled mileage will be covered.

This means that overtime will be cut and that recent recruits will have to come off duty rotas and join the 'spares list' - not knowing from one day to another precisely what hours will be worked or which route to expect.

3. The 1976 wage bill will be kept to the 1975 level, allowing only for threshold payments.

4. "No redundancies".

The combination of points 3 and 4 means wages must be attacked - if the assurances on redundancy means anything at all!

Several effects of LT's cuts are already being felt. In Essex several bus services run by LT are being

axed because the local authority refuse to subsidise the losses on those routes. Similar negotiations are being made with Berkshire, Surrey and Bucks and announcements are expected shortly.

The public in London are already quite well aware of the effects of cuts in schedules. LT's capital expenditure is being maintained, however, with large sums of money being spent on new buses, rolling stock and developments.

The new buses, easily modified for one-man operation, combined with experiments with pre-paid tickets, pose a threat to jobs.

## AGREED

The T&GWU provides no obstacle. They have agreed to 100% OMO conversion.

Although the agreement was made about twelve years ago - in a period of boom and staff shortages - the bureaucracy continue their approval. In the last six months a resolution calling for suspension of OMO conversion was thrown out by the Central Bus Committee.

In this situation of threatened redundancies and wage cutting London Transport are pushing for a scheme of "worker participation". Although only on a small scale, with two "workers" being taken onto the LT Executive, it provides a warning. The dangers of worker participation can be seen from

British Leyland and from Chrysler.

The union leaders seem very likely to accept the scheme, thus giving credibility to a management committee which plans to cut the throats of LT workers.

But a transport system as we have known it is completely compatible with capitalism in recession. Only when the transport system is placed under workers management; when the financiers, supply industries and vehicle manufacturers are nationalised without compensation and under workers management and in the context of a planned socialist

the cuts would be pure coincidence. Yet he is ready to trot off to management with the leaders of ASLEF and NUR to push for worker participation. The conniving with bureaucracy infests the union structure in LT.

The WSL stands apart in its fight for elected committees of transport workers to investigate the book finances and plans of LT to show the absolute need for an integrated planned transport system nationalised and under workers management.

This links with the need for a all-round programme, on which



Western region threatened with cuts

economy - only then can a planned transport system providing cheap, extensive travel be initiated.

## WHINE

But the union leaders have other ideas. Larry Smith, national bus officer of the T&GWU whines that if the buses were allocated 2% of the money given to British Rail, road passenger transport would survive. As far as he's concerned, its dog-eat-dog - rail jobs should go to make way for busmen.

Smith has made it quite clear that any kind of combined campaign with other unions against

fight can be carried out to challenge the existing leadership and defend jobs, wages and services.

We say No redundancies, voluntary or enforced!

No cuts in scheduled mileage. Expansion of all services. These must be maintained by full staff levels - not overtime working.

Fight for an increase in basic rates which makes up for loss of overtime earnings, protected from inflation by a sliding scale, whereby wages rise point with inflation as determined by committees of transport workers.

Elect committees of transport workers to fight for these demands!

# ANATOMY OF A WITCH-HUNT

For any workers who had illusions in the 'independence' or 'freedom' of the press, the completely coordinated and united witch-hunt directed by seven national daily papers and three television networks for a week leading up to the recent elections in British Leyland's Assembly Plant should be an eyeopener.

Not a single paper stepped out of line or at any point attempted to question the combination of lies and distortions fed to them by the local union bureaucrats and directly by British Leyland management.

Indeed the coordination of the witch-hunt shows clearly that behind-the-scenes briefings and manipulation daily predominates over such minor questions as facts and objective analysis in industrial coverage - and clearly must also decide the coverage on political and international questions.

## NEWS AGENCIES

The way it works is this - the main bones of the story are fed into the main news agencies from management and the trade union bureaucracy. Reporters have direct access to the bureaucracy at any time - though of course trade union members (particularly if in dispute) can find it impossible to contact officials for weeks at a time. The 'reporters' then seek out their local 'colour' - which makes their reports marginally different in certain details and gives the impression of individual treatment.

This is why many of the reports during the Cowley witch-hunt seemed to be the outcome of a game of 'Chinese whispers' - in which the participants sit in a circle and repeat a story round and round getting details more and more garbled while the main lines stay the same. Out of the garble therefore, the same insinuations, lies and slanders emerge in unison.

Let us take a simple instance - the issue of the election as Chair-

man of the 5/293 T&GWU Branch of Alan Thornett (who two years ago some unknown *Sunday Times* reporter for no apparent reason decided should be called 'The Mole' starting a craze throughout Fleet St.).

The *Oxford Mail*, knowing its readers have some idea of what goes on in Cowley, had to admit that the attendance at the Branch meeting (which was the highest ever of those held outside working hours) was "by branch standards a good attendance".

## BIG BOYS

But the big boys in London don't feel so inhibited and let loose some grand distortions. Thus the *Times* argued that his vote was only 1.4% of the total voting strength and that there had been a strike in the plant, drawing the bogus conclusion:

"On the day the election took place, most of the voters were at home because of the strike".

The *Telegraph* goes even further, though omitting to mention the strike, which they replace with:

"a maintenance breakdown [which] led to all but 141 of the 3,500 [!] being sent home."

The *Mirror* uses the strike story to much greater effect, however, creating suspicions as to 'extremist' involvement:

"Since then there have been fears that the dispute was started to coincide with the election".

But while the *Mirror* just refers to 1,600 being sent home, the *Guardian* suggests the real position was much worse, telling readers all 1,600 were "unable to vote".

## "EXTREMISTS"

Amazing how much strength these papers attribute to Thornett and the 'extremists' - apparently they are able to keep 1,600 'moderates' locked up in their houses, barring them from attending a branch meeting held after working hours and outside the

plant! Naturally, every paper has to ignore the fact that these people never attend branch meetings!

Of course every accusation and insinuation in a witch-hunt against a militant is cumulative in the Tory press - the technique is to heap smear upon smear in the hope that workers who do not accept one argument will be bowled over by sheer weight of propaganda.

In this witch-hunt all papers returned again therefore to the previous witch-hunt in 1974 which centred on Leyland's withdrawal of recognition from Thornett as deputy convenor and their unsuccessful attempt to withdraw his recognition as shop steward.

The *Times*, while forced to admit that a T&GWU Regional Enquiry exonerated Thornett from the charges levelled by management still digs them up again and makes them the centre of its coverage.

## SCURRILOUS

The *Mail*, then and now one of the most scurrilous of Fleet St. rags, distorted the past still more, claiming that "Mr. Thornett was voted out of office by fellow stewards 18 months ago after an 18 day strike". But as Cowley workers know, a major consequence of that confrontation was that the T&GWU bureaucracy took from Cowley stewards the right to elect their convenor.

Once the witch-hunt gets under way of course, any old angle will do, and the most ordinary actions are trumpeted as evidence of dark doings by the 'extremists'. The *Express* sounds the warning:

"The Mole and his colleagues from other extreme left wing groups [!] are making a concerted effort to win the poll."

The same argument is taken up in the *Mail*. How outrageous! People standing in elections, and trying to win? - How despicable and undemocratic!

According to the *Express* these 'wreckers' and 'militants' even had the cheek to accuse the 'moderates'

of starting a witch-hunt! The *Mail* however, quotes Parsons saying with pride that he is running a witch-hunt!

As for Peter Boyles, the militant who pointed out in the press that Parsons should not be stabbing trade unionists in the back, but fighting management - he is castigated by the press because he complained after the right-wing "lost" his nomination papers.

"The moderates are very suspicious of such left-wing manoeuvres", says the *Telegraph*.

How devious this chap Boyles must have been! "Manoeuvring so that the right-wing lose your nomination is really an amazing trick!"

Indeed the manipulations of the extremists also involved taking advantage of management's well-intentioned introduction of speed up!

"The speed-up was seen by the militants as a ready-made excuse to stage lightning strikes. They hoped practically to shut the plant for a day", reports the *Telegraph*.

Apparently then the stock response of workers to speed-up ought to be to welcome it with open arms! Of course the press are at pains to make it clear that the 'extremists' are not interested in defending jobs and wages against management attack, but in "wrecking" and "disrupting" production, "shutting down" the plant, and all the other dire things extremists are supposed to want. The *Express* is clearest of all:

"The militants want to smash society and pick up the pieces for themselves".

## WHITE

Strangely coordinated, then, was the press support for one supposed 'extremist', Tom White, a leading member of the Workers Revolutionary Party. White had been selected by Parsons as a tame 'left' to complete his right-wing anti-communist slate, and so all the press with one voice separated White from the

'militants', describing him as a 'moderate', or 'acceptable to Parsons'.

And with one voice every paper for the last few days up to the deputies elections advertised Parsons' slate of candidates, bombarding workers on every side with the need to vote for these 'moderate' men, and whipping every right-winger into participating in the ballot.

Indeed it was this rallying of the right-wing, together with the personalised threat by Leyland that they would still refuse recognition to Thornett if he were elected which alone secured the 'moderate landslide' in the election.

## ELECTED

Bob Fryer, regarded as a Trotskyist, who had come within 200 votes of defeating Parsons for convenor, consolidated his vote which increased from 900 to 1,001 securing his election as deputy. Cy Blake, another militant in opposition to the Parsons slate, was also elected with over 1,000 votes.

And Alan Thornett, whose election was thought to be the signal for indefinite strike action for recognition, came 10th out of 34 candidates, winning 526 votes. Without the blatant, organised and vicious intervention of Leyland, the press and trade union bureaucrats, this result would have been very different.

Workers must take note of these press techniques. They are more refined than the art of witch-hunting, more coordinated and more conscious than ever before. They are now the basis used directly as a weapon in the hands of the ruling class to dictate the results of union elections and the policies the unions themselves adopt.

The demand that any union election or decision which is subjected to such intervention by the Tory press and TV must be deferred until this interference ceases must therefore now be fought for in every union branch and shop stewards committee.



# BITTER LESSONS AT NVT

For the capitalist press, the workers' cooperative at Meriden and the occupation of the NVT factory in Wolverhampton are no longer newsworthy. Yet these two factories and the struggle around them well deserve attention as an example of the achievements of the Labour government and the trade union leaders.

With their assistance, 3000 jobs have been destroyed to date and another 1,000 workers drawn into a cooperative scheme which has been forced through massive speed-up and still leaves their jobs hanging by a thread.

## BENN

Despite these negative results a whole mythology about the benefits of cooperatives has been built around the Meriden struggle, a mythology in which Wedgewood occupies a principle role. For these reasons, it is timely to review the effect of the events of the last few years on motor-cycle workers in the Midlands.

By 1973, the British motor-cycle industry was confined to two firms BSA and Norton Villiers (a subsidiary of Manganese Bronze Holdings). Both were operating on ancient machinery and producing out-dated models - mainly for the US 'super-bike' market where their position was being strongly challenged by their

competitors.

In capitalist terms, the 'viability' of both was in question. The intensifying battle for profits on the world market was demanding the destruction of small and relatively unproductive companies. BSA was threatened with bankruptcy and Norton Villiers, though recording a profit was in a weak position.



Benn

At this point the Tory government intervened to try and back up their profits. A £4.8 million grant was handed out to ensure the merger of Norton Villiers and BSA to form Norton Villiers Triumph. The government took 51% shareholding and the rest was retained by MBH which also took the profitable non-motorcycle interests of BSA.

Following the logic of capitalism

the first move of the new company was to close down the Meriden plant in the hope of saving its profits by rationalising production onto the two other factories in Birmingham and Wolverhampton. The workers at Meriden resisted and immediately occupied the plant to defend jobs.

Operating within a reformist framework, the Meriden workers' resistance to the closure was combined with faith in finding a viable 'solution' within capitalism. Their campaign identified saving jobs with saving the industry and the Triumph name.

## 'VIABLE'

The incompetence of the management (whose record at Meriden was indeed appalling) was seen as the sole cause of the problems. The hopes of the workers were pinned on a workers' cooperative which would make the industry 'viable' again.

The union leaders seized on this as an ideal solution, since it directed the resistance of the workforce away from any fundamental conflict with capitalism and let them off the hook.

When Labour returned to office, Benn too adopted the idea and with Benn's blessing the Meriden cooperative was born.

It was soon shown that the cooperative was not so ideal for the Meriden workers. The absence of the capitalist did not abolish the laws of the capitalist economy

which dictated speed-up, wage cuts and redundancy. As we pointed out in *Socialist Press* No 2:

"The labour force was halved from 1750 to 870, all demarcation was ended, and wages are at a flat rate of £50 a week - lower than the general average in the area".

Exploitation was intensified to maintain the profits of the supplying companies and pay off interest to the banks.

Today the fate of the cooperative still hangs in the balance with international competition intensifying and their marketing arrangements threatened by the collapse of NVT - which is also demanding compensation for its blueprints and its copyright of the 'Triumph' name.



Varley

In July 1975, the financial collapse of NVT itself was to axe the jobs of another 3,000 workers. At Wolverhampton where the workers, whose wages had been held down for the previous three years to 'save the industry', had occupied, the union leaders once again refused to offer any leadership.

This time even a cooperative was scarcely considered. Benn's left rhetoric had been dispensed with as the Labour government turned directly to creating unemployment and Varley's decision was to wash his hands of any responsibility for workers in NVT.

Following the government's lead, the union leaders abandoned the occupation to its fate. With no lead from the unions and a weak reformist leadership in the plant, a fight for nationalisation though discussed was not acted on.

The occupation continued with no perspective, other than the hope of finding another employer to buy up NVT's assets. The responsibility for this dead-end policy must rest with the union leaders and the Labour government.

## CHALLENGE

For the outcome at NVT by no means inevitable: an entirely different avenue of struggle was open, one which challenged the right of capitalism to destroy jobs and to tie the fate of workers to the 'viability' of the industry.

As we pointed out in *Socialist Press* No 15:

"Poore claims that Wolverhampton has £2 million debts - yet most of this is owed to the parent company NVT. What financial fiddles have gone on to transfer funds elsewhere? What has happened to the £18 million given in government loans and grants? . . . The books of both Manganese Bronze and NVT must be opened to the inspection of trade union committees.

On the basis of such information a plan can be drawn up to maintain jobs after nationalisation through state contracts and the provision of alternative work".

This direction of struggle was blocked by the union leaders who not only refused to fight for nationalisation, but would not even think of calling for the veil of secrecy which surrounds NVT's operations to be raised.

At the centre of both these struggles has been the issue of leadership. Workers in the motor cycle industry have been deliberately demoralised and led into the blind alley of searching for 'viable' solutions by the union leaders and 'lefts' alike.

From this bitter experience must be drawn the need to forge a new leadership in the struggle to resist Labour's attacks.

# HULL-TRADES COUNCIL ADOPTS FIGHTING PROGRAMME

Boasted by the continued betrayals of the local and national trade union leaders, employment in Hull, at 10,000, now stands at nearly double last year's level - without including the number of factories now imposing short time on their workforce.

This level was not reached without sharp resistance by workers most notably the 19-week occupation of Imperial Typewriters last year. But every move from the top floor confronts the conscious sabotage of full time union officials and the political inadequacies of Tory leaderships.

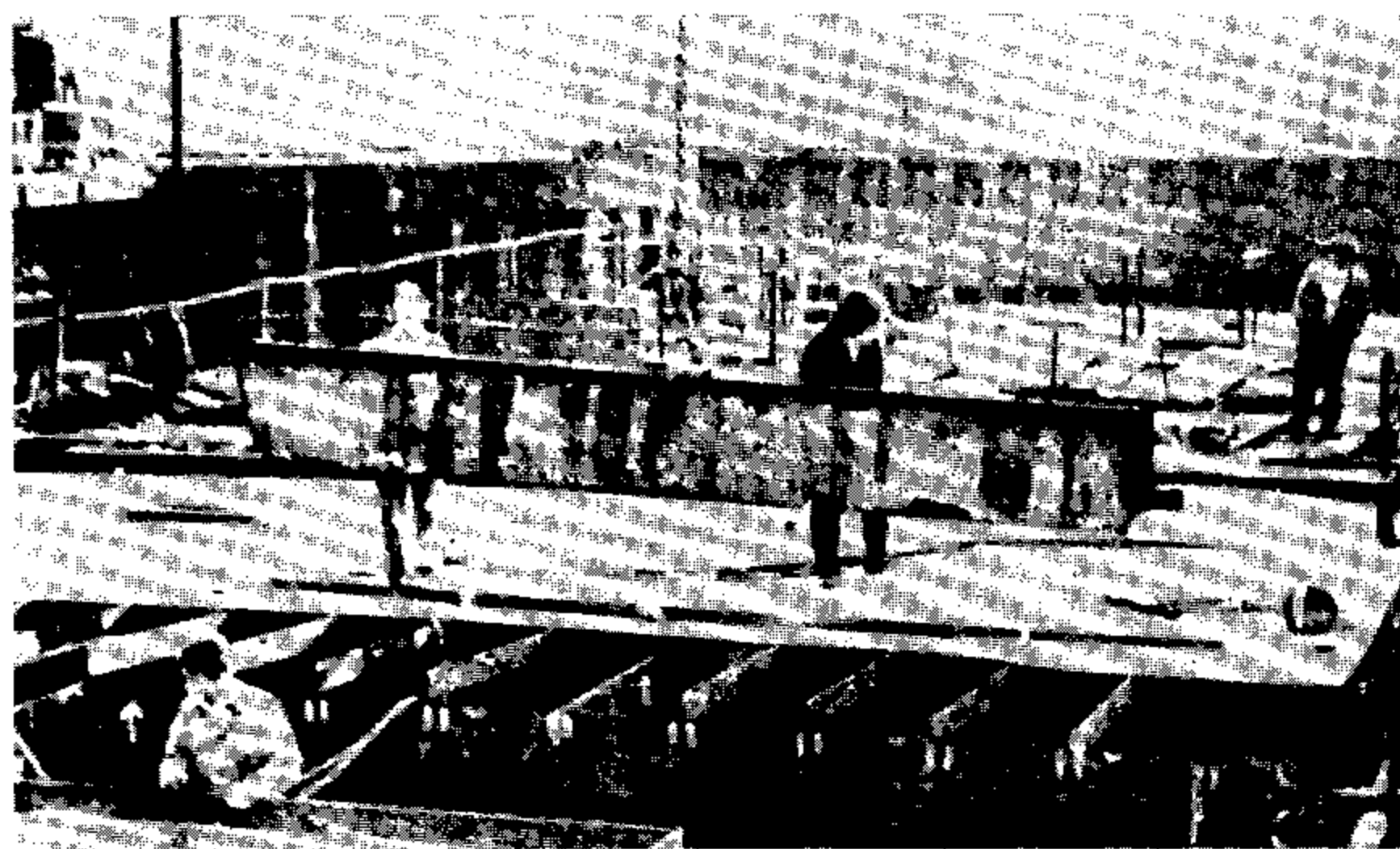
The Imperials fight was deliberately isolated from the rest of the labour movement by the T&GWU bureaucracy, while a whole series of reformist diversions - of "cooperatives", the search for another employer etc. - were used to divert from the all-out fight to force nationalisation.

## VARLEY

And the death blow was administered by Labour Minister Varley who gave the factory's owners, Litton Industries, the go-ahead to sell off plant and equipment.

Yet even after this betrayal the right wing blamed the defeat on the working class - claiming that they had "not raised enough money" to finance the sit-in! More recently the attempted closure of the Drypool Shipbuilding has figured prominently in the news. The yards are based in Selby and Beverley - Hull being the largest.

Drypool faces bankruptcy because of fixed-price contracts in



The Drypool yard in Hull

can only be lunacy in the uncontrolled inflationary crisis confronting British capitalism.

The local AUEW, though verbally campaigning for nationalisation of the yards, have at the same time allowed a run-down in the labour to begin, while the District Committee has organised only the most half-hearted opposition to closure.

This took the form of a request (not even an instruction) to branches to participate in a 2 hour meeting at City Hall, addressed by local Labour MPs - after which members were expected to return back to work!

## WITHDRAWN

But the Drypool crisis exposes also the reactionary role of the Labour government. Originally down for nationalisation under the Shipbuilding Industries Nationalisation Bill, Drypool was withdrawn from the list when bankruptcy was declared and the

1975.

Now local Labour MPs have agreed to try to amend the Bill to include Drypool, attempting to substitute Parliamentary manoeuvres for the necessary struggle by workers in the yards to force nationalisation.

## RESOLUTION

Against this background of betrayal and political bankruptcy the 10/76A T&GWU Branch based on Hollis Sawmills (itself engaged in struggles over job security) submitted a resolution to Hull Trades Council calling for an all-out fight against unemployment - to include demonstrations and public meetings.

Though the resolution was adopted by Trades Council last July a lengthy period elapsed before the EC circulated a draft statement consisting of a twelve point programme - thoroughly reformist in character. For instance, point 9 read:

cooperate with their employers in every way that is reasonable and proper, to avoid redundancies and unemployment".

Hard to see any employers objecting to that proposal! In fact the cringing keynote of the draft statement was set by point 2:

"That normal manpower wastage should as far as possible be replaced"

and by the conclusion which stressed the need for "all classes in Britain" to make "sacrifices" to enable the "nation" to survive while making flabby appeals to the Labour government to reduce unemployment.

## AMENDMENTS

WSL members fought consistently in their union branches during the discussion on the statements for transitional demands to be moved as amendments in opposition to the reactionary politics of the draft, and at the 50-strong Trades Council meeting on January 15th most of the amendments submitted originated from this fight.

Among the points of programme adopted as a result of this intervention were calls that:

1. Normal manpower wastage be replaced.
2. To avoid redundancies there should be work sharing on full pay.
3. A general ban on overtime should be implemented.
4. That trade unions must have a veto on hiring, firing and the control of manning levels.

## DELETED

The EC's reactionary concluding statement was deleted and a TASS

though inadequate at stressing the link between the policy adopted and the development of a socialist planned economy, was still a considerable improvement.

## SUB-COMMITTEE

A further motion from the 10/76A Branch, calling for the setting up of a Trades Council unemployment sub-committee was agreed and the committee appointed. It is already Trades Council policy that unions where possible recruit unemployed workers.

In developing the fight after these advances in Hull the need is to ensure that these policies are taken in to all struggles against redundancy, and that the further demand to force the opening of the books of the employers to elected trade union committees is also brought forward as a bridge between workers resistance to redundancy and the all-out fight for nationalisation.

## LEADERSHIP

On this programme it is possible to begin to resolve the crisis of working class leadership in Hull.

## WSL PUBLIC MEETING

SHEFFIELD  
February 1st, 7.30  
The Mail Coach  
West Street





Police carry off Cammel Laird picket

# CAMMELL PICKETS 'TRIAL'

The struggle of the Birkenhead building workers which began in 1974 and ended in the courts this month is rich in lessons for the labour movement. The building workers were employed by Peter Lind to construct a slipway for Cammel Laird in 1974 and in the autumn of that year struck and stayed out for five weeks until a pay dispute over tide manning was satisfactorily concluded.

They had only been back at work six days when Cammel Laird's own crane men and boiler-makers

came out at the end of October. In solidarity the Peter Lind workers refused to cross the Cammel Laird picket line or use their own entrance gate to the works.

By now Cammel Laird management had some notion of the kind of building workers they had contracted and applied to the courts to rescind the contract with Peter Lind. The building contractors Peter Lind checked this move by applying for an injunction but eventually Cammel Laird were allowed by the court to rescind the contract and Peter Lind pulled out.

Determined to defend their jobs whoever had the contract the men formed an action committee,

occupied and impounded the plant. Straightaway the crane hire firm served writs on the leaders of the occupation, but when police attempts to enforce the writs failed, a more personal approach was attempted.

## SYMPATHY

The owner of the cranes, a Mr. Goodfellow, arrived, declared his sympathy with the aims of the occupation; an aim which he felt was in no way advanced by retaining possession of his cranes. To show his declaration was no empty gesture he claimed membership of the Communist Party, asked to see the member of the strike committee who shared his political outlook and waving a £10 note offered it to buy "drinks for the lads".

The drink was gratefully consumed but the cranes stayed put, and meeting with no success on this peaceful road Mr. Goodfellow resorted to the methods of the classical period of Stalinism and turned up the next day with a gang of heavies.

The contract was eventually given to Wimpey who refused to take on any of the Peter Lind men, claiming that they had all the men they needed. It was at this point that the trade union bureaucrats of the TGWU and UCATT attempted to turn a principled struggle against management in defence of jobs into an "inter-union dispute".

## LOGIC

According to their logic the Peter Lind men in the Liverpool TGWU and UCATT districts were keeping Manchester TGWU and UCATT members (who Wimpey were trying to bring in) from their work.

So a picket in defence of jobs was denounced by union officials from Manchester as a lock-out against jobs!

This divisive position of the union officials was soon exposed. The mass picket stopped the coaches that Wimpey were trying to bring in and the police, seeing the size of the picket, acquiesced to the picket's demand to speak to the occupants.

Inside they discovered not regular Wimpey workers but recently recruited Irishmen who still had their suitcases with them. In the face of this exposure Wimpey retreated and agreed to take on 30

of the 100 or so Peter Lind men. The list of 30 that the action committee proposed was not at all to the liking of Wimpey who tried unsuccessfully to invite by telegram and personal entreaty 30 workers more to their taste. The workers' plan was that the selected 30 would fight for all the jobs from the inside.

In an attempt to keep Wimpey to their own agreement the TGWU offices were lobbied for support. No support was forthcoming and by deserting their members in this way the union bureaucrats gave the green light to the police attack that was being prepared on the picket.

## CONFRONTED

At eight in the morning, half an hour before the coaches were due, 35 pickets found themselves confronted by 70 policemen who drove the pickets from the gate and formed a line to allow the coaches (escorted by police cars from the Mersey tunnel to the gate) unimpeded access.

In the attack various arrests were made, leading to 11 pickets being charged with assault and making an affray. Trial by jury was refused and the case was eventually heard in front of 2 magistrates at Bromborough instead - with curious results.

The magistrates found the picket Robertson guilty as charged despite the fact that when the police witness was asked to point to the perpetrator of Robertson's crime he pointed to another defendant, Sprotwood, instead.

This regrettable 'confusion' which the magistrates in their wisdom overlooked probably arose from the fact that at the committal in Birkenhead the defendants were lined up in the dock on the order on the charge sheet, while in Bromborough Sprotwood was standing where Robertson 'ought' to have been.

## 'TRIAL'

As the "trial" proceeded, PC Pugh's vivid and entirely convincing description of Bob Christian's "savage attack" on a policeman was brought to an abrupt end when he was told he was on the wrong case!

As his sergeant glowered at him Pugh buried his head in his hands and although he returned again for the right case, try as he might the

persuasive power of his initial performance seemed to escape him

## REMARKABLE

No less remarkable was George Hall's conviction for assaulting PC Bate. Two policemen testified that Hall lowered his head, charged PC Bate like a bull and felled him to the ground where the two men rolled around in a ferocious embrace. But when PC Bate was called to the witness stand he was adamant that he had stayed on his feet and the closest George Hall had got to assault was to point a finger in the vicinity of his chest.

PC Bate admitted that on the previous day's picketing he had "taken a hammering" but on neither occasion had he required medical attention. In finding George Hall guilty the magistrate must have concluded that by the second day PC Bate was too punch-drunk to know whether he was rolling around on the ground or not!

Of the eleven charged, six were found guilty of various offences like obstruction and assault. Fines ranging from £10 to £50 were imposed and both TGWU and UCATT refused to provide legal representation, maintaining that the dispute was between two groups of workers. By this definition an attempt to keep out scab labour during a strike is a dispute "between two groups of workers". The bureaucracy now take on the role of open apologists for strike breaking.

## OFFICIALS

The trial of the Merseyside pickets was a further display of the real support of the capitalist state - the police and the judiciary who only moved when they got the nod from the trade union bureaucracy. So while Shrewsbury picket De Warren is still allowed to rot in jail by the parasitic bureaucracy in the TUC, local and regional officials are opening the door to more legal attacks on picket lines.

## EAST LONDON CONFERENCE

Trade unionists have begun a fight back in East London in defence of jobs and social services.

The fruits of two years of Labour government can all be seen in the area. The attack on the NHS and social services locally has been merciless.

Without building any replacement facilities, the scoreboard of hospitals already closed or closing shortly includes Poplar Hospital, the Invalid and Crippled Children's Hospital, the Eastern Hospital, the Metropolitan Hospital, the Connaught Hospital, the accident unit at Albert Dock Hospital, and the Mothers' Hospital (Hackney's main maternity unit).

Thousands of workers in the area are jobless. In Newham over 5,000 are already unemployed, and with the closure of more factories such as STC, that grim total is sure to rise.

It is in the face of this desperate situation that trade unionists have begun to organise to fight back. Trades Councils in Hackney, Bethnal Green and Dagenham have set up unemployment sub-committees and a variety of local conferences have been held.

However, so far these activities have been limited to protest politics and no real alternative perspective has been put forward. This is why the call by the East London Action Committee against the Cuts for an East London Labour Movement Conference to Defend the Right to Work and the Public Services can prove an important step forward. The Committee, composed of delegates from over 30 trade union branches - including NUPE, NALGO, NUT, ATTI, NUR and Fords Shop Stewards Committee - was originally set up in May to organise the fight against hospital closures.

What is needed is not another talking shop, but a working conference with the job of mapping out a clear programme of action to put the working class on the offensive.

## VIETNAM

### POPE'S FRATERNAL GESTURE

As a gesture of goodwill towards Hanoi's 'peaceful co-existence' with the Catholic hierarchy in North and South Vietnam, the Pope has excommunicated an Archbishop together with five 'bishops' recently ordained by him.

An announcement in Rome on January 16th, declared that Monsignor Ngo Dinh Thuc, formerly Catholic archbishop of Hue, in the north of South Vietnam, together with five priests whom he ordained as bishops in Spain at the end of December, had been cast out of the church.

### BROTHER

Archbishop Thuc is a brother of Ngo Dinh Diem, the dictator of South Vietnam installed by US imperialism after the partition of the country in 1954. When the Diem regime fell in 1963, the Archbishop fled to exile in Europe.

The Vatican announcement of excommunication stated he was purged under a 1951 decree of the Holy Office, which automatically excommunicates anyone who consecrates bishops who have not been nominated or approved from Rome.

This decree has never previously been used. The axing of Thuc is a sign of the Vatican's satisfaction that its representatives in Vietnam are getting the support and collaboration of Party and state officials in both North and South, and it indicates that they do not wish to prejudice this by maintaining any sort of token 'church in exile'.

## 'MODERATES' ON THE WARPATH

When serious questions of class collaboration and the right to hold socialist views in academic institutions are involved, academic freedom must be thrown to the wolves.

That is the gist of written proposals by the Director of the London School of Economics, being put to the LSE's Academic Board at its February meeting.

Director Ralf Dahrendorf, a former West German Social Democrat and Common Market Commissioner, proposes the setting up of a 'Centre for Policy Studies', as part of the LSE, for the "improvement of economic, social and political conditions in a different climate".

Among the problems he identifies for attention are the international economic and monetary crisis, the sad state of the UN, the stagnation in British industrial investment, the high level of strikes, and "Hostility between workers and management, and high tax levels".

### DEPLORE

Getting down to brass tacks Dahrendorf deplores "a tendency to seek, and embrace extreme solutions for a far-reaching transformation of economy, society and polity" and a resulting "evacuation of the centre".

His solution involves a Centre for devising and propagating policies "in the national interest".

It would employ academics and "middle level executives from industry and the civil service", and the aim would be to "mobilise and stabilise the restless and increasingly disillusioned mass of middle ground citizens around a focal point which is independent of the existing political parties, which provides a credible commonsense means of expressing the moderate view as to what needs to be done in the national interest to resolve the country's problems".

### ANTI-COMMUNIST

At this point, the thoroughly reactionary and anti-communist character of Dahrendorf's 'consensus' politics declares itself. Since the aim is to preserve capitalism in crisis, the 'Centre' must be staffed by its loyal servants.

Or, as Dahrendorf delicately puts it "One is not talking about a purely academic institution, but about one which is supposed to be relevant. Contrary to a university - LSE for example - the range of problems, however loosely defined, is restricted and should be so. Contrary to a university, it would not seem necessary, and perhaps wasteful, to try and invite people of all intellectual and political

convictions to participate. What would be unacceptable for a university, is therefore acceptable for a Centre for Economic and Political Studies. i.e. restriction of participants to the spectrum of views represented in Parliament. This must not, of course, exclude other more idiosyncratic views as objects of study".

In a nutshell, keep 'extremists' out!

For his cockpit of anti-communist policy-making, Dahrendorf impudently proposes an initial endowment of £8½ millions. No doubt he hopes to attract this sort of sum from employers who consider the hundreds of thousands they pay every year to the Conservative Party, Aims of Industry, etc money well spent.

### REJECT

Workers and students in higher education must reject all such sinister proposals, and demand the removal of those - like Dahrendorf - who spend their time hatching such schemes.

Dahrendorf seeks to rally "the middle ground" against the working class.

Students and academics who seriously wish to resolve the economic and social crisis must grasp that this can only be done by a revolutionary leadership of the working class which will end capitalism once and for all.



# NO ENQUIRY INTO 'IMPOSSIBLE' VOTES

Following demands for an inquiry from two of the major T&GWU branches in the Oxford area, the Finance and General Purposes Committee of Region Number 5 has declared the recent elections for Regional Committee, National Committee and General Executive Council for the Southern Division (basically Oxford and Coventry) invalid and have ordered a new ballot. Questions were raised following the publication of the results at the end of December. The votes received by three of the Oxford candidates were considered by many workers to be unaccountably high.

## HANDFUL

Jack Adams, who has only a handful of members in his own factory (MG Abingdon) received 134 votes. Parsons, the recruiting convenor of the Assembly Plant received 6,781, then only 287 of these came from his own plant. Bill Roche, convenor of the Body Plant received 11,442 votes when the vote possible in Oxford was 10,000 (after those branches who do not vote are deducted) and it is unlikely to have received any votes outside Oxford. Since the Coventry vote could

be largely accounted for as having voted for Coventry candidates, it appears that the only place that such figures could have been recorded was the Cowley Body Plant - which has 6,000 members.

Yet everyone knows that only a tiny percentage of these members voted. The two ballot boxes were in the canteen and workers were able to see how many voted whilst they ate their meal.

## "SUB-JUDICE"

When workers in the Body Plant saw the high votes in the Regional results and asked for the figures for their own plant they were told that the issue was "sub judice" - a term which has nothing to do with the trade unions and only applies when court proceedings are involved.

Using this excuse the bureaucracy refused to reveal the figures even to the Body Plant branch meeting which took place the following weekend.

On Wednesday January 14th the Regional Committee met and discussed the demands for an inquiry. Presumably they decided to avoid an inquiry, against revealing the suspect Body Plant voting figures and in favour of declaring the whole election null and void.

## "TECHNICAL"

This decision was only



TGWU Regional Secretary Mathers eagerly investigated Trotskyists at Cowley in 1974, but now avoids enquiry into right wing votes.

announced a week and two days later after the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee - on the basis of a "slight technical infringement".

The nature of this "infringement" they explained, was the destruction of the ballot papers, by the scrutineers one month after the date the returns were posted, rather than after 3 months as required by the covering letter detailing the arrangements for the elections.

## NO COMPLAINT

They picked on this 'technicality' knowing that no-one had complained about it. In fact the only people who would have known that the papers were destroyed were the scrutineers.

The only complaints raised were on the unexplained size of the vote and the refusal of the Body Plant leadership to reveal the results of the ballot on the plant.

As Tony Bradley, secretary of the 5/55 branch, put it in last Saturday's *Oxford Mail*: "What we still want is a breakdown to show how the individual branches voted. This information has to be given by each branch secretary and should be on record. If the union has nothing to hide, why does it not reveal them?"

We already know how most of the branches voted. What we don't know and what we want are the voting figures for Pressed Steel (the car body plant). We believe that 90 per cent of the members there did not vote.

And the factory's voting figures have been refused even to members who work there.

It is because we know how almost every other factory voted that we find it difficult to accept the voting figures which were announced. That is why we complained of abnormally high voting figures".

## ENQUIRY

Bradley is right. The decision will not satisfy any T&G member concerned about the conduct of the election and the procedures used in the T&GWU. A full inquiry must be held immediately to establish the true facts.

The avoidance of an inquiry shows the real nature of ballot voting under the existing set up. Those in control of the system have all kinds of manoeuvres open to them to say nothing of the now routine intervention of the media to witchhunt those opposed to the bureaucracy.

A complete revision of the rules under which voting takes place in the T&G is required. Rules must be established which take the control of elections out of the hands of the appointed officials and hardened bureaucrats and establish the rights of rank and file workers to scrutinise election procedures and figures at any stage.

## HOUGHTON DISASTER

The Houghton Main Colliery disaster was not just an accident. It follows in line with the Lofthouse tragedy and from the increasing accident rate in the mines.

This increase is due to the productivity deal pressure and bears out everything that the Yorkshire miners have said about such 'deals'.

No less than sixteen people knew about the faulty Carter Howden auxiliary fan and yet no-one did anything about it.

On June 12th 1975 at 6.49pm the explosion occurred in the Meltonfield seam of the Houghton Main Colliery.

A new committee has now been set up by the Chief Inspector of Mines and Quarries, John Carver, to investigate ventilation in narrow drive ways.

The inspector also put forward a series of immediate proposals for improving safety in the mines.

The NUM must act to force immediate implementation of all the measures in the report.

The whole report is complete indictment of NCB methods of management. Its lessons must be the start of a campaign to prepare for workers' management throughout the Coalfield.

(cont'd from front page)

incentives to stimulate capitalism, not one has demanded socialist policies to defend jobs and create employment.

But the working class is now posed with the urgent battle for jobs and conditions. The demands necessary to lead such a fight are those from the Trotskyist Transitional Programme:

\* No redundancies - work sharing on full pay!

\* Occupy factories where this is refused.

\* Demand the account books be opened to elected trade union committees.

\* On this basis, nationalise, under workers' management.

\* A full programme of public works, paid at trade union rates, for nationalised industries.

\* Full union rights for the unemployed!

In fighting for these demands workers will see in practice the union and Labour leaders as Trotsky described them in 1926:

"The whole of the present day superstructure of the British working class - in all its shades and groupings without exception represents a braking mechanism on the revolution."

As this is learned by broader layers of workers in struggle, the base will be established for the building of a new revolutionary leadership in the working class.

## SPAIN

(cont'd from front page)

questions of amnesty and democratic reforms these organisations are attempting to suppress the loud and clear demand for the overthrow of the government which the working class is making.

Nowhere was it louder than at the Real Madrid football match on January 11 which ended with the chanting of political slogans familiar from the Portuguese revolution and the Spanish republic of the 1930s.

In sharp contrast to this, the Workers Commission leader Marcelino Camacho, like other leaders of the Democratic Junta and Platform, attempts to disown the political history and sabotage the political demands of the Spanish working class.

## 'RECONCILIATION'

The history of Spain, he said in a recent interview with *Le Monde* 'has always proceeded through wars, revolutions or crusades. We are at present in a moment of history when it is necessary to end the 'traumatic' evolution. We must reach a national reconciliation of Spaniards'.

The economic crisis he went on, demanded sacrifices and the working class knew its responsibilities. But 'the working class is the bearer, in part, of the future of Spain. To be sure that today's sacrifice will bring benefits to the whole society and not only the oligarchy, we say we need freedom'.

But at Camacho's back Spanish workers are already demanding the complete elimination of that ruling class with which Camacho and his fellow Stalinist and reformist leaders wish to enter into partnership.

## OVERTHROW

The last two weeks of dramatic action give further proof of the readiness of the Spanish working class to wage a militant and united struggle for the overthrow of the fascist regime and for a workers' government. The single major obstacle to that is the policy of class collaboration of the leaders of the parties which make up the Democratic Junta and Platform.

The main lines of the 'liberalisation' policies to be announced by Prime Minister Arias Navarro on January 28 are already clear (elections and the legalisation of non-communist parties).

These attempts to rescue Francoism must be met not with compromising gestures but total rejection. Spanish workers' organisations must at once prepare a general strike to bring down Francoism once and for all and establish a workers' government in Spain.

# I.S. 'RIGHT TO WORK' MARCHES

The International Socialists are launching what their paper 'Socialist Worker' describes as "a rank and file campaign for the right to work", acting through their front organisations calling themselves "Right to Work Committees".

They are organising a march of unemployed from Manchester to London, starting on February 15th, and finishing on March 15th. They want to use the march to build still more of these rank and file committees.

The campaign is distinguished by putting forward virtually no programme whatsoever other than

the vague slogan "fight for the right to work". On this basis IS have been able to enlist the support of a number of 'left' MPs who are lending their names to the marches. Without committing themselves to anything, these people who have voted for virtually every one of Wilson's unemployment-creating policies, including the Chrysler deal, are thus given a 'left' face in the workers movement.

The opportunist tactic of the IS in this march is to direct the massive hostility against unemployment within the working class away from the political fight for leadership within the unions and the

necessary confrontation with the bureaucracy, into rank-and-file protest committees.

There are surface similarities between this march and the Right to Work Marches organised by the Socialist Labour League in 1972. The SLL (like the IS today) advocated no developed programme unemployment. It, too, enlisted 'left' MPs as sponsors.

But the Socialist Labour League at that time fought consistently, against all other tendencies for leadership within the trade unions in conflict with the bureaucracy, and correctly focussed the attention of workers continuously on the political treachery of its leadership in the face of the Tory government.

This was linked to a political fight against Stalinism and centrism.

None of these political strengths are present in today's IS campaign. In seeking only to develop the lowest level of 'rank-and-file' action, the IS panders as ever to the political backwardness of sections of workers, and offer neither programme nor principled understanding of the bureaucracy.

The Workers Socialist League will of course support the unemployed marches when they pass through areas in which we have support.

We will not stand aside from the struggles of unemployed workers against capitalism however much we disagree with their political position.

But we will give no support to the diversionary politics of "rank and file" or "right to work" committees which direct unemployed workers and youth away from the trade unions.

Instead we have consistently fought for the formation of Trades Council unemployment committees on which we along with other tendencies can fight for our policies. And we will continue to take up the fight in the branches for full trade union rights for the unemployed.

## RALLY: 1 year of SOCIALIST PRESS

The first year of publication of *Socialist Press* has seen the Workers Socialist League develop strongly from a small nucleus of members expelled from the WRP to a solidly based movement with a proud record of struggle in the trade unions.

Leading this at each point has been the paper, which has consistently put forward programme and perspective on every major political issue confronting the working class.

Our Anniversary Rallies will look back on this history and then look forward to coming struggles and prospects for further development of the movement. We invite all readers and supporters to attend.

Speakers will include Alan Thornett and John Lister (Editor, *Socialist Press*)

### LONDON

Friday 6th February, 7.30  
Conway Hall  
Red Lion Square

### BIRMINGHAM

Sunday 8th February, 7.30  
Digbeth Hall  
Lecture Room 1

### LEEDS

Sunday 15th February, 7.30  
Trades Council Club