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SCANLON POLICES PAY LAWS



RYDER THREAT USED

The recent rightward swing of 'left' engineering workers' union leader Hugh Scanlon has resulted in a cold-blooded attack on the working class. Last week, strike leaders at British Leyland plants in the Midlands, who have been in action against the pay laws of the Labour government, were hauled before the full AUEW Executive Council. There they were pressured, by the blackmailing provisions of the Ryder Report, into making recommendations which resulted in a return to work.

Scanlon acted enthusiastically to enforce the pay laws which are central to the attacks of the Labour government on the living standards of the working class; so enthusiastically that the capitalist press fell over itself to sing his praises.

The *Daily Telegraph*, possibly the clearest voice of the employers, pointed out that Scanlon and his Executive: "have taken unprecedented steps to exert their authority and order four groups of strikers back to work"..... "For a union which initially opposed the £6 limit and all forms of wage restraint, they have acted most energetically in enforcing it".

DIFFERENT

This is very different language from that used against Scanlon on the occasions when he has defended the working class. It is the direct opposite of the attacks by the media which followed his use of his President's casting vote to call the whole AUEW out on strike and defeat the National Industrial Relations Court in 1974.

Yet it was in that very period, mid-1974, that today's betrayals began. Even while opposing the NIRC, Scanlon allowed the AUEW/TASS motion of oppos-

ition to the reactionary social contract to be withdrawn at the special conference of the TUC. He led the AUEW in abstaining on the vote, and the social contract was endorsed.

Scanlon's "opposition" to Wilson's pay policy was a fraud from the start.

"OPPOSITION"

The whole time the AUEW was in "opposition" to the social contract not a finger was lifted to support any section of workers who opposed the pay laws. But no sooner had the right-wing swung the AUEW in support of wage controls than Scanlon acted vigorously to enforce it.

This is why the employers now gloat as Scanlon does their job openly for them.

The strikes of the British Leyland skilled men were of great political significance. They represented the growing opposition in the working class to the attacks of the Labour government. It is for this reason that the forces ranged against them were so great.

To bring the local leaders of a group of workers on strike, whilst all the pressures of the media are on them, in front of a full meeting of the Executive Council is entirely unprecedented.

Pressure can be brought to bear under these conditions which only a leadership with the clearest political perspective could resist.

And to force a return to work, Scanlon used all the techniques and rationalisations developed for that purpose.

He argued that workers must sacrifice in order to make the employer "viable"; that opposition to government policy was "hopeless" because they would get not support from the union; and finally, he used the threat prepared by the architects of the Ryder plan - if you refuse to return to work, then the next cash injection of £100 million, due in August, would be withheld and Leyland would go into liquidation.

Thus, in order to police the pay laws, Scanlon utilises the full weight of the provisions of the Ryder Report.

STAGES

These provisions divide the government's cash payments to Leyland into stages with each stage conditional on substantial increases in productivity and a reduction in disputes.

In this way the threat of mass unemployment can be used against workers who defend their wages and conditions.

Scanlon must be fought. Motions opposing his actions must be raised throughout the AUEW.

A new leadership must be built in the fight to defeat the bureaucracy he leads and ensure that the AUEW ends its support for the pay laws and opposes Stage Two.

Full active support must be given to workers who fight for free collective bargaining, and the pay policy talks with Callaghan, Foot and Healey must end.

WHO WRITES JONES' SPEECHES?

As TUC leaders twist and turn to find the best means to impose a substantial wage cut on their members through Stage Two of the pay laws - Jack Jones, General Secretary of the T&GWU and the leading right-wing TUC bureaucrat - has produced a 'new' formula.

His proposal is for a sum of money to be agreed between the TUC and the Labour government which could be distributed differently in each plant or industry.

For example, if 5% was the agreed total figure, workers in each factory could decide if it would be paid as a flat rate increase or on a percentage basis, providing the total increase in the payroll was not more than 5%.

But Jones has no authority from the T&GWU policy conference - the highest body in the union - to pursue such a policy.

HIGH-HANDED

It is however consistent with the high-handed way he is operating in a union which is fast becoming one of the most bureaucratic and undemocratic in the trade union movement.

This raises the question as to where Jones' policies come from.

Does he think them up himself?

Are they handed to him after a discussion between Foot and Healey? Do they derive from within the labour movement at all?

With the advent of ever more blatant collaboration with the employers through 'participation'

major policy decisions being discussed by national and local bureaucrats with big multinational corporations such as Leyland before being presented to the trade union movement.

This certainly seems to be the case with Jones' latest scheme. In a major statement on long term wages policy (dated February 23rd 1976 but only just released) Geoffrey Whalen, Personnel Director, puts forward a policy identical to the 'Jones plan'.

Whalen's document proposes an end to individual plant bargaining - an objective cherished by Leyland for five years whilst they awaited the right conditions to force it in.

He wants to replace it with corporation-wide negotiations conducted by the national officers of the unions.

Corporate bargaining is designed to restrict the independent action of the working class and strengthen the hand of the bureaucracy and the employers.

PART OF RYDER

Whalen, who argues that corporate bargaining is part of the Ryder plan and therefore already accepted by the unions, explains

MAY DAY GREETINGS

The Editorial Board of *Socialist Press* send revolutionary May Day greetings to our readers and to the international workers' movement in struggle against Imperialism.

We offer our fullest political support in the fight to defeat the labour bureaucracy and to reconstruct the Fourth International.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

FRANCE

PORTUGAL FOR AN SP-CP GOVERNMENT!

The new elections in Portugal on 25th April, second anniversary of the overthrow of fascism, seem certain to show a marked, and carefully organised move to the right.

These elections do not take place under the same conditions as a year ago. All the right wing officers imprisoned after the attempted 'coup' of 11th March 1975 have now been freed.

The newspapers, together with many farms and other enterprises have been handed back to their former owners. The CDS and other right wing parties have been actively protected by the military regime - though despite this only small numbers are attending their public rallies.

All of these measures have led to repression. The new constitution, called by the Times and the Portuguese Communist Party the most progressive in the capitalist world, nevertheless leaves the power of veto in the hands of the head of state who has yet to be elected. It cannot be changed until 1980.

The capitalist and pro-capitalist parties standing in the election have accepted this. Extreme right wing forces around the refugees from anti-colonial revolt in Angola and other former colonies have come out into the open.

On 7th April the West German magazine Stern claimed that it was possible to meet leaders of the so-called 'Portuguese National Movement' by chance on the street in Northern Portugal.

SPINOLA

The same magazine also showed that a right wing 'coup' was again being planned by ex-General Spinoza from his hide-out in Switzerland.

The Swiss authorities were compelled to deport their unwelcome guest back to Brazil, but who is to say that all the military equipment detailed in the Stern article has not now been put in place to prevent any workers government from coming to office.

While these right wing forces have been openly organising themselves, the election has been deliberately weighted against the left. At Beja on 10th April demonstrators against a right wing CDS rally were arrested.

When a further demonstration was held to demand the release of those arrested, it was supported by local soldiers.

Other soldiers had to be flown in, and they shot on the crowd, wounding a number and killing 38-year old farmworker, Manuel Calminha.

At the same time, the rights of left-wing parties in the election have been restricted. The Maoist UDP has been banned by the

French authorities from campaigning for their policies among the immigrant workers there.

Even more important, the LCI, affiliated to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, was banned for eight days from putting forward its policies on Portuguese radio and TV, after attacking some of the right wing military leaders.

Such constraints have not been placed on the Communist Party or the Socialist Party.

The CP, naturally enough, has announced its complete support for the new constitution which enshrines capitalist rule for the foreseeable future.

Its careful support for the status quo has not however won it any new support and it does not seem likely that it will increase its vote in the elections.

The Socialist Party, on the other hand, considers itself to be in a strong position. On 11th - 14th March SP leader Soares received a vote of confidence in a conference at Oporto from various other European reformist leaders such as Mitterrand of France and Palme of Sweden.

On 19th March *Le Monde*

reported that Soares said "we will govern alone or we will be in opposition" after the elections.

By 9th April, the London Times was able to report a modification of this position: 'independent' military and political figures might be included in an SP administration, Soares had now said.

This policy will not serve the interests of the workers at all. In these elections we call for the establishment of a government of the main parties of the working class, the CP and the SP, independent of the armed forces and any of the other capitalist political formations.

This is a fight to establish the independent class interests of the working class. At the same time we are for the development of workers committees in the factories and the banks, and the peasants occupation of the land, which although they suffered a setback following the November rightward swing, remain together with the rank and file soldiers movement the only basis on which the working class' and peasants' interests can be defended.



Callaghan and Soares

ZIMBABWE

The 40% increase in the African government's defence budget reflects the decisive impact within South Africa of the mobilisation of thousands of peasants and workers around the war for the liberation of Zimbabwe.

Since the end of 1974, the Vorster government in South Africa has followed a conscious policy of accommodation (detente) towards the black states further north, notably Zambia.

The aim was both to secure countries like Zambia as markets for South African industry and to ensure, through Zambian pressure, that the eventual government of

liberated Zimbabwe would be amenable to South Africa's influence.

Vorster has for some time therefore accepted that the days of the Smith regime in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) are numbered.

VORSTER

Vorster and his predecessor white minority governments in South Africa however, have hitherto imagined that they could avoid meeting the same fate as Ian Smith by disguising racial oppression under the guise of 'national independence'.

Thus next October Vorster plans that the first 'independent' African 'Bantustan' will separate from South Africa with its own government and army.

This area, the Transkei, will in effect remain totally under the control of South Africa. 70% of its income will come from African migrant workers working for a pittance in the gold and diamond mines in South Africa.

CHIEFS

Crucial to the policy of Bantustans has been the cooperation with Vorster of the conservative tribal chiefs like Chief Mantanzima who is to be the first "President" of the Transkei.

However, a month ago another important African chief Gasha Buthelezi who had hitherto gone along with Vorster made a speech resoundingly opposed to Bantustans in favour of 'one man one vote' within South Africa.

This speech reflects the pressure of the forward movement of the African masses within South Africa directly flowing from the chain of



100,000 French University and secondary school students and teachers brought their objections to the government's educational 'reform' plans to the streets last week.

Large demonstrations in most of the major cities (40,000 in Paris alone), though permitted by the authorities, were heavily pressured by the riot police and numerous demonstrators were injured.

The movement which has developed with astonishing speed is against the government's plans to rationalise the education system to make it meet more consistently the needs of French capitalism.

Primary education should concentrate, according to education minister Haby, on the acquisition of basic skills; secondary and higher education should concentrate on courses designed to produce the qualifications for which demand exists.

So the nature and content of college and university courses will be decided by committees of teachers, administrators and capitalists. At the same time, admission to courses should be much more selective.

The strength and rapid growth of the movement against this

policy has forced the Communist Party and reformists to support it. And the efforts of the students' and teachers' leaders to obtain trade union support for the protest means that the movement has become a significant threat to the increasingly insecure Giscard regime.

ENQUIRY COMMISSION

The WSL has supported for some time the institution of an enquiry into allegations by the OCI that Michel Varga, leading member of the LIRQI faction, is a CIA/GPU provocateur. Such an enquiry has now been set up and has held its first meeting. The following is the statement issued from that meeting:

"This is to inform you that we have constituted ourselves as a Commission of Enquiry on the basis of the enclosed text. The participants in this Commission are at this time: G. Marion (Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire), Gus Horowitz (Socialist Workers Party), John Docherty (Workers Socialist League), Lesueur (International Spartacist Tendency), Andre Fry (Lutte Ouvriere). We invite you to take part. The secretariat of the Commission of Enquiry has been assumed by Lutte Ouvriere, at the above address."

The Declaration, which has the support of all the above organisations, reads as follows:

"For some time the Organisations Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) has put forward a number of charges, claiming that Balasz Nagy, known as Michel Varga, is an 'agent paid by the CIA', and a 'GPU provocateur'.

The leaders of LIRQI, the organisation to which Michel Varga belongs, have demanded a 'workers' commission of enquiry' to express an opinion on 'the campaign of baseless allegations put forward by the OCI leadership', as well as on 'the extension of these charges to the League Internationale, in that they have gone as far as repeated physical attacks against members of the OCI/LIRQI faction, notably on the united demonstration against Francoism, and at the leafletting that was taking place outside a meeting calling for the freeing of the Soviet mathematician Leonid Plyushch.

We consider that such accusations made against an individual militant or an organisation are serious enough for the entire revolutionary movement to ascertain whether they have any foundation.

For this reason we have decided to constitute ourselves into a Commission of Enquiry in order to invite the leadership of the OCI to present us with all the proofs it claims to possess, and to ask all those who consider they can provide any evidence on the affair to come and put it forward.

The Commission takes upon itself the task of a scrupulous verification of facts and documents which it will eventually publish. To give this as much authority as possible, the Commission invites all those organisations that consider themselves to belong to the



Vorster

ARGENTINA

General Jorge Videla's military junta has launched massive repression against the working class and its organisations.

The right to strike and negotiate collective terms and conditions are suspended. Hundreds of workers have already been convicted of 'crimes' against these restrictions and imprisoned for up to ten years by summary court martials. The number of arrests since the coup is now put by observers at over 3,000.

Government measures are backed up by the vicious activities of the ultra-right triple-A and Liberators of America commando groups (the latter organised by General Benjamin Menendez). Since

organisations.

This fierce repression is necessary to back up the economic policy of finance minister Martinez de Hoz. This is based on restoring capitalist profitability through wage control, the continuation of inflation, tax changes which assist profits, the sacking of about 500,000 public employees and selling off state enterprises to private capitalists. Such measures add up to huge real wage cuts and unemployment.

Leaders of the workers movement have continued the treacherous conciliation which helped the coup to take place. A group of leaders of the peronist CGT (the main trade union

TURKEY Down with NF coalition!

On 8th April fascists attacked the students of Ankara University of Political Sciences, killing one student and wounding many others.

The next day, April 9th, over 60,000 people marched in a funeral demonstration for the dead student calling for the revolutionary overthrow of the government.

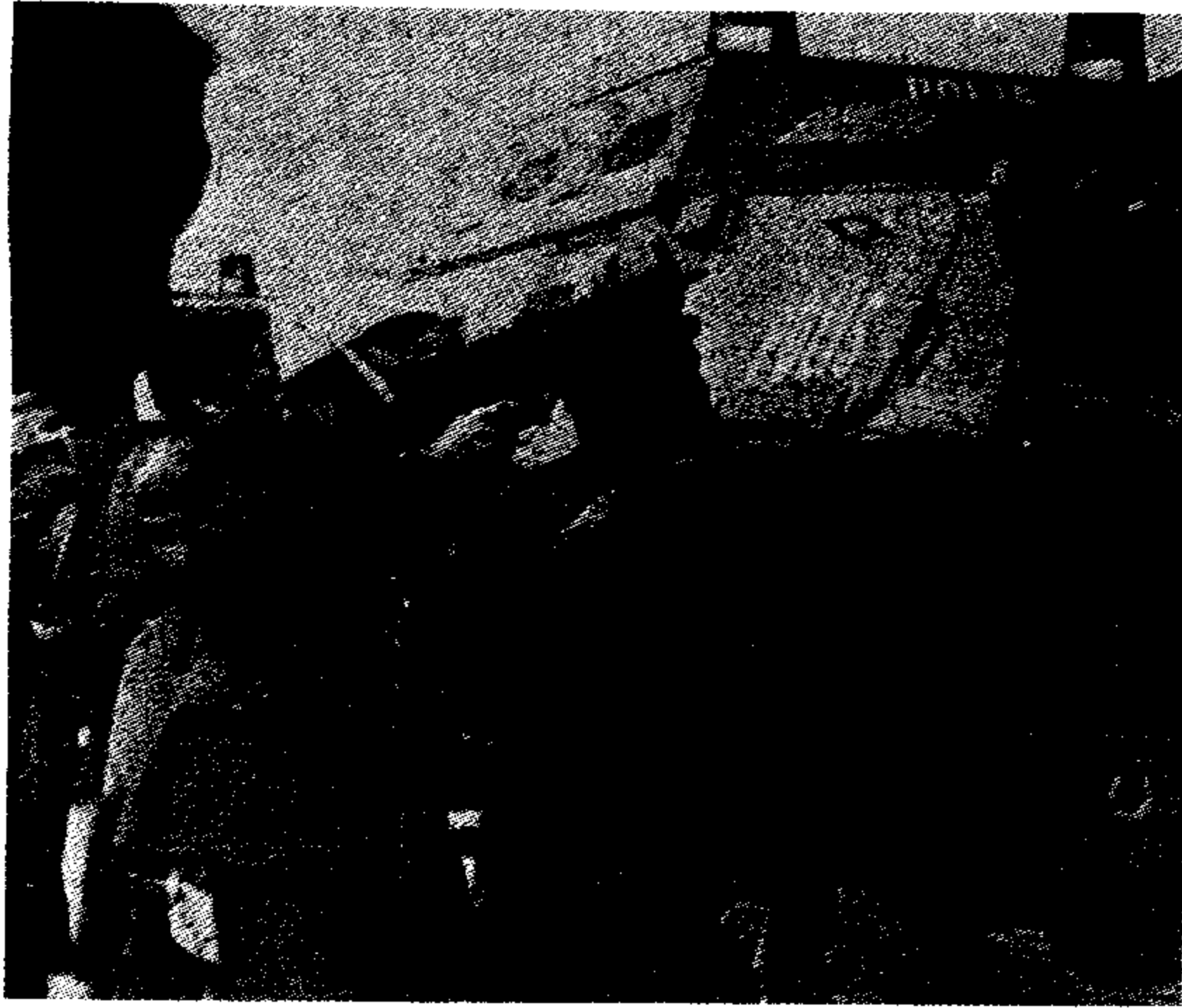
ARMED CLASHES

In the resulting protests from students in many Universities in Ankara, armed clashes developed between police and students leading to a further two students being killed by police and many more badly wounded.

Confrontations spread through many parts of the city as police attacked students demonstrating around the slogans 'Down with the Fascists' and 'The Government Must Resign'. Police arrested more than 300 students.

The Turkish National Front Coalition government consists of four right-wing bourgeois parties. It was established in March 1975, six months after the break-down of the coalition government based on Ecevit's Republican Popular Party and the National Salvation Party.

Since then the fascists have increased their attacks on the working class, students and progressives with the full support of the state forces.



Turkish police use armoured car against demonstrators

Hundreds of violent incidents have taken place, killing more than 60 people with hundreds wounded.

These incidents show that the fascists are rapidly expanding their forces and terrorist attacks under the favourable conditions created by the right-wing government.

The international economic crisis, which is getting deeper day by day, is felt deeply in Turkey. Six million workers are unemployed while inflation is between 20 and

30 per cent.

Under these conditions, the class struggle is sharpening and the bourgeoisie are trying to repress workers' struggles through methods of fascist terror.

It is also significant that the interests of American imperialism in the Middle East requires them to maintain a right-wing government and to establish a repressive regime in Turkey.

The ability of the Turkish bourgeoisie to establish its united front against the working class is the outcome of the reactionary policies of the leadership of the Turkish working class.

Ecevit's Republican Popular Party (the parliamentary opposition to the National Front government) is based on the petty-bourgeoisie and is making some left sounding speeches. In words they are demanding the "bringing down" of the National Front government but only through democratic and parliamentary ways.

In this attitude they represent the interests of the native Turkish capitalists against the world imperialist interests represented by the National Front.

Most of the other "left" parties are supporting the RPP against the National Front government. In this way the RPP gathers the support of layers of workers and peasants.

UNIONS

In the unions there is a similar crisis of leadership. There are, in Turkey, about five million employed workers and two million of them are organised in unions.

They fall into two major trade union confederations, the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Unions and the Confederation of Turkish Workers Unions.

The CTWU is the majority force and a reformist confederation - many of its leaders have been trained as trade unionists in the USA.

The CRWU was founded after a split from the CTWU and has rapidly strengthened; in the last two years many unions have split from the CTWU to join the new confederation.

But the CRWU gives all its political support to Ecevit's RPP and does nothing to establish the political independence of the working class.

SUPPORT

During the Cyprus war, both confederations gave full support to their "own" bourgeoisie, banning all strikes and accepting the imposition of a curfew and anti-labour laws.

In the last few months the CRWU leadership has brought about the defeat of a struggle involving 400,000 public sector workers. The fight was against legislation changing the status of the workers to civil servants, thus banning their right to unionise.

But in manufacturing industry, unionisation continues to develop rapidly.

There are some parties to the left of the RPP. The Turkish Labour Party was founded after the coup in May 1960. Up to the coup in 1971, the TLP had considerable

support from workers and MPs in Parliament. But the coup saw the TLP closed down. The change in the RPP leadership attracted much TLP support.

In 1973, the TLP was reconstituted and based itself on a trades unions. It is now struggling to win the support of the workers away from the RPP. But by keeping the struggle against the National Front government on the democratic and parliamentary level, the TLP politically identifies itself with the RPP.

The illegal Turkish Communist Party (TCP) has no independent alternative policies in this struggle.

PARLIAMENTARY

It formulates its aims as the establishment of democratic politics through Parliamentary means. In the Stalinists, it isn't necessary at this stage for the working class to take power, but merely to have some involvement in it.

On this basis, the TCP combats policy, with the RPP and the TLP.

During the Cyprus war, the Stalinists of the TCP gave support to Ecevit on the basis that he supposedly going to establish "peace" on the island.

There is also a number of small left wing organisations. The Maoists have considerable support in sections of peasants and students. But they divert all struggles by the slogan 'No to the Soviet Union. No to America - Independent Turkey!'

In Turkey as in all other countries, the way to fight the fascist and repressive regimes is to mobilize the full strength of the working class in a united front against reaction.

In this only Trotskyists show the way forward. The central demands of the struggles today in Turkey must be:

- * For a General Strike to bring down the National Front Government!
- * For workers defence squads against fascist and police attack!
- * Down with the state security courts and their laws!
- * Repeal all anti-working class legislation!
- * Release all political prisoners!

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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 leader-

DRAIN ON SOCIAL SERVICES

A mass turn out of over 600 NALGO members attended a rally of the Union's Save Our Services Campaign in Birmingham Town Hall last week.

They heard NALGO leader Geoffrey Drain and local 'left' MP Audrey Wise avoid even a hint of a fight to prevent the government cuts in jobs and services.

Wise told the meeting that (like any "liberal" employer),

"I do not disagree with the government's White Paper on the cuts because of its practicality or its actual words, but because of its philosophy which would mean a less healthy workforce".

SILENT

The upshot of this line of argument was Wise stating that she disagreed with the White Paper, while remaining silent on what steps she would take to fight its implementation.

Thus despite demagogic "left" statements, Wise, like all the 37 abstainers who brought the initial defeat of the White Paper only to vote confidence in Wilson's economic policies the next day, winds up simply accepting the "right" of the government to carry through the attack on jobs and living standards.

words with action, this is what must happen.

Drain's statement was an even more open betrayal carrying with it an attack not only on his own members in local government but also on private sector workers. He argued that if the Labour leaders were going to transfer spending from the public sector to private industry, they would have to show these private projects to be economically "efficient". If they did so, presumably Drain would agree to the slashing of NALGO jobs.

This open call to implement work-study and speed-up in private industry as a prelude to an onslaught on jobs in the social services plays right into the hands of the employers. And Drain's strategy for a fight to "Save Our Services" is designed to exclude the membership from struggle and prevent a conflict at the point of redundancy.

He simply asked NALGO members to allow him to use his "influence" within the job-cutting TUC leadership and amongst wage-cutting Labour cabinet ministers!

SLIM PROSPECT

He was obliged to keep quiet about the slim prospects of finding anywhere either a Labour minister who would support a call to save jobs or a TUC leader who would



Drain



Wise

the only way NALGO members act to defend jobs and force defence of the social services national strike action.

NALGO Branches must recognise the road to ruin and redundancy being followed by their leadership.

They must begin local preparations for action to defend all jobs against attack, along with calls to the Executive for national strike action, if possible coordinated with other public sector unions, to stop the cuts, and to force home

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION Part 8

The Call for Workers' Control

By Steve Murray

The mass upsurge of February 1917 which overthrew Tsarism had drawn into the struggle alongside the vanguard forces of the working class, not only backward and unorganised sections of workers, but also the mass of peasant soldiers and the petit-bourgeoisie of the city.

This tremendous broadening of the movement, though absolutely essential for the success of the revolution, had temporarily cramped the class conscious minority of the working class.

When the Soviet was formed the majority of its deputies were members of the Socialist Revolutionaries or Mensheviks, and the Bolsheviks were in a minority.

Though the Soviet alone carried authority with the working masses it was already being forced to concentrate power in its own hands, the petit-bourgeois majority of the Soviet voluntarily agreed to transfer power to the bourgeoisie and voted confidence in the Provisional Government.

It was in this way that the situation of 'dual power' was born. In the *April Theses* Lenin sums up the nature of this dual power as follows:

"The dual power is evident in the existence of two governments: the main, the real, the actual government of the bourgeoisie, the 'Provisional Government' of Lvov Co.; the other is a supplementary and parallel government, a 'controlling' government in the name of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which holds no organs of state power, but directly rests on the mass and indisputable majority of the people, on the armed workers and soldiers".

TEMPORARY

These two conflicting regimes could only temporarily exist side by side with each other. The bourgeoisie could not for long tolerate masses 'interfering' in their affairs - workers vetoing the decisions of their management, officers refusing to obey the orders of their officers.

Neither could the fundamental demands of the working class and peasantry be realised without abolishing the 'dual power' and vesting power in the Soviets.

The balance between the Soviet and the Provisional Government was unstable only so long as the bourgeoisie did not have the strength to overthrow the Soviets and while the masses still shared the illusion that 'peace, peace and land', the demands for which they had thrown the Tsar, could and should be granted by the Provisional Government.



Lenin

In the last article we saw how at its April Conference Lenin set to re-orient the Bolshevik Party in this new situation, to win the party majority to the perspective of a struggle for the proletarian dictatorship and to develop a programme which could break the



The Petrograd Soviet in session

faith of the masses in their petit-bourgeois leaders.

To struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, did not mean an immediate call for armed insurrection:

"Our work must be one of criticism, of explaining the mistakes of the petit-bourgeois SR and social democratic parties, of preparing and welding the elements of a consciously proletarian Communist Party, and of curing the proletariat of the general petit-bourgeois intoxication.... Only by overcoming this unreasoning trust (in the Provisional Government), and we can and should overcome it only ideologically, by comradely persuasion, by pointing to the lessons of experience, can we set ourselves free from the orgy of revolutionary phrase-mongering and really stimulate the consciousness both of the proletariat and the masses in general". (*Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*, April 1917).

From April onwards the Bolsheviks at the head of the class conscious workers set out to 'patiently explain' to the masses the need to take all power in their hands.

NO LEAD

The Soviet leaders would not give a clear direction forward. Trotsky explains how this came about.

"In a revolutionary epoch the oppressed masses turn more easily and quickly to direct action, than they learn to give their desires and demands a formal expression through their own representatives. The more abstract the system of representation, the more it lags behind the rhythm of those events which determine the activity of the masses.... With all the advantages of their organic connection with the factories and regiments, the Soviets are nevertheless representative organs, and are therefore not free from the qualifications and distortions of parliamentarism. The contradiction inherent in representation, even of the Soviet form, lies in the fact that it is on the one hand necessary for the activity of the masses, but on the other hand easily becomes a conservative obstacle to it.... At any rate on the day after the April quarter-insurrection.... the same deputies were sitting in the Soviet as the day before. Arriving once more in their accustomed seats, they voted for the motions of their accustomed leaders". (*History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 329)

But the April crisis was not entirely without outcome. The masses began to draw lessons from this experience and moved closer to the Bolsheviks. In the local Soviets in the factory districts the Bolsheviks very rapidly won a majority. And from April onwards the Bolsheviks stepped up their agitation for workers' control, leading to the call for nationalisation.

"We must at once prepare the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, the Soviet of Deputies of Bank Employees, etc., to proceed to the adoption of feasible and practicable measures for the merging of all the banks into one single national bank, to be followed by the establishment of the control of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies over the banks and syndicates and then by their nationalisation". (*Political Parties and Tasks of the Proletariat*, Lenin Selected Works, vol VI p. 85-6)

PLOTTED

Meanwhile, defeated in its frontal assault on the Soviets, the bourgeoisie plotted a more gradual offensive against the advanced sections of the working class.

A meeting of leading industrialists drew up a plan to institute a creeping lockout where factory after factory would be closed down on one pretext or another.

Central to this was the struggle step by step to break the illusions of the masses in bourgeois democracy and prepare the workers to take power through the development of workers' control. Vital was the fight to renew the leadership of the Soviets and strengthen the self-confidence of the workers they represented.

LOCK-OUT

The revolution would be blamed for the resulting industrial chaos. Trotsky describes how the lockout gave an impetus to the revolutionising of the masses.

"In the course of March and April, 129 small plants involving 9,000 workers were shut down; in May 108 with a like number of workers; in June 125 plants with 38,000 workers; in July 206 plants, threw on the streets 48,000 workers. The lockout developed in geometric progression.... The manufacturers would refer to an absence of fuel, raw materials, accessories, credits. The factory committees would interfere in the matter and in many cases indubitably establish the fact of a malicious dislocation of industry with the goal of bringing pressure

on the workers or holding up the government for subsidies.... In several cases the sabotage was so obvious that as a result of the exposures of the shop committees the industrialists found themselves compelled to re-open the factories". (Trotsky, *ibid.*, p. 385)

EXPERIENCE

From the practical experience of economic sabotage, the factory committees were won to the slogans of the Bolsheviks and began to exercise workers control in industry. By June the Bolsheviks had won the leadership of the Petrograd factory committees. At their Conference they passed a resolution which according to Lenin:

"...lays special emphasis on the all important thing, that is, on what is to be done 1) to prevent the actual 'preservation' of capitalist profits; 2) to tear off the veil of commercial secrecy; 3) to give the workers a majority on the control agencies; 4) to ensure that the organisation (of control and direction), being 'nationwide' organisation, is directed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies and not by the capitalists....

"Let's get down to business! Let us have fewer excuses and keep closer to practical matters! Are the profits made from war supplies, amounting to 500 per cent or more, to be left intact? Yes or no? Is commercial secrecy to be left intact? Yes or no? Are the workers to be enabled to exercise control? Yes or no?" (Lenin, *Collected Works* p. 45, June 1917)

Faced with the economic collapse, the Compromisers convened a conference of economic 'experts'. Its conclusions were that state regulation of economic life was necessary.

"Contemporary conditions demand a regulative participation of the state in the distribution of raw materials and finished products.... Simultaneous with this it is necessary to place under control all credit institutions".

The Soviet Executive Committee adopted these proposals and called on the government to implement them.

Naturally the government refused, for it was their own class which was organising the sabotage.



Meeting of a soldiers committee

Lenin contrasted the extravagant promises of the Soviet ministers in the coalition government with their complete inaction.

"It is safe to say that every single speech, every single article clearly and explicitly recognises the chief and principal measures of combatting and averting catastrophe and famine. This measure is control, supervision, accounting, regulation by the state, introduction of a proper distribution of labour power, etc., and it is just this which is not being done for fear of encroaching on the supremacy of the landowners and capitalists, on their immense fantastic and scandalous profits".

The steps to take, on the other hand, argued Lenin, were simple:

"It would be enough to arrest fifty to a hundred financial magnates and bigwigs, the chief knights of embezzlement and of

robbery by the banks. It would be enough to arrest them for a few weeks to expose their frauds and show all exploited people "who needs the war". Upon exposing the frauds of the banking barons, we could release them, placing the banks, the capitalist syndicates and all the contractors 'working' for the government under workers' control". (Lenin, *Collected Works* vol 25 p. 58, June 20th 1917).

No step forward from the limited elements of control being exercised by the workers in the factories could be made without encroaching on private property and challenging the bourgeois Provisional Government.

The Mensheviks tried to scare the working class with the technical complexities of production and the impossibility of running industry without the capitalists.

Lenin replied:

"There is not the slightest technical difficulty in the way of amalgamation of the banks; and if the state power were revolutionary not only in word (ie. if it did not fear to do away with inertia and routine), if it were democratic not only in words (ie. if it acted in the interests of the majority of the people), it would be enough to decree confiscation of property and imprisonment as the penalty for managers, board members, and big shareholders, for the slightest delay or for attempting to conceal documents or accounts. It would be enough for example to organise the poorer employees separately and to reward them for detecting fraud and delay on the part of the rich, for nationalisation of the banks to be effected as smoothly and as rapidly as possible". (Vol. 25 p. 321).

The fight for workers' control, which had grown out of the struggle against the lockout and economic sabotage, fulfilled two important functions.

It eroded the power of the capitalists in industry, and at the same time convinced the working class through its own experience of the impossibility of going further without destroying the political power of the capitalists and concentrating all power in the Soviets as instruments of the proletarian dictatorship.

It was on the basis of the experience of control that the masses were prepared to overthrow the Provisional Government.

The October Revolution, however, did not bring to an end the struggle for workers' control. The immediate task facing the Soviet government was to develop from workers' control in the factory to a system of state regulation of the production and distribution of goods.

The banks and the major monopolies were nationalised, but wholesale nationalisations were excluded. First the resistance of the individual employers to state regulation had to be broken and more important, the working class had to gain the technical experience necessary to take over direct management of industry.

Workers' control continued to develop after October, stimulated and backed up by the Soviet power. The nationalisation of industry developed gradually sector by sector as the masses began to gain experience of administration and learned to break the resistance of the technical experts and utilise them under workers' management.

It was only the allied wars of intervention and the civil war which cut short this process and forced the abrupt nationalisation of all industries by decree in June 1918.

With the upsurge of working class militancy in Spain, the explicit class collaboration of the Communist and Socialist parties — each seeking alliances with “liberal” sections of the capitalist class — has been one of the main forces leading class conscious workers towards parties which at least claim to be further to the left.

Three of these in particular have grown rapidly in the last few months and have played a significant role in the wave of strikes and other actions since Franco's death.

These are the Labour party (Partido del Trabajo - PT), the Workers' Revolutionary Organisation (Organizacion Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores - ORT) and the Spanish Communist Movement (Movimiento Comunista de Espana - MCE).

All three are estimated to have as many as 10,000 members or close active supporters.

In many areas and factories these parties have provided an important organisational alternative to the CP. Only to a very small extent, and in the most erratic way, however, have they offered a real political alternative to Stalinism.

MAOIST

All three parties are commonly known as “Maoist” though this conceals their very varied origins.

They are all to some degree centrist in that they ricochet from day to day between the reactionary positions of the CP and apparently revolutionary or even ultra-left positions.

The PT was formed in the 1960s by a left opposition group expelled from the CP.

Last year it changed its name from the International Communist Party because, it claimed, such a name “aroused suspicions of Trotskyism”. Its political line, however, arouses no such suspicions.

Following the CP, it declares that the primary objective in Spain is for the working class in alliance with other “democratic” classes to establish bourgeois democracy.

Its major difference with the CP is one of words: the PT, unlike the CP, still maintains that “only with the installation of the proletariat can our present revolution be said to have ended in success”.

SEPARATED

But, like the CP's “socialism”, this is postponed in the PT's party programme for an indefinite future and safely separated from the democratic objectives of the moment.

In its recent practice the PT has become little more than a left cipher of the CP and it has remained a loyal and uncritical member of the Democratic Junta.

The ORT is on the surface less close to the CP's line. In its origins the ORT goes back to left wing groups of catholic workers and



Police attack students in Madrid.

SPAIN CRISIS OF WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP

intellectuals in the early 1960s, such as Vanguards and Catholic Action.

In 1963 some of these formed the syndicalist AST which converted itself into a political party after numbers of Maoists, expelled from the CP, had become the majority.

So in spite of its catholic origins the ORT is now Maoist to the extent that it claims to follow “the revolutionary line of the Chinese Communist Party” and bases itself on “the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao-tse-tung”.

It is not surprising that from this starting point its apparently commendable objective “to combat the revisionism of the CP” has not led it to a consistent revolutionary position.

TWO STAGE

It has rather led to bizarre variations on the CP line. The ORT, for instance, accepts the CP's rigid concept of a “two-stage” revolution (one step from fascism to bourgeois democracy, and another, separate

step, to socialism) but argues for the armed struggle of the workers to produce the bourgeois democratic stage.

Its definition of the political contents of this first stage do, however, go further than the CP's and include the nationalisation of monopolies under democratic workers' control.

These differences have not prevented the ORT from joining class collaborationist alliances.

It recently withdrew from the Socialist Party's Democratic Platform and called for the unification of the Junta and the Platform — an event which has now taken place, creating the body under the name of Democratic Co-ordination, though certainly not because of the ORT.

The MCE began in 1964 as the Basque Communist Movement, a split from the nationalist organisation ETA. It adopted its present name in 1972 and claims allegiance to the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Mao.

Its strength is still concentrated in the Euskadi (Basque) region,

where in many towns it occupies a dominant position in the workers' and students' movement.

It is the only one of the three large centrist/maoist organisations to have made a strong, specific criticism of the CP's political line.

It correctly condemned the Democratic Junta as “an alliance of a few reformist parties with political representatives of the oligarchy”.

In a recent issue of its paper *Serve the People* it condemns the interference of the “2nd international” of Wilson and Meir in the Spanish opposition.

In contrast to the CP's call for “national unity”, peace and forgiveness the MCE talks of the need to “disarm and dissolve” the repressive forces of the state, and bring the instigators of torture and repression to trial and punishment.

On economic questions the MCE has called for an end to wage control, the control of prices, nationalisation of all important sectors of the economy under democratic control, recognition of the right of workers to inspect the books and accounts of all capitalist

firms, and workers' participation in the running of all public services (health, transport, social security, etc.).

Such demands, however, are presented in the movement's press not as elements in a programme of struggle but more as a list of desirable objectives in contrast to the recent economic measures of fascist economics minister Villar Mir.

CONTRAST

And the MCE's correct if very incomplete criticisms of the CP are in startling contrast to its own political position until recently as an ally of the Socialist Party in the equally class collaborationist Democratic Platform, which, it argued bizarrely, was significantly to the left of the Junta.

The MCE only withdrew from the Platform just before its union with the Junta.

A much smaller group is the Communist Organisation of Spain (Bandera Roja).

The group, which left the CP in the early 1960s, was concentrated in Catalonia (especially in Barcelona).

After huge oscillations of political line it liquidated itself back into the CP, but a minority has recently resigned to re-establish the second incarnation of Bandera Roja (Red Flag).

The group has made a more consistent criticism of the CP and Socialist party than the three larger centrist/maoist groups.

Its press has condemned the way in which: “the revisionists and reformists, often supported by the PT and MCE, have tried to limit the demands and channel the combativity of the people into a narrow pacifism in the face of the aggressive attitude of the police.”

It calls for: “Freedom, amnesty, dissolution of the repressive forces (armed police, etc.), the overthrow of the government and the monarchy,” and the building of workers' self-defence organisations.

CRITICAL

And in its press it maintains a constantly critical position towards the CP's abandonment of even the pretence of fighting for dictatorship of the proletariat.

These correct positions, however, represent more a number of correct points than a qualitative political advance on the CP's line. Bandera Roja has not been able to develop a consistent programme incorporating these demands; they remain as propaganda.

In addition to these parties and groups, the last few years have seen the growth of several looser, syndicalist organisations in the workers' movement.

One of these is the very localised organisation which headed the strikes and demonstrations in Vitoria in February and March, the Organisation of the Communist Left (OIC).

Operating at a more national level is the Workers' Syndical Union (USO).

CATHOLIC

This organisation, like the ORT, originated in the movement of Catholic workers in the 1960s, though it has now lost most of its religious connection.

It consciously models itself on the French trade union federation, the CFDT. It has recently established a political party, the Socialist Reconstruction, whose political line is hard to distinguish from that of the Communist Party.

The large number of centrist, maoist or syndicalist organisations which have established themselves in Spain is symptomatic of the growing dissatisfaction of workers with their traditional stalinist and reformist parties.

But none of them have been able to offer a clear programme to serve as a basis for a complete break with class collaboration.

The challenge and opportunity in this situation for Trotskyism is obvious.

In a future article *Socialist Press* will assess the record and programme of the groups in Spain which claim allegiance to the Transitional Programme of the Trotskyist Fourth International.



Barcelona police disperse a rally demanding amnesty for political prisoners.

CHARTER CONFERENCE BOOSTS TRIBUNALS

Report from the Working Womens Charter First National Conference

by Gill Blackwell

Far from taking a decisive new step in the battle for women's rights, the conglomeration of left groups dominating the Working Women's Charter conference (primarily the IMG) advocated the use of industrial tribunals by women fighting for equal pay and opportunity.

In this way they sowed illusions in the recent bourgeois legislation instead of taking the clear position that only independent class action by the working class can further the struggle for women's rights.

LAWS

The IMG clearly saw the whole orientation as towards the new "equality" laws:

"The task facing this weekend's conference is to provide a framework for activity to resist these attacks [of the Labour government] and to carry forward the fight for women's rights around the demands of the Charter. Local campaigns should be organised around the inadequacies and sabotage of the recent legislation, with support for equal pay strikes...."

The conference will also have to take up the fight for the right of women to work, through solidarity with women fighting redundancies...." (our emphasis). (Red Weekly 8th April).

This quote from their press, together with the actions of the International Marxist Group at this conference, show that, adapt as they may to the demands of Trotsky's Transitional Programme, the IMG is still a very long way from understanding the essential message of the Programme, which Trotsky states in his opening paragraph, that the central feature of this period is "a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat" (our emphasis).

This orientation towards leadership was totally lacking from the policies presented to this conference, despite the IMG amendment to write the sliding scale of wages into the Charter. It was precisely this orientation that the WSL comrades fought for.

WSL comrades stood virtually alone among the many political tendencies present (there was an assortment of ICL, RCG, Spartacists, Workers' Democracy, Maoists, along with, predominantly, the IMG) in fighting for principle.

CAMPAIGN

They alone, when selling their paper at the door of the conference campaigned against the anti-abortion right-winger of the "Life" group, resulting very successfully in the vast majority of their reactionary literature being handed back or torn up. (A leading member of the National Abortion Campaign attempted to argue that it might be useful to quote the "Life" arguments to people unable to decide on the abortion issue!).

WSL comrades alone, in the "workshop" they attended on 'legislation', fought for the principled position that the industrial tribunals provided by the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act should be boycotted, that only the independent action of the working class can genuinely further the struggle for women's rights, and that the crucial element in this is leadership.

An important example used was



WWC Conference (Red Weekly photo)

fight in BLMC for the recruitment of women on to the assembly lines - jobs which previously management could call "men's jobs" and an area where due to the Sex Discrimination Act opportunities could be made available for women.

ALL MEN

BL Cowley Assembly Plant has recently been recruiting labour and many women applied. 300 workers were taken on - all men.

At the last BMC Joint Shop Stewards Committee in Birmingham, due to the initiative of the WSL, the decision was taken to circulate all shop stewards committees in the affiliated plants, urging that they investigate discrimination against women in the recruitment of labour and report back to the next meeting.

This decision will now be used in the struggle not only against the extreme right-wing leadership in the Cowley Assembly Plant, but also in other plants where a principled stand is taken, to force convenors and shop stewards committees to demand management provide applicant figures - men and women - and thus expose their daily practice of discrimination.

WORKERS CONTROL

This is the first step towards fighting sex discrimination through the mobilisation of the class and through the struggle for workers' control.

The IMG on the other hand would advise one (or maybe all?) of these disappointed women to go to an industrial tribunal, plead her case before the lawyer, CBI chief and Trade Union bureaucrat who make up the panel, and win - at best - compensation for her "injured feelings" - certainly not a job!

This is the logical conclusion from the bankrupt reformist positions argued by the IMG, ICL, RCG etc., at the conference workshops.

Their excuses and rationalisations were endless:

"We have to use these tribunals as a platform" [who's listening?] "We cannot afford to close down any avenues" [more like a cul-de-sac] "What about the women who aren't in unions?"... they all claimed one after another.

BUREAUCRACY

Of course, these arguments are just what the trade union bureaucrats want the working class to hear. The bureaucracy don't want a struggle for women's right on their hands - it is much more convenient to ship an irritating woman member off to a tribunal with her complaint where she can, if necessary, be fobbed off with compensation for

These bureaucrats will be only too pleased to provide "legal and financial assistance" as the first policy of the main document presented to the conference advocates:

"To fight for unions to take up cases of discrimination under the Acts and provide legal and financial help". (Policy (a) of the London Planning Committee Resolution).

DELETE

The WSL proposed that this policy (a) should be deleted and instead the following amendment made:

"That the tribunals should be boycotted and instead a fight taken up to call on the leadership of the trade unions to call industrial action to fight for equal pay and against discrimination".

The workshop heavily defeated this amendment, though it did concede that the words 'industrial action' ought to be somewhere in the policy!

At the report back to conference it emerged that the other workshop on 'legislation' had also had to contend with those who wanted to boycott the tribunals, although this also had been unfortunately defeated.

In the workshop on 'Wages, the cuts and unemployment' a counter-move by a Society of Civil Servants delegate to remove the sliding scale of wages amendment to the Charter was successfully defeated.

OPEN THE BOOKS

Berry Beaumont of the NAC and the IMG spoke very ably of the power and strength of the 'open the books' demand in the struggle to oppose the closure of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital.

The Planning Committee was recommending that the very lengthy resolution from the February 'Women Against the Cuts' Conference be adopted as policy. WSL comrades spoke in support of this, expanding on the demands for a sliding scale of state expenditure and to open the books.

They then attempted to amend this very general resolution to specify a concrete path that the conference could direct towards, taking up the section on Labour 'lefts' and trade union leaders which said:

"We call on every trade union leader or Labour MP who speaks against the cuts to put their words into action, by voting against the government and by mobilizing working class action against the cuts".



Castle - gave employers and bureaucrats 5 years to manoeuvre over Equal Pay Act

The morning's plenary session had been addressed by a member of the CPSA (Civil and Public Servants Association) Executive. He had spoken of his union's long fight for women's rights over the years, and of their recent struggle for a creche for their members in Croydon. Apparently the creche had been scheduled to open on April 1st, but had just been axed.

The WSL comrades, to test out the practical meaning of the 'left' positions put by the CPSA leadership, moved an amendment that stated:

"We welcome the attendance at this conference of the CPSA Executive and call upon them to call national strike action against the cuts in social services spending, demanding a large increase in, and a sliding scale of, public expenditure".

"NO POINT"

Berry Beaumont came back into the discussion, saying that she was "quite sure" that all delegates would be going back from the conference to fight for this policy in their union branches anyway, and so there was no point in passing this amendment!

She asked the WSL to withdraw it. When this was refused, another IMG delegate put the motion that "the motion be not put" - which was overwhelmingly carried.

Thus the IMG successfully headed off any real decision to fight being made by the conference, and preserved a diplomatic coexistence with its CPSA 'left' bureaucrats.

MARCH TO STOP CUTS

The fight against the cuts in the Health Service is a crucial one for the working class. An important stage in that fight will be the National Coordinating Committee against Cuts in the NHS (NCC) in London on March 25th.

The NCC was set up last October following a national delegate conference organised by the IMG-dominated Medical Committee Against Private Practice.

AMENDMENT

At that conference the delegates from the Oxford ASTMS Health Service Branch moved a Branch amendment to the main motion, calling both for a sliding scale of state expenditure to defend the Health Service against inflation and for setting up in each area elected committees of trade unionists to look into the day to day running of the NHS as well as for the books of Regional and Area Health Authorities to be opened to these committees.

These demands are crucial in launching a real fight at the sharpest point - the point where the cuts are felt. They form a

programme for situations where hospital and health workers must have a perspective for strike action to defend their jobs and conditions as well as the service itself.

Since that time, though the NCC has apparently gained in influence (through the declared support of the National Executive of NALGO) the tendency to pull away from a fight on sharp questions has remained.

NALGO is certainly giving important financial support to the 25th April demonstration. But at the same time the union leadership have yet to seriously undertake any programme of trade union industrial action in defence of the service. They, along with the ASTMS and NUPE leaders, hide behind a 'left' form of words as their nominal policy, while doing nothing at local level to implement that policy.

The NCC, therefore, in so far as it will not fight out these questions, far from coordinating class action against the cuts, becomes restricted to simply "co-ordinating" protest marches at the political level of the most reluctant "left" bureaucrat.

We support all serious struggles of the working class against the cuts and in defence of living standards.

We therefore stand foursquare in support of the April 25th demonstration.

But we must warn the NCC and its supporters of the real danger that, if a fight is not taken up against empty rhetoric and 'left' talk from the trade union leaders it attracts, it can become simply a sophisticated left cover for inaction while the bureaucracy and management at local level get down to the real job of coordinating the cuts.

The clearest way of beginning a fight to test out and expose the left bureaucrats is to demand they call for strike action to back their bold statements. As the cuts bite home, this call must be the centre point of the march.

Our demands are:

- * Stop the Cuts in the Social Services!
- * For local and national strike action to oppose the cuts and defend jobs and wages.
- * For an immediate £1,000m cash injection to restore the Health Service, followed by a sliding scale of spending!

- * Ban all private practice!
- * Open the Books of the AHAs and RHAs to elected TU committees!
- * Nationalise the drug monopolies, suppliers and private medical facilities. Integrate them into the NHS under workers management!

ASTMS LEADERS IGNORE NHS

There will be no discussion at the Annual Delegate Conference of ASTMS on the Health Service, Ireland or abortion, in spite of many motions on the preliminary agenda concerned with these subjects.

At the last Conference ASTMS discussed the National Health Service and adopted a policy against private practice both inside and outside the Health Service and for committees of trade unionists to be elected to monitor the day to day running and finances of the Area Health Authorities.

A second motion was also passed which called for a massive injection of money into the Health Service and for a sliding scale of expenditure to protect it from inflation and government cuts.



Jenkins

This programme is ASTMS policy, but all that the National Executive have done about it has been to refer the Conference motions to the Parliamentary Committee, while allowing massive cuts in the Health Service to be carried through.

Twelve motions appeared on the

preliminary agenda concerning the Health Service, some censuring the NEC for their lack of action in defence of the Health Service, and called for an enquiry into the running of the NHS, along with industrial action to back the demand for the immediate injection of money into the Service, and a sliding scale of expenditure.

The Conference Standing Orders Committee, however, have decided that the NHS is not a "priority area" for ASTMS this year. They are presumably happy to wait until some future conference, when it has been still further devastated by cuts.

The rottenness of the ASTMS leadership is shown also by the way the SOC proposes discussing the full time officers' dispute, in which one officer, Judy Cotter was dismissed.

Though several motions called for the election of full time officers the SOC has chosen only one motion for discussion - simply instructing the NEC to further improve the comfortable conditions of employment for full time officers and ensure that "disputes such as the recent officers dispute can never occur again".

Thus the non-elected bureaucratic base of the Jenkins leadership is to be further strengthened at the expense of the membership.

The manipulation of the Conference agenda and the refusal to tackle the crucial questions facing the working class confirms that the 'left' talkers as well as the open right-wingers within the TUC are incapable of defending their members against the Labour government.

ASTMS branches must send emergency resolutions to the NEC demanding the Conference discuss the important topics deleted by the NEC.

SHEFFIELD STALINISTS ATTACK JOBS

A half day strike on May 26th has been called by the Sheffield AUEW District Committee. In a town where not only the DC but also many other trade union bodies are completely controlled by the Communist Party, this can only be seen as a manoeuvre to maintain their credibility among their membership.

The reality of the reactionary Stalinist politics of the CP is exposed by the events at Laycocks, a subsidiary of GKN. Both its convenor Colin Taylor, and the Chairman of the Joint Shop Stewards, Ian Thackeray, are members of the Communist Party.

These two recently signed an agreement, with no recourse to stewards or membership, forcing workers in other grades to do labourer's work. The agreement does away with the need for the firm to recruit labourers - of which there is an acute shortage in the factory.

The agreement reads: "Where a production worker is instructed by his supervisor to work on a labouring job, and where no shortage of work situation exists on his/her job, the worker concerned will be paid at his/her average earnings for the period of time spent on the labouring job".

When the shop floor heard of this agreement there was a movement against it in one of the three main factories making up Laycocks. A mass meeting of the 150

workers in that plant was held at which the convenor spoke. The meeting unanimously rejected his argument and called for a mass meeting of all the plants.

The shop stewards of all the plants met last Friday and voted almost unanimously (including most of those supposedly requesting the earlier mass meeting) against a joint mass meeting and in favour of accepting the convenor's agreement.

The Stalinists and right-wing in the plant were shown to work completely together. The action of these CP members must be rejected by the whole trade union movement in the town. Where does the AUEW District Committee stand?

If they don't reject the deal and remove the credentials of the convenor then the fraud of their position on May 26th will be exposed since their own leading stewards are helping the employers to increase unemployment.

Just like the leadership of the AUEW nationally, the Stalinists pose as being against unemployment while every action they take increases it.

We demand of the Sheffield Communist Party members: where do you stand on this?

*One leading member of the CP and a familiar face at all-London Committee conferences, Cyril Morton, convenor of the Shardlow factory in Sheffield, a factory completely dominated by the CP has taken the CP's position to its logical conclusion and become personnel manager for the firm.

RULE 14 WRP BACKS TUC

The retreat from principled politics on the part of the Workers Revolutionary Party has in recent weeks assumed the character of a rout.

Not only do the WRP leaders suppress democratic discussion within their own organisation, exclude members of other political tendencies in the workers movement from their meetings and generally besmirch the name of Trotskyism in their everyday practice. They have now joined the right wing, the TUC bureaucracy and the Stalinists in support of the new anti-democratic rule 14 in trades councils.

We have held back in recent issues from reporting various instances of WRP members and supporters voting in favour of rule 14. Perhaps there was some mistake, we thought. Perhaps they were mandated by their union branches, we thought. But no. The real position was put forward by Cyril Smith - a leading member of the WRP - at a meeting of the Charing Cross ASTMS on April 14th.

Those who oppose rule 14, he told the astonished branch members, are 'trying to tear apart the trades councils'. In Lambeth, where he is a delegate, they had passed it without anybody worrying. Those delegates to other

trades councils who were proposing opposition to the TUC were simply putting the head of the working class in a noose.

This is exactly the argument of every Stalinist and bureaucrat who wants to avoid a fight.

RESPECTABILITY

Smith knows this well enough. So why is it that he now moves in behind the policies of the TUC bureaucracy? Is it to do with the desperate efforts of the WRP to get going their new *Daily News Line*, with all the veneer of respectability that will be necessary for them to make the paper pay? Is there a link between this 'non-political' paper and the sharp shift to opportunism of the WRP in the workers movement?

Readers of *Socialist Press* will not be surprised to discover that in the same meeting Smith spoke against a motion calling for a sliding scale of wages on the grounds that it was a diversion from the real problem of bringing down the Labour government. Truly, sectarianism and opportunism were never so closely married.

In addition to this in Dagenham Trades Council we have heard that the Secretary, who also supports the WRP, informed the TUC that the council had supported rule 14 without the matter ever having been discussed.

LETTER TO SOCIALIST WORKER

To 'Socialist Worker' from members delegated to Camden Trades Council.

Dear Brother/Sister,

We are delegates to the Camden Trades Council who oppose Rule 14. As you know, the majority of delegates voted against the rule at the Council's AGM.

We note that *Socialist Worker* has consistently pointed out the dangers of Rule 14 and the need to fight it, although without saying how this should be done.

In some Trade Union branches (eg ASTMS, Charing Cross), affiliated to Camden Trades Council, however, its members have urged acceptance of the blackmail letter from the Camden Trades Council Secretary, which stipulates that only those branches supporting the rule will be admitted to the May Delegate Meeting.

If your idea of struggle against Rule 14 is to capitulate at the bureaucracy's first slap, you will be in no position to give a lead and, worse still, you will badly let down other trade councils who have thrown out the rule.

We believe a united fight of all trades councils would be waged against the rule - but such a fight cannot even begin if delegates who in theory oppose Rule 14 refuse to do so in practice.

We ask that you make clear your position; in particular:

- (1) Will you oppose signing an undertaking that branches support Rule 14?
- (2) Will you fight Rule 14 up to and beyond the point where the TUC suspends and disaffiliates Trades Councils?
- (3) Will you actively support the All-London Campaign against Rule 14 launched by Camden Trades Council delegates (including IS members) and work for its meeting on May 6th?
- (4) What steps will you take on behalf of any delegates who may be excluded from Trades Councils because of their opposition to Rule 14?

Yours fraternally,

Geoff Bell
Rosemary Burn

Colin Smith
John Suddaby

BUDGET Taxes Slashed — For Industry, Not Workers.

The 'Financial Times', usually a good barometer to the climate of business opinion, said of the budget:

"Mr Healey appears to have taken special care to meet the well publicised demands of industry and to reassure it that the Government means business (in both senses) when he talks of an industrial strategy designed to create the right environment for the manufacturing sector and to encourage investment".

The central feature of the budget which lead the *Financial Times* to make the quite correct assessment is, of course, the plan for huge cuts in workers living standards which is embodied in the proposal for phase two of the pay policy.

But also very important, though less publicised, is the decision to make permanent, and slightly extend, the 'temporary' exclusion of stock appreciation from company profit for tax purposes which was introduced in the November 1974 budget.

This highly complicated and indigestible change in company taxation criteria embodies enormous cuts in capital's tax bill.

As recent figures released by the Bank of England make clear, without this tax change British capital as a whole would have made losses in 1974 (the latest year for which full figures are available).

Without the concession, the rate of profit after payment of tax would have been -0.3% (ie a loss of 30 pence for every £100 of capital invested), with the concession the rate was +4.1%.

The real effect of this change in tax liability, usually presented as merely an "updating" of archaic and irrational accounting practices is that British capital as a whole now pays a negative amount of tax.

State subsidies to capital, for investment and other purposes exceed industry's tax payments.

On the Bank of England's figures, indeed, the rate of profit before payment of tax in 1974 was lower than the after tax rate! (4.0% before tax and 4.1% after). It seems that this is now to become regarded as standard practice.

It is little wonder that the *Financial Times* reports an ecstatic senior civil servant as saying:

"This is a Department of Industry Budget, a real support for the industrial strategy"



Healey

MAY DAY GREETINGS

East London Cuts Committee

sends May Day greetings to the labour movement. Fight Healey's cuts!

Dagenham Trades Council

sends May Day greetings to all workers in the continuing struggle for socialism

Islington Trades Council

extends May Day greetings to all sections of the labour movement

NUS CONFERENCE NO LEAD AGAINST CUTS

A clear indication of the bankruptcy of protest politics epitomised by the Stalinist and left-reformist Broad Left leadership was given by the recent National Union of Students Conference.

As further and higher education are decimated by Healey's cuts and graduate unemployment reaches the highest ever level, the Broad Left can only offer more protest campaigns.

Alongside this goes talk of "links" with the trade union movement at all levels - which in reality means links with the bureaucracy at all levels.

The confidence of the right-wing in the Broad Left was clearly shown at Llandudno. Tribune president Charles Clarke retained office against the 'socialist challenge' of opportunist ex-IS member Hugh Lanning with the assistance of Tory votes transferred in the final count.

The continued domination of

the NUS by the Broad Left, together with the gains made by the Tories (who had a member elected onto the executive) highlight above all the absence of effective alternative leadership from the IS and IMG.

The IS, the largest opposition group, with a complete absence of an alternative programme become no more than a left cover for the bureaucracy - advocating as always nothing but 'more militancy'.

And whilst the IMG present various correct demands, they do not see these as the essential basis for a fight against the bureaucracy.

As for the small YSSS (WRP) group, their 'programme' for students amounts to the four following demands: No cuts in overseas students! Defend the right to education for all! Force the Labour government to resign! Vote for the YSSS candidates and join the YSSS!

A serious fight to defeat the reformists and Stalinists in the NUS must be based upon a fight for a programme of transitional demands developed out of the need to defend education as a right of the working class.

The following demands must be the battleground on which to fight the Broad Left:

*For a sliding scale of grants based upon a working-class cost of living index to keep pace with inflation.

*For a sliding scale of public expenditure.

*Students must fight alongside trade unions for the opening of the books of the local authorities to joint committees of students and trade unionists to reveal the profits of the suppliers and the plans to cut jobs and education. This is a step towards workers' control of education.

Who Writes.....contd from front page.

the Leyland plan in the following terms:

"some things, eg., the total amount of money to be made available for wage increases in all plants [NB], security of employment including lay-off and sickness pay: ways in which the difference in average pay levels between plants are to be reduced - can only sensibly be negotiated on a group basis".

"FLEXIBLE"

Whalen goes on to argue for a "flexible" approach and proposes that the exact distribution of the negotiated sum of money can be left to local 'negotiators'.

This is almost word for word Jones' plan but written five weeks before Jones announced it publicly, claiming it was T&GWU policy!

But this coordinated call for corporate bargaining has been extended, through participation, beyond Whalen writing T&GWU policy. It now engulfs leading convenors.

Derrick Robinson, Stalinist convenor of the British Leyland Longbridge complex, Chairman of the BMC Joint Shop Stewards Committee and Chairman of the Cars Council - highest 'participation' body on the car production side of Leyland, also displays a startling affinity with the Whalen document.

At the March meeting of the Combine Shop Stewards Committee, (two weeks after Whalen's document was written) Robinson surprised the meeting by proposing that the committee reconsider its long-held position of defending independent plant bargaining, and adopt a policy of corporate negotiations. His proposal got little response.

At the beginning of April Robinson wrote a letter to Industry Minister Varley, which was reproduced in the *Morning Star* of April 10th. The letter argued the case for a more "flexible" approach to Stage Two in exactly the same terms as the Whalen statement.

Urging a change in government policy, Robinson says:

"Rigidity of flat rate increases do not help us to solve the problems....In Leyland a great

number of anomalies exist that need to be put right as soon as possible".

Robinson and Whalen are of course agreed on the main problems and anomalies, as a comparison shows.

Robinson: "Rates of pay for doing the same category of work varying by anything from £6 to £13 a week depending on the job".

Whalen: "What justification is there....for the level of wages being generally higher in one plant than another?"

Robinson: "Differing termination dates for agreements - leading to the widening of pay levels".

Whalen: "Negotiating annual agreements at different times throughout the year is an almost guaranteed way of causing disputes....what justification is there for one plant receiving its wage increase at an earlier date or a later date than another....?"

Robinson "Reluctance to move to wider bargaining units due to the government's pay code".

Whalen: "Multi-group bargaining within a plant means built-in trouble. The Company would like to see all hourly paid employees in a plant covered by one collective negotiation. Indeed it may be appropriate, for employees in more than one plant to be covered by a collective negotiation...."

Robinson winds up the discussion, pointing out that:

"Removal of the restrictions will enable us to negotiate a basis to resolve the anomalies and eliminate the friction so that we can return to uninterrupted production runs that we have proved can be achieved".

These very striking comparisons show the real meaning of participation and its implications for the independence of the trade union movement and trade union democracy.

It is time to step up the campaign to defend democratic rights in the unions and to launch a new campaign, based on the new situation these developments create in the Leyland plants, to destroy the class collaboration of the Ryder Committees and to defend the independence of the shop stewards movement.



Healy Replaced as WRP Secretary

The appearance of the WRP's non-political daily paper 'Daily News Line' on May Day, published by Alex Mitchell, does not indicate any change in the process of regeneration and disintegration gripping the WRP and the International Committee.

The April 10th edition (No 27) of the WRP's stop gap three times a week *News Digest* - four pages comment from the agency - carries a statement on the

stepping down of Gerry Healy from the General Secretaryship of the WRP and the election of Mike Banda to the position. The statement said:

"The Workers Revolutionary Party Central Committee has voted unanimously to appoint Michael Banda as General Secretary of the Party. He replaces Comrade Gerry Healy who has been Secretary of the Trotskyist movement in Britain for 27 years. Comrade Healy will take up other work in the Party, concentrating on cadre training".

TASS CONFERENCE

TASS delegates at their Annual Conference from 3rd-7th May have the possibility of giving a lead to the entire working class in the fight against State pay laws.

The Coventry No. 6 Branch have submitted an amendment to a resolution for a substantial national wage claim, stressing the necessity for a sliding scale of wages clause.

The amendment, if passed, would give direction to the fight to defend living standards.

For such a claim to be followed by strike action would challenge the right of capitalism to put their economic crisis on the backs of the working class.

The manoeuvrings of the leadership of TASS in the recent period, when they have not led a single struggle against the Social Contract indicates they will do everything to avoid the passing of such a resolution.

DOCKS STRIKE

A strike by 300 shore gang workers on Liverpool docks, now in its sixteenth day, is almost certain to close Liverpool dock in the next few days.

Ship owners are refusing to replace three men who recently retired. Their policy is to allow the labour force to dwindle by "natural wastage".

The strikers, all members of the T&GWU, claim that 100 jobs have been lost in this way over the past two years.

The shore gang workers, who tie up the ships and strip and secure the hatches, have the support of the gigboatmen - the workers who manoeuvre the ships within the docks system. They in turn have the support of the tugboatmen who will black any work normally done by them. This makes the strike an effective action.

One of the employers involved has offered to take back one man on a probationary basis - this has been rejected.

So far there has been no supporting action by the dockers who are being laid off progressively.

National Coordinating Committee Against the Cuts in the National Health Service

Demonstration Sunday 25th April Assemble Speakers' Corner at 12.30 for march to Trafalgar Square.

BUILDING WORKERS CHARTER

The Building Workers Charter organisation is holding its 7th Annual Conference on Saturday 24th April in Birmingham.

This rank and file grouping of building workers is dominated politically by the Stalinists, as is shown by the circular inviting branches to send delegates.

In it, the cutbacks in the building industry and the continued imprisonment of Des Warren are detailed, but the only policy statement is that "Rank and file policy is needed to bring about change".

This meaningless statement leaves open whether this should be a right-wing rank and file policy or a socialist alternative. Knowing the way the Communist Party continuously covers up for the lack of leadership provided by UCATT, T&GWU and other building unions, we can see why the phrasing is left vague.

The general reformist sentiments of the Building Workers Charter offer no perspective in defence of jobs or conditions.

The only way forward in the industry is the fight for a new leadership around an alternative programme of no cutbacks in social services, a sliding scale of state expenditure in the services, the institution of a programme of public works to employ unemployed building workers together

building industry and land without compensation.

For the release of Des Warren, instead of the usual bankrupt Stalinist pleading for parole, the delegates must not only demand national strike action of the leadership of their union but also initiate strike action themselves as preparation for drawing in trade unionists in other industries.

The experiences so far with the Labour government have shown that no other action can seriously hope to force Warren's release.

Workers Socialist League
Public Meeting
A Programme to
Defend Jobs
Sunday May 9th, 7 pm.
'The Lion', The Wicker,
Sheffield

Our Policies to Defend
Jobs and Wages
Thursday April 29th at 7.30
John Barnes Library
Camden Rd, North London

Hull Trades Council
Demonstration Against
Unemployment
Saturday 1st May at 11 am.
Kingston Square
HULL

Publication Fund

TARGET: £500

Since we last went to press we have received: Oxford PSF £5; Oxford NHS £10; Oxford Central £5; London Central £10; Bolton reader £1; London Central £7; Banbury £3; London Central £10; Aggregate £42.80; London reader £1.

Total received since last issue: £101.80. Total so far: £144.80.

With over a week to go to the end of the Publications Fund we would like to go well over the top of our target.

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