

BEHIND COWLEY WITCH-HUNT

UNION RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

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Parsons - old lies for a new problem.

The unprecedented and hysterical witch-hunt of the Cowley elections carried out over the past week by every section of the mass media raises issues which confront the entire working class.

As thousands of workers are sacked in Chrysler and British Steel, every Tory, every employer, every social democrat and trade union leader knows that the working class will fight if given a lead and a perspective. Their entire existence is dedicated to preventing this developing.

There has never been a witch-hunt like this one. All that is involved is seven positions for deputy convenors. Hundreds of such elections must take place every day. Yet the election is witch-hunted day after day by every section of the mass media.

WAGE BARGAINING

The working class face conditions where free collective wage bargaining is under attack. The standard of living is dropping fast and trade union bureaucrats see it as their job to search for ways to implement mass redundancies and speed-up without resistance.

The ruling class know that the emergence of a principled and determined leadership with a programme of action in defence of the basic rights of the working

class, even if initially only in one plant, would develop into struggles to protect wages and jobs all over the country.

They know that in Cowley above all there is a real possibility of breaking the grip of the right wing and linking a large workforce into a real struggle against the employer's offensive, based on a programme of demands which have already raised the political consciousness in the factory to a high point.

FOCUS

If such a leadership emerged in Cowley, ruthlessly exposing each betrayal of the officials it could become the focus of national resistance and the cockpit of a concerted attack on the trade union bureaucracy.

This is the development the employers, the press, the bureaucracy and the Labour government are desperate to head off.

They want to secure a leadership in Cowley which will, in line with the policies of the Labour government:

*Allow management and the press to pre-determine union elections.

*Abandon free wage bargaining

*Sell out all factory agreements

*Actively assist in smashing the workforce and speeding production through the Ryder participation committees.

But recent struggles in Cowley have shown a very different leadership emerging, a leadership which has mobilised all-out resistance to speed-up and lay-offs in the North Works around the demands of "open the books" and "work-sharing on full pay". A leadership which crushed the right wing in the elections for the 5/293 TGWU Branch and won 1,000 votes in a factory ballot for Bob Fryer, regarded in the plant as a Trotskyist, in the convenor elections. A leadership pledged to fight the bureaucracy tooth and nail in defence of the independence of the trade unions and of hard-won agreements, and one which before the witch-hunt was certain to win representation in the elections for deputy convenors this week.

TWO-PRONGED

Panicked by this prospect, British Leyland therefore launched a two-pronged offensive to prevent this going ahead. They announced they would not recognise Alan Thornett as deputy convenor even if he was elected by democratic ballot. And they had witch-hunting convenor Reg Parsons calling a "news conference" to unleash the Tory press and TV against "extremists" in the plant.

Not a word of Parsons' 'sensational' revelations was new. He

just dredged up the same old lying allegations about Trotskyist groups supposedly "going to any lengths" to cause "disruption" and "destruction". He named in particular the Workers Socialist League, the Workers Revolutionary Party and the International Marxist Group.

SUPPORT

What was new was the balance of forces inside the factories - the real base of support for the policies fought for by the Workers Socialist League in the plant which are policies not of "destruction" but of all-out defence of jobs, wages and conditions. In calling in the gutter press Parsons was admitting his own inability to hold the line for management. The press have been openly backing the right-wing in the elections. But last week's witch-hunt reached a new level. After creating the hysteria, lists of names of so-called "moderate" candidates appeared day after day in the national dailies - violating every principle of democracy. Yet within the factories themselves there is growing awareness among workers of this role of the capitalist press.

So great was the revulsion within the union that even TGWU Regional Secretary, Brian

Cont'd on back page, col 5.

SPANISH STRIKES THREATEN CARLOS

Police in Madrid arrested 20 alleged strike leaders in dawn raids on January 10th. This followed two weeks which have seen an explosion of militant actions by Spanish workers most notable of which was the four-day strike of workers on the Madrid Metro (underground).

This first complete stoppage of the Metro for forty years was supported by the 4000 workforce in its entirety. It was no stay-at-home protest but involved an almost continuous meeting of the majority of the strikers, first of all occupying an underground depot and then in turn three churches, from each of which they were forcibly removed by the police.

The strike produced instant demonstrations of solidarity from other workers in Madrid, in particular from workers of the IIT subsidiary Standard Electric (16,000 on strike), Chrysler (5000 on strike), Kelvinator and Siemens.

Workers from these factories, who have themselves been on strike since December, demonstrated openly in the streets or

occupied churches, in most cases suffering brutal assaults by the police.

In Madrid, at least 50,000 workers were last week either on strike or locked out; the industrial suburb of Getafe was at an almost complete standstill.

After negotiations in which the Metro company agreed to pay at least part of the underground workers' demand for what amounts almost to a 50% wage increase, the striking workers agreed to return to work temporarily, but have given notice that they will strike again if the whole demand is not met by January 19.

AMNESTY

The strikes and demonstrations are not confined to Madrid. Throughout the country demonstrations of several thousand have taken place in almost all the major cities demanding immediate complete political amnesty and other political reforms.

In Oviedo, 7000 workers struck at the important steel-works, Ensidesa, and a major shipbuilding firm in Valencia declared a lockout for a week. In the Cordova village of Palma-de-

Rio several hundred agricultural workers were violently attacked by police (several of them being wounded) while demonstrating against unemployment and in support of their demand for a minimum wage of 700 pesetas (about £6) a day.

This wave of strikes and demonstrations constitutes a head-on challenge to the political authority of the fascist regime. The granting of part of the Madrid Metro workers' claim threatens the rigid wage control law which was strengthened only two months ago; and it forced the Metro company to negotiate with the leaders of a strike which is totally illegal under Spain's constitution.

Though the government kept the Metro in partial operation through the use of specially trained troops, it did not dare to carry out its threat to call up the strikers and court martial those who refused to work (as Franco had done in the previous less general Metro stoppage in 1970). And police baton and tear gas attacks on workers' demonstrations have completely failed to subdue them. Since the end of the Metro strike

their size and militancy has grown.

These events have shown both the weakness and confusion of the regime and the courageousness and solidarity of the Spanish working class. The only thing which can stand in the way of the rapid and complete overthrow of Spanish fascism is the treacherous position of the leaders of the Stalinist and reformist organisations.

COMPROMISE

They have shown in numerous statements since the death of Franco, their readiness to compromise with the regime and their complete unwillingness to lead a principled and independent struggle of the working class. For instance, while the Metro workers were on strike, Marcelino Camacho, the leader of the Workers' Commissions which are closely allied to the Communist Party, was giving a press conference in Paris.

'We have decided', he is reported to have said, 'to find a peaceful road to freedom...Chan-

ges can be obtained without insurrection or civil war'.

Although admitting that only nuances of policy had so far changed he added:

'We salute every step towards freedom taken by the regime'.

He refused to make any strong criticism of it because:

'I have not come to France to denigrate Spain. I am a patriot'.

Workers in the demonstrations however, were increasingly advancing political slogans for the resignation of the government alongside their economic demands.

Now it is essential for the workers' organisations to unite to call a general strike to bring down the fascist regime and replace it with a workers' government.

Preparations for this strike, in particular the arming of united defence squads drawn from the workers' parties to protect strikes against the attacks of the state must begin at once.

In Spain the only way forward is to carry through the struggle for workers' power: the treacherous "compromises" and Popular Fronts of Stalinists and reformists with the fascist ruling class must be rejected.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

ITALY NEW GOVERNMENT CRISIS

Secretive paralysis is the best description of the Italian Communist Party's policy in the government crisis that erupted last week.

The immediate cause of the fall of the Christian Democrat Aldo Moro's cabinet (backed by a parliamentary coalition of Republicans, Socialists and Social Democrats) was a slight shift to the left, under pressure, on the part of the Socialist Party leadership, which withdrew its support until the Communist Party could be brought into some sort of governmental 'understanding'.

But the Moro government - a cabinet of big business and of American foreign policy - has been far to collapse since the early

summer, and was given an extra lease of life only by the refusal of the Stalinist leaders to demand general elections and to force the Socialist Party leadership into an electoral agreement.

SWING

Ever since the June 15th regional elections showed a big swing to the left, with the Communist Party polling only marginally less than the Christian Democrats, the various factions in the Christian Democratic Party have been using their breathing space to prepare themselves the most advantageous political bargains possible with the Communist and Socialist Parties.

And in this they have had every ounce of help from the Communist

Party leadership, whose policy of an 'historical compromise' - i.e. a government embracing themselves and the Christian Democrats - places them in some respects to the right of the Socialist Party.

It is possible that President Leone and the political chieftains can cobble together such a cabinet. But it is not likely to have much greater stability than its predecessors - on average post-war Italian governments have lasted well under a year. And the intricate manipulation required to construct it may well exceed the several weeks which are usual in such cases.

CRISIS

The reasons for this are not sim-

ply the complexities of political intrigue. The economic crisis in Italy - one of the Western European economies worst-hit by the world recession - permits of very little room for reforms. Over forty manufacturing companies are thought to face bankruptcy if the government crisis holds up the subsidies and loans they were expecting for more than a week.

And the massive strike by public service employees in all three of Italy's three main trade union confederations last week was followed by a threat from the main engineers union to launch a national strike if there is not soon a governmental agreement which offers some protection on jobs and wages.

OPPOSED

Yet still CP leader Berlinguer is opposed to an election - despite the gains it would certainly bring his own Party and the Socialists. He prefers to wheel and deal - in the interests of 'democracy' - with the Italian Tories and the Pope.

For the same reasons the CP press has played down the widespread reports that the CIA has channelled six million dollars in this

year alone into the coffers of a broad range of politicians - after all Berlinguer may find himself within a few weeks sitting round a 'progressive' cabinet table with the recipients of Washington's 'slush funds'!

DROPPED

Events in Italy were echoed last week by a marked shift to the right on the part of George Marchais and the leadership of the French Communist Party. In an effort to shore up the rickety 'Union of the Left' with Mitterand's Social Democrats and the bourgeois 'Left' Radicals, Marchais last week declared on television that he favoured dropping the aim of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' from the Party's statutes.

Speaking in the run up to the February Congress of the Communist Party, Marchais prostrated himself before French 'democratic', petty bourgeois patriotism:

"The Communist Party is not dogmatic. It knows how to adapt to the conditions of its time. Now, today, the word 'dictatorship' does not correspond to what we want. It has an intolerable significance, contrary to our aspirations, our positions.

Even the word 'proletariat' is no longer suitable, since we wish to group with the working class, the majority of salaried workers. But that does not mean that we are abandoning the objective we have made our own: socialism in French Colours'.

OFFICIAL

This change, which does no more than make official what has been Stalinist policy for years, nonetheless represents an important step in the continuing adaptation of the Western European Communist Parties to their 'own' capitalist classes.

The policy of "socialism in one country" first put forward by Stalin in 1924 can now be seen in its true colours - condemning workers to capitalism in every other country in the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

ANGOLA

Class conscious workers and opponents of imperialism in every part of the world will have been delighted by the news coming from Angola in the early days of the New Year.

Not only were the claims of the South African mercenary forces of UNITA in the South to have made territorial gains shown to be false when subject to independent verification, but at the same time, in the North of the country, the capture by the forces of the MPLA of Uige (formerly Carmona), a capital of the northern province next to the Zaire border, and Negage, another important town in the area, were confirmed.

Uige was formerly the 'capital' of the pro-imperialist FNLA forces in the Northern part of the country.

The last hope of the racists, imperialists and CIA puppets of the FNLA and UNITA rested with the Organisation of African Unity Conference that began at Addis Ababa on 10th. January.

VICTORY TO MPLA!

simply seeking to reshuffle the diplomatic pack of cards internationally.

We said this was elementary but it is not obvious, apparently, to some who claim the mantle of 'revolutionary Marxism' or 'Trotskyism'.

SCANDAL

The coverage of events in Angola since independence on 11th. November by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and the magazine *Intercontinental Press* published with their support, has been little short of a scandal, sullyng the name of all the traditions to which they lay claim.

For example, an article by Ernest Harsh in *Intercontinental Press* for 24th. November equated the three Angolan organisations in their 'anti-working class policies' and claimed that all three were equally 'seeking support both from the imperialist powers and from the workers states'.

He also alleged, though the evidence for this is scanty to say the least, that the FNLA and UNITA 'have a long history of resistance to Portuguese colonialism'.

All this studied neutrality has led to a number of ludicrously wrong and dangerous political conclusions. An article in the SWP's paper *Militant* of 12th. December determinedly avoids taking sides and calls for "political pressure... against the intervention - direct or indirect - of Washington, Pretoria and other imperialist centres".

Intercontinental Press of 22nd. December contains a piece by its editor Joseph Hansen which while pointing out the inescapable pro-imperialist record of the FNLA leaders, refuses to take sides in calling for their military defeat!

"GET THEM OUT"

Hansen's concluding slogan, 'Get them out before they get us in' is nothing more than an appeal to pacifist and even chauvinist feelings in the American petty-bourgeoisie.

The battles in Angola do not take a form chosen by Marxists. However, it is their essential duty to take sides in a conflict crucial for the future of imperialism. However clear we are about the inadequacies of the MPLA, however well we understand the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism, we must take sides in this struggle.

For our part we repeat our support for the struggles of the MPLA, we applaud their successes, and we call for the recognition of their government. The military defeat of the pro-imperialist FNLA and UNITA will be a step forward in the struggle against imperialism.

Even if not the end of the battle, this is a step in the struggle against imperialist control of Africa, which we, as revolutionaries and socialists



Militant Italian workers demonstrating against rising prices.

VIETNAM

The leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party is pressing ahead in its efforts to establish a single, effective administration throughout the state.

Even though formal reunification of the North and South cannot be carried out in advance of national elections (announced for some time in the first half of 1976) the old frontier at the 17th parallel is being changed in the reorganisation of provincial borders which began recently.

Thus the former two southern provinces of Quang-Tri and Hue are to be combined with the northern area of Quang-Binh, to form a single new province.

"RELIABLE"

At the same time ten thousand technical workers regarded as politically 'reliable' have been sent from the North to the South and especially Saigon where they will stay for some time. In Saigon, the authorities face a wave of petty crime and black marketeering, with unemployment still high and food shortages still not eradicated.

At the beginning of January death sentences were announced on three men found guilty of armed robbery.

And in the North, miners at the Hong-Gai anthracite mines were reported to be staging a go-slow at the New Year.

They were protesting at the fact that the whole 5 million tons per year output of the pits - one of the most important sources of foreign exchange for Vietnam - is reserved

REACTIONARY FRIENDS OF THE BUREAUCRACY

compensation for the lack of fuel during a hard winter, rations should be increased.

The situation was sufficiently serious to bring a hurried visit from the North Vietnamese Minister of Planning.

These incidents illustrate the inescapability of the permanent revolution - the unification of Vietnam and the establishment of an integrated, socialised economy there bring both the Stalinist leadership and sections of the working class up against the problems of the political revolution.

The absence of any power in democratic committees, directly responsible to the masses, in the South, combined with the economic chaos left by the war, is what breeds crime and the black market.

Refusing to mobilise the political energies of the masses, so that they themselves can 'police' these problems, the Party leaders are forced to rely on administrative repression through their appointed tribunals.

CHURCH

Similarly, in their ever-closer relations with the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the VCP leadership seek their support not in the masses but among the enemies of the masses. *Nhan Dan*, the main Hanoi daily, gave front-page coverage to a New Year exchange of the warmest greetings between Prime Minister Pham Van Dong and the Catholic archbishop of Hanoi.

Yet a measure of the reactionary role of the Church in Indochina can

neighbouring Cambodia the new Constitution outlaws those religions - including Catholicism - which contributed to the destruction of the nation'.

The permanent, indivisible character of the revolution in South East Asia is also underlined by recent developments in Thailand.

While Vietnam and Laos, moving more and more closely into the Soviet diplomatic orbit, are cementing their relations with Bangkok, tension and provocations continue along the Thai-Cambodian border.

"ADVISERS"

Although the sixteen thousand US troops presently stationed in Thailand are officially to be withdrawn by March, a US 'military assistance group', helped by 'advisers' will continue to provide the Pramoj regime with military supplies, training and support.

In other words, US imperialism will continue in its efforts to prop up its puppets - and the Vietnamese and Laotian leaderships will not stand in their way.

They thus set themselves against the masses of workers and peasants in Thailand, who on January 2nd launched a massive strike against a government-backed increase of 25% in the price of rice - bringing the cost of this basic food up to more than half the income of families on the legal minimum wage.

The strike - though limited by the leadership of the trade union federation to workers in certain state enterprises - still brought out a demonstration of over ten thousand in Bangkok on January

CONSERVATIVE

Here it was hoped that enough of the extreme conservative politicians of Africa could be mobilised behind a 'fair to all sides' withdrawal of all foreign troops' line which would lend some credibility to the crumbling fortunes of the pro-Western groups in Angola.

However, the increasing flood of recognitions of the MPLA government of Angola in Luanda, the success of their military campaigns and the growing international support for them in the fight against the CIA-backed FNLA and UNITA, has made it more and more difficult to arrive at such arrangements.

As revolutionary Marxists, we in the WSL have consistently supported the victory of the MPLA forces and called for the recognition of a government by our own Labour administration.

We have demanded the granting of any possible material support to military campaigns. We do this not because we have any illusions in the petty-bourgeois policies of the MPLA, who despite the support they have from the urban working class, have never fought for any socialist policies.

Nor have we any illusions in the purity of the motives behind the support given to the MPLA from the Stalinists of the Soviet Union and Cuba.

SOLIDARITY

It is our elementary duty, however, to join in solidarity with those who are in the front line of opposition to imperialism, at the same time as exposing their own inadequate policies.

We must do this at the same time as exposing the machinations of their counter-revolutionary

CUBA: FIRST CP CONGRESS

PART 1: ORIGINS OF THE PRESENT CUBAN CP

Between December 17th and 22nd the present Cuban Communist Party held its first Congress. This has come ten years after the formation of the party.

That, in itself, is some indication of the non-political nature of the Cuban CP which in the ten years of its existence has functioned as an administrative arm of the state, overseeing the planning of production, organising demonstrations of support for Castro's government and exercising a rigid control of any opposition or failure of commitment to production targets.

It has never been a political party: up to now the members of its leading bodies have not, even in a formal sense, been elected but are all appointed by the self-perpetuating leadership; its origins are not in open political struggle since it was established 6 years after the Castro government came to power.

UNIFICATION

The party was established through the unification of Fidel Castro's 26th July Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate (the two bourgeois reformist organisations which had supported the armed struggle against the Batista dictatorship between 1956 and 1959) and thirdly the old Cuban CP, known as the Popular Socialist

Party (PSP).

The period from 1959 to 1965 had seen continual attempts to unite these three organisations. All of them failed for the same reason: Castro and his supporters were in control of the government and had considerable mass support, but their political organisations were derisively weak and disorganised; the PSP had little mass support but were far better organised than any other political tendency.

Union of the organisations which was necessary to give an organised base to the new government would inevitably mean the overwhelming dominance of the PSP.

HOSTILITY

After the fall of Batista, there was an initial period of open hostility between the Castroites and the PSP. From Castro's side the hostility came both from resentment against the PSP's ambiguous and largely inactive role in the struggle against Batista, but also from the open and deep rooted anti-communism of Castro's movement.

The PSP, for its part, had bitterly opposed what it called Castro's adventurist and putschist politics both in the student movement in the late forties and even more fiercely after the disastrous attack on the Moncada barracks in 1953.

Its only alternative, however, had been the peaceful road and



Castro's policies in action: Jamaican dictator Manley welcomed in Havana

subject attempts to forge alliances with whatever seemed to be the most powerful 'progressive' section of the bourgeoisie at any time.

The PSP's about-face towards Castro in late 1959 therefore was quite in keeping with its political line for 25 years. At the same time Castro, forced by pressure of the masses into increasingly radical policies and so losing the American support which had helped bring him to power, turned increasingly to the PSP.

He needed both its domestic political organisation to control the demands and actions of the masses, and required its support as backing for its overtures to the Soviet Union, whose assistance became necessary because of growing US opposition.

DECLARATION

In 1961, in the Declaration of Havana, Castro declared the socialist character of the revolution, and confessed previous 'errors' in his attitude to the PSP; the way was cleared for the establishment of a

united organisation.

This was called the Integrated Revolutionary Organisations (ORI) and in March 1962 its national Directory (13 members of the 26 July Movement, 2 from the Directorate and 10 from the PSP) was announced. The ORI lasted in this form for 8 days!

MONOPOLISED

Castro then made a speech claiming that the whole of the direction of the movement had been unscrupulously monopolised by members of the PSP (which was almost inevitable since a good deal of the membership of the 26 July Movement had by this time gone into opposition or left Cuba altogether for the US); he described the result as 'a dungheap'.

The speech was followed by the enforced exile to the USSR of the organisation secretary of the party, Anibal Escalante, and an immense purge of PSP members carried out by Castro and his close allies in the leadership. Thousands were expelled from the initially 15,000

strong organisation.

At the top, however, other old PSP leaders, especially Blas Roca the secretary general of the party and Carlos Raphael Rodriguez remained in an uneasy alliance with Castro.

In 1963 the all but defunct ORI had its name changed to the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS). Purges of the old PSP leadership continued until 1965 when the name of the organisation was finally changed to the Cuban Communist Party which by that time Castro and his close allies were able to dominate.

NO MEMBER

The eight member Political Bureau of the Party contained no former member of the PSP, and so it has continued until the present time. Roca and Rodriguez however were appointed to the 7-member Secretariat from which they have come to exercise increasing power.

This has been particularly true since 1968 when Castro declared unequivocal support for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Since that time the oscillations in the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union, and in the relations between the Castroites and what is left of the old PSP leadership, have ended.

Both have become, both verbally and in practice, increasingly intimate even to the point of fulsome.

NEXT EDITION

PART 2

CASTRO PREPARES FOR THE CONGRESS

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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CHRYSLER CONVENORS CRUSH JOBS FIGHT

The trade union leadership at Chrysler have now succeeded in obtaining votes of support for the Labour government's so-called 'rescue' plan under which 8000 workers will lose their jobs.

At the time of writing the Coventry ASTMS and Maidstone factory were the only sections yet to accept the plan.

After weeks of selling the plan to the shop floor, pleading for the right to 'push ahead with negotiations' arguing for a 'realistic' attitude, Ryton Convenor Pat Fox, who had done possibly more than anyone else to head off a fight, had the cheek to blame the workforce for the defeat!

"You can't run an occupation without an army. If you're going to occupy you need more people attending these meetings", he said.

No one can blame those who did not turn up. From the start it was clear that Fox and the leadership were determined to accept the plan and in the absence of a clear

alternative policy what was the point of going to mass meetings to find out what you could read in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*?

And for any who did attend, there was the same abysmal display of impotence and hopelessness from Fox, to ensure they didn't return.

Losing a battle, however, is not the same as losing a war. Those who voted against the plan should push forward with a campaign to resist its effects.

At Ryton only the Chairman's casting vote decided support for the plan from the stewards; at Stoke there was a large vote against and at Linwood, stewards' acceptance was only due to the white-collar representatives brought in to swell the vote.

At Linwood, International Socialists member Willie Lee spoke against acceptance at the mass meeting despite Convenor Carty's ruling that he must resign his steward's position in order to do so.

Lee's principled action and the stand taken by other workers, including those at the Maidstone factory where 600 face the sack, show

that fighting spirit does exist. All that is missing is a concrete policy and a principled leadership.

DEMANDS

All those who voted against the plan and argued for nationalisation should now consider strongly the importance of demands such as work-sharing on full pay and particularly 'open the books' demands which strengthen and develop the resistance and militancy of workers, and around which a real struggle to defend jobs and conditions and force nationalisation can begin.

The present leadership has been shown to be completely bankrupt. Those like the Communist Party which built-up the so-called 'left' convenors, such as Carty at Linwood, and attacked the demand for occupation as ultra-left have played their part in knifing the struggle.

They, along with all the other so-called leaders who have betrayed the campaign to defend jobs and led their members onto the dole queues must be forced out and replaced by those who will fight.

NALGO INACTION GROUP

An important development toward a fight against local Government spending cuts was when Camden NALGO branch passed a resolution calling others to support a special conference which would discuss action to be taken unless the Labour government reverses its decision on the cuts.

But by a majority of 11 to 3 the IS dominated NALGO steering

NAG members should reject the steering committee decision and fight for the re-establishment of living standards, services and jobs.

Geoffrey Drain, the General Secretary of NALGO, and other prominent members have made threatening noises toward the government on the cuts issue, now is the time to bring them and other so called Labour lefts into an arena where positive action is the order of the day.

In this period, it is on their actions that 'left' groups and individuals must be judged, and not

FIGHTING RAIL CUTS

This motion was passed by the Oxford NUR Branch on January 6th:

"This branch demands that the NUR executive refuse to negotiate with the BRB or the government on any cuts or economies in the railway service. Furthermore if any such cuts are proposed we insist that Brother Weighell make good his threat of December 16th and instruct the 10 NUR sponsored MPs to withdraw all support from the Labour government until that Labour government takes steps to guarantee the jobs and conditions

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Part One: THE BEGINNINGS OF BOLSHEVISM

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." Lenin CW Vol. 5, p. 369.

Russia, October 1917, gave birth to the first workers' state — a landmark in the history of the international working class. Yet the successful storming of the autocratic state of Tzarism under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, germinated in the 1890s with the formation of Russian Social Democracy.

The working class, though itself being no part of the great productive forces in capitalist society, progresses through its labour the whole wealth of society. It is an oppressed and exploited class, which can only overcome these conditions in the struggle to overthrow capitalist state power and institute socialism.

Yet despite this revolutionary role of the working class, its material oppression prevents workers spontaneously understanding the political tasks they face. They need a political leadership equipped with the scientific method of Marxism which enables them to analyse the contradictory movement of the classes in society on that basis. Trotsky writes:

"Were the proletariat as a whole capable of grasping its historical role, it would need neither party nor trade union. Revolution would be simultaneously with the proletariat." (*Marxism and the Trade Unions*)

TASK

Lenin, too, made it clear that the task of a revolutionary party is to introduce the science of Marxism to the workers movement:

"We have said there could not have been Social Democratic (i.e. revolutionary) consciousness among workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries [NB, not Russia] shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation." (*What is To Be Done?* pp. 31-32)

The early debates in Russian Social Democracy were therefore decisive in determining the outcome of the revolution. Without the ruthless struggle led by Lenin to defend the scientific principles of Marxism, the Russian proletariat could not have acquired the discipline or political consciousness to seize state power.

The Russian working class achieved Marxism, forged a revolutionary party, only through the experiences of half a century of practical trial, disappointment, sacrifice, heroism, party splits in order to arm the working class for the tasks history demanded before it. In our fight to build revolutionary leadership today, we must draw on the richness of those struggles and experiences, understanding that the tiny circles of intellectuals and the debates they waged, though they often appear bereft of political significance, contained the seeds of revolution.

PRESSURE

Without the continuous theoretical struggles against the various forms of opportunism which evolved in response to the continued pressure of bourgeois ideology on the world movement, there would have been no revolutionary movement in Russia. The history of the revolution must start therefore with the

NARODNIKS

Although the Bolshevik Party did not arise until the 1903 split in Social Democracy, the foundations upon which it was built were laid in the preceding years. It was from the late 1870s onwards that the working class emerged as a significant force, and the first circles attempting to organise workers were formed; but it was to the Narodnik organisations that the first politically aroused workers turned.

The Narodniks talked in terms of "the people" (in effect the peasantry who constituted 80% of the population) not in terms of classes. They dismissed the leading role of the working class in the coming revolution.

They argued that Russia could bypass the stage of capitalist development — factory production, accumulation of capital, and the growth of the working class. Instead, the Narodniks pointed to the peasant commune as the future germ of a socialist system.

FIGHTERS

The earlier generation of Narodniks were courageous fighters against Tzarist repression. But with the rapid emergence of the working class they looked increasingly to the liberal bourgeoisie who talked of 'democracy' but fought to contain the proletariat, and adopted openly reactionary views. Writers like Krilenko glorified the "economic independence" of the peasantry — in reality exalting an economic system in which the peasantry were tied to the large landowners.

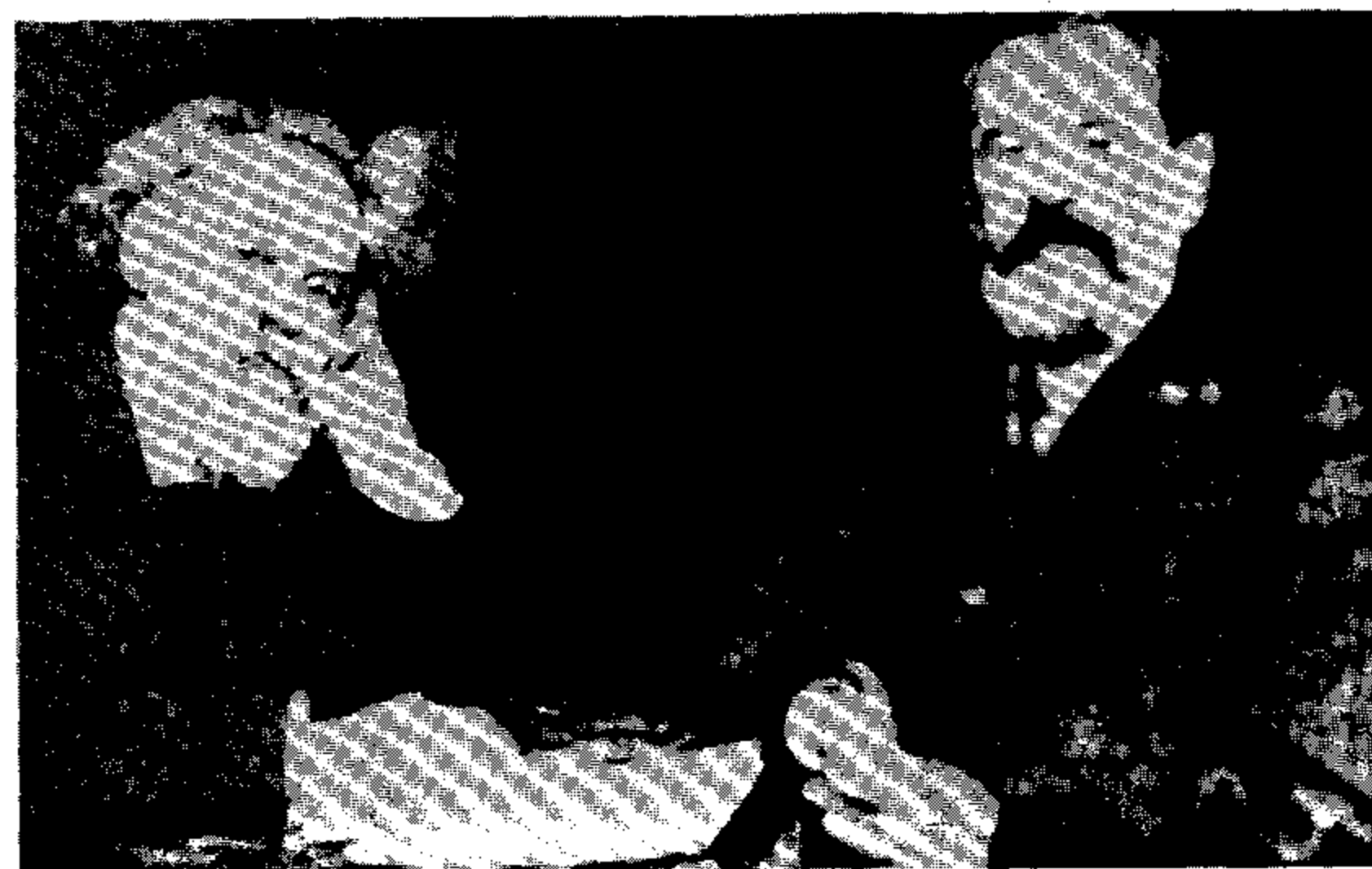
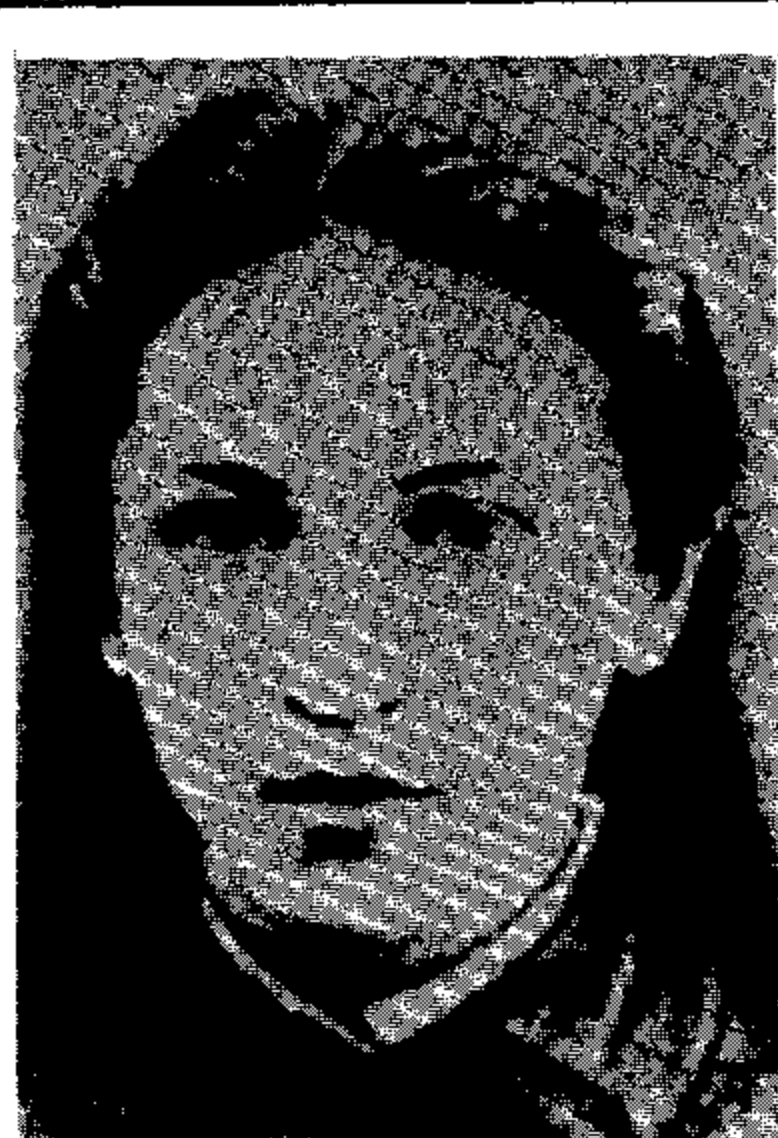
As early in 1889, when no workers party yet existed in Russia, Plekhanov at the First Congress of the Second (Social Democratic) International, stated that: "The Russian Revolution will either triumph as a revolution of the working class or it will not triumph at all." The cornerstone of Bolshevism which assigned to the working class the leading role in the democratic and socialist revolutions was thus first articulated by Plekhanov.

CIRCLES

The embryonic Russian Marxist movement took the form of the circle or discussion group type of organisation. Steps in the direction of an All-Russian party of the working class went apace with the founding of the 'North Russian Workers League' in 1877-78.

Plekhanov, the father of Russian Marxism, also established with Axelrod the 'Emancipation of Labour Group' in 1883. This was a decisive break with the Narodniks because it recognised the need to build a party based on the working class. It also produced, in 1885, the first draft programme of the Social Democratic Party.

The first attempts to organise workers' circles were tentative and not always successful. Many collapsed and were restarted later. But these initial efforts to organise the Russian proletariat were given impetus by the strike movement in the mid-1890s which involved half a million workers. It was during this period that



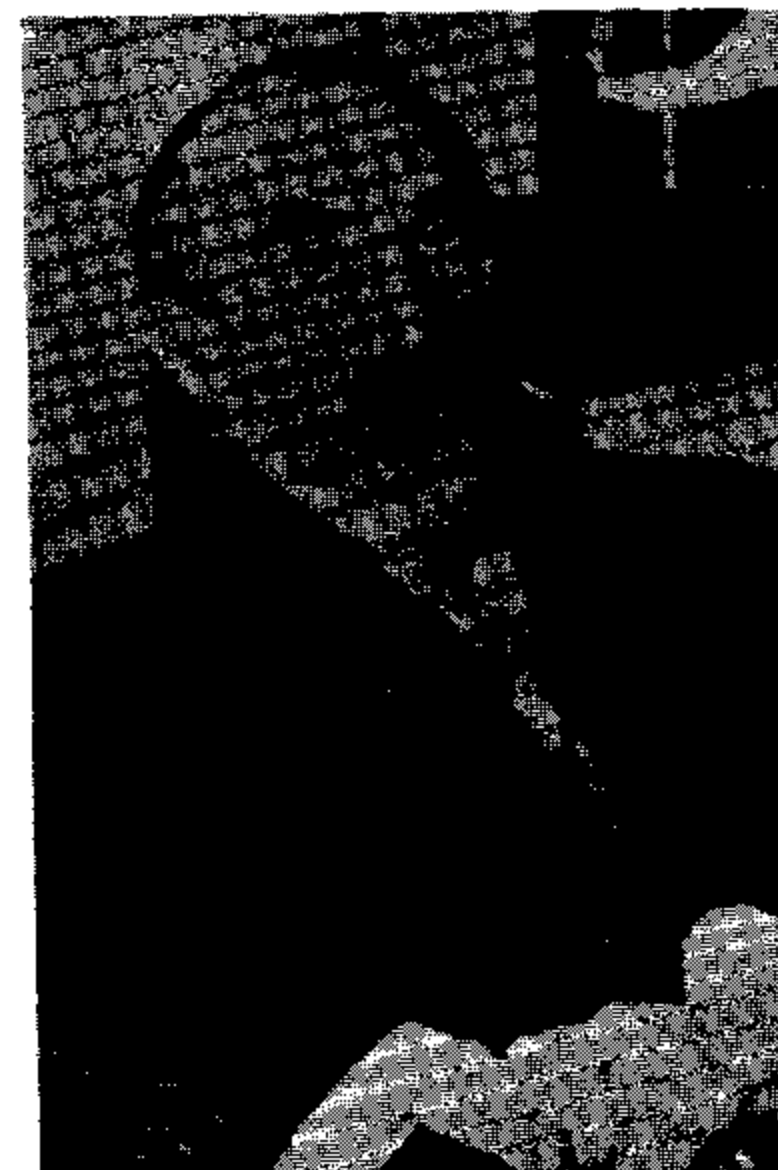
Top left: Vera Zasulich: Top right: Lenin
Leon Deutsch (left) with Paul Axelrod.

was formed in 1895, and involved several members who were to play a leading part in the future party, including Lenin.

The result of these efforts was the first Party Congress of Russian Social Democracy in 1898. Eight representatives only were present. Before the work of this congress was disrupted by a police raid, it did manage to issue a manifesto written by Struve.

LEGAL MARXISM

Later Struve was to become an arch opponent of the Russian revolution but during this period he, and other future representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie, were prepared to accept Marxism because it was able to demon-



Plekhanov

strate, in opposition to the Narodniks, that Russia could not avoid the capitalist path of development.

But Struve and the other 'legal Marxists', as they came to be known, recognising the future danger of their own class position, flinched from the task of organis-

ing for its leading role in the coming revolution.

INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM

It was no coincidence that some of the 'legal Marxists' applauded individual acts of terrorism. Whereas terrorism assigns to the individual the prime agency of social change, Marxism looks to the working class, raised to its politically independent role to lead the masses.

Plekhanov and Lenin did not reject individual terrorism on moral grounds but on the grounds of revolutionary expediency. For the terrorists, political activity is confined to an individual or small groups and their organisation is inevitably conspiratorial.

The heroic act of self-sacrifice of such individuals is supposed to 'stimulate' the masses into activity but in fact reinforces passivity and reliance on self-appointed 'heroes'. It underestimates the raising of the political consciousness of the masses by means of a revolutionary programme; and, in place of the programme, it substitutes the bomb.

Whilst making these criticisms of individual terrorism, the revolutionary Marxists did not reject the use of mass terrorism in the form of the armed uprising, nor in the defence of the revolution against the armed counter-revolution.

Like the legal Marxists and the 'Economists', the advocates of terrorism denied the leading role of the working class. Politics was the privilege of particular individuals or of the liberal bourgeoisie; the working class were to be restricted to their role — that of waging the economic struggle.

ECONOMISM

The method which Lenin

that both denied the need to organise the working class as the vanguard fighter for revolution.

As an attack on the Marxist method, Economism arose sharply in the Russian movement during the strike wave of the 1890s. It spread its roots further in the changeover from localised circles and discussion group activity — to agitation and mass intervention of Social Democrats in the class struggle.

The developments require a centralised political party. The Economists advocated a division of labour: that politics should be the concern of the liberal bourgeoisie, and that workers should interest themselves in nothing more than narrow trade union and wages struggles.

They saw no need therefore for a revolutionary party based on the working class. Their aim was rather to drive the workers into the kennel of the wages struggle.

One of the earliest tasks of the Russian Social Democracy was the winning of workers misled by these people who reflected the influence of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement.

Lenin took up the struggle against the 'Economists' in two ways: the call for the All-Russian Party, and the political newspaper.

THE PARTY PRESS: ISKRA

Lenin fought for an all-Russian Party of dedicated revolutionaries when the movement was still dominated by propaganda circles, a practice Lenin christened 'primitiveness'.

Zinoviev summarised Lenin's argument from *What is to be Done*:

"To limit yourself now, in this day, to discussion groups means to engage in primitive handicrafts and hair splitting when we need revolutionary factory production. We need to create an All-Russian Party with a division of labour in it where everyone knows what he must do and what his obligations are."

But Lenin's proposed 'division of labour' was very different from that of the Economists. It centred on a firmly-structured party functioning along the lines of democratic centralism.

Decisions would be aimed at and party leadership elected after full democratic discussion within the movement. But once these decisions had been made, the strictest centralised discipline was to be binding on all members. Only in this way could the movement steel itself against hostile pressures and act decisively at crucial points.

NEW

At that time Lenin's view of a centralised party in order to combat the spontaneous movement of the working class and raise its political consciousness was new. Lenin's clear-sighted all-Russian perspective contrasted with the blurred localised vision of the old discussion group mentality.

The decision to publish *Iskra* in 1900, under the editorship of Plekhanov, Lenin, Martov, Axelrod, Potresov and Vera Zasulich, was precisely for the purposes of campaigning for a centralised all-Russian revolutionary party of the working class.

Iskra was seen therefore as a collective organiser, breaking down localism and focussing the spontaneous struggles of the working class into a struggle for state power.

A continuous polemic was waged in the columns of *Iskra* against economism which in separating politics from workers' trade union struggles bowed to the spontaneity of workers and sought to contain them within the grooves of trade unionism. In *What is to be Done?* published by *Iskra* in 1902 Lenin argued:

"There is much talk of spontaneity. But the spontaneous development of the working class movement leads to the subordination to bourgeois



May Day demonstration, Russia 1917.

unionism . . . and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie".

ROSTOV EVENTS 1902

The final blow, however, that discredited the 'economists' was dealt in the practice of the movement. In the city of Rostov, November 1902, a powerful political movement arose out of what was initially an economic grievance. Meetings lasting several days attracted over 40,000 people whom the police were unable to disperse.

At the head of the movement were two Rostov workers, also Iskra comrades, called Stravsky and Gusev.

The demonstrators took up the arguments of *Iskra* and many workers were brought forward and trained for leadership in the future revolution. This movement had nothing in common with the subordinate role the 'economists' had assigned for the working class.

BOLSHEVISM OR MENSHEVISM

An organisation was formed around *Iskra* composed of some 150 revolutionaries. A committee was formed which had the task of drafting a programme and convening an All-Russian party congress. This draft, written mostly by Lenin and Plekhanov was prepared in time for the congress but the major disputes centred around the party rules for membership.

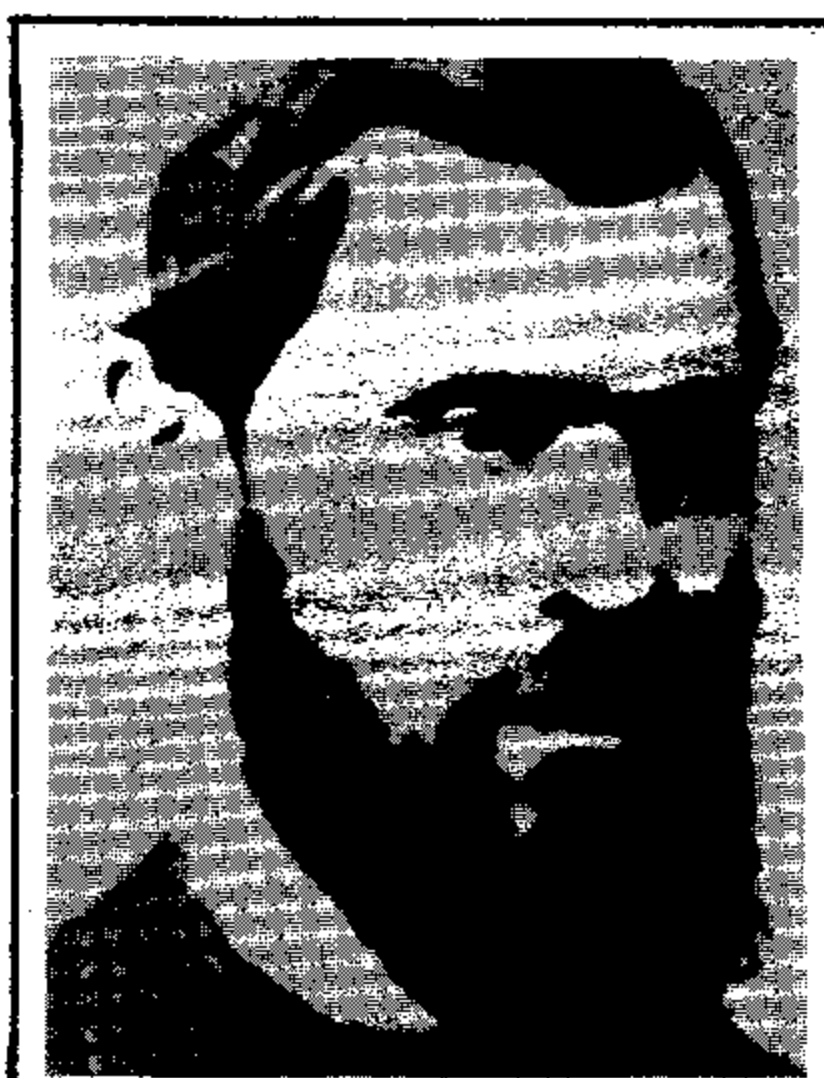
This seemingly unimportant dispute would appear to be about words but it had very important political consequences.

The Menshevik position, argued by Martov, allowed anyone to call himself a party member. As a result anyone, including middle class academics, could declare themselves as party members. Lenin fought this position relentlessly, challenging Martov's argument:

"The more widespread the title of Party member, the better," argued Martov, without, however, explaining the benefit of a widespread title which did not correspond to fact. Can it be denied that control over Party members who do not belong to a Party organisation is a mere fiction? A widespread fiction is not beneficial but harmful"

Lurking behind this disagreement about organisation, lay two very different political trends. The Bolsheviks sought to preserve a tight, disciplined, and centralised party which would enable the working class to lead the struggle to seize state power. By dissolving the party into the

mass, the Mensheviks were creating not a vanguard party, but a party of the rearguard, following the tail of the masses and therefore prey to the dominance of other classes, like the liberal bourgeoisie. Lenin showed this clearly when he opposed Martov's proposal that



Martov

"every striker" could "proclaim himself a Party member".

"In this statement Cde Martov instantly carries his mistake to the point of absurdity, by lowering Social Democracy to the level of mere strike-making . . . We could only rejoice if the Social Democrats succeeded in directing every strike, for it is their plain and unquestionable duty to direct every manifestation of the class struggle . . . But we should be tail-enders if we were to identify this primary form of struggle, which . . . is no more than a trade unionist form, with the all-round and conscious Social-Democratic struggle".

OPPORTUNISM

At each stage in the development of the Russian party, opportunism sought to dissolve the proletarian character of the movement. Although the Second Congress of Russian Social Democracy ended in a split, and its forces halved, it was the faction fight waged by Lenin which defended the political and organisational independence of the party against the Mensheviks.

The leading role of the working class, the political and organisational independence of the party, are inseparable: a weakening in one of these spheres results, as the reactionary history of Menshevism demonstrates, in the abandonment of all three principles.

Through sometimes complex factional strife and conflict, the essential weapon of working class revolution was being forged, a party steered in principle.

by Julia Kellett.

IMG: WHY WE HAVE RESIGNED

The world wide offensive of the working class puts to the test all those organisations which claim to be 'revolutionary'. The central tasks which face the working class in carrying through this offensive to the end, to the revolutionary seizure of power, is blocked in the main not by the strength of the capitalist class, but by the feebleness of the counter revolutionary labour bureaucracy, both Stalinist and social democratic.

Every revolutionary organisation has to be able to put forward a programme which can combine the taking forward of the struggle against capitalism and at the same time resolve the crisis of leadership through the building of the revolutionary party.

In Portugal the revolution has been put in danger precisely because the Stalinists and Socialist Party refuse to break from the bourgeois Armed Forces Movement and lead independent action of the working class. In Spain the Stalinists offer "national reconciliation" to the bourgeoisie, in Italy they plead for a "historical compromise" with the bosses, and in Britain it is the Labour government ably aided by all sections of the Trade Union bureaucracy which leads the attack on the working class.

DEMOBILISE

The role of these Stalinists and labour fakers is their desperate attempt to demobilise the offensive of the working class which poses a threat not only to capitalism but to these bureaucrats as well.

The task of the Trotskyist movement is to outline and to take into practice the correct methods for engaging in all the struggles of the working class and challenging for revolutionary leadership which can take forward the fight for workers power and socialism.

The IMG is now preparing for its 1976 Conference through opening a discussion on a "Draft Statement of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International" - *The British Crisis and the Way Out for the Working Class*.

This document, far from drawing a correct and honest balance sheet of the line of the IMG and the USFI, in effect confirms the present liquidationist and opportunist positions of the John Ross leadership.

In Portugal the USFI group, the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI) signed the pact for the Popular Front, and gave their support to a bourgeois government. Ernest Mandel, secretary of the USFI, attempted to evade responsibility for such a state of affairs, yet in the document drafted for Britain, far from learning from the experiences of being used as a pawn by the Stalinists in their bureaucratic manoeuvres, he offers the same services to the reformist Labour Party in Britain.

MANIPULATION

This takes the form of subjecting the struggles of the working class to the manipulations of the Labour Party bureaucracy and particularly of the 'lefts'. Mandel explains it's vital to remove the Wilson leadership and says that in the next 12-18 months "the only credible alternative to Wilson is an alternative policy, programme and leadership inside the Labour Party". (page B, emphasis added). Anything else, he says, would be "unrealistic".

He informs workers that "the emergence of such an alternative

leadership is a necessary precondition, for a generalised successful defence and counter-attack" (emphasis added). So the 'realist' Mandel informs the thousands of workers who have taken action against the policies of the Labour government that their struggles will only be successful if Benn, and the other 'left' bureaucrats replace Wilson.

This falls into line with the positions that have been developed by comrade Clynes in his 'Perspectives' document that appeared at the National Committee meetings in September and November. This document spells out the nature of the "class struggle left wing" that it is claimed is going to resolve the crisis of leadership.

SPELT OUT

The *Red Weekly* has spelt out the forces of such a 'formation', as the Communist Party and the Tribune group, as well as militant workers bodies such as the

or articles in newspapers; definite organisational methods have to be put forward which can actually impose them.

WHICH CLASS?

Each of these demands poses the question of which class will rule. But for the IMG and Ernest Mandel such questions are only for the "transitional programme in its totality" not for the action programme! We are told "the idea of generalised workers control over the whole economy, of workers councils . . . of challenging bourgeois state institutions" (page E VIII of USFI document) is to be kept back for propaganda only.

Thus for the IMG the 'Action Programme', far from being a series of transitional demands, is merely souped-up reformism.

At the beginning of December, the Second Conference of the Trotskyist Opposition of the IMG took place, at which there was



IMG National Secretary Pennington with Tariq Ali.

National Abortion Campaign and the Institute for Workers Control, and also 'left' groups. Clynes says: "in the last analysis, the project of the class struggle left wing signifies the struggle for leadership by the revolutionary Marxist vanguard. But in the process broader forces will contribute to the building of the class struggle left wing". (Clynes - 'Perspectives', p 10 Internal Information Bulletin, undated but probably October 1975).

In short, Mandel and Clynes propose to evade the burning question of the hour, the building of an alternative, revolutionary leadership. For the time being they meekly stand aside for the 'lefts' of the *Tribune* group.

PABLOITE

Such positions are the direct outcome of the Pabloite heritage which has always 'projected' other forces than Trotskyists to resolve the crisis of leadership 'just for the moment'. These people have been saying the same thing for over twenty years!

The correct course, the application in practice of the method of the Transitional Programme, has been explicitly rejected by the 'majority' leadership of the IMG.

In place of a clear fight for a programme which bases itself on the independent mobilisation of the working class, they counterpose the "Action Programme", which Clynes has described as a series of "centralised State measures".

Thus all the talk about transitional demands in the *Red Weekly* is merely propaganda, and is not based on a struggle in the unions for the workers control demands of Trotsky's programme - the sliding scale of wages, Open the Books, work sharing without loss of pay. None of these demands can be achieved just by resolution-passing

unanimity that the Workers Socialist League represented a major gain for the working class.

Whereas the IMG liquidated itself into propaganda blocs such as the TOM and the NAC, the WSL fought openly in the unions for the transitional programme. Whereas the IMG continually complained of the unfavourable balance of forces between the revolutionaries and the reformists, the WSL understood Trotsky's advice to the French Communist League in the 1930s:

"The relationship of forces has to be changed, not concealed. It is necessary to go to the masses". (*Writings* 1934-5).

RESIGN

We therefore decided to resign from the IMG in order to take part in the building of the Workers Socialist League, knowing that in that practice we would contribute more to the understanding of the IMG membership of the Transitional Programme, than all the documents of the IMG Pre-Conference discussion.

We appeal to all members of the IMG and especially to remaining supporters of the Trotskyist Opposition to join the real struggle against those like Mandel, Ross and Clynes who tie the working class to the manoeuvres of the 'left' bureaucracy, in front of the working class, in the actual practice of the struggle for leadership in the mass movement.

For the Workers Socialist League!
For the Fourth International!

John Strawson.
Mark Hyde.
Dave Rafferty.

In addition, on January 9th, three further comrades resigned on these positions. These are:

Maureen Hector.
Joyce Cleaver.
Martin McClean.

REVIEW

Two L.P. records by Robert Johnson, "King of the Delta Blues Singers", reviewed by IAN SWINDALE.

The Blues: Timeless songs of protest

Although these recordings of Robert Johnson's songs have been available for a number of years, they remain among the best selling blues albums in Britain today, in itself a testimony to the central importance of Johnson to blues music.

Johnson himself is an enigmatic figure about whom little is known except that he made a number of important recordings in 1936-7 and was dead by the age of 21, poisoned by a jealous woman. There are no known photos of him so little is known even about his physical appearance. Many later bluesmen however, remember him from their youth and cite him as an early influence on their musical development.

By the time that Johnson was singing, the blues was already well established within the black community as a distinct musical form. During its formative period however the blues had drawn on two very different cultures. The Negro slave labour shipped into America brought with them the culture of Africa. However, slaves were subjected to an extremely barbaric process of dehumanisation which involved an attempt by the slave traders and the slave owners to destroy every aspect of the African heritage.

This meant the destruction of the tribal family structure, the tribal languages and even the musical instruments of the slaves. Consequently, the only remnants of African musical culture to survive were the highly developed sense of musical rhythm which had been culturally instilled into every African from childhood, and the musical scale on which the blues was to be based, a scale different from the one predominant in the West.

At the same time that the African slaves were being forced to loosen all connections with their past, they were also confronted with new culture. Religion was clearly an important part of American bourgeois culture in the last century and there was no shortage of Christians prepared

in African culture the Negro musicians produced music that came to be known as rag-time. This music later formed the basis of Jazz.

The blues on the other hand was the result of a combination of the rhythms and melodic lines of Africa with the form and structure of the American folk song. The black man took this structure and adapted it to his own purposes.

The result was the blues, a song with several verses which did not tend to link up to tell a story but which was almost exclusively based on the same musical structure of twelve bars to each verse and the same chord sequence in each of the different songs.

STRANGE

To western ears, at the time, the music sounded very strange indeed. This was largely due to the fact that in the scale used by the blacks two of the seven notes were played flat. Moreover, it was common practice for blues singers to play their guitars holding a piece of glass over the frets and sliding the glass to the various notes they wanted to play.

'Bottleneck' or 'slide' guitar, as it became known, produced a whining effect and of course many of the notes were slurred together. Robert Johnson was himself an accomplished bottleneck guitarist, a fact which comes across very clearly on these albums.

Contrary to popular opinion, the blues did not actually originate during the period of slavery but at the turn of the century. For the blacks this was a time of increasing isolation. What few constitutional rights they had been "guaranteed" in the aftermath of the civil war were finally removed in the last decade of the 19th century when the last Southern state disenfranchised its black population.

The blacks had no organisations of their own through which to fight back and so there emerged a tendency towards 'self-help'. Negroes set up their own churches and schools and organised their own entertainments. It was of course not possible by these means

The blues, of course, was in no sense a revolutionary music. However, it was no pie-in-the-sky escapism from the oppression of American capitalism. It is no coincidence that the black church waged a very bitter battle against the blues and blues singers. Nor was this done solely because bluesmen sang (as they overwhelmingly did) about booze and women. The blues could provide no answers, but no music ever can.

It was a leisure activity of the black masses but its themes were rooted in the general problems of living as well as the specific problems confronting blacks. Blues criticised and protested against the world, even if unable to change it.

In his songs, Robert Johnson takes up many of these themes. Social relationships between the sexes feature predominantly in the blues and represent a very largely unconscious reflection of effects of class society on human relationships. Under capitalism, the tendency is for relationships to become turned into *money relationships* which gives rise on the one hand to a view amongst men that women have a specific function in the home, whilst among many women men are seen as a meal ticket.

POVERTY

With the grinding poverty of the 1930s and the fairly loose relationships between the sexes which the slavers had encouraged and which still existed at this time, together with the drifting and searching for employment across the US, personal relationships between men and women were very frequently unstable. So blues songs about "woman trouble" which form the vast majority of blues songs, including those of Johnson, clearly reflect this instability.

As Johnson sings in *I'm A Steady Rollin' Man*, "I'm a hardworkin' man, have been for many years I know (x 2) And some cream-puff's usin' my money, ooh well Babe, but that'll never be no more."

The bitterness between men and women in class society as their



Segregated Cafe in Mississippi - heart of cotton country

to teach these "heathens" about their God.

This was soon reflected in the music that the blacks began to develop, and in particular in the Negro Spirituals and Gospel music which the slaves sang in the fields while they worked.

Having been denied the use of his own musical instruments, the black man was forced to resort to the instruments of the white man and the American civil war provided the black man with the chance to pick up numerous musical instruments abandoned by the various armies.

Adapting the use of these instruments to the syncopated

relationships turn sour also finds its expression in the blues, for example, Johnson's *Rambling on my Mind* where he sings "And now babe, I will never forgive you any more, You know you did not want me, Baby why didn't you tell me so?"

Of the four basic types of black music to grow out of the collision of cultures (gospel, blues, ragtime and jazz), it was gospel music that in the main performed the function of escapism from the squalor of life that confronted the black families (and many whites too) in the first decades of this century. The myth of an heavenly after-life as a reward for the misery and suffering on

relationships turn sour also finds its expression in the blues, for example, Johnson's *Rambling on my Mind* where he sings

"And now babe, I will never forgive you any more, You know you did not want me, Baby why didn't you tell me so?"

This bitterness can even turn to violence, as in *32-30 Blues* "I'm gonna shoot my pistol, gonna shoot my gal and gone, (x 2) You made me love you, now your man have gone."

This 'solution' to the problems was not frequently resorted to - although ironically it was in Johnson's case. In fact, where any

NOTICE!

STOP

Help Save The Youth of America
DON'T BUY NEGRO RECORDS

(If you don't want to serve negroes in your place of business, then do not have negro records on your juke box or listen to negro records on the radio.)

The screaming, idiotic words, and savage music of these records are undermining the morals of our white youth in America.

Call the advertisers of the radio stations that play this type of music and complain to them!

Don't Let Your Children Buy, or Listen
To These Negro Records

Racist whites campaigning against Blues music

it usually takes the form of leaving town or going back home, ideas clearly linked with trying to make a fresh start, the search for something better:

"I believe, I believe I'll go back home (x 2)
You can mistreat me here Babe, but you can't when I get home."

However, even trying to get away from it all can have its drawbacks as Johnson relates in *Crossroad Blues* (a blues constantly reworked and performed even today, by blues and rock groups):

"Standing at the crossroad, trying to flag a ride, (x 2)
Didn't nobody seem to know me, Babe, everybody pass me by."

Johnson's light-hearted treatment of the 'solution' of making a fresh start reveals a cynicism concerning any possibility of escaping from reality by running away from it. Consequently humorous blues form another response to the relations between the sexes as in the song where Johnson sings:

"Well I'm gon' get me a gambling woman if it's the last thing that I do (x 2)

A man don't need a woman, ooh fair brown, he got to give all of his money to."

And then of course there was the eternal "blue blues":

"I love my phonograph, but you broken my winding chain, (x 2)
And you taken my lovin' and you gave it to your other man."

"And we played it on the sofa and we played it 'side the wall
But boys, my needle done got rusty and it will not play at all."

Excessive drinking of course seems one way to escape at least temporarily from the misery of one's existence, but because it is only temporary, particularly when the money runs out, it is no solution at all. In *Drunken Hearted Man* Johnson expresses what must have been the wish of so many:

"I'm a drunken hearted man, my life seems so misery (x 2)
And if I could change my way of living it would mean so much to me."

The sentiments of Johnson's songs found a response in generations of black Americans. Although after his death his records did not sell particularly well, his songs were performed by a number of famous bluesmen.

After the war when amplification became available for the first time and the first electric guitars were made, a young singer named Elmore James recorded Johnson's song *I Believe I'll Dust My Broom*. The power and intensity of James' singing and his guitar playing - he used an amplified guitar and played it in the bottleneck style - made the record an instant hit.

Since then many blues singers, old and young alike, have recorded Johnson's songs, bringing some of the outmoded expressions up to date, but retaining the basic sentiments of the songs. What is even more interesting is that the blues have since the war reached a much wider audience than simply black Americans.

the basic inspiration and starting point for every major development within what one could loosely describe as 'pop' music.

Firstly, it was the combination of the blues style with the traditional folk music of white America, country music, which led to the development of 'rock and roll', a music which was to reflect the growing self-assertiveness of white youth in the emerging affluence of the post-war boom, and at the same time raise cries of horror from the lips of the establishment (until it was realised that capitalism and rock and roll were far from incompatible, and even the Queen asked to see Haley's film 'Rock Around the Clock').

As the fifties gave way to the sixties two things happened. Firstly sections of youth began to feel alienated from the position which capitalism had placed them in, putting them on the commercial pedestal in order to make super profits out of youth-orientated industries such as clothes, records, cosmetics etc. Secondly the post-war boom began to falter. The cracks in the system were beginning to open up.

White youth turned once more to the blues, this time in the form of the heavier electric blues of such singers as Chuck Berry and the Chicago-based rhythm and blues bands.

AGGRESSION

The white groups removed much of the ethnic quality of the original records but what they were able to capture was the aggression and excitement of the music, which they developed in the direction of a basically non-political, social protest.

The Beatles, the Rolling Stones and The Who all based themselves on this music, developing it in different directions until 'Flower Power' came along and poured mystical philosophical rantings of love and peace over the frustration of the Stones' *I Can't Get No Satisfaction* and the aggression of The Who's *My Generation*.

Disillusionment with the sterile idealist philosophy of flower-power - a disillusionment helped along by the escalation of American involvement in the Vietnam war, and the batons of the Chicago cops as they beat open the heads of demonstrators outside the 1968 Democratic convention, led to a renewed politicisation amongst young people. Hand in hand with this politicisation there took place a revival of the blues.

One of the most popular blues singers amongst this new, predominantly white generation of singers was Robert Johnson. John Mayall, Eric Clapton, Cream and the Rolling Stones all recorded his songs, giving them a modern treatment which reveals the timelessness of the blues and its basic adaptability to and influence on different musical currents. So in 1975 Johnson's blues songs are not only best sellers in their original form but are also to be found on best-selling albums by top rock musicians. A greater tribute to Robert Johnson, "King of the Delta



TWO FACED OPPORTUNISM

After just over a year of manoeuvring and opportunism, the "Trotskyist" Workers Revolutionary Party has now reached the point where Tom White, its only member in British Leyland's Assembly plant in Cowley, is aptly described throughout the capitalist press as a "moderate".

This fact is clearly a major embarrassment to the WRP leadership as a whole, and General Secretary G. Healy in particular, who takes personal responsibility for every one of White's unprincipled actions.

Even more of an embarrassment is the fact that the WRP membership and the readers of *Workers Press* are being given a story completely different from the WRP position in Cowley. This has reached the point where their latest article in defence of White "A Policy for Cowley Workers" (almost unread in Cowley) includes a number of arguments which would be rejected out of hand by workers in the factory.

As a result, when they decided to leaflet the plant with a short-

ened version of the article, they omitted some of its more ludicrous positions - notably its lengthy defence of White's position as a stand-in delegate to the factory's Ryder "participation" committee, and its attack on the Open the Books Committee set up by the Joint Shop Stewards on the plant, coupled with the contradictory demand "open the books for inspection by an elected workers' committee".

The WRP has wriggled to avoid or distort every principled question - and each move shows more clearly the political degeneration that has gripped the movement in the last twelve months. It is for this reason that we must take up some points from this latest WRP leaflet.

1. Healy chose to leaflet the Cowley plant one day before the elections for deputy convenor, and in the teeth of a national press witch-hunt with a statement aimed entirely at Alan Thornett and the Workers Socialist League entitled *Lies and Liars*. This could only play into the hands of the right wing and the employers who aimed precisely to discredit and isolate Thornett.

2. The WRP leaflet claims that the Tory Press seek to "discredit" White by calling him a "moderate". They do not explain however why White alone in the whole country should be treated differently from other militants, and branded a "moderate", while claiming to be a revolutionary. For the Tory press the term

'moderate' in distinction to 'extremist' is precisely a seal of approval.

The WRP do not, and cannot explain why extreme right-wing convenor Parsons originally endorsed White as a "suitable" candidate for deputy convenor, voted for White in the election for Chairman of the 5/293 TGWU Branch, and still endorses him to this day on his short list of seven prospective deputy convenors.

Or why Parsons told the *Oxford Mail*, that while "aware of his politics" he was supporting White because he considers him a "good steward"!

3. The leaflet states White has "publicly denounced" his inclusion on Parsons' slate in the plant and in the branch. *Workers Press*, trying to cover the fact (exposed in the last *Socialist Press*) that White took a whole week to separate himself from Parsons' list and did so only after the allotted date of the deputies' elections had passed, goes further and descends here to barefaced lies.

CONFIDENT

Justifiably confident that nobody in the factory will be reading the article, they state that White held back on issuing a denunciation because the deputies' elections were postponed:

"Any statement from White, therefore, was equally delayed until after the New Year when it would have maximum effect..."

In fact, the original arrangement had been to hold the plant

ballots for convenor and for the seven deputies' positions all on the same Wednesday. Parsons' 'slate' was published on the *Monday* in preparation for this. In the event a late objection was raised on the list of candidates for deputy convenor, and these elections were postponed - while the ballot for convenor was allowed to continue.

What *Workers Press* readers would not know was that the deputies' election was not postponed until half way through the morning of the actual day of voting - in fact some sections had already voted!

"WAITING"

So when *Workers Press* tells us White was waiting for the postponed elections, what they really mean is that he had issued no denial at all between Monday and the actual day of the election. And of course Parsons stood that day as convenor using White's name on his election platform!

4. The leaflet goes on fraudulently to cash in on the mass hostility to the Ryder "participation" committee in the Assembly Plant, claiming:

"Step by step we have exposed the attempts of British Leyland to draw the leading shop stewards into the participation scheme."

And step by step *Socialist Press* has charted Tom White's headlong dive into that self-same participation scheme, and the WRP's activities in giving credibility to its joint investigation

committee! *Workers Press* contains a lengthy defence of this thoroughly reactionary position - but, knowing it would get scant support in Cowley, this is omitted from the leaflet.

EXPOSED

5. Stung by our exposure of the solid right-wing vote which backed White in the 5/293 TGWU branch elections, Healy is forced to further absurd lies and distortions. His leaflet claims:

Firstly that Parsons "took little interest" in the 5/293 elections. But Healy cannot account for the fact that the right wing mobilised 54 hard core supporters - more than at any Branch meeting held out of working hours - or for the fact that Parsons himself took the unusual step of attending the meeting to vote for White. Indeed one right-winger at this week's 5/293 branch meeting revealed that Parsons individually canvassed every member in his strongest area - 'E' Block - urging them to attend!

Secondly that "ten supporters of the openly right-wing candidate Paintin voted for Thornett when Paintin dropped out of the election". Healy has to ignore the fact that, allowing for the Stalinists and a couple of waverers who voted for White against Thornett, the same right-wing bloc vote of 54 voted for right-wing secretary Jim Barsons as had voted for WRP member Tom White for Chairman. Not one militant voted for White. Nor can Healy answer why the right wing decided to withdraw Paintin in favour of White for the chairman's position.

Thirdly: To cover White's unprincipled role in the election, the WRP claim that the election was not important anyway!

Healy lyingly claims that Parsons all along was preparing to launch a new "moderate" TGWU branch in Cowley. In fact the WRP leaflet was issued two days after the plan had been finally declared dead by Parsons, who never even mentioned it in his "news conference".

And what killed the 'new branch' idea was precisely the fact that even right-wingers could see it had been announced only after Parsons and the right wing had taken a crushing defeat in the 5/293 Branch elections! Such details of fact do not trouble Healy, however, who becomes one of the few people in the country to believe Parsons' story on the question.

CHALLENGE

Socialist Press therefore challenges Healy and the WRP to answer the following questions unanswered from our previous articles:

Why was Tom White drinking and chatting with Parsons around the same small table in The Swan pub in Cowley immediately after Parsons' victory in the convenor elections?

Why did the Stalinists vote WRP when the alternative was to vote for WSL member Thornett?

Why did the right wing, meeting two hours before the 5/293 branch meeting, decide to withdraw Paintin in favour of White?

Is it national policy of the WRP to enter "participation" schemes? And if the claim is that this is done only to "expose" the scheme, is it still WRP policy to enter joint management-union committees when these are rejected by a majority of the workforce? If it is not national WRP policy, why has it been carried out in Cowley behind the backs of the membership?

For our part we have opposed and still oppose 100% any participation in these scab committees. We call on all WRP members to take up these vital issues of principle and fight for the removal from the leadership of Healy and White who have done so much to nullify the name of Trotskyism in

REJECT STEEL SELL OUT

Last Sunday's "Sunday Telegraph" has a large picture of Bill Sirs, General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation looking "weary". Weary no doubt from the task of selling his members down the river.

Last summer, after the proposals by Monty Finiston, Chairman of BSC, to carry through 20,000 redundancies, Sirs agreed to the compromise proposals involving speed-up, waiving the guaranteed working week and 6,000 redundancies.

That was not enough. Now BSC plans 40,000 redundancies in a desperate attempt to break even, and halt its financial losses of £8m a week.

TWO WEEKS

Management's new draft proposals which Sirs and the union leadership have two weeks to answer contain a battery of proposals designed with the sole purpose of making redundancies, speed-up and plant closure on a massive scale possible over the coming period.

Bob Scholey, the chief executive of BSC, stated clearly at the end of the latest round of negotiations: "We have withdrawn nothing on the question of redundancies. Jobs are still going to have to go."

The bankrupt reply came from Sirs: "We accept that there will have to be a streamlining of the labour force." Saddled with this leadership steel workers can expect nothing but complete capitulation to management proposals.

SCRAPPED

The management document proposes to scrap the manning level agreements, end once and for all the guaranteed working week, end overtime and guaranteed shift

working and to concentrate production in the most efficient plants, putting more plants on to standby operation.

In addition, if voluntary redundancies have not resulted in an "acceptable" cut in the labour force within twelve weeks of the agreement, then management will start sackings.

AGREEMENTS

In the long run the proposal central to the attack on jobs is the scrapping of the manning level agreements. Management need this desperately to improve the competitiveness of BSC in the slump-ridden world steel market.

During 1975 steel production slumped in all the major capitalist steel producing countries, in Germany by 22%, in France by 18% and in Britain by 10%. Over the period of the current world slump as a whole, steel output has fallen by one third and prices by a half.

BURDEN

The major steel producers are now attempting to inflict the burden of this crisis on steel workers throughout the world, by increasing productivity, to produce a smaller output more cheaply and outbid competitors. At the same time they clamour to their governments for import controls - each

trying to get other countries to bear the brunt of the slump.

British Steel is not well placed to enter this melee of cut-throat competition. Japan's most efficient steel plants produce 520 tons per man year, West Germany's 370. British Steel's five most efficient plants produce 195 tons per man year and the overall output of the British industry is 122 tons.

In the light of these figures the aim of industry becomes clear. Even with the closure of less efficient plants on a massive scale and a concentration of all production in the top five plants the competitiveness of the British industry would not be restored. Massive productivity increases involving speed-up and redundancies have to be pushed through in the most efficient plants as well.

CONCEDED

Meanwhile Varley, Secretary for Industry, was putting it about that he would be prepared to press for retention of the guaranteed working week if the other management demands are conceded by the steel workers. In other words the guaranteed working week restored to the minuscule workforce that would be left after management's savage cuts.

The task facing steel workers is therefore clear. The strike action

Order Now!

The next edition of *Socialist Press* will be our first anniversary of publication.

To mark this occasion we will be producing a special 12-page edition with additional articles and industrial news.

BACK ISSUES!

We have back issues available of both 'Trotskyism Today'

Socialist Press 1st Anniversary Meetings

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

WSL PUBLIC MEETING

SHEFFIELD
February 1st, 7.30
The Mail Coach
West Street

UNITE TO FORCE TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

In doubling the number of troops operating in South Armagh, and including among the reinforcements 150 members of the SAS who will operate in four-man terror squads, Harold Wilson does indeed move to maintain security - the security of British imperialism.

The immediate pretext for this massive intervention - the gunning down of ten protestant workers by a splinter group from the Provisional IRA - has indeed been carefully singled out by the capitalist press. There has been a concerted attempt at the same time to underplay the parallel activities of loyalist paramilitary murder squads, which in the recent period of "cease-fire" have claimed far more Catholic victims than the IRA has murdered protestants. And also to conceal the real concern of British imperialism has not been so much with sectarian murders (which the SAS will no doubt now assist) but the IRA campaign against British troops which had overwhelming support in this largely Republican area.



The frantic activity which the murder of ten protestant workers has inspired in Harold Wilson does not indicate any concern for the people of South Armagh. What does concern Wilson is his imperialist strategy which is up for debate and scrutiny in the Commons on January 12th.

REPORT

This is the day on which the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Merlyn Rees, must state the government position on the Convention report. In it the Loyalists demand the return of their Stormont government and reject out of hand the possibility of power sharing with the SDLP.

Only a few days ago, Harry West the leader of the UUUC confirmed in an interview that the position was unchanged:

"How could any government work if it was forced to include people dedicated to bringing down the state? It is a ludicrous proposal."

To emphasise to the British government that it is determined to have its own government and to control its own security forces the UUUC have called their supporters to rally at Inniskillin on Saturday, two days before the debate on the Convention report.

Faced with this obduracy, the British government dare not reject the report in its entirety, and it is as part of its plan to force the SDLP to accept it that the recent intervention in S. Armagh must be seen.

The SDLP have so far capitulated to the Loyalists on every issue bar two: they have demanded that they be included directly in the government at Cabinet level; and they have declined to

give full support to the security forces (the RUC and the UDR) while they retain their sectarian structure.

By putting extra soldiers, especially units like the SAS, into S. Armagh, the British government calculate that the SDLP will come to terms rather than see nationalist solidarity surging back to the IRA.

A further ace in Wilson's hand against the SDLP is to get their supporters in Dublin to disown them. This must be the clear inference from Justice Minister Cooney's statement before he left his recent meeting with the British government that "Neither the SDLP nor any other party can afford the luxury of polemics about the RUC at this time".

So after 6½ years of military occupation the British government will now consider it a success if they can manage to restore the sectarian structure they started to dismantle in 1972!

The presence of the army has been the basic guarantor of sectarian divisions in the fight for class politics in Ireland today.

But the resistance to imperialist domination in Ireland can only be successful if led by the independent strength of the working class - the only class whose interests demand no compromise and an all-out fight for social revolution.

PROGRAMME

But the unity of the working class in this fight can only be secured by a political programme representing the international interests of the working class. Even if we were to believe the IRA could bomb the British out of Ireland, what it would *not* be able

to do (and we reject their methods precisely for this reason) is bomb itself into a united socialist republic.

Fighting for working class leadership in Ireland against the conspiratorial and terrorist programme of the IRA, which effectively has no political perspectives to advance the consciousness of Irish workers, is inseparable from our tasks in Britain.

BANKRUPTCY

The situation in Armagh must be seen as the outcome of the combined treachery of the SDLP and the complete political bankruptcy of the IRA which in the whole history of its necessary struggle against British imperialism has sought and found no way to mobilise the strength of the working class in the fight for national liberation.

It is this crisis of political leadership which must be resolved in the next period.

A first step in this is to take up the fight for workers' defence in Armagh. The huge non-sectarian march last week called by local trade unions to protest against sectarian killings must be made the starting point of the setting up of *joint* protestant-catholic workers' defence patrols with the aim of preventing sectarian murders.

The fight for workers' self-defence must be accompanied by the demand from both protestant and catholic workers that the troops, main cause of sectarian division, be *withdrawn* from Northern Ireland. Only in this way can the road to class unity be opened up.

Cowley, cont'd from front page.

Mathers, was forced to go on ATV Midlands and denounce Parsons as an "alarmist", dismissing his allegations.

This is clearly not enough. Trade union elections are *not* the property of the capitalist class or their press. They must be protected from such outside interference. The Oxford 5/55 Branch of the TGWU (with members in the Cowley Assembly plant) has correctly objected to the factory ballot going ahead this week, partly because of the atmosphere of witch-hunt under which it is being conducted. Workers must fight within the trade union movement for any election which is the subject of press intervention to be postponed until members are allowed to make an objective choice of which candidate to support. And a renewed campaign must be launched against the postal ballot system of election.

These demands come into conflict with the strategy of the bureaucracy, the Labour government and the employers. The independence of the trade unions from the employers and from the state emerges clearly as a political principle which must be defended if there is to be a fight to defend jobs and wages. The WSL is in the forefront of this fight.

*FOOTNOTE.

As we go to press, it is clear in Cowley that the new technique of the right-wing and the employers - publishing in every paper a "recommended list" of candidates in conjunction with a national witch-hunt - will produce a very high poll and have a marked effect on the way many workers will vote. Leyland's statement that if Alan Thornett is elected it would mean an automatic confrontation over his recognition, seems to make his election unlikely, though there will undoubtedly be a substantial solid vote for him.

Among the militant candidates, Bob Fryer seems in the strongest position to gain a deputy post. His election and every vote for a militant under these conditions would be a major blow at the employers and the bureaucracy.

The brazen perversion of democracy by the press in these Cowley elections must be met by a fight throughout the unions to kick witch-hunters and those who open up the union to such interference or condone it, out of the labour movement.

SAFETY

The safety of Armagh's population will be no greater with the retention of the SAS, a gang of professional army psychopaths, trained to perpetrate atrocities and provocations. Indeed government denials, assisted by self-imposed censorship of the press, have not been able to hide their undercover presence all along and their role in keeping the sectarian hot of violence on the boil.

From the time they set up the murder squad called the Ulster Freedom Fighters within the IRA in 1972, the SAS have used assassination and bombing to ferment divisions between Loyalists and Nationalists, and to exacer-

bate tension within both the republican and loyalist ranks, all for the purpose of nipping in the bud the most embryonic of moves towards class unity.

When it was felt that the Dublin government needed a little encouragement to take a firmer line against the IRA, special agents like Kenneth Littlejohn crossed the border to rob banks and blow up public buildings; and the night the Birmingham pub bombs went off, who should be spending the night with the agent provocateur, National Front member and chief prosecution witness, Watts? None other than special army agent Littlejohn!

BRANCHES CALL FOR INQUIRY INTO 'IMPOSSIBLE' VOTES

There is growing suspicion among Oxford trade unions concerning the recent TGWU ballot to elect delegates to General Executive, Automatic National Committee and Regional Committee - positions far more important than the Deputy Convenors elections splashed over the press.

ADMINISTRATION

The General Executive, in particular, administers the day to day policy and administration of the 50,000 strong union and is in a vastly more powerful position than a plant convenor.

The results show a hefty victory for two of the three-man ticket of extreme right-wing candidates put forward by the Oxford District Committee.

TOP

Bill Roche, convenor of British Land's Body Plant at Cowley, topped the poll in the contest for General Executive, 3,500 votes over his nearest rival, with only 11,500 votes.

Jack Adams, a completely unknown right-winger with only a hundred members at MG Abingdon, topped the poll for Regional Committee with well over 6,000 votes.

And Assembly Plant convenor, George Parsons, who only polled 280 votes in his own plant, came a close second to nationally known campaigner Eddy McGarry, who polled again over 6,000 votes.

What is unusual about these

results is not so much the overall size of the votes, but the fact that in the local area, where the support for these candidates should have been highest, there was an extremely low turn-out - much lower than in the last such elections two years ago.

REFUSAL

This, combined with the adamant refusal of the 5/60 T&GWU branch to declare the figures from the plant ballot even to branch members (in breach of T&GWU rules), has prompted the growing call for a union enquiry into the elections.

This call was taken up first in a resolution passed by the 1,500-strong 5/55 branch at its meeting a week ago. The branch has demanded a complete breakdown of the votes cast for Parsons in the election, the results of which Branch Secretary Tony Bradley has described as "practically impossible".

Commenting on the 11,442 votes attributed to Bill Roche for National Executive, Bradley told the *Oxford Journal*:

"Harold Wilson wouldn't get that sort of vote. We want to know what branch returned these votes in favour of these people".

SUPPRESSED

But up to now, the branch resolution and Bradley's statements have been heavily suppressed by the capitalist media, intent on witch-hunting Alan Thornett.

The demand for a full enquiry was backed yesterday by a unanimous vote of a well-attended

meeting of the 5/293 branch, who also voted to send the whole branch committee to Birmingham this week to lobby the Regional Committee in support of an enquiry.

£500 monthly development fund

Even though the WSL is still a relatively new movement, and *Socialist Press* has only been in publication for a year, we have already established a clear position in the lead of the fight for principle and programme in the working class.

Our monthly development fund is to enable us to expand the work of our paper to keep up with the growth of the WSL and its work.

Please send all donations to: *Socialist Press*, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

WSL EDUCATION CLASS

LIVERPOOL

Wednesday 21st January

7.30

AUEW Hall

Mount Pleasant

"The Russian Revolution"

COVENTRY MARCH

Coventry Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has called a demonstration against unemployment for Saturday January 17th - a demonstration intended to be a harmless protest.

It was only thanks to mass pressure from a 300-strong stewards meeting that the Confederation leadership supported the November lobby of Parliament and since then no lead has been taken in fighting Coventry's mounting unemployment.

With only 401 vacancies in the city unemployment now stands at 15,112. This does not include redundancies at Chrysler (5,000), Alfred Herberts (1,200) and GEC (1,000). These will take Coventry's unemployment rate over the 10% mark. There are still 590 school leavers without jobs.

The demonstration has been called for a Saturday rather than a weekday when the massive industrial strength of Coventry workers could have been mobilised. Every effort must be made to turn the demonstration into the opposite intended for it by the Confederation leaders.

Only a combination of working class strength and a clear policy can deal with unemployment. The WSL is mobilising for the demonstration around the demands for no redundancies; occupations; work-sharing on full pay; open the books; nationalisation under workers' management and a programme of useful public works.

All those who want a real fight to defend jobs should join our contingent and attend our meeting afterwards at...

The Sir Colin Campbell

Nr. Odeon

Jordan Well

Coventry

1.00 pm January 17th