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# MINERS MUST DEFEAT PAY CUTS

The plans of the Labour government and the TUC leaders for another year of massive pay cuts can be defeated even before they begin to operate. A gigantic step towards this defeat would come from a decisive rejection of the cuts in the miners' ballot which takes place over the next two weeks. This would then set the stage for a national strike which must make its central demand the sliding scale of wages.

In 1926 the whole working class went on strike against a wage cut in the mines. Today the question is wage cuts for all workers. Once again the miners can give a lead against pay cuts as they also did in 1972 and 1974.

Those members of the NUM who accepted the leaders' arguments over the £6 settlement last year have now seen their utter fraudulence.

Through this ballot they can deal a deadly blow to the continuation of these anti working class policies.

Millions of workers are ready to join them in this struggle. Yet the union leaders say that the working class 'accepts' the sacrifices and is not ready to fight.

## LEADERS

On the contrary, as in 1926, it is the *leaders* who are not ready to fight the demands of capitalism. To avoid *that* fight they are forced into another, increasingly intensive fight against the members they nominally represent.

A NO vote in the miners' ballot would stop these collaborationist leaders in their tracks. It would be an enormous challenge to their authority and to that of the Labour government.

A fight against the pay cuts, therefore, cannot remain a question of ballots; it must develop into a full-scale political

battle for leadership of the labour movement.

A number of leading trade unionists have made statements against the pay cuts policy. We welcome these, as well as the decision of some members of the NUM executive, such as Arthur Scargill, to campaign for a rejection of the executive's narrow vote in favour of the cuts.

## MEANINGLESS

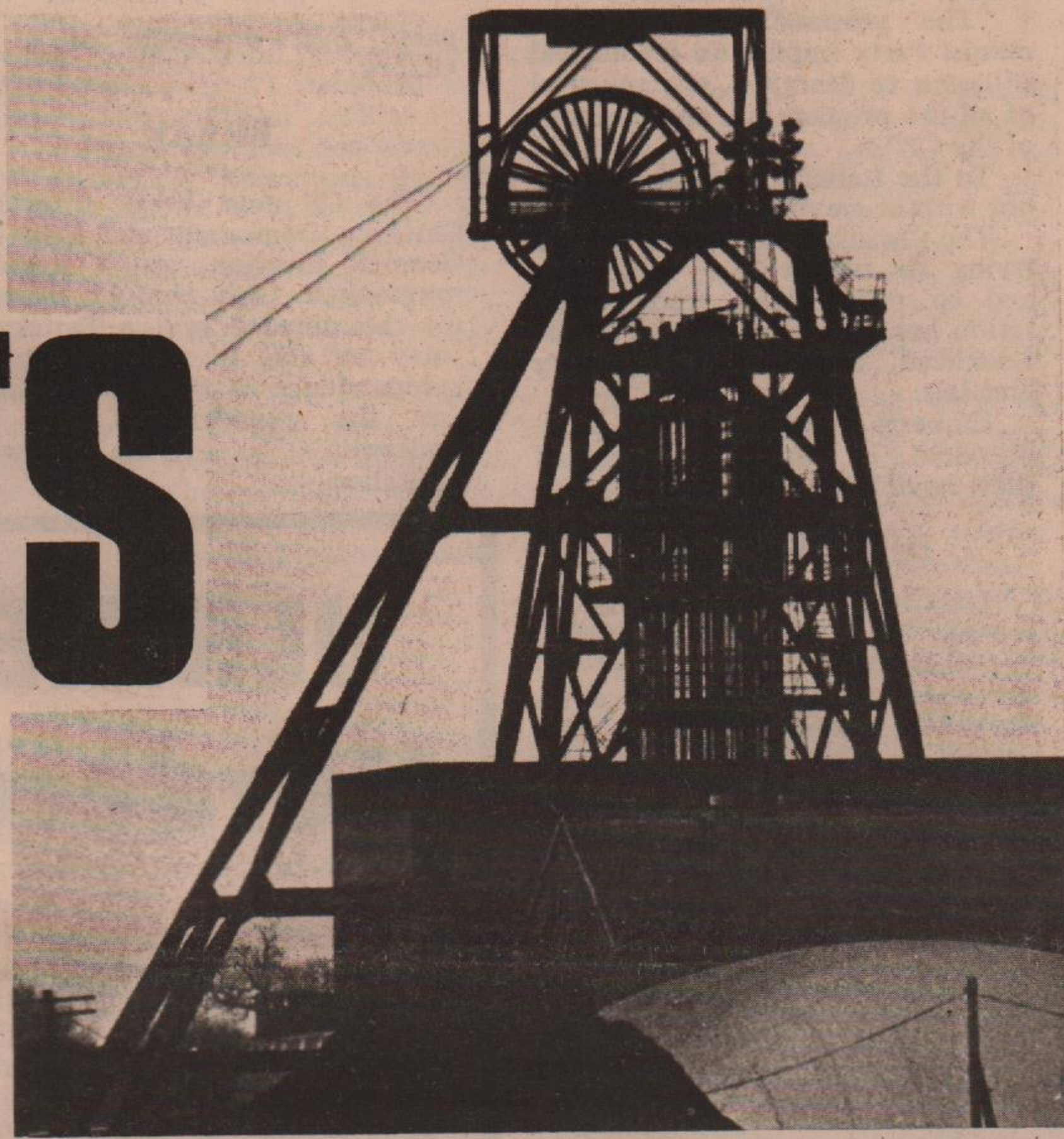
But we warn that in many cases such statements of opposition is nothing more than a meaningless token which does not imply any readiness for a real, political fight.

For instance, several members of the T&GWU executive are known to have been against the policy and to have spoken against it in the executive meeting.

Yet they meekly squirmed before Jones' wish to make the decision unanimous in order to help sterling.

Thanks to Jones and his lily-livered 'opponents', quite a few speculators got quite a bit richer that afternoon, while the interests of the working class were abandoned. Such 'opponents' of the policy are at least as dangerous as its supporters.

Another example, is Clive Jenkins, ASTMS general secretary. Jenkins agrees with the large vote in the ASTMS conference against the wage policy. But at the same



time he tables a resolution which contains no call for action.

The function of this 'opposition' to the pay cuts by Jenkins and other 'left' leaders not prepared to fight, is to try to hypnotise their membership into believing that real opposition is taking place.

Conference votes will not guarantee this. The members of all unions, including those whose leaders 'oppose' the policy must wage an unremitting fight for words to be converted into action.

The union leaders and the Labour government are evidently alarmed at the speed at which rank and file opposition to their wage policy is growing.

Jack Jones has been making a desperate attempt to rebuild his shattered image as a defender of the working class by more attacks on the capitalists.

## "SACRIFICES"

Speaking to tinplate workers in Swansea on May 13th, Jones called on 'city bankers and industrialists' to 'show the same sacrifices for Britain as ordinary working people have made and have shown they are prepared to continue making'.

Jack Jones knows full well that this is rubbish. The working class have shown *no* willingness whatever to take huge cuts in pay. Jones and his fellow TUC leaders have *decided* it in their secret meetings, making sure that workers got no opportunity to express their views.

And Jones also knows that capitalists will not make equal sacrifices, because the whole *purpose* of the policy he himself did so much to design is for the working class to take wage cuts so that capitalists should get higher profits.

Callaghan, explaining the policy to Tories in the Commons, was a bit more honest than Jones

talking to workers in Swansea. Callaghan said:

"It is essential that there should be an improvement in profitability".

The Labour government clearly fears that the combination of Jones' lies and Jenkins' 'opposition' will not be enough to impose the wage cuts.

So they have appointed Lord Cudlipp, former head of the Daily Mirror IPC publishing group, to head a £1 million publicity campaign in support of the wage-cut policy.

## SALES TECHNIQUES

There could be no clearer acknowledgement that it is a policy for which they *dare not* fight openly and democratically in the labour movement but which they will instead try to 'sell' with the techniques of capitalist advertising and the bourgeois press.

But the miners' ballot is so important because a large and crucially important group of workers do have the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights through their union organisation.

In voting 'no' they can begin a decisive offensive, which through subsequent determined strike action can put to rout a leadership devoted by all available means to sacrificing the wages and conditions of their members in support of the needs of capitalism.

The WSL policy is clear:

- \*For a NO vote in the miners' ballot!
- \*Force the 'lefts' to fight the pay cuts!
- \*Remove the collaborationist leadership!
- \*Forward to strike action against all wage control!
- \*For a sliding scale of wages!

## MAY 26

The strikes and demonstrations on May 26th must have as their central point preparation of actions against unemployment and programme for that action.

The leadership will want to limit the day to protest and such nationalist demands as import controls. For us it must be a day in which we demand of the 'lefts' in Parliament that they fight for the removal of Callaghan and Healey and that they support workers in action.

All trade unions, factories and branches involved on that day must be committed to a fight against redundancies, demand work sharing on full pay, fight all the cuts in social services and demand a sliding scale of expenditure to defend the social services.

The WSL continues to campaign for the widest possible support for May 26th whilst maintaining our criticism of the leadership. We must not allow union leaderships such as that of ASTMS (which supported the Day of Action at its conference) to get off the hook. They have not called strike action for that day, nor have they led a single fight against unemployment.

## BENN MELTS AWAY

The opposition of the 'lefts' to Callaghan at last week's Labour Party National Executive Committee meeting melted away before it even started.

Six of them, anticipating a fight might be on the cards did not even care to turn up.

As a result, Callaghan commanded a majority which overruled every item of policy which the 'left'-dominated home policy committee had proposed.

Instead the NEC substituted support for all the major items of the Labour government's anti-working class policy.

Even more serious was the announcement of a deal, evidently concluded secretly in advance between Callaghan and Benn which would effectively kill off the already paralysed NEC and lead to the surrender of all its power to the Labour Cabinet.

Callaghan announced - without dissent - that from now on any statement of the NEC should be considered at the most as some long term goal on the distant horizon.

And Benn proposed (to approving murmurs from the right) that if in future any NEC policy statement appeared to conflict with the policy of the government, then the Cabinet should have the right to publish its present policy in the same document as the NEC statement!

So much for the prospect of "left wing takeover" of the Labour leadership - even bodies on which they have a majority are handed back to the extreme right-wing!



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

# PORTUGAL

## ITALY

"Vote Communist - for a Christian Democratic government". That was in effect the message of Italian CP general secretary Berlinguer's opening statement of the campaign for the parliamentary elections on June 20th.

If it emerges as the largest party (as the opinion polls predict), the CP will insist, Berlinguer said, on forming a coalition with the Christian Democrats.

That, to the CP leaders, is the only road to their objectives - "a healthy economy, a democratic and efficient state and an orderly and workable one".

### CONTEMPT

This complete and abject contempt for the interests of the working class is characteristic of the whole of the Stalinists' electoral campaign.

It has outlawed all further action in support of the long delayed new wage contracts. It is campaigning for less nationalisation and the implementation of the Chiarelli report which advocates the rationalisation of the huge public sector along more capitalist lines.

Its fiercest electoral propaganda is directed leftwards against Proletarian Democracy - the alliance of the PDUP (Democratic Proletarian Unity) and Avanguardia Operaia (Workers' Vanguard) with support from Lotta-Continua (Permanent Struggle).

CP candidates do not even have to subscribe to the party's nominal programme. In headlong retreat from attacks from the Christian Democrats and the church, the CP has wooed 'independents', especially Catholics, to stand as its candidates.

One tenth of its candidates are of this kind; they include the former director of the Christian Democratic newspaper *Il Popolo* and another former editor of a



Enrico Berlinguer, General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party talking to his French counterpart, Georges Marchais.

major Catholic paper. After the Pope had darkly quoted St. Matthew against these candidates ("The enemies of man will be from our own midst") the Stalinists issued a statement:

"The proposal of the Communist Party implies no ideological adhesion to Marxism, nor approval of all the programmes and methods of the CP".

To the Italian CP 'those who are not with us are with us'.

The Christian Democrats are also trying to recruit new candidates and to retire those whose reputation has been most stained by the Lockheed, Shell and BP bribery scandals.

Umberto Agnelli, Fiat Vice-President, is likely to be one of their candidates.

### DIRECT PART

Like many capitalists he is following the call of his brother Giovanni (Fiat President and ex-President of the employers' organisation Confindustria) for capitalist leaders to take a more direct part in government.

Giovanni Agnelli is himself standing for the Republicans, also in Turin. This is a clear sign of the determination of the capitalist class to move towards a government more adequate to their needs.

These, according to Umberto Agnelli, are for an increase in productivity of ten to fifteen per cent over the next year. He himself has not ruled out that the CP may produce the government best able to realise that.

There is no call, he said, for

panic over prospects of a CP victory.

### BREAK

The CP must break from the Christian Democrats and fight the General Election on a socialist programme. Only through fighting for this demand will a Trotskyist party be able to struggle for the independence of the working class and the exposure of the CP leadership's alliance with capitalism.

## Soares Backs a General



Soares

It is now announced that Soares, the Socialist Party leader, will be throwing his support behind General Antonio do Santos Ramalho Eanes, commander in chief of the armed forces, as presidential candidate in the June 27th election in Portugal.

Soares, in confirming Socialist Party backing for the general explained that it was because "he [Eanes] could ensure the cohesion and unity of the armed forces".

### SUPPORT

Soares' support for Eanes has reportedly been reciprocated: Eanes will throw his weight behind Soares' plan for a Socialist Party minority government in Portugal.

The Stalinists meanwhile restrict themselves to the position that a Socialist Party minority government would not automatically gain the approval and support of the

### LYNCH-PIN

The prospect of a Socialist Party minority government supporting a president who in Soares' own words is "above party" reveals very clearly the role of the Socialist Party leadership in the present period; it acts as a lynch pin in the attempt by the bourgeoisie to reconsolidate the state apparatus in preparation for a decisive confrontation with the Portuguese workers.

Soares fulfills this role in two ways. Firstly supporting the steps to secure the cohesion and unity of the Armed Forces Movement as an essential instrument of rule on behalf of a weak capitalist class in the face of a strong workers' movement.

And secondly the support by Eanes for a Socialist Party minority government is an attempt by the Armed Forces Movement to prevent the tendency as in previous coalitions for the government to fall apart. This is to attempt to re-establish parliament and the Cabinet as the focus of politics as opposed to the independent organs of the working class - the workers' and factory commissions.

### CRISIS

This manoeuvre takes place in the context of a massive economic crisis facing Portuguese capitalism bringing the need for the capitalists to slash living standards even further in an attempt to restore the rate of profit. The Bonapartist AFM itself is unable to carry through this task against the organised power of the working class.

The working class has yet to be confronted and defeated by the capitalists and their military defenders. That is why the latter are pinning all their hopes on the

ability of Soares and Eanes to restore 'parliamentary government'.

But this is also the reason why the massive Socialist Party vote in the recent election was in no way an endorsement by the working class of Soares' manoeuvres.

The question of an independent working class leadership based on the independent organs of working class power is therefore still the central question.

The demand must be for the SP and CP to break from the AFM and form a workers' government based on the workers' commissions.

## ULRIKE MEINHOF Murdered by state

The funeral of Ulrike Meinhof in West Berlin last Saturday was attended by a crowd of many thousands. The death - officially labelled 'suicide' - of the 41 year old leader of the West German anarchist group follows almost four years of judicial torture of her and her fellow prisoners at the hands of the state, including very long periods of isolation, "sensory deprivation" and incarceration in cells kept almost totally silent through special sound insulation.

In 1974, another member of the Baader-Meinhof group, Holger Meins died in jail following a hunger strike against conditions there.

The family and defence lawyers of Ulrike Meinhof have charged that she was assassinated by the state. They have demanded an independent autopsy and defence lawyers have - after official obstruction - secured a postponement of the Stuttgart trial of the surviving accused members of the group.

As one lawyer pointed out, the death of Meinhof comes at a convenient moment for the prosecution, "at a time when the defence is attempting to introduce a political content into the proceedings".

The mistreatment inflicted on these prisoners is one of the clearest signs of the police methods in use behind the "democratic" facade of

the West German state.

Like the laws recently brought into operation to ban those lacking "loyalty to the constitution" from jobs in public services and education, it demonstrates the direct responsibility of the Social Democratic government for legal and police violence against the labour movement and the left wing.

The Workers Socialist League is fundamentally politically opposed to the methods of anarchism and individual terror associated with the Baader-Meinhof group.

This is because we can see that such methods in no way assist the struggle for leadership within the working class movement which alone can prepare the mass revolutionary upsurge necessary to end capitalism.

But we do not for one moment confuse our disagreements with terrorist methods with support for the repressions of the bourgeois state which act only in the interests of the capitalist class.

We therefore unequivocally condemn the barbaric and brutal murder of Ulrike Meinhof at the hands of the German capitalists, police and Social Democratic leaders.

Only the mobilisation of the working class in Germany can bring these, the real criminals to account.

## USA Labour Party Needed

"We bought it, we paid for it, and it is ours, and we intend to keep it".

With this prize bit of jingoism about the Panama Canal, extreme right wing presidential hopeful Ronald Reagan has been rolling up one primary victory after another to bid as a serious candidate for the Republican nomination.

Never mind that he has got his American history muddled. Never mind that his brand of six-gun imperialism could lead to war in Latin America.

Reagan's language is that of the Texas rancher, the Indianapolis shopkeeper, even some sections of skilled workers who have gained a house in the suburbs and a second car - and will turn to any force which promises to prevent their loss

### MIDDLE CLASS

To the post-Vietnam American middle classes, disorientated by changes in the world balance of class forces and scared by economic crisis, Reagan's words conjure up a fantasy of US dominance and boom.

Reagan's campaign is also helped by Democrat supporters of that arch-reactionary of the other capitalist party, George Wallace. Seeing that their own one-time idol is a lost cause, they have crossed party lines, in states whose primary election rules permit, to swell the vote for "Ronnie".

differences of principle are over how to keep workers in line when the economy dips again, reactions have largely concentrated on image.

Ford's advisers have told him to start acting more "presidential", and some have begun to call on him to dump Kissinger, whose recent African manoeuvres alarmed the wealthy Texans into believing that something else was about to be "given away".

### DECEPTIVE

Last week there were also stirrings from Rockefeller, who accused Reagan of being "totally deceptive in the way he's raising the issues". Rockefeller, no mean hand at deception himself, will certainly move against Reagan on behalf of liberal finance interests, if the latter looks like wresting the nomination from Ford.

With Wallace out of the race, Jimmy Carter - the 'respectable' racist with black bourgeois support - seems likely to become the Democratic candidate, through his party continues to produce new runners from its hat, the latest of whom, Idaho Senator Frank Church, narrowly beat Carter in the Nebraska primary.

### UNDIGNIFIED

The undignified scramble of the trade union leaders, bent on establishing a cosy relationship with the Democrat most likely to

succeed, has virtually turned into a free-for-all.

Until early this month, most of the leading bureaucrats were betting on Henry Jackson. But within two days of Jackson's withdrawal from active campaigning after losing the Pennsylvania primary, they were on the phone to Carter in the hundreds, asking and offering terms.

Whatever the outcome for the image-mongering presidential "personalities", American workers can only lose.

Only the struggle for a labour party, independent of the bosses' interests, can give the US working class the weapons it needs to defend itself against capitalist crisis.

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# FRENCH UNIONS' DAY OF ACTION

The 'national day of action' by the French trade unions on May 13th gave a clear indication as to where the 'new line' of the French Communist Party is leading in the short term.

Scarcely a single union leadership issued an official call for strike action, leaving the forms of protest against inflation and unemployment to be decided 'as appropriate' by the middle-rank bureaucrats of the regional and sectional organisations.

## STOPPAGES

Partial stoppages took place in the building and engineering industries, by postmen and miners, and in the electric supply and print sectors. But in Paris itself the main demonstration did not exceed 20,000.

The first rumblings are also visible of an internal crisis within the Communist Party. Louis Althusser, one of the Party's leading theoretical lights, has denounced the official abandonment of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and has declared (in a preface to a book on Stalin's court biologist Lysenko) that the general line of Stalinist repression and lying persists in the USSR.

Althusser, of course, presents this as a novel discovery, and his main objection is that it hampers the French Party in achieving a satisfactory relationship with the intelligentsia.

## REPROACH

Nonetheless the Party leadership has felt the pressure sufficient to issue an official reproach to him in their daily paper *L'Humanite*.

At the same time the Party has suffered a serious setback in the first test of its line since the 22nd Congress - at the recent parliamentary by-election near Tours.

Its share of the vote fell below all previous results in the area

during the Fifth Republic. This brought an emergency meeting of the political committee - not in any way to change the line, but to launch a campaign of 'explanation' by the local organisations of the new 'national' perspectives offered by the Communist Party's policy.

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

This policy now includes explicit support for the French nuclear weapons force, as an essential instrument of 'national independence'.

In the universities, strike action continues on many campuses against the government's educational 'reforms' - designed to tie policies on admissions, courses and examinations much more directly to the demands of the employers.

Despite the mass demonstrations during April, the government has scarcely retreated at all in its policies, agreeing only to an extension of 'consultations'.

Here again, Stalinists (and the social democrats) bear a direct responsibility for their refusal to allow any effective support from the workers' organisations for the students.

## UNIVERSITIES

The struggle in the universities also demonstrated the real content of the 'democratic' policies of the Stalinists. Their sabotage has permitted the fascists to show their faces on a scale not seen since before the 1968 general strike and the student demonstrations which triggered it.

On one of the Paris campuses - Assas - courses go ahead under the "protection" of armed squads of extreme right-wingers from the law faculty, assisted by thugs exported from as far afield as Marseilles.

With the police turning a benign blind eye, they have already attacked and injured several dozen left-wing and Communist Party students on university premises and in the neighbouring Luxembourg Gardens.

# TURKEY

The possibility of an open split dominated the recent conference of the Workers Union Confederation of Turkey (CTWU), country's biggest union confederation.

More than 300 delegates attended the April conference, the outcome of which was crucial to the political balance in the class struggle in Turkey.

Until now the CTWU has shackled the struggles of organised workers by its policy of standing "above" political parties. This "non-political" pose has been the cover for direct and open support given by the CTWU leaders to the reactionary bourgeois parties.

## CHANGE

But at the conference, 24 out of 35 federations within the giant CTWU demanded a change of policy, in opposition to the leadership, while only 11 defended the present "non-political" attitude.

Of course this does not mean all 24 opposition federations wanted an independent workers party. 19 of them wanted to support the "left" democratic party, the Republican Popular Party (RPP) led by former Prime Minister Ecevit.

But the other five federations correctly argued that the existing parties are incapable of defending or solving the problems of the working class, and that a new party fighting for their interests should be built and supported.

## 'DEAL'

In a play for such support to be given instead to the RPP, Ecevit (who throughout the conference was engaged in private discussions with German SDP General Secretary Willy Brandt) made a demagogic speech offering a 'deal' with the bureaucratic CTWU leaders. He stressed that:

"The questions that should be asked of a political party by the CTWU are:

Will you allow workers to participate in state administration? If so, how?

Will you hand over the management in the state sector to workers or not?

Will you prepare progress plans together with workers?

Will you consult the workers on the important decisions of the government?

Will you construct basic indus-

# MAJOR UNION NEAR SPLIT



Ecevit with Willy Brandt.

try together with the workers?

The RPP is prepared to offer these policies to the workers".

## FRAUD

Of course the entire proposal is a fraud. Ecevit as a bourgeois politician is merely offering the top layers of the bureaucracy a slim chance of assisting the government attacks on their members. He is angling for CTWU support to prevent any turn by its membership to independent working class politics.

While Ecevit flirted with the bureaucracy, the ruling right-wing National Front leader Demirel made clear the reactionary essence of the present "above parties" stance of the CTWU, urging that

"The CTWU must remain independent and must continue its 'above political parties policy'. If the CTWU supports any political party it will confront others".



Turkish troops attack demonstrators

The final decision of the conference was that the CTWU should support a party until one week after the date of elections is declared. This move was an attempt to hold the opposition federations within the CTWU.

The crisis of leadership in the Turkish workers' movement has been the more acute because of the historical backwardness and semi-colonial character of Turkish capitalism.

## COUP

The establishment in the 1960s of a Turkish Labour Party (TLP) was then cut short by the coup of March 1971 which closed the party down.

The fight now within the CTWU poses again the need for a workers party independent of the bourgeoisie, particularly as the struggles sharpen against growing repression and fascist attacks on the Labour movement.

Only on the platform of political independence can workers build a firmly based united front against fascism and carry through the struggle against their own reactionary leadership.

## LABOUR PARTY

A clear break from the policies of Ecevit and the CTWU leaders is needed, with a turn to building the Turkish Labour Party.

Such a step would change the entire balance of political forces in Turkey in favour of the working class, creating the best conditions to defeat fascism and fight for a workers' government.

# 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 1975 T&GWU Conference were the only alternative to Jones' £6 pay plan and the wholesale acceptance of redundancies by the bureaucracy. In today's fight against the TUC's 4½% pay cutting proposals this demand for a sliding scale of wages (rising according to the rising cost of living as assessed by trade union committees) is the essential basis of consistent opposition.

In the Health Service WSL comrades have led the struggle for a sliding scale of NHS spending, for the start of workers' control of the service (beginning with opening the books of the Health Authorities), along with the fight to end all private practice. Perhaps more important we have led the growing call for *strike action* to defend the NHS against the cuts and to implement these policies, fighting those like the ASTMS leadership who substitute the words for the action.

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.

In doing this our comrades have been forced also to lead struggles for trade union democracy against the bureaucratic manipulation of the Stalinists and right-wing.

While these interventions have developed the League's grasp of Trotsky's Transitional 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.

# ASTMS STRIKE OVER SACKING



The ASTMS picket line.

ASTMS members at London's National Hospital for Nervous Diseases took part in a one hour token strike on May 7th against the victimisation of Lesley Nairn, a Senior Technician. She had been sacked for refusing to see a psychiatrist named by hospital management after she suffered a short illness.

An active trade unionist in the hospital, Miss Nairn was moved

from the hospital laboratories to an "office" in a different building after complaints about her work and time keeping were made to management.

The union claims that none of these complaints were substantiated and that Miss Nairn was placed in an office with no work and no contact with other people for three weeks.

Not surprisingly Miss Nairn developed an anxiety state. The personnel officer at the hospital called in two psychiatrists and Miss Nairn was committed to Friern

Barnet hospital on a 72-hour order.

After her discharge, a Guy's Hospital psychiatrist and her own GP both declared her fit to return to work. It was at this point that hospital management insisted that she see a psychiatrist of *their* choosing.

ASTMS members feel that Lesley Nairn is being victimised for her trade union activities and that the hospital management are attempting to have her declared unfit for work in order to exclude her from her job.

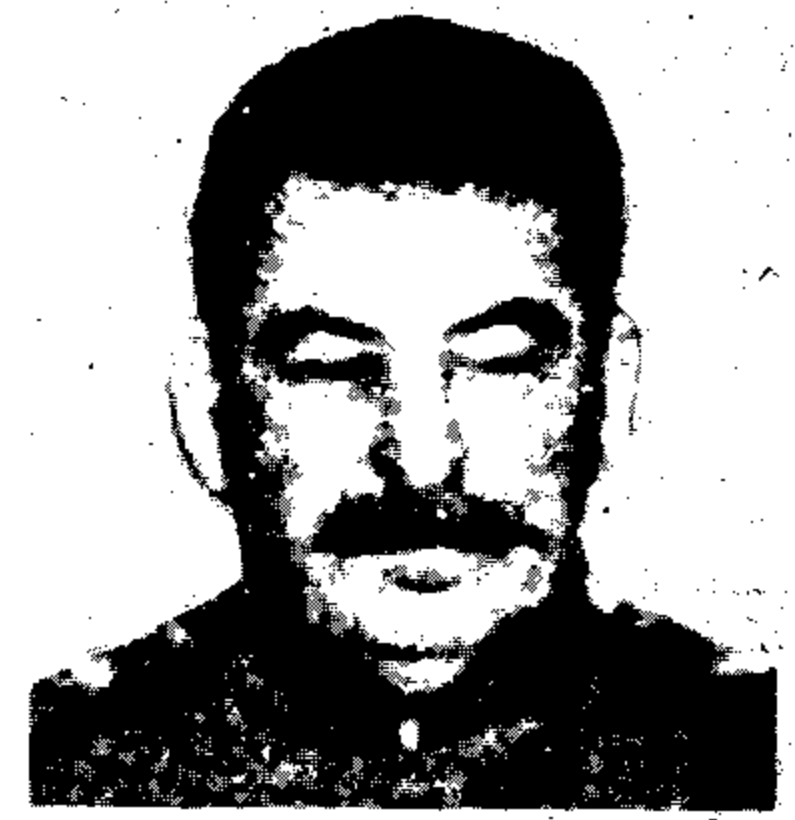
Shortly before the token strike was due to take place, the ASTMS branch offered to abide by the decision of an *independent* psychiatrist agreed by both sides. Management turned down the offer.

Although Miss Nairn's appeal was due to be heard last Wednesday management will clearly base their case on her "indiscipline" for refusing to see their psychiatrist rather than on an assumption that she is unfit for work.

The Appeals Committee is in any case heavily weighted in favour of management.

Encouraged by the token strike, which was also supported by T&GWU and EETPU members in the hospital, ASTMS members have made it clear that if the outcome of the appeal is unsatisfactory, a longer strike will be called.

# IS THERE A SPLIT IN WORLD STALINISM?



A letter from Comrade H.L. of Cowley in *Socialist Press* of April 7th raised important questions regarding *Socialist Press's* assessment of divisions within the world Stalinist movement. Our reply (which has been held over for reasons of space) is printed below.

What is the basic significance of splits within the world Stalinist movement? Are they real splits, or merely skirmishes among bureaucrats? What is their connection with the offensive of the working class, and the response of imperialism to it? These are questions of fundamental importance for the working class which are raised in Comrade H.L.'s letter.

Comrade H.L. is absolutely right to insist that the divisions which came to a head at the 25th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party between the CPSU and the leaderships of some of the main Western European CPs (see *Socialist Press* of March 10th) contain not a shred of revolutionary principle on either side.

But does it follow from this that these divisions are of only superficial importance, without any long-run consequences or impact on the international class struggle?

And does it follow — as Cde H.L. suggests — that the main splitting of world Stalinism will take place within national CPs rather than between CPs internationally?

## NATIONAL LINES

In our opinion the splitting of the world Stalinist movement along national lines is of very considerable importance in the struggle for an international revolutionary leadership which can unite the working class in different countries.

The Stalinist splits express in a direct way the partial, bureaucratic basis of the Stalinist caste and its opportunist and counter-revolutionary political character: precisely because this is so they can not be easily healed.

This may be seen in the political moves by the French and Italian CPs following the 25th CPSU Congress.

Cde. H.L. sees the French Stalinists' formal abandonment of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and the rejection of 'internationalism' directed from Moscow as 'completely in line with the wishes of the Soviet bureaucracy'.

But consider what has followed on the heels of these 'fraternal' disagreements.

## COALITION

In the last few weeks the Italian CP has not only reiterated its willingness to enter a coalition with the Christian Democrats, but has pledged in advance that within such a coalition it would not seek to alter in any way the structure or budget of NATO, and that it would not seek the 'sensitive' ministries of defence or foreign affairs.

The French CP has come out clearly in support of France's 'own' nuclear weapons — which play a central role in French military planning and are, as everyone knows, directed in reality only at the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

And hoping to trade on the anti-Americanism of the French middle classes, they have sharply denounced the Polish Prime Minister for conferring on President Giscard d'Estaing 'nationalist' credentials which they consider should properly be theirs.

These are not secondary differences. They touch directly on the international military and diplomatic policies of the Kremlin, and on its ability to continue to use the policies of the Western European CPs as bargaining counters with the main capitalist states.

As the CPs tie themselves more closely to the interests of class-

collaboration with their 'own' national capitalist class, they necessarily run into conflict with the Soviet leadership's strategic requirements for collaboration and 'balance' with imperialism on a world scale.

That is why there has been stalemate for a year on Moscow's plans for a conference and joint policy declaration of European Communist Parties.



violent zig-zags of Stalinist policy before the war: from the ultra-left 'social fascist' period (copied by Maoism today) which split the German workers movement and allowed Hitler to power, through the Popular Front coalitions with 'patriotic' and 'democratic' capitalist politicians (being explicitly revived by the Western European CPs today), back to the criminal pact with Hitler on the eve of the Second World War.

At each turn the Stalinist 'monolith' twisted the interests of the workers movement and the national CPs to the immediate self-interest of the bureaucratic caste — though not without the most enormous strains and damage to their own ranks.



Tito, Ceausescu, Carillo and Mao.

These divisions and splits are the necessary outcome of the political degeneration of the Third (Communist) International at the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

When Stalin dissolved the Comintern in 1943, to please his capitalist allies, he declared, in his own way, what the Trotskyist movement was insisting since the 1920s: that the bureaucracy was hostile to international unity of the working class, that it sought always local, national, ad hoc compromises with the capitalist powers.

## COLLABORATION

After decades of being urged — by Moscow — down the roads of domestic class-collaboration and bourgeois respectability there is little wonder that the leaderships of the French, Italian, British and Spanish CPs now discover that their duties to their 'own' ruling classes and the particular requirements of compromise and manoeuvre in their 'own' countries now compete violently with their historical loyalty to Moscow.

It is very important to grasp that the roots of the post-war splits in the Stalinist 'monolith' lie in the bureaucratic social basis and opportunist political character of Stalinism itself.

They were anticipated in the

This fragmentation has objective roots, and the splits that take place (and have already taken place) within world Stalinism are neither willed nor even foreseen by the bureaucratic tops in Moscow.

Cde. H.L. refers to (but does not discuss) the Sino-Soviet split, which has certainly not proceeded according to the desires of either side. Yet this split overshadows all others in the world Stalinist movement in the postwar period, and it is one that very clearly arises from the fact that both Moscow Stalinism and Peking Stalinism stand on national ground, are intent on defending and consolidating their own national positions, and are prepared to subordinate all principles of support or defence of the international workers' movement to these requirements.

## NO PRINCIPLES

Whatever revolutionary or 'Marxist' phraseology may be employed from time to time, it is in no sense a question of one side defending even the vestiges of revolutionary principle against the other.

The split has now carried the Chinese leadership, which originally assumed a garb of 'revolutionary' positions against 'Khrushchevism', into foreign policy more reactionary than that of Moscow Stalinism in the whole post-war period, and to the point of becoming openly the broker for military alliances with the imperialist powers against the Soviet Union.

The Sino-Soviet split is, of course, in many ways formed by the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has taken power independently (and against Stalin's wishes), with its own mass base and as the result of a protracted revolutionary civil war. (A similar history was key in precipitating the split between Stalin and Tito in 1948.)

## BASE

But the essential factor is the national, conservative social base of each Stalinist apparatus. In Rumania Stalinism was placed in power at the end of the Second World War entirely by the Red Army.

The state apparatus was reconstructed on a wholly national basis, even preserving the monarchy up till 1947. The state and party personnel were built up very largely of middle-class elements, and were initially wholly subservient to Moscow.

When the Stalinists carried out the social transformation of Rumania into a 'People's Democracy' in 1947, they little imagined that the same pressures that had brought the dissolution of the Comintern would give rise to Ceausescu's Rumanian Stalinism of the 1970's which is not only brazenly independent of Moscow, balancing between the Soviet Union, China and the imperialist powers, but it is even preparing to insert major territorial claims on the Soviet Union into its foreign policy!

## THREAT

The splitting of world Stalinism is, therefore, in no way a secondary or accidental development. As far as the ruling Stalinist castes in the workers' states are concerned, it forms a direct threat to the defence of these states against capitalist war and restoration.

Each national caste pursues above all its own interests, and they thereby jeopardise the very social base on which they rest.

Communist Parties, especially in Western Europe, are concerned there is another important factor at work.

In Italy and France the CPs with membership well over a million, mass-circulation papers, a tight grip in the trade unions and other labour movement organisations, a thick layer of support among the intelligentsia and the middle classes — there the CPs have become the main avenue for careerism and self-seeking by bureaucratic elements, in Parliament, in the universities and the media, as well as within the labour movement itself.

Among the smaller CPs — such as the British — the fact that a period of service in the CP is a useful preliminary to a career as a 'left' is reflected in the same spiritual hallmarks (traditionally those of the social democracy) — an instant willingness to call black white, instinctive evasion and manoeuvre, a rancid appeal to the mediocrity and cynicism of the middle classes.

## DECADES

These features, sedimented and hardened by three decades of 'peaceful' post-war class collaboration, bind the cadre of the CPs to the national interests and attitudes of their 'own' capitalist states far more closely than was so before the war.

And this was certainly an important element behind the 'differences' at the CPSU Congress.

Cde. HL is entirely right to point out that there are strong tendencies towards splits within the Stalinist parties in capitalist countries, as well as along national boundaries, and that some of these splits will reflect the sharpening conflict between the needs of the working class and the role of the party leadership in holding militants within the class back from struggle with the employers.

Trotskyist forces must always seek to politically develop elements whose experience is bringing them into conflict with Stalinist policy.

## TENDENCIES

But the ground for the development of organised tendencies moving towards revolutionary policies remains narrow — for all their obedience to the principles of bourgeois 'democracy' the Stalinists maintain a harsh bureaucratic dictatorship over political discussion and struggle within their own ranks.

The fact that the British CP presently permits some of its intellectuals licence to conduct open 'debates' on — for example — questions of economics, of the family, or of the place of art in society, does not mean that they will allow any such 'freedom' if the basic line of *The British Road to Socialism* is questioned.

And this (as Cde.HL points out) is something that is clearly recognised — and privately appreciated — by the ruling class and the right wing in the labour movement.

It is not possible to reply in a short space to all the points Cde.HL raises. As we have indicated in the international perspectives of the WSL\* one of the most important tasks facing the world Trotskyist movement is the study of the post-war development of Stalinism; contributions in *Socialist Press* have an essential part to play in this.

\* 'Fourth International — Problems and Tasks' (in *Trotskyism Today*, nos 1-3)



National demonstration against NHS cuts organised by National Coordinating Committee against the Cuts. NAC only mobilised a few supporters on this key issue.

Maurcen Shevlin looks at the politics of the National Abortion Campaign

# ABORTION RIGHTS A CLASS ISSUE

The attack on the democratic right to abortion for women is not an isolated attack on women as one sector of the working class alone. It is part of a widespread offensive being waged against the working class as a whole by the present Labour government as part of its anti-working class politics in order to 'solve' the crisis of capitalism.

Over the past period we have seen many other attacks waged on the working class by the same Labour government. Attacks on the right to picket, the jailing of the Shrewsbury building workers, the use of the troops in Glasgow during the dustcart drivers strike as well as the introduction of the so-called 'Prevention of Terrorism Act'.

It is in this overall general situation that we have to understand the fight for the right for women to have abortion freely available on the NHS.

## ABSTRACT

This is why we say that although the right to free abortion on demand is an essential one, the abstract slogan "a woman's right to choose" obscures the way to win it.

Could we claim that this demand in itself would give women a real choice, free them from their oppression in the family?

Clearly we cannot say that either free abortion or equal pay in themselves can resolve the questions of woman's oppression so long as the capitalist system prevails. They are only a part of the problem.

But even democratic reforms will not be properly realised without altering class relationships. This is why the struggle for them, if carried out with a conscious working class leadership can begin to draw workers into the larger fight against their oppression, against the bourgeois family and the exploitation of women as a reserve army of labour to be discarded at the employer's convenience.

## WRONG SLOGANS

This is what has been wrong with the slogans of the National Abortion Campaign. Its leadership, dominated by the International Marxist Group, in attempting correctly to mobilise large numbers of men and women workers on the abortion issue, have wrongly responded that these class issues

of 'greater unity'.

They presume that the consciousness of women is so low that they can only respond to single issues and not to a comprehensive programme which leads them ultimately to the fight alongside the organised working class for the overthrow of capitalism.

Over the past year we have seen the emergence of resolutions from the women's TUC conference, the TUC conference and the Labour Party conference, all piously calling for free abortion on demand, freely available on the NHS. But nothing else.

## BASIS

The NAC conference which was held last October could have been a good basis for launching such resolutions into the mass organisations of the working class, if the members of the NAC and its leaders were at all serious about its professed orientation to the labour movement.

The NAC conference had 69 NAC groups, 7 national political organisations, (IMG, IS, RCG, WF, etc, along with the Communist Party), 6 Trades Councils and 17 trade union branches.

Leaving aside the political groups, the extent to which the labour movement bodies were mobilised for this event remains very small. There were three times as many delegates from the NAC groups as from trade union bodies.

convenient division of labour on this and other questions between the trade union bureaucrats and the left groups.

The trade union bureaucrats pass formal paper resolutions for free abortion, while the left groups leave them in peace and spend their time on building the NAC with its endless "ad hoc" local groups, which generally represent in reality only tiny forces from left groups along with a few individuals.

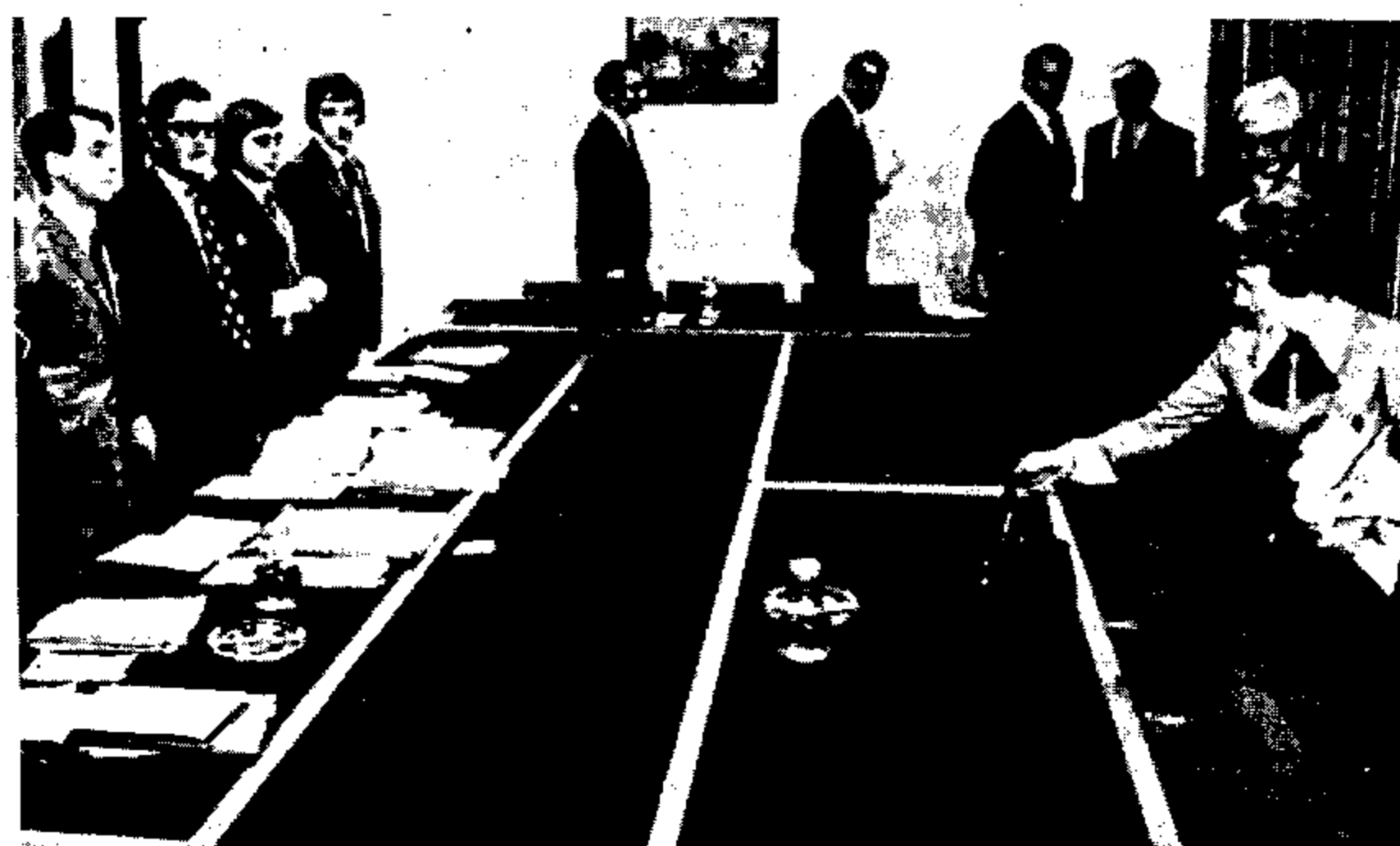
The mere building of these "ad hoc" groups in the localities by the revolutionary left lets the bureaucrats off the hook.

The IMG and other groups who operate in this way are then left with a choice. Either they must concentrate their forces in the unions at the base, attempting local initiatives, or simply attempt a short cut, assembling individuals in an umbrella organisation they grandly term a "united front". This latter course is the one preferred by the IMG.

## CONFERENCE

The fight for the October NAC conference was therefore not seen as a move to extend and change the relationship of forces involved in the fight but an effort to consolidate a left propaganda bloc from the forces on last June's demonstration based upon social layers largely outside the working class.

In short, for all the protesting of the IMG, the conference was a



Barbara Castle meets the BMA

This demonstrates the inability of the NAC so far to take up the question of abortion in the organised labour movement while at the

model of the so-called "new mass vanguard" and in orientating towards it the IMG exhibited a

# UNCTAD CONFERENCE

It is fitting that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) should be held in Africa - scene of the recent MPLA victory - because UNCTAD, like all the major 'development' agencies, is primarily a response to national liberation struggles.

The first UNCTAD conference in 1964, was little more than a 13 week party for its newly assembled bureaucracy to get to know each other (there is a secretariat of over 400!)

## MINOR

The second, in 1968, resulted in some fairly minor tariff preferences for third world exporters.

The third, in 1972, got nowhere. The present meeting, from May 5th to 28th in Nairobi, is the fourth.

There are two main proposals for discussion. The third world countries are proposing a general buffer stock scheme for primary products.

This involves finance for a body to be set up to buy raw materials and agricultural products when the price is low and sell them when the price is high.

This would stabilize the export earnings of primary producers.

## NO THREAT

This plan apparently poses no real threat to the developed economies.

Traditional capital suffers from huge rises in commodity prices - like the 200% increase that accompanied the mini-boom of 1973-74

complete capitulation to 'left' social democrats and fostered illusions in the existing bankrupt leadership of the present day.

The correct attitude socialists should be advancing at the present time is to stress that

Only the working class can actually win and defend democratic rights. And the working class does not defend rights merely through protest and pressure politics or assembling just individuals but through actions collectively organised in its mass organisations.

The WSL does not reject protests against capitalism, but we seek to transform those protests into revolutionary action which educates those involved, showing them the need to destroy the present system.

## FIGHTS

The WSL will therefore conduct an all out fight against those in the labour movement and those elements from the womens liberation movement who attempt to divert women from the central tasks which face the working class.

Such tendencies attempt to trap women by subordinating class questions to an imagined "womens movement", splitting women from men, and concealing the fact that there is no perspective for the struggle for womens rights outside the working class struggle for socialism.

This links in a very material way, since any fight for abortion now must centrally take up the defence of the free health service. The cut backs directly attack the health service and make impossible even the maintenance of the present inadequate level of abortion done on the NHS.

And to defend the health service workers have to politically challenge the Labour government and its allies in the TUC who are implementing the cut backs.

We must lead the fight for access to all plans and information on area

- as much as it gains from the bottom falling out of the market.

Professional speculators would seem to be the only real losers.

A comprehensive buffer stock scheme would however undermine the powerful influence wielded by the US over certain commodity prices.

The American government holds enormous 'strategic reserves' of certain commodities, which give it considerable control over their prices.

This explains the greater resistance of the US to these proposals than many other advanced capitalist countries like France, which is more prepared to accept the principles of the proposal.

The other main plan comes from Kissinger. He has proposed an "international resources bank" which would borrow private capital and re-lend it to third world countries to develop extractive industry in exchange for an option on the output.

## BLATANT

This is a blatant attempt to ensure supplies of raw materials for capital. The multi-national have become increasingly wary of investing in the third world for fear of expropriation.

Kissinger's plan provides the benefit of extraction by the multi-nationals without the risks to the individual firm.

It may well turn out that the only third world country to get anything much out of the conference will be Kenya.

The 2000 delegates and their hangers-on will provide a boost to Nairobi's tourist industry, badly hit by the rainy season.

151 ministerial speeches in three weeks will probably make them thirsty.

trade unionists, housewives and all users to take over the planning of the health service according to need.

A massive injection of funds is required along with protection against inflation and the nationalisation of the building industry to make possible a programme of public works to build hospitals as well as nurseries, creches, decent housing and more.

Drawing women into such struggles, showing the relation between their particular problems and those of the whole working class is the only way to begin seriously to attack women's oppression. We must fight to recruit women into trade unions and to defend part-time workers who are the most vulnerable in crisis.

The Labour bureaucracy remains an obstacle to the organisation of women workers and attempts to use the crisis (and the equal pay legislation) to set male against female workers.

This is why, despite passing as policy the demand for free abortion neither the TUC nor Labour Party leaders have done anything to advance the campaign.

## SELECT COMMITTEE

Barbara Castle has even gone along with support for the rotten Select Committee, which only aims to find "evidence" to further restrict women's rights.

We call on Labour MPs to refuse to recognise the Select Committee and throw out any restrictive proposals which emerge from it.

The campaign for free abortion on demand therefore has a responsibility to draw out and link up the class questions and to begin to win broad layers of working women to the fight on every level against the capitalist society which is the instrument of their oppression.

\*Reject the attacks on public spending!

\*Boycott the Select Committee!

\*End private practice!

\*Workers' control of the health

# THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

## Part 10: THE KORNILOV REVOLT

by John Lister

In the period of reaction which followed the repressions of the July Days in 1917 the Bolsheviks were forced to reassess their tactics and demands.

As a party they were being witch-hunted throughout the country. Leading Bolsheviks were in jail, accused of acting as German agents.

Their papers were suppressed, and slanders accusing them of receiving German money were peddled by the most reactionary sources.

But foremost at propagating these allegations amongst workers and soldiers were the class collaborating leaders of the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries.

### COMPROMISERS

These compromisers both sat with bourgeois ministers in the coalition Provisional government and used their majority support in the Soviets to uphold their reactionary policies of support for the war and opposition to nationalisation.

For Lenin and the Bolsheviks this new situation called for a fresh examination of the demand they alone had popularised in the period before the July Days - "All Power to the Soviets!"

Lenin wrote on July 10th:

"The leaders of the Soviets and of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties, headed by Tseretelli and Chernov, have completely betrayed the cause of the revolution by putting it in the hands of the counter-revolutionaries and by turning themselves, their parties and the Soviets into mere fig-leaves of the counter-revolution. All hopes for a peaceful development of the Russian revolution have vanished for good. This is the objective situation: either complete victory for the military dictatorship, or victory for the workers armed uprising; the latter victory is only possible when the insurrection coincides with a deep, mass upheaval against the government and the bourgeoisie caused by economic disruption and the prolongation of the war".

The conclusion which Lenin drew from this analysis was:

"The slogan All Power to the Soviets! was a slogan for peaceful development of the revolution which was possible in April, May, June and up to July 5th-9th, ie, up to the time when actual power passed into the hands of the military dictatorship. This slogan is no longer correct, for it does not take into account that power has changed hands and that the revolution has in fact been completely betrayed by the SRs and the Mensheviks....."

Let us gather forces, reorganise them, and resolutely prepare for the armed uprising, if the course of the crisis permits it on a really mass, country-wide scale...The aim of the insurrection can only be to transfer power to the proletariat, supported by the poor peasants, with a view to putting our Party programme into effect".

(Collected Works Vol 25 pp 177-8)

This reassessment, which meant recognising even more clearly the crucial central role of the Bolshevik Party itself as the only party consistently opposing the war and directing the working class towards the struggle for power, did not come without resistance from conservative layers of Bolsheviks.

Lenin was forced to explain the change in detail in a longer article "On Slogans", pointing out that the change of slogan was both the



redirect the masses and to educate them as to the role of their leaders.

"All agitational work among the people must be reorganised to ensure that it takes account of the specific experience of the present revolution, and particularly of the July days, ie, that it clearly points to the real enemy of the people, the military clique, the Cadets and the Black Hundreds, and that it definitely unmasks the petty-bourgeois parties, which played and are playing the part of butcher's aides...."

That would be a very long and arduous process under the 'normal' conditions of capitalist development, but both the war and economic disruption will tremendously accelerate it. These 'accelerators' that may make a month or even a week equal to a year".

(CW Vol 25 p 188)

At the same time as changing the demand 'All Power to the Soviets!' therefore, the Bolsheviks looked also to other methods of highlighting the betrayals of the SR and Menshevik leaders, and exposing their increasing separation from the demands and mood of the masses who followed them.

In this way, Lenin took up the issue of the Provisional Government's repeated promises to convene a Constituent Assembly, and used this as a further means to stress the refusal of the compromisers to break with the bourgeoisie, their peddling of constitutional illusions:

"Meanwhile the Bolsheviks said: only the growing strength and authority of the Soviets can guarantee the convocation and success of the Constituent Assembly. The Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries laid emphasis on the act of law, the proclamation, the promise, the declaration to call a Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks laid emphasis on the class struggle....."

(CW vol 25 p196-7)

It was because of their turn away from reliance on the class struggle the compromisers could only become more and more

exposed in the eyes of the masses on this and every other question as the war and the crisis continued.

### UNCHALLENGED

Meanwhile, unchallenged by any of his coalition partners, Kerensky moved further and further to an open alliance with the extreme right - the Black Hundreds and the military. Lenin and Trotsky, using a comparison with the French Revolution, characterised Kerensky's moves as the first steps towards Bonapartism:

"We see the chief historical symptom of Bonapartism: the manoeuvring of state power, which leans on the military clique (on the worst elements of the army) for support, between two hostile classes and forces which more or less balance each other out".

(CW Vol 25 p220)

But Bonapartism is an unstable form of rule - one which must eventually resolve itself through the outright victory and consolidation in state power of one class or the other - with the crushing of all opposition. It was to defeat this threat from the right that the Bolsheviks were put on the alert from July onwards.

In a bid to consolidate his uneasy, divided base of support Kerensky called for a special State Conference to be held in August 1917. The Moscow Journal of Social Revolutionaries (Kerensky's own party) attacked the composition of this bogus 'conference':

"As against 150 representatives of labour, there are 120 representatives of trade and industry; against 100 peasant deputies, 100 representatives of the landlords have been invited; against 100 representatives of the Soviet, there will be 300 members of the State Duma...."

(Quoted by Trotsky HRR vol 2 p148).

### CONFERENCE

This conference, to be held in the supposed security of Moscow,

between him and Kerensky as a continuation of the anti-Bolshevik witch-hunt and a "restoration of order" in Petrograd.

A cavalry corps was to be brought into the city, martial law declared, and then steps taken to attempt to provoke a Bolshevik insurrection which could provide the pretext for smashing the workers movement.

The object as Kerensky saw this conspiratorial plan, was to establish him in overall dictatorial power. The object in Kornilov's view was to dispose of Kerensky as well and have done with the soviets and the workers' parties once and for all.

Under the pretext of taking detachments to protect the town of Riga - on the front line of the fighting against the Germans, Kornilov had begun from early August to prepare the forces to march on Petrograd. Four cavalry divisions considered most useful against Bolsheviks and a division of Caucasian mountaineers were to work with a division of Cossacks and all were moved into ready positions.

### PLAN

An essential part of the plan was the surrender of Riga to the Germans. Kornilov had stated this openly at the State Conference when he announced to the world that:

"The enemy is already knocking at the gates of Riga and if the instability of our army does not make it possible to restrain him on the shores of the Gulf of Riga, then the road to Petrograd is open."

(Trotsky HRR Vol. 2 p. 166)

His object was to prepare a massively intensified witch-hunt against "soldiers who will not fight" and "workers who will not work" as part of the plans to discredit Kerensky and the Provisional Government and to attack Petrograd. On August 19th the lines were broken by the Germans and on August 21st Riga was occupied.

### DEFEAT

The soldiers had been confronted with a defeat they could do nothing about, because as Trotsky wrote:

"Everything was lacking: men, arms, military supplies, gas masks. The communications were unspeakably bad. Attacks were delayed because Japanese cartridges had been supplied for Russian rifles."

(Trotsky HRR Vol. 2 p. 185)

Riga, a potential stronghold of the Bolsheviks had been sacrificed as part of Kornilov's overall plan. And the Bolsheviks were able to show this clearly to wide layers of soldiers who saw there had been no real defence of the city. Even the compromisers were forced to call for the truth to be revealed and to point out that "a political game" was being played to attack the Provisional Government.

As Kornilov proceeded, however, the thought began to occur gradually and horribly to Kerensky that maybe his general, his "muscle" against the Bolsheviks, was going to press too far ahead, and could even threaten Kerensky himself.

Kornilov made this clear when he called for all the powers of the Provisional Government to be given to him as supreme commander-

was like a whole series of counter-revolutionary conferences at the beginning of August, to rally in particular the propertied classes behind Kerensky.

It served instead to highlight the strength of the masses and the continuing and growing power of the witch-hunted and slandered Bolsheviks.

Despite the opposition of the Menshevik-SR dominated Moscow Soviet, the local trade unions, a majority of which were now under Bolshevik control, took the initiative in calling for strike action on the day of the State Conference.

And despite the efforts of the compromisers to prevent it, the strike won overwhelming support. 400,000 workers paralysed the city on the day of Kerensky's attempted show of strength.

"There were no lights, no trams: the factories and shops were closed and the railroad yards and stations; even the waiters in the restaurants had gone on strike."

(Trotsky HRR Vol. 2 p. 151)

The slanders and witchhunting were failing in their task of isolating the Bolsheviks. The leaders of the compromising parties the SRs and the Mensheviks were instead themselves forced more and more into the open as opposing the defence of the working class and as all-out defenders of Kerensky and the war.

The "left" side of his Bonapartist balancing act was becoming increasingly unstable.

At the same time the opposing side, the camp of the big bourgeoisie was becoming likewise impatient and seeking the road to establish its own dictatorship.

Even during the State Conference itself preparations were taking place by the extreme right wing of the military, led by General Kornilov, to bring a force of the most backward and reactionary troops into Petrograd to break up the soviet, arrest all working class leaders including (above all) the Bolsheviks, and instal a "firm" government.

### INCAPABLE

Kornilov was not an ideal leader for an ultra-right wing coup. He was incapable of making assessments of situations. General Alexeiev described him as a "man with a lion's heart and the brain of a sheep".

But the bourgeoisie, seeing the need for a decisive attack on the working class felt its back against the wall and found no real choice but Kornilov.

The original basis of the military intervention was jointly planned



in-chief. "At the same time that Kerensky and Savinkov were intending to clean up the Bolsheviks, and in part the soviets, Kornilov was intending also to clean up the Provisional Government. It was just this that Kerensky did not want." (Trotsky, op.cit. p.207)

Kerensky was forced to counter these preparations by his ally. On August 27th, the day allotted for the coup d'etat, he sent a command to Kornilov that he should turn over duties to his chief of staff and come to Petrograd.

MANIFESTO

Kornilov, however, by now committed to action, refused, issuing his own manifesto. Proudly, he proclaimed:

"I, General Kornilov, declare that the Provisional Government, under pressure from the Bolshevik majority of the soviets, is acting in full accord with the plans of the German general staff, and simultaneously with the impending descent of hostile forces upon the Riga coastline is murdering the army and unsettling the country from within."

On the evening of August 26th, the other members of the Provisional Government — both bourgeois and petty-bourgeois representatives — had resigned. Kerensky alone retaining office wavered, uncertain which way to turn, as on August 28th the split between government and supreme commander in chief became openly known.



Above: 'Fraternisation with Kornilov's 'Savage Division' led to them arresting their officers. Left: A soldiers' committee meets.



Kornilov, like Kolchak (above) fought with the White forces after October

But while Kerensky and his hangers-on wavered and dithered, the working class had moved to prepare armed defence against the counter-revolution.

BODY

A new ad-hoc body first named the Committee for Struggle against Counter-Revolution but later to be better known as the Military Revolutionary Committee, had been set up.

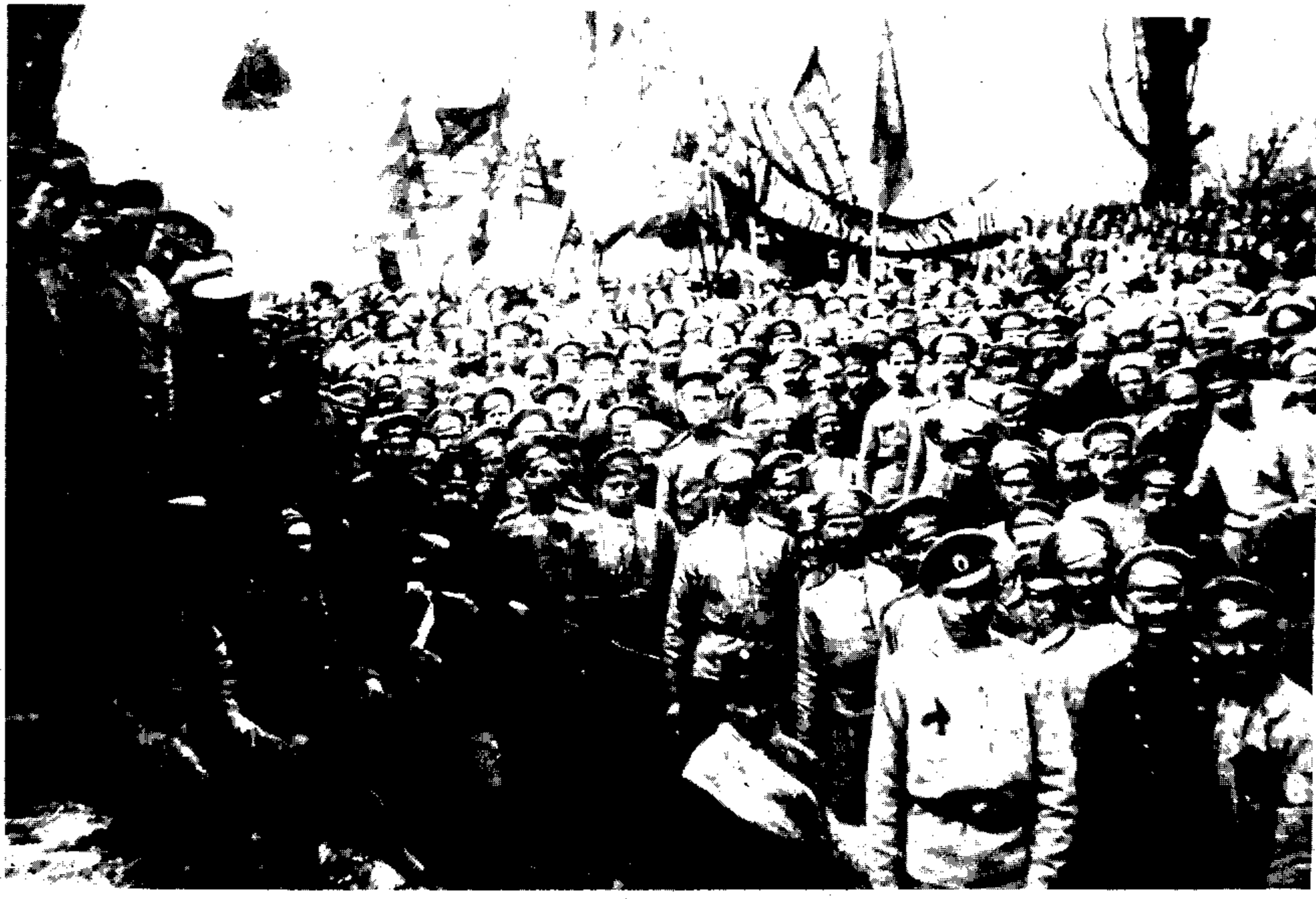
"Early in the morning instructions were sent by telegram to the railroad workers and postal and telegraph clerks and soldiers. 'All movements of troops ... are to be carried out at the direction of the Provisional Government when countersigned by the Committee of People's Defence' ... At the same time steps were taken for the destruction of Kornilovist nests in Petrograd itself. Searches and arrests were carried out in the military schools and officers' organisations ...

During the hours of greatest vacillation in the government ... the district soviets were drawing closer together and passing resolutions: to declare the inter-district conferences continuous; ... to form a workers' militia; to establish control of the district soviets over the government commissars; to organize flying brigades for the denunciation of counter-revolutionary agencies ... Although paralytic moves by the leadership of the Provisional Government, the soviets were kept apart from below at the crucial moment under the pressure from the masses."

MASSIVE

The mobilisation against the counter-revolution was massive and all-embracing. Every section of workers found their appropriate task. Especially important was the training in arms of large numbers of Red Guards:

"Experienced soldiers were brought in as teachers. By the 29th Guards had been formed in almost all the districts. The Red



Guard announced its readiness to put in the field a force of 40,000 rifles. The unarmed workers formed companies for trench-digging, sheet-metal fortification, barbed wire fencing." (Trotsky, op.cit. p.224)

These developments were doubly significant. Not only had preparations been accomplished at unbelievably short notice, but the whole process was completely in the hands and control of the workers and soldiers themselves.

SWIFT

These were days of lightning swift political education for the proletarian masses during days in the approaching struggle for power ...

"They were inspecting their own ranks among the workers, sending out detachments as patrols along the tracks... the task of the Committee of Defence was not so much to keep watch over and summon the workers, as merely to register and direct them."

As similar developments began in Helsingfors and the Kronstadt fortress, the soldiers and sailors, impatient to get to grips with the counter-revolution, began to attack it in its most recognisable form — their Kornilovist commanders and officers. Some were shot, others arrested.

While the forces of revolution strengthened hour by hour in organisation and independence, the Kornilov camp was disintegrating by the minute.

As the careful sabotage by the railroad workers halted the advance, the fraternisation, the propaganda and the sowing of seeds of friendship by the workers and soldiers who flocked out to surround Kornilov's forces were whittling down his available strength to nothing.

His dreaded "Savage Division" of Caucasian mountaineers arrested its staff commander. Cossack forces held meetings and discussions among themselves and with workers and soldiers from Petrograd.

The split between Kerensky and Kornilov was revealed to them and the fact that they were supposed to be the tool to establish the power of the Supreme Commander.

IMPOSSIBLE

And work of all for an authoritarian breakdown, it became impossible to coordinate the Kornilov troops:

"The railroad workers in those days did their duty. In a mysterious way echelons would find themselves moving on the wrong roads. Regiments would

arrive in the wrong division, artillery would be sent up a blind alley, staffs would get out of communication with their units... The telegraphers also held up by the orders of Kornilov..." (Trotsky, pp.232-3)

By 31st August, the entire military support of Kornilov had crumpled, crumbled away to nothing. The imposition of "firm" government had not been so simple a process after all.

"ARREST"

Kornilov finally came to grips with the real situation, and submitted to the formal process of "arrest", through which Kerensky evaded the universal workers' and soldiers' demand that Kornilov and his conspirators be shot.

Lenin summed up one of the most important lessons of the United Army:

"The Kornilov event fully revealed that the entire army hates the general staff ... The army, which hates the general staff and does not want to fight a war it now knows to be a war of conquest, is inevitably doomed to new catastrophes.

Only the working class, when it has gained power, will be able to pursue a peace policy ..." (CW Vol.25, p.344-5)



Trotsky

anised the masses, brought the Bolsheviks to the fore in the real defence against counter-revolution and struck a mortal blow at the credibility of the Compromisers.

In the united action against Kornilov the Bolsheviks had not acted to support Kerensky, but, in the words of Trotsky, showed the masses how to "Use Kerensky as a gun-rest to shoot Kornilov. Afterward we will settle with Kerensky."

The stage was now set for the opening of the October revolution.



# REVIEWS

## One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest

The use of psychiatry in the Soviet Union to discredit and incarcerate critics of the bureaucracy is a favourite target for anti-Soviet propaganda in the bourgeois press.

But the use of dubious medical criteria to give a cloak of respectability to the subordination of misfits in society is probably used on a wider scale in the West.

It is the use of psychiatric methods to break a petty criminal which is the subject of the much-praised film "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest".

R.P. McMurphy, played by Jack Nicholson, is the inmate of a state prison, an easy-going con-man with a record of fighting ("What's wrong with that? Rocky Marciano had 40 fights and ended up a millionaire!") and statutory rape.

He is referred to the state mental institution on the assumption that anyone who fights must be looney and is incarcerated with inmates whose deviations owe as much to the conditions under which they are held as to any illnesses they may suffer.

### LESS REGIMENTED

During his stay at the hospital McMurphy undertakes to make the inmates' lives (and his own) less regimented and more stimulating, playing poker for money instead of matchsticks, to McMurphy's enrichment). Although some of these ventures are far-fetched, they illustrate that when given the opportunity, the nuts are more than the hospital will ever permit them to be.

The reward McMurphy receives for his troubles is "treatment" - punishment, the distinction is trivial for his misdemeanours, including electro-convulsive therapy carried out without anaesthesia (a technique discredited medically but still used in American penal institutions).

Unbroken, McMurphy continues to spar with the hospital authorities, passing up several opportunities to escape. Finally, after an hilarious drunken party in the ward arranged by McMurphy, the head nurse sadistically drives guilt-ridden young Billy to suicide, McMurphy lacks and almost strangles the nurse, and the authorities wheel him off to the theatre to have part of his brain cut out.

He returns to the ward as a vegetable, reduced to the level of the most hopeless inmates.

Although the effects of various psychiatric treatments are caricatured in the film, its underlying theme is all too real.

### OBJECTS

The treatment of mental patients as objects to be used at the whim of their overseers has been highlighted in a number of cases of mental nurses beating up patients, the most recent one involving the suspension of a consultant after a like action by hospital workers.

It would be wrong to see these incidents as the outcome of individual eccentricities. They result from a system which only sees the mentally ill as unproductive, as a drain on society.

Even more insidious is the use of psychiatric techniques, both as methods of punishment (as can be seen with ECT) and as methods

In Germany it was suggested that the reason for Ulrike Meinhof's terrorist activities lay not in the contradictions of contemporary German society, but in the possibility that she might have a 'brain tumour'.

The barbaric proposal to submit her to brain surgery was only prevented by a nationwide outcry, while the mental and physical torture she endured continued until it drove her to her death.

### "ILLNESS"

The idea persists, however, that those who cannot or will not adapt to society and those who consciously reject it as destructive must be suffering from some form of organic mental illness.

The film attempts to show that it is society which creates the misfits and then punishes them for their weaknesses.

But what has captured the imagination of (especially) the American public is the vision of McMurphy fighting the system, seeing its contradictions and yet unable to break away from it, ultimately bringing about his own destruction.

The obvious parallel is with the dissidents of the 1960s, who challenged social institutions then but find themselves in 1976 part of that system, lobotomized by the consumer society, "democracy" and the American way of life.

It is at this generation too, that the Hollywood-style cop-out ending is aimed. Having illustrated all-too-convincingly that "you can't beat the system", the script-writers attempt to clear away the heavy pessimistic atmosphere.

### SUBSTITUTE

They try to direct the audience's feelings away from reality, "back to nature", human nature, ecology, black, red, yellow and women's liberation - to the whole bag of campaigns in America which substitute for revolutionary politics and attempt to block any development of revolutionary consciousness.

Thus the film's final assertion is that you can't beat the system, but maybe you can individually clean up your own piece of it a little bit, and maybe that will make everything alright.

If such a philosophy justifies four Oscars and international acclaim then it is time for a new generation of politically conscious film makers to challenge Hollywood with a revolutionary alternative.



Workers leave the Cowley Assembly Plant

## A 'TALE' WITH A STING

"MADE IN BRITAIN" By Steve Gooch and Paul Thompson

reviewed by Tony Richardson.

The play, 'Made in Britain', by Steve Gooch and Paul Thompson, is one of the most vicious pieces of Anti-Communist propaganda to be presented in the theatre for some time

Purporting to deal with a series of events which have taken place in British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant over the last ten years, it is in reality geared to the requirements of the right wing in their struggle against the left in the factory.

For the first 8 years of the period covered by the play there was a leadership in the factory which fought to organise the union, improved wages and conditions, opposed Measured Day Work and defended agreements won in struggle.

### SLANDER

From this period Gooch and Thompson (whose last play, incidentally, was published by the IS publishers, Pluto Press) select every witch hunt and lying slander against the leadership as their material.

The final 2 years of this period starts when the T&GWU bureaucracy moved in to break up the powerful 5/55 Branch, force the re-election of the leadership by ballot in the midst of a national witch hunt and instal right winger Reg Parsons as convenor.

This period has brought the break-up of conditions won, the loss of agreements, speed-up on the tracks and a substantial drop in the value of wages. This was carried out alongside an anti-communist witch-hunt reminiscent of McCarthyism.

From these two years Gooch and Thompson show not a single attack on Parsons, not a single

recognition of the continuous fight waged against him in defence of conditions. They ignore Parsons' refusal to attend the 5/293 T&GWU Branch, the election of Alan Thornett as Chairman of the branch and of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, and the struggles in the factory around the shop stewards' 'Open the Books Committee'.

### PARTICIPATION

Instead the only aspect they present is the introduction of 'participation'. Of course they conceal the manoeuvres to bring it in, keep silent on the massive abstention in the election of delegates to the committees, and suppress the widespread shop-floor opposition to 'participation'.

They show shop stewards discussing, all of whom are in favour of 'participation', while the heroine of the story tells the audience that "we have to be constructive instead of always attacking", and that "we have to make it work". A trade union official in the play actually says that all his members are in favour of participation - and nobody contradicts him.

Parsons is thus defended to the hilt. A stark contrast to this is the play's depiction of the 1966 so-called "noose trial" which carries a vicious attack on the previous leadership in the factory.

The play shows workers screaming "hang them" in exactly the way the Tory press claimed in a huge national witch-hunt. For the Tories this was to be a main plank of their 1966 Election campaign. It disappeared from the media the day after the election.

Of course the real events were entirely different, with workers who had blacklegged on a pay strike (not a redundancy strike as shown in the play) agreeing to donate a day's pay to the Lifeboat Association.

### JOCULAR

The director of the play has argued that he attempted to show "hanging" being raised in a "jocular" way. But in the play two of the leading characters discussing after the mass meeting seriously conclude that violence is "sometimes necessary".

The "noose trial" scene also shows a method which runs through the whole play - portraying the principled leadership as mindless militants talking in abstract strings of political clichés. The almost incomprehensible speech by the convenor at the mass

With another twist of the facts the 1969 six-week strike in opposition to Measured Day Work is presented as ending in a drift back to work - when in fact the strike was solid to the end.

The return to work in fact only came after a phony deal had been hatched in York, and after a recommendation from national officials had been fought for at a two hour mass meeting by local officials.

In the play, the only person pressing to stay out is, laughably, a student, putting such ridiculous arguments as "the private car has become effectively self-destructive".

Of course even this ludicrous detail ties in with the witch hunting of the media, anxious to suggest "infiltration" into the factories. And by inventing such caricatures the authors show their contempt for the best layers of workers who were prepared to fight MDW.

### PAY RISE

On MDW itself the play simply suggests it means a 'pay rise', and completely distorts the agreement which was fought for by the leadership after the strike.

For a year after MDW was forced in (backed by the threat that workers who rejected it would be forced into the labour pool on lower wages), the leadership refused to sign an agreement - fighting for full mutuality to be included.

When finally this was conceded by the company and the agreement was signed, the International Socialists and Communist Party, anxious to oppose the principled stand of the leadership (since their position had been to accept and "negotiate" MDW) turned around to attack the agreement, which was one of the only agreements in the entire industry containing a mutuality clause. (This agreement has since been torn up by Parsons).

Lining up with this, the play describes the agreement as a "lousy agreement" - no doubt to the applause of IS, CP, and right wingers alike.

Every slander and witch hunt from the capitalist press is dragged out in the play's presentation of the victimisation of Deputy Senior Steward Alan Thornett in 1974.

### STEWARDS

The "drivers' steward" is portrayed as an idiot, of whom the company say "he's played right into our hands", while a steward says he has "committed tactical





"trigger-happy". The authors combine this with getting wrong the cause of the strike which led to the victimisation.

They join too with the Tory press and the right wing in the unproved lying allegation that under the old leadership meetings of the 5/55 Branch were "manipulated".

From this total perversion of history, to the present day. The Ryder plan is termed "a move away from conflict" - tell that to the workers who have been speeded up! The 95% state holding in Leylands is likewise referred to as "nationalisation".

**UNITED**

The finale of the play is a song in which united management and unions sing together - which sums up the authors' "perspective for the industry's present and future".

It is only fitting that such a display of venomous hostility to the struggle for principled defence of conditions should turn out to be technically as well as politically a dreadful play, and that its first performances held in Cowley in the hopes of luring a few carworkers to see it should have been given to an almost empty hall.

But the right wing have been singing its praises. BLMC Body Plant Convenor Bill Roche lyingly described it as "entertaining", while Reg Parsons claimed that it would cause offence to no-one "except perhaps a few militants".

To show how thoroughly he has swung to the right, AUEW Convenor of the BLMC Service factory, John Power, who in 1966 as "Mr X" was the main target of the 'Noose Trial' witch hunt, went on television to urge his members to go and see the play.

Oxford Mail Industrial Reporter Peter Sturges has added his voice to the right wing clamours of support. Sturges was at the forefront of the victimisation of Alan Thornett, and has for years played a key role in every witch-hunt in the town - a record which has caused him to be deservedly hated by trade unionists in every sector.

This hatred was reflected recently in the Trades Council decision to exclude him from reporting meetings.



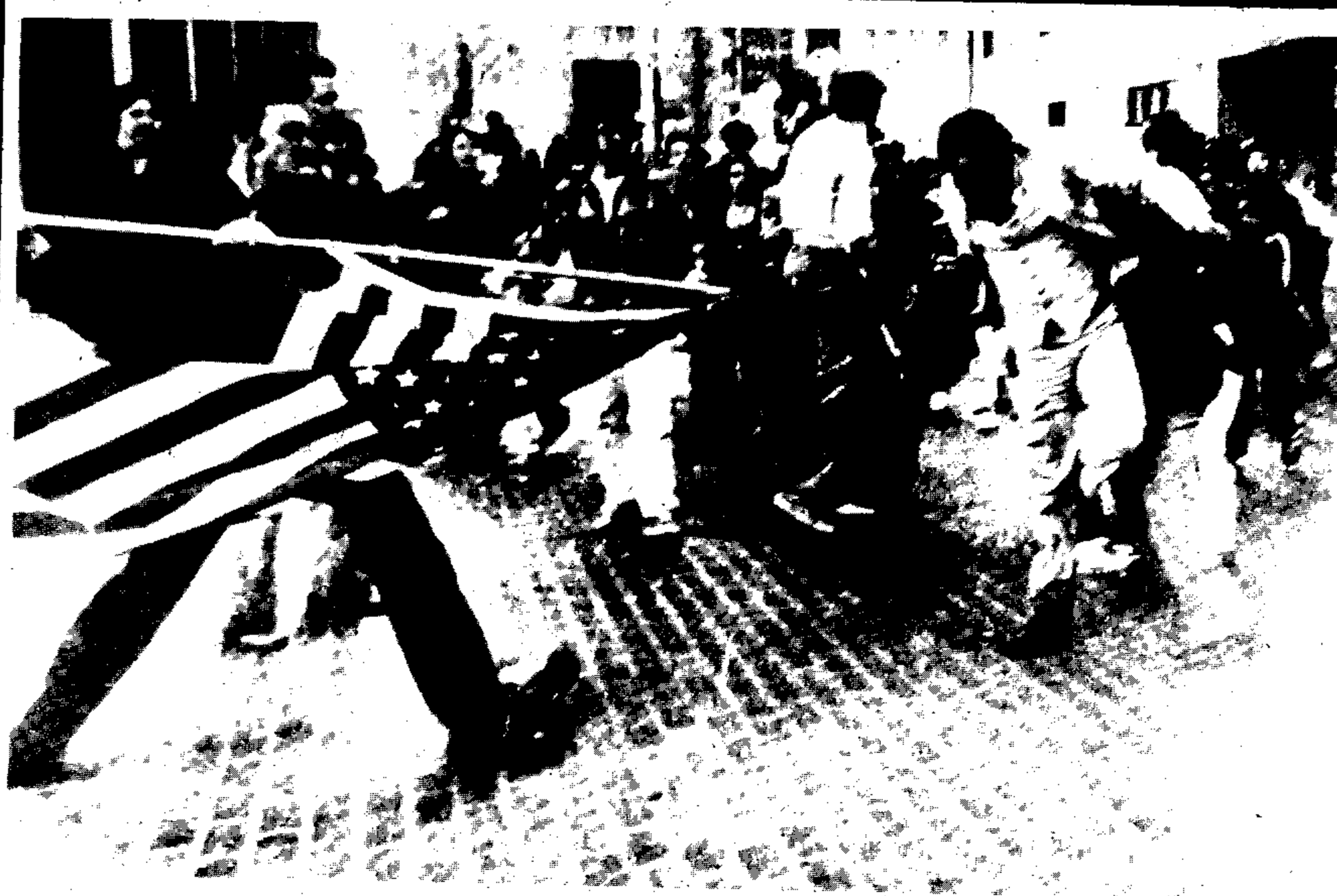
Extreme right winger Parsons - not censured at all in play which he recommends as "inoffensive".

In Sturges' opinion the play "does give a fairly accurate idea of factory life". Considering most of the material seems to come direct from the collected works of Peter Sturges this is hardly surprising! As for the details of "factory life" - the director of the play in a discussion afterwards with the handful of people who had turned up to see it said that they had discussed with CP, IS and labour left shop stewards. In other words, it was based on a cross-section of those opposed to the fight for principled leadership in the factory.

The real record of the struggles at Cowley would make a compelling play. "Made in Britain" is not the real record, and a disastrous play.

The authors, revealed as a pair of witch-hunters, describe their play as not a documentary but "a tale". It is a tale with a sting.

# DEATH THREATS FROM BOSTON RACISTS



Black lawyer attacked by antibusing mob in Boston

The violent campaign launched against Boston's black community reached a new level on April 27th when racists openly threatened the lives of leading campaigners against school segregation.

In an interview printed in the Boston Phoenix, Warren Zaniboni, head of the white terror "vigilante" group known as the South Boston Marshals Association, was quoted as saying "...we're looking for Tom Atkins and Maceo Dixon".

**LEADER**

Atkins is the leader of the Boston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) - the foremost US civil rights movement which has over 400,000 members; while Dixon heads the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR), an anti-racist movement initiated largely by the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) of which Dixon is a National Executive member. The YSA is the youth organisation of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

It is the NAACP and the NSCAR

which have led the campaign at the centre of the current storm, a campaign to break segregation in schools by busing children between white and black neighbourhoods to achieve a racial balance.

**VIOLENCE**

Racist violence against blacks has been mounting sharply since April 5th when, amid screams of "Get the nigger, kill him", a mob of white high school students nearly killed a black attorney Theodore Landsmark outside the City Council Chamber.

While Mayor Kevin White watched from his office window, Landsmark was knocked to the ground and kicked in the face. His nose was smashed by a demonstrator wielding a steel pole attached to which was an American flag.

**BOMBS**

The previous day a bomb had destroyed a school bus in Dorchester and the days following the assault on Landsmark saw more attacks. There have been many examples of violence against

isolated blacks, rifle attacks on blacks living in "white" neighbourhoods and gangs of white thugs cruising black areas smashing cars and windows.

It is clear that the violence is organised. On April 8th and 9th, the Charlestown Marshals Association and the South Boston Marshals Association announced the mounting of dusk to dawn patrols to "protect" all-white areas.

**NO INTEREST**

Despite a seeming lack of interest in these racist attacks the authorities and the capitalist press were quick to move in when blacks began to hit back. After white motorist Richard Poleet was dragged from his car and beaten up by a group of 20 black youth a hysterical campaign against "black violence" was launched.

Sections of the black community were cordoned off by police, a move which encouraged statements such as that made by James Kelly (leader of the violently racist South Boston "Restore Our Alienated Rights" (ROAR) group) who said "a black is not safe in South Boston".

In the face of an intensive racist campaign much liberal backing for an April 24th pro-busing demonstration fell away. Perhaps most damaging was the decision of the NAACP to withdraw support.

In a letter to the NSCAR, Margaret Bush Wilson, on behalf of the NAACP Boards of Directors stressed the importance in the coming elections of:

"not handing the reactionary an opportunity to capitalise on latent fears".

She argued for a mass 'campaign of voter registration because:

"The political process offers immeasurable opportunities to bring about positive social change but such opportunities can only be realised if the people most affected appreciate the value of their vote".

This statement sums up the hopeless confusion of the liberal bourgeois leaders in the busing fight. They are always at pains to avoid any call for the political independence of the working class or the building of a labour party.

At a news conference on April 21st, Maceo Dixon of the NSCAR announced the April 24th demonstration would have to be rescheduled.

"The black community is under heavy attack. We are in a state of siege. The intensity of the racist terror is such that it is not possible to hold a peaceful legal activity at this time".

Seizing the initiative, Mayor White, who had done nothing to defend blacks under attack, called for a "march against violence".

On April 23rd 20,000 people marched to Boston City Hall where they heard Protestant, Jewish and Catholic religious leaders deplore violence and call for prayers "to heal the wound of our city".

Despite the decision of the NAACP to back this march less than 5,000 of the demonstrators were black.

**CENTRAL**

The NSCAR opposed the April 23rd march as an attempt to avoid the central issue of racist violence and the future of desegregation plans. In a public statement, Maceo Dixon attacked the Mayor's record on opposition to violence directed at blacks and continued:

"Yes, a march is needed today, but a march that says the law, the desegregation order, must be applied fully and firmly. A march that says that federal prosecution of antibusing conspirators is needed now. A march that demands that federal troops be on hand and fully deployed in South Boston and Charlestown when the buses carrying our black youth roll into areas where racist 'marshals' have declared open season on black 'outsiders'".

Anti-busing groups such as ROAR also opposed the march. They now have the bit between their teeth and obviously hope to deliver a final blow to the pro-busing forces.

However, their national march in Washington on April 24th was attended by only 2,000 of the 40,000 to 50,000 expected by the organisers.

**DRAFTED**

Extra police were drafted into the schools on April 26th and the authorities obviously feel that the situation could get completely out of hand over the summer.

Last August blacks and whites fought over the use of South Boston's Carson beach - a public facility which in practice has been closed to blacks.

The issues involved in the Boston riots are complex. By no means all of the US groupings calling themselves Trotskyist have come out in favour of busing, most of these groups have been especially critical of the call by the Socialist Workers Party for federal troops to enforce desegregation.

In a future article Socialist Press will attempt to throw some light on the background to the Boston events and the questions of revolutionary strategy posed by them.

**LETTERS**

We welcome letters from readers. Letters for publication should be kept as brief as possible. Send to the editor.

## Carlists Attacked

On May 9th on a mountain top in Navarra a rally of 5000 supporters of the Carlist party, advocates of the Carlist pretender to the Spanish throne, was attacked, two of its members being killed and several wounded, by another group also claiming allegiance to the Carlist cause.

This bizarre event has grown into a major political crisis for the Spanish regime.

The Carlists, dislodged from the Spanish throne in the nineteenth century, were leading supporters of Franco in the civil war. They moved into opposition to Franco after the dictator's selection of Juan Carlos to succeed him as head

The policies of the party are now hardly distinguishable from those of the Socialist Party with which the Carlists have been in alliance in the Democratic Platform.

The Carlists, like the socialists are now in the wider Democratic Coordination which included the Communist Party. The pretender, Prince Carlos Hugo, who led the rally, says incongruously that:

"We are monarchists but we do not demand the throne and power. What we do demand is a socialist society".

The attackers were led by Carlos Hugo's younger brother Sixto and included members of the ultra-right terrorist group Guerillas of Christ the King.

They were allowed to escape unmolested by police who

During the next two days there were strikes and demonstrations throughout Navarra. In the nearby town of Estrella almost the whole population joined a silent protest march.

The town council has said it will resign unless the government moves against the attackers. Even the local judge has demanded the same.

In Pamplona a 10,000 strong protest was violently broken up by police.

As is normal in cases of ultra-right violence the Francoist government had taken no action.

It is, however, left without its usual excuse that the culprits are unknown: several Madrid newspapers have published clear photographs of them actually in the act of shooting.

This episode and its aftermath come on top of growing public allegations made by lawyers all over Spain, but especially in Euskadi that political prisoners are being subjected to the most extreme and brutal forms of torture. All this has further undermined the fascist

# CONFERENCE PAGE

First-hand reports  
from key conferences.



Jenkins



NEC Apologist Williams

## ASTMS

INACTIVE  
"WRECKERS"

As if anxious to vindicate the 'Socialist Press' article written a week before, and, the ASTMS bureaucracy manoeuvred and squirmed away from any commitment to action for the three days of their Annual Delegate Conference.

The end result was that they emerged with carte-blanche to continue in the way they see fit.

The key to their efforts was an agenda rigged to exclude any motions calling for action to be taken. And the essential camouflage for this were two 'left' resolutions - one verbally "urging support" for the Day of Action against unemployment on May 26th called by the Assembly of Labour, and the other rejecting the Healey-Jones pay deal.

On pay policy, this apparently puts ASTMS among what Healey has branded "a small minority of wreckers". But the sum total of "wrecking" that the Jenkins leadership is committed to is casting its 360,000 votes against the deal at the special TUC conference in June.

It is safe to predict that as a result of this gesture the number of ASTMS members who get pay increases above the Government norm could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Indeed the emergency resolution on economic policy passed at the conference pledged "continuing negotiations and consultations between TUC and government..." and stressed what the NEC called "the fundamental need for emergency action against excessive import penetration and for effective exchange controls; the urgent need to build up the manufacturing base".

This call for import controls - implying an alliance of British workers with their "own" employers instead of with other workers internationally, was vigorously opposed by some delegates who pointed out the racist and nationalist nature of the policy.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

No policy was adopted on unemployment by the conference, though a long and vague motion against unemployment was remitted to the NEC, who will be glad of the chance to ignore the few demands (such as a ban on overtime) which it did contain.

But it was on the government spending cuts on the social services that the bankruptcy of the NEC emerged most clearly.

Speaking against a motion which opposed the cuts, the NEC first tried to claim that the Labour government had not increased to an unprecedented degree the cuts made by previous governments.

Seeing this met little response, they moved on to ridicule the idea that social services should be planned by elected committees of trade unionists, housewives and tenants to meet the needs of workers.

This ridicule was backed not by argument but simply by the NEC's own contempt for the ability of workers to plan such services. But conference was not persuaded to reject the motion by these arguments and it was remitted to the NEC.

### CONDEMNED

On the fight to defend the Health Service, conference overwhelmingly condemned the NEC for its inaction on last Year's resolution against all private practice both inside and outside the NHS - and reference back of the NEC's report of action against the cuts in the NHS was only narrowly defeated, despite a vigorous defence of the NEC by Stalinist speakers.

Many ASTMS Health Service delegates at the conference reflected the frustration and anger of the membership at the lack of leadership over the last year against the swingeing attacks by the Wilson government on the NHS.

### DELETION

They were even more angry following the deletion of all motions calling for action against the cuts from the ADC agenda; and nearly universally hostile to the way a national executive member, Jack Williams had bureaucratically closed a meeting of NHS delegates on the Sunday evening as soon as the topic of the cuts was raised.

Aware of this, ASTMS President Len Wells, carefully selected the few speakers allowed on the issue, before bringing in Williams again, who spent ten minutes dodging, twisting, evading and distorting the record of the leadership, and attempting to blame the members for lack of action, maintaining the NEC only knew of cuts in the London area.

### UNCONVINCING

The unconvincing show this provided to Conference was reflected in the 4-vote defeat of the reference back motion proposed by the Oxford Health Service Branch delegate which went down 229 votes to 233.

Closing the conference, the President congratulated the staff of appointed officials on the 'smooth running' of the conference, while many delegates thinking back on what little was achieved must have wondered why it was held at all.

The reason is the sophisticated manoeuvres of the Jenkins ASTMS bureaucracy which in a different but equally effective way to Jack Jones' blunt dictatorship in the T&GWU seeks to hold the membership back from action against the attacks of government and employers.

In the year to the next ADC this elaborate 'left' cover of the ASTMS leadership will be increasingly exposed to the membership.

The building of a principled political alternative in the union to challenge and defeat Jenkins is therefore the clearest task following the ADC.

## TASS

The annual conference of AUEW (TASS) meeting in Bournemouth overwhelmingly rejected any incomes policy under capitalism, reaffirming the decision of the AUEW National Conference last year.

That NC decision by rule is binding on all four sections and all officials of the amalgamated unions.

But this "technicality" did not prevent Hugh Scanlon once again ignoring union policy and voting for the new wage-cutting deal between the TUC and the Government at the General Council.

Reg Birch and TASS General Secretary Ken Gill voted against the deal, but the last year's events show clearly that such opposition is unlikely to be more than a token show.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party, TASS has now adopted a so-called "flexible wages policy" which in effect means there is no national strategy over wages, and small groups of members are left to look after themselves as best they can.

### DECLINE

As real wage levels of TASS members continue to decline steadily, so the leadership must hope that TASS members stomachs have the same "flexibility" as their wages policy.

An EC spokesman poured scorn on a motion calling for a national campaign to achieve settlement with a sliding scale of wages to keep pace with inflation.

He said it would be "difficult" to get the employers to agree to it.

Presumably wage claims are now to be dictated by the employers deciding what they will agree?

This shows clearly that the EC

## PAY CUTS REJECTED - AT LEAST IN WORDS

has abandoned all hope of maintaining TASS members' living standards.

The "flexible policy" is in reality no more than a miserable capitulation to the incomes policy dictated by the ruling class, and its supporters in the TUC.

The confusion over the amalgamated union's attitude towards incomes policy is only the most obvious sign of the deep divisions which are preventing progress towards a full amalgamation of the four sections.

### ELECTION

This main stumbling block is the system of election of officials. At present TASS officials are appointed by a selection committee. The other sections insist that a system of direct election must be introduced.

Some delegates showed such a contempt for the membership that they opposed any electoral system as inevitably leading to right wing control of the union.

The truth is that it is the increasing bureaucratisation of the union by appointed officials that is stifling the initiative of lay members.

The recent events at Lucas Aerospace, Wolverhampton, are a good example of this. Combine wide support for action to protect jobs at Wolverhampton was sabotaged when the official concerned ordered members to resume normal working on the basis of what turned out to be no more than a verbal promise to discuss the question further.

The Communist Party wish to use elections as a bargaining counter in negotiations over amalgamation.

We say democracy in the unions is not a bargaining counter. It is an immediate and essential require-

ment of TASS members and all other trade unionists.

### POSTAL BALLOT

We are opposed fundamentally to the postal ballot form of election, which hands control to the mass media. But this must not divert us into the sterile and elitist path of supposing the union must be protected against its members.

In this period it is the organisations thrown up by the rank and file, such as multi-union combine committees, which must be defended against the trade union bureaucracy which fears anything it cannot control.

It is against this background that the proposals for reorganising TASS must be seen. Instead of each of the 26 divisions electing an EC member there are now to be only nine lay EC members, and this is seen by many as a move towards a full-time EC.

The one EC member to the left of the Stalinists seems certain to be removed as a result.

### FILTERING

Similarly the reduction in the size of the conference which will be recommended next year will introduce a filtering process whereby oppositional motions can be prevented from reaching conference.

Summing up, it must be said that the conference marked a further retreat of TASS from an active fight against the class collaboration of the TUC, into a world of pious left-wing verbiage and no action.

This is perhaps best illustrated by the passing of a motion against participation schemes - with the understanding that this would in no way prevent TASS sending delegates to BLMC Ryder committees!



The ASTMS Conference

## NUJ: FOCUS ON JOBS

by Peter  
McIntyre

Technology was the key issue at the annual conference of the National Union of Journalists at Buxton this year. After years of neglect the union has woken up to the fact that the campaign by our employers and in their newspapers against "overmanning" in Fleet Street has been the softener for a nationwide attack on jobs.

The change to web offset printing has given newspaper groups the opportunity to install new computers and up to date equipment which erodes printing jobs.

But while the unions, NUJ included, have largely ignored the technological developments, this equipment has been installed with a latent capacity to destroy the industrial muscle of the print unions.

Direct lines on video screens into computers mean not only that compositors and proof readers are threatened with loss of jobs but that the jobs that are left could be done during strikes by a scab force, as was done in the US at the Washington Post.

The overall effect would be to turn the whole production of newspapers into one assembly line in

which no section played a vital role. Faced with this challenge the NUJ leadership simply bowed the knee.

According to General Secretary Ken Morgan, the possible introduction of visual display units, (whereby journalists would take over the jobs of redundant printers) would mean only that industrial power could move into the hands of NUJ members!

Leaving aside the unprincipled union leadership portrayed in this remark, it shows considerable stupidity since the job would be done by any one to hand if the NUJ should strike.

A motion from the Magazine branch calling for a one year ban on the introduction of further technology while a rank and file independent analysis was carried out was defeated.

In its place a motion from the right wing London Central branch carried the day by 199 votes to 113. This firmly committed the union to a policy of permitting redundancy.

Its wording, covering the whole of one side of the order paper, included such gems as

"a positive approach which will maintain.....the optimum number of jobs".

Straight faced, it said, "ADM believes that the number

of workers displaced through voluntary redundancy, voluntary early retirement on full pension (note not full pay), and natural wastage should be kept to a minimum".

Following this lead, since the ADM, suited executives can already be seen visiting the offices of new and super technology papers and marvelling at their economy of labour.

What has become known as the "Barnsley issue" provided the other main debate. Full support was promised to NUJ branches which, like Barnsley, launch a campaign against non-union journalists, in particular against the Institute of Journalists (who have backed their claim to be a "trade union" by continuing to bring out the Daily Telegraph during the current dispute).

The Barnsley issue proves one thing. A small branch of totally non political trade unionists took a correct action through instinct.

Having made the choice they stuck to their guns despite a smear campaign from the whole of the national press.

The ovation given to the Barnsley delegates was an expression of the optimism that their determination has sparked in all but the most hardened and cynical right wing elements of the union.

BEHIND JONES' WAGE CUTTING

# T & G OFFICIALS CRUSH UNION DEMOCRACY

We carry below a number of accounts of the repression of democracy within the Transport and General Workers Union - which is rapidly becoming not only Britain's biggest but also Britain's most bureaucratic union.

It is no accident that this has stepped up as Jones leads the pack of TUC leaders in the acceptance of a substantial wage cut in the form of the 4½% deal - completely over the heads of the membership and in defiance of his union's conference policy, in line only with British capitalism's defence of the pound.

Such actions require the suppression of any independent sections of the union - from the shop stewards movement through independent committees to branches and any individual who fights for the rights of the working class.

The scorn for democracy by the T&GWU leadership was shown clearly by the endorsement of Jones' position by the National Executive Committee, none of whom have held meetings of the members they supposedly represent.

The collapse of those 'left' NEC members who timidly voted opposition to the pay cuts, only to join in a unanimous endorsement of a reworted proposal shows the crisis of leadership in the union.

## CHAIRMAN'S 3 VOTES

After the 5/293 branch elections last December the right wing in the Oxford T&GWU have lost their majority on a committee crucial to the bureaucratic moves by which they hang on to their positions in the town - the District Automotive Committee.

A problem arose for them at the April meeting at which a delegate was to be elected to the annual policy conference of the T&GWU Automotive Group. There are 17 members on the Oxford District Committee, and only 7 can be relied upon to vote for the right wing.

With one object in mind - to stop Alan Thornett (a member of the Committee), from going to the conference - the right wing conducted the most amazing manoeuvre.

### VOTES

There were two nominations - Alan Thornett and Reg Parsons. The vote for Parsons was taken first, which attracted 7 votes from the floor of the meeting.

The chairman then announced that he would cast his personal vote as a delegate for Parsons - making 8. The vote was then taken for Thornett, nine delegates raising their hands. The chairman then counted the 9 votes as 8, declared the result a draw, and gave his chairman's casting vote for Parsons, and declared him elected!

Having refused to allow a challenge to the chair he then closed the meeting, claiming 'pandemonium' had broken out.

Both the 5/293 branch and the 5/55 branches then sent delegations to the Regional Committee demanding that the vote be taken again, with covering letters from the branches in which the 9 delegates who voted for Thornett were named.

The letter pointed out that each of the 9 were prepared to make a statement on how he voted.

### NO REPLY

A month later, when the May meeting assembled, the Regional Committee had not replied to the branches.

The tactic of the right wing was to get the minutes accepted as a true record, and then claim that this ratified the election.

When the minutes were not accepted the right wing found a pretext to close the meeting.

The branches then received a letter from Brian Mathers, Regional Secretary, saying that since the letters from the branches conflicted with the minutes (which were written by the right wing to



Mathers

suit their case) and since the May meeting had broken up with no decision having been taken and the conference was only 3 weeks away, which gave no time for a reelection - the Oxford District would have no delegate to the policy conference.

This disqualification of Parsons is a tacit admission by the Regional Committee that the right-wing manipulated the vote.

But they would sooner deprive the T&GWU car workers in Oxford of a delegate than face a reelection which Thornett could win.

## FOREMAN IN BRANCH - BY ORDER

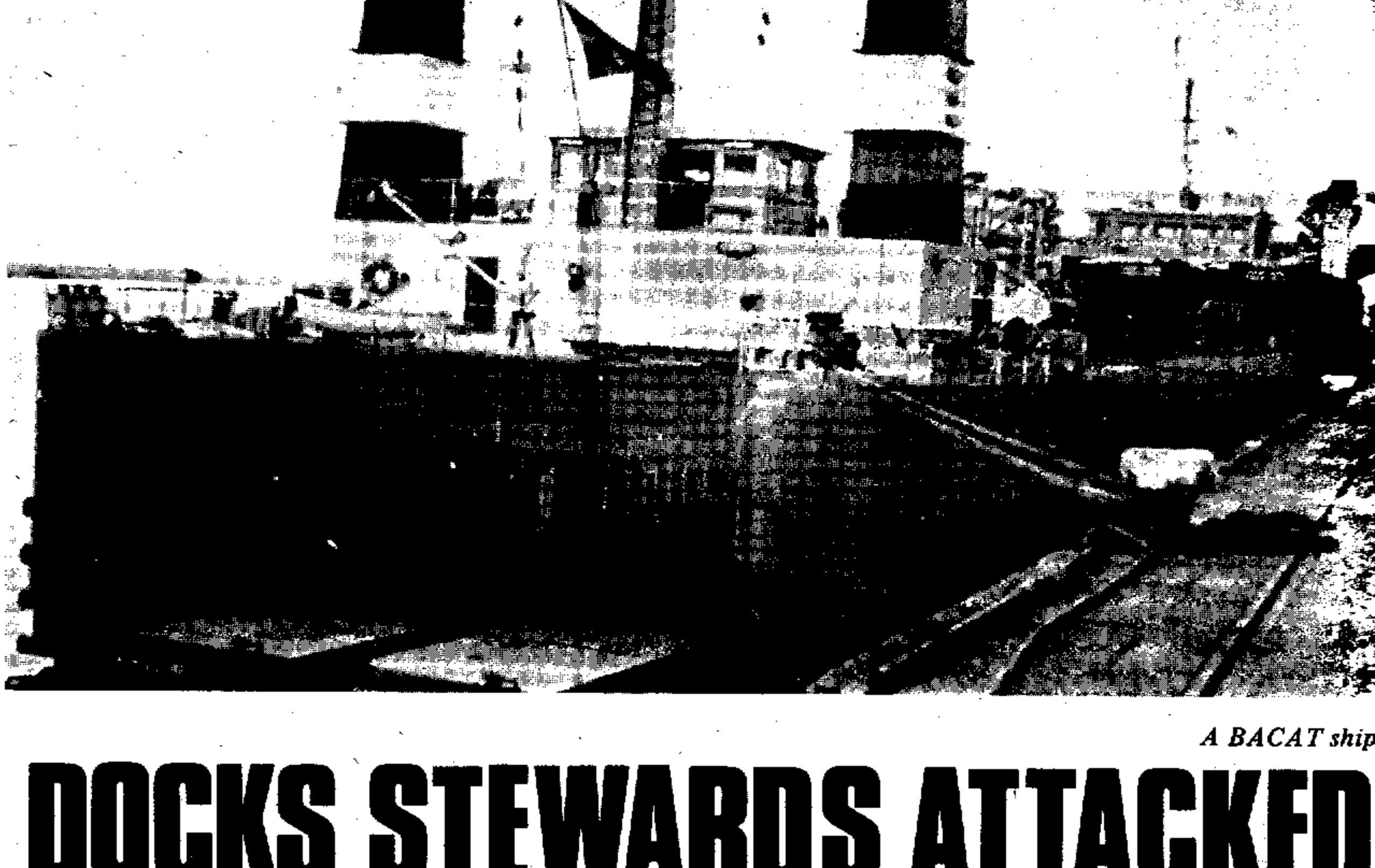
The assistant secretary of the T&GWU Cartransport branch in Oxford, a branch which covers a number of firms engaged in transporting new cars to the distributors and to the Docks, was recently promoted to a foreman's job in one of these firms - J. B. Henry LTD.

Since he was now part of management the matter was raised at the branch meeting and the correct demand made that he be removed as a branch officer.

David Buckle, the extreme right wing District Secretary of the T&GWU, ruled that he not only retain his position as Assistant Secretary but that he would also retain his position on the negotiating committee.

One of the major groups of drivers within the branch then made application under rule for a new branch, because they did not want to attend meetings with management at the table.

This was refused by Brian Mathers, Regional Secretary of the Transport Union.



A BACAT ship

# DOCKS STEWARDS ATTACKED

The credentials of 19 leading shop stewards on Hull docks have been withdrawn by the T&GWU Region 10 Committee (covering the NE coast). In a curt letter, which gave no reason for the decision, the Regional Secretary, D. Cairn, said that the men could no longer represent the T&GWU in the port of Hull.

The issue used by the Regional bureaucracy for this action was the blacking by the Hull dockers of the BACAT (Barge aboard Catamaran) system.

The system relies on shallow draft barges being carried aboard a ship of Catamaran-type construction. On arrival, the barges are released from the ship direct into inland waterways - thus completely by-passing the docks, threatening jobs and conditions.

Although the T&GWU has opposed the BACAT system, the Region 10 committee ordered the black on it to be lifted. A mass meeting of dockers rejected this - and the withdrawal of stewards cards followed.

### INDEPENDENCE

Of course there is more to the action of the T&GWU bureaucrats than the issue of BACAT. Traditionally, dockers have operated through their unofficial committees often with a considerable degree of independence from the officials. And in Hull they have worked jointly with the 'blue' union.

Now the bureaucracy want to move in firmly and end that independence. It is part of the right-wing swing of the union bureaucracy which now daily results in bureaucratic attacks on any section of workers or shop stewards who attempt in any way to act independently and defend their wages or working conditions.

In this way the Hull attack is

directly linked to the scramble to stamp out resistance among British Leyland workers fighting the pay laws, and to the continuing blatant bureaucratic moves in the Cowley BLMC factories against those stewards who organise to oppose the Ryder speed-up measures.

It links also to the arrogant way Jones and the TUC leaders have ridden roughshod over their union's conference policies and acted entirely without mandate in order to impose Stage 2 of wage control in defence of the pound.

But the problem in Hull is that those victimised refuse to fight back. No appeal has been lodged. No mobilisation has taken place in the union to reverse the decision.

### MADE LIGHT

Instead the leadership especially Walter Cunningham, chairman of the Port Stewards and one of those with credentials withdrawn, makes light of the victimisation by simply saying "we are elected by the members".

This ignores the fact that the dock stewards have been placed by the bureaucracy at the mercy of the Port employers, who, whilst continuing to negotiate with them at present, could refuse to do so at any time with the full backing of the T&GWU!

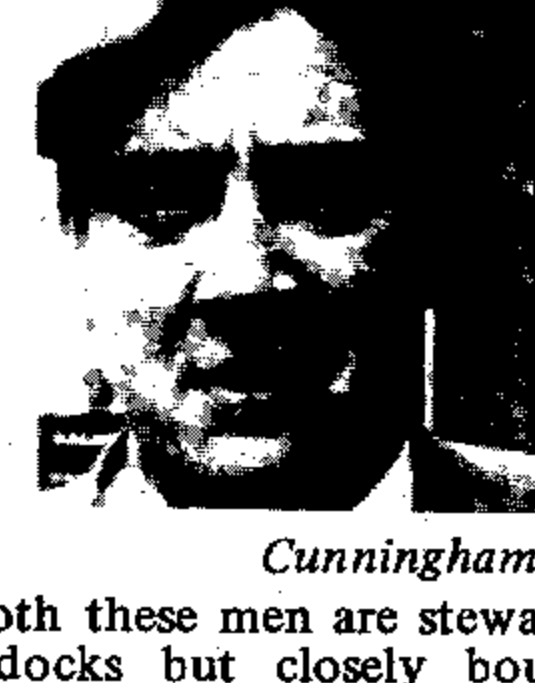
The employers in any case are prepared to wait. They know that as elections come round for the various committees in the Port, the victimised stewards have been declared not eligible to stand, and the right-wing could strengthen their position.

### CHAIRMAN

A clue as to why the leadership on the dock refuse to challenge the bureaucracy is given by the fact that one of those with credentials withdrawn is Tony Fee, Chairman of the T&GWU Regional Committee.

Another is Walt Greendale, a

member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the T&GWU Executive - and one of those who voted bureaucratically for the 4½% pay limit with no mandate from conference.



Cunningham

Both these men are stewards on the docks but closely bound in with the bureaucracy. They know what impact a challenge to the bureaucracy from Hull Docks could have.

They know it would be a blow at the T&GWU bureaucracy nationwide, and that workers would respond to such a fight, seeing a lead in the struggle against the bureaucratic dictatorship of the appointed officials.

We say the removal of the stewards' cards on Hull docks is not simply a dockers' issue.

It is the property of the trade union movement as a whole. The strength of the docks should be mobilised to force the Regional Committee to change their decision. The details of the case should be made available throughout the T&GWU.

A coordinated campaign should begin in the T&GWU led by those sections who have been the victims of the bureaucracy:

\*For an end to bureaucratic abuse.

\*For the return of the stewards' cards in Hull.

\*For the protection of shop stewards.

\*For democratic election and other procedures.

\*For all officials, local, Regional and National, to be elected and not appointed.

# CALLING IN MANAGEMENT

Following the recent decision of the T&GWU stewards at the British Leyland Cowley Assembly Plant in Oxford to adopt Alan Thornett as T&GWU nominee for chairman of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee a new struggle has broken out with the right wing.

Working daily with the extreme right wing District Secretary of the T&GWU David Buckle, who has just been appointed (with the personal involvement of Jack Jones) to "represent" all the car factories in Oxford, witch-hunting convenor Reg Parsons has requested management to withdraw facilities from the Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

Since this committee has been a thorn in the side of management for 20 years, and was the body organising the Open the Books committee which has been at the

centre of recent struggles at the plant, it is not surprising the company readily agreed to this.

By this open use of management the right wing hope to break up the committee's AGM which is scheduled for Monday May 24th.

The campaign was stepped up last Friday with a major article in the *Oxford Mail* by industrial reporter Peter Sturges. Sturges is now not simply the voice of BLMC management but, as local secretary of the Institute of Journalists (the scab organisation set up as a rival to break the strength of the NUJ) is himself an active organiser of a strikebreaking force in the newspaper industry.

His article on the JSSC echoes phrases used by Buckle at a secret meeting of selected T&GWU shop stewards in the Assembly Plant days earlier. He writes:

"Objections were raised by the Transport and General Workers Union...

Buckle] and the Company acted".

He creates the usual illusion of a left wing 'plot' by describing the AGM as "moves to revive the Joint Shop Stewards Committee" and goes on:

"The JSSC is now being seen as a means by which Mr Alan Thornett can extend his influence".

By setting out to destroy a democratic Joint Shop Stewards committee and substitute secret meetings of a minority of selected stewards the right wing hope to win what they desperately need - some kind of base in the stewards movement in the plant.

But it is not as simple as that. It is difficult to win stewards in a plant with a history of principled struggle when you represent simply an arm of management engaged in taking away the things which have been won in the past.

This is the real conspiracy which must be exposed and fought in

# KICK OUT LABOUR'S RACISTS

RIGHT WING BUREAUCRATS GIVE OPENINGS TO FASCISTS IN MIDLANDS

Thirty-three anti-fascist demonstrators were arrested in clashes outside Winson Green Prison last Saturday. Over 2,000 demonstrators, including a large contingent of immigrant workers were prevented from reaching some 100 NF supporters by an 800-strong police cordon.

Police used dustbin lids as shields against rocks thrown by the anti-fascists and retaliated with mounted police charges.

The NF had boasted of taking 'thousands' to protest the jailing of racist Robert Relf, sent to Winson Green Prison for contravention of the Race Relations Act.

The fact that so few of their supporters turned up indicates the success of recent anti-fascist mobilisations.

Relf, who has insisted on his 'right' to sell his house to 'English people only' has a long history as

a fascist. He has announced his intention of standing as British Movement candidate in the next General Election, when he will oppose Roy Jenkins at Birmingham Stetchford.

In the week before their projected 'protest' the fascists were given a boost by the newly elected chairman of West Midlands County Council, Bill Jarvis, who is also a Labour councillor and President of the Birmingham Trades Council.

Jarvis issued a call for an end to immigration and even hinted at repatriation - all this as a "solution" to the "strains" on the social services and unemployment.

After doing nothing to fight the real causes of cuts and job shortages - the degenerate capitalist system - Jarvis turns to attack that section of the working class hardest hit by the crisis.

Protests have poured in from Labour Party and trade union bodies throughout the Midlands.

The whole of a three-hour meeting of Birmingham Trades Council was devoted to a debate

of a motion condemning Jarvis, demanding withdrawal of his remarks, and reaffirming a policy against racial discrimination.

The motion was passed 83-52. This, however, is not enough. Jarvis must be removed from all his positions of leadership in the Labour Party and the trade unions.

The recent electoral successes of the far right, two council seats won by the National Party in Blackburn and 43,000 votes for the National Front in Leicester show the danger facing the whole working class.

It should be noted that immediately before the election, the Sun carried a two-day campaign around immigrants lodged in a 'luxury' hotel - very convenient timing for all those forces wishing to point the finger at immigrants as the central "problem" facing workers in Britain.

The blame for the 43,000 NF votes in Leicester lies fairly and squarely on the trade union leaders in the city.

It is the direct result of the cowardly refusal of the local T&GWU bureaucracy to take a stand against racism at the time of the Imperial Typewriters strike two years ago.

Not only did they do nothing to support the strike but it originated in the long-time coexistence with racism by T&GWU convenor Weaver (for years Executive member of East Division, Region Five of the T&GWU and the (all-white) shop stewards committee.

## STEWARDS

When Asian workers elected an Asian shop steward to represent their interests Weaver and the shop stewards committee brought in a rule stipulating two years union membership as a qualification for stewards credentials.

In this they were consistently backed up by Percy Neal, District Committee chairman of the T&GWU. This disgraceful episode has left the door open to further gains by the NF.

# RULE 14

At their meeting on May 11th the Camden Trades Council voted 51-18 with 9 abstentions, to accept Rule 14, the new rule for Trades Councils brought in by the TUC to remove individuals and prevent support for any organisation opposed to TUC policies.

The vote on Camden Trades Council came only after a series of manoeuvres including the Stalinist Secretary of the Trades Council, Sid Gregory, with TUC backing, himself closing down the Trades Council and cancelling the April meeting.

He managed to get the vote at the May meeting by circularising all affiliated branches informing them that they could only re-affiliate if they brought a letter to the Trades Council saying that their branch was now in agreement with Rule 14.

If the TUC is prepared to go to such extremes to force the rule onto the Trades Councils which have not accepted it, then they and the right-wing on the Trades Councils are obviously going to use the rule to expel opposition or close down Trades Councils.

Already it is reported that the leadership of Sheffield Trades Council has used the rule to dis-affiliate from the Working Women's Charter.

The Morning Star, paper of the Communist Party, broke its silence on Rule 14 on May 7th by reporting Stalinist Executive member of Camden Trades Council, Vic Heath, who said:

"Those who do have the best interest of the movement at heart should put their energies into winning their own trade union for deletion of Rule 14".

He then went on to attack all those on Camden Trades Council who were actually doing anything about the rule.

But even these statements and positions are outdone by the WRP whose paper, The News Line is the only paper on the left not to report the struggle taking place in Camden, and in fact has not carried a single word on Rule 14.

The threat is still on Camden Trades Council where the President has told the delegates of the five branches who didn't bring the necessary letter that they would not be admitted to the next meeting. If this occurs a further lobby of the Trades Council should be arranged.

The Camden Trades Council Defence Committee has organised a lobby of the Annual Conference of Trades Councils on May 22nd. We urge support for this lobby and WSL members will continue to campaign for rejection of this rule by Trades Councils.

# DRAIN LEADS HECKLERS

The unity of last Saturday's Oxford demonstration against the cuts in the public services was split by the right-wing and the Communist Party who refused to allow the Oxford and District Trades Council a platform position at the public meeting afterwards.

The Stalinists and the right-wing had previously boycotted the anti-cuts demonstration organised by the Trades Council on March 13th.

They called instead, last Saturday's demonstration under the auspices of the Joint Trade Union Committee in the hospitals.

Having an appalling record and no real base in the hospitals they hoped that they could attract workers to them by parading the names of a panel of four national speakers - Geoffrey Drain, General Secretary of NALGO; Reg Bird, National Officer ASTMS; Ron Keatling, National Officer NUPE and a National Officer from COHSE.

In the event, the names of the bureaucrats drew only a handful onto the 400-strong demonstration with the main force being mobilised by the campaigning of the Trades Council which fully supported the march. 300 of the 400 marchers rallied behind the Trades Council banner.

It was this size of mobilisation by the Trades Council which

prompted a request from the floor of the meeting for a Trades Council speaker on the platform. The right-wing chairman Chris Luker refused.

Demands from all sides of the meeting got no better response and calls for a vote on the matter were turned down.

Temper became frayed as one bureaucrat after another explained how he was doing nothing to defend the social services except talk while the majority were excluded from the platform.

After the last speaker, Geoffrey Drain, had failed in the whole of his right-wing contribution to explain why he had voted in favour of the wage-cutting 4½% pay deal at the TUC General Council a week or so earlier, the meeting was promptly closed by the chairman.

The great majority of the meeting, however, remained whilst the platform was taken by Trades Council chairman Gerry Casey who said that the Trades Council saw the fight against the cuts as crucial to the working class.

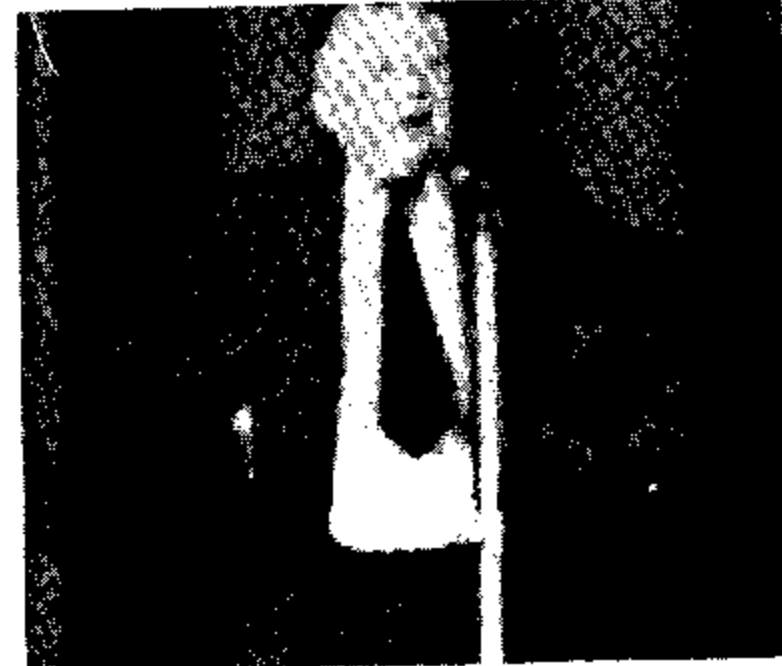
The Trades Council would continue the fight, he said. But it was clear that the bureaucracy intended to do nothing.

"We will be sitting here for 2,000 years if we wait for them to move"

he told the meeting. By this time a group of right-wing and Stalinist hecklers had gathered at the back of the hall, led by Geoffrey Drain, who shouted various insults at the platform.

The majority of this group, with all but their arms around the Stalinists, then began chanting "reds out!" - with the Stalinists looking embarrassed in the middle of the group.

Drain left the hall muttering that he would "take this back to the TUC" which means that the attacks of the bureaucracy on those in Oxford who are determined to defend the standard of living of the working class are not over.



An irate Drain

# PLOT TO SAVE PRENTICE

Top level collusion between 'left' talking ASTMS leader Clive Jenkins and the extreme right wing of the Labour Party bureaucracy is exposed by Jenkins' brazen and unconstitutional expulsion of Tony Kelly, Secretary of Newham NE Constituency Labour Party.

The right-wing, desperate at all cost to restore rabid anti-union MP Reg Prentice as candidate in the safe Newham constituency, have been continuously manoeuvring for months to reverse the democratic decision of the local Party's AGM which ousted him.

## CONDEMNED

This came to a head at the ASTMS Conference when discussion was prevented on a Charing Cross Branch resolution which condemned the General Secretary for "declaring Mr. Tony Kelly not to be a member of ASTMS".

Jenkins, however, was given the platform to launch a vicious witch-hunt against Kelly, saying ASTMS was not going to assist "Trotskyists" to "infiltrate into Newham NE Labour Party".

Kelly was, of course, given no chance of defending himself. The means of victimisation used by the bureaucracy - declaring he "has never been a member" denies him any constitutional rights in the union.

An 80-strong unofficial meeting of delegates from a broad section of the union, held during the ASTMS Conference, pledged to fight to reverse this bureaucratic abuse by Jenkins.

The WSL calls for full support

from all principled ASTMS members to this fight. Motions must be passed by branches and Divisional Councils in every area and bombard the NEC with demands to endorse the Branches acceptance of Kelly in November and reject the disgusting manoeuvres of Jenkins.

Meanwhile, the second prong of the pincer move against the left in Newham came into play when the Labour Party Regional Committee declared void the AGM at which Prentice was removed - and outlawed any discussion on the question of the constituency's Parliamentary candidate.

This is to give more time to local bureaucrats to consolidate a right-wing group of Prentice supporters.

But like every one of the current attacks on workers' democracy the Labour Party Regional Committee's decision relies upon suppression of discussion and exclusion of the rank and file from decisions. And all in the name of "moderation".

The fight in Newham NE is therefore inseparable from the crucial fight nationally against bureaucracy and for new leadership in the working class.

Workers Socialist League Public Meeting

OXFORD UNIVERSITY

"Why the 'Moderates' Attack Union Democracy"

Thursday 27th May at 8pm

The Blue Room, Wadham College

## WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

### PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### Liverpool

Our Programme to Defend Jobs and Wages  
Tom Halls Tavern  
(formerly The Strand)  
Brunswick St, Near Pier Head  
2.30pm May 26th.

#### Skelmersdale

Our Programme to Defend Jobs and Wages  
Tuesday 25th May at 7.30pm  
Quarrybank Community Centre,  
Ormskirk Rd, Skelmersdale

#### BIRMINGHAM

Racism - The Threat of Fascism  
Wednesday 2nd June at 7.30  
"The Wellington"  
Bristol St., Birmingham

#### BRIXTON

Forward to the African Revolution  
Wednesday 2nd June at 7.30  
The Canterbury Hotel  
Canterbury Gardens, Brixton