

SOCIALIST PRESS

FORTNIGHTLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

No 30 * March 24th * 10p

WILSON'S POLICIES CONTINUE LABOUR LEADERSHIP: 'LEFTS' GAVE IN

Not one of the six cabinet ministers jockeying for the leadership of the Labour Party offers an alternative to Wilson's anti-working class policies. The 'Left' MPs who have collapsed in front of Wilson on every issue have failed even to field a candidate out of the 37 who abstained from supporting the spending cuts ten days ago.

Instead, 'left' support is being thrown into the campaigns for Foot (Wilson's ambassador to the TUC, basking in the glory of having inflicted the biggest ever wage cut on the British working class) or Benn (leading advocate of job-cutting, "worker-participation" in industry and the nationalist policy of import controls).

CENTRE

Wilson's unexpected announcement of resignation a week ago, especially coming so soon after the Parliamentary defeat for the Labour government, threw the question of the Labour leadership back into the centre of the stage.

It posed the decisive question to the 'left' MPs. Would they take this chance to fight to defeat the right-wing and their policies - or would they yet again stand back respectfully while the right wing get down to the job of running capitalism and attacking the working class?

Workers did not have to wait long to find out there would be no fight. The very night of Wilson's resignation, Tribune Group MPs were falling over each other to praise Wilson.

"IRREPLACEABLE"

Chairman of the Tribune MPs, Arthur Latham, told us that Wilson was "irreplaceable", and Eric Heffer was happy to discuss in a television interview whether he would prefer Callaghan or Jenkins! (He opted for Callaghan).

This grovelling of the 'lefts' is a complete betrayal. The issue facing the working class is not choosing whether they prefer to be bludgeoned into the ground by Jenkins and Healey or strangled by Foot's wage cuts. It is to fight to mobilise the strength of the trade union and Labour movement to drive out these traitors and instal a leadership prepared to carry out policies to defend jobs, wages and the social services.

I'M BANKING
ON ALL OF
YOU!



The 'left', by limiting the leadership fight to the closed ranks of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and by fielding no candidate have shown they want no part of this fight.

But even as they try to turn their backs on the problem, the 'lefts' must confront the growing strength of the hostility to Wilson's policies amongst their own supporters in the Labour movement.

It is in the light of this growing resistance that the Workers Socialist League repeats the call for militants to fight now for a recalled Labour Party Conference to elect a new leadership.

There can be no question of simply accepting another Wilson foisted on the Labour Party by the Parliamentary clique of MPs while the membership in the constituencies and Labour voters in the unions are brushed aside.

While the 'lefts' sit on their hands and leave Wilson's policies intact, the main prop of this government's programme of unemployment, the TUC, however

cracy, has clearly stated its opposition to any fight for principle within the Labour Party.

Bassnett (G&MWU), Jones (T&GWU) and Scanlon (AUEW) have combined to call for "unity" - meaning in practice, unity around Wilson's policies! But certain sections of the trade union bureaucracy are becoming aware of the movement growing within the union ranks, and are calling for a recall TUC Conference.

SUPPORT

We support this call - to bring clearly before the working class the betrayal and political bankruptcy of the TUC leadership. We demand the TUC discuss a fighting programme of action in defence of the working class:

1) No to all Social Services cuts. National strike action to defend full services and manning levels.

2) No to all redundancies. Occupy the plant, and demand the full strength of the unions be

fight for work-sharing on full pay.

3) Where employers refuse this - force them to open their books to elected Trade Union committees.

4) On this basis nationalise bankrupt firms and place them under workers' management!

5) A full programme of public works under trade union control to create new jobs and make good the cuts in health, housing, transport and education.

The Labour Party 'lefts' refuse to stand and pull back from the fight for such a programme because it is one which cannot be fulfilled under capitalism.

They know all too well that the present crisis is so severe that the basic right to a job and decent living standards cannot be conceded within the capitalist economy - but they refuse to lead the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

For this reason only a principled revolutionary leadership is equipped today to lead actions in



Callaghan with fascist envoy Areilza

SPAIN

BASQUE GENERAL STRIKE

The events which followed the police massacre of workers in Vitoria on March 3rd have revealed both the tremendous strength of the Spanish workers movement and the way in which this strength can be wasted and diverted by the political line of the Communist Party and its allies.

The killings (4 in Vitoria and at least one a few days later in Basauri, a district of Bilbao) provoked an immense reaction in the 4 provinces of Euskadi (the Basque provinces).

A General strike called in the region on March 8th was supported by about four-fifths of the workers in the region, one of the most industrialised in Spain. In all the towns of Euskadi the day was marked by continuous clashes between thousands of demonstrating workers and students and the armed police.

Even more than the recent demonstrations in Barcelona, these actions in Euskadi represented a direct challenge to the authority of the fascist regime. The sight of four-fifths of the workers of a major industrial region responding to a call for a political general strike is for the regime a terrifying reminder of its mortality.

It is no doubt one of the reasons for the sharpening of tactical differences inside the Fraga and Arias government.

Spurred on by its fear, the government has now published its proposals to "legalise" political parties.

Their main feature is the maintenance of the illegality of any party which has the support of a significant section of the working class. The plan is to grant legality to liberal, radical, christian-democratic groups probably including the Socialist Party (PSOE). In fact all these parties already operate in a kind of semi-legality.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

CHINA STALEMATE

Why does the political crisis in the top bodies of the Chinese Communist Party continue in a state of festering stalemate? To understand it is essential to grasp that behind the two main factions stands a 'third party', the millions upon millions of Chinese workers and peasants.

And both factions - the 'lefts' their main target, the 'capitalist' Teng Hsiao-Ping - are fully fearful of the results of driving the masses directly into political battle. This is the only reason why Teng remains in his posts (as Vice-Premier and Vice-chairman of the Communist Party) despite the fact he has been publicly denounced in the press and in huge poster campaigns since the beginning of February. And from the other side Teng, seated in his attempt to succeed Chou-En Lai as Premier at the last meeting of Party leaders at the end of January, apparently retained his positions but has had to keep out of public view and is unable to act against his opponents who have now got explicit backing from Mao Tse-Tung.

FORM

The political form of the attacks against Teng disguise their content. The whole of the Communist bureaucracy in China is caught on the horns of an historical dilemma.

On the one hand they are based on the victory of the international revolution against imperialism in China and the destruction of capitalist property relations there. And on the other they exist as a caste on that national basis, balancing between the interests of the Chinese people and the international working class - and imperialism.

The policy of 'socialism in one country' - a contradiction in terms, which for today's Chinese leadership means cynical 'friendship' with the most reactionary capitalist politicians, from Franco to Nixon - captures this dilemma in a phrase. This contradiction is what lies behind the ironies of the present 'anti-revisionist' campaign in China.

Some of the things Teng is accused of putting the 'class struggle' on the same level as two other 'theses' Chairman Mao - the need for stability, and the need to develop the national economy.

The 'left' faction, supported by Mao, accuse Teng of playing down

the importance of the class struggle in the interests of reviving the 'capitalist road' for which he was ousted during the 'Cultural Revolution'.

In effect the 'left' are resurrecting Stalin's famous 'theory' that the further the building of socialism progresses, the more intense the class struggle becomes in that country.

This was for Stalin the 'political' justification for the massacre of thousands upon thousands of Communists and Soviet citizens in the great purges of the 1930's, and for the drive to physically destroy the opposition to Stalinism in the world communist movement.



Mao with friend Nixon

In the 1930's the apologists for Stalin made great play with those capitalist newspapers and politicians who gave credence - for example - to the 'confessions' of the Moscow Trials.

In China today the 'left' faction - afraid to bring into play the Chinese masses - also look for support among the most hardened enemies of the revolution. Thus there was the spectacle of the head of Peking university solemnly explaining the importance of the struggle against Teng and the 'capitalist road' to...Nixon, the man who launched the most savage bombing ever on North Vietnam and who (in public at least) is a pariah even among capitalist politicians!

And in the last fortnight, one of the main audiences for further attacks on Teng has been the capitalist ambassadors in Peking.

Teng may be attacked every day in *People's Daily* and on wall-posters by activists, but he has the silent support of a massive social layer of party and state functionaries, technical and professional officials, and military officers, all of whom are privileged relative to the mass of Chinese workers and peasants.

His policy to go for economic

consolidation and technical advance with higher wages for specialists and with a reform of the higher education system to produce competent functionaries and technologists, rather than to give first place to educating the children of workers and peasants.

His supporters see in this the consolidation of their position, and many of them have only recently returned to office after being attacked for conservatism and privilege during the Cultural Revolution.

The 'lefts' are not, of course, opposed to economic development. But they can feel on their necks the breath of the forces that began to get out of hand during the Cultural Revolution, and they fear that if there is not another, similar campaign, a drive by Teng and his supporters to impose too fast a pace of economic development, and to buttress their own privileges will lead to even greater eruptions in

the future.

Thus it is seen as an important victory for the 'lefts' that the pro-Teng Education Minister, Chou Yung-Hsin, appears no longer to be active in his post.

But with the important editorial in *People's Daily* on March 10th, the 'lefts' have been making unmistakable attempts to limit their own campaign. The struggle, claimed the paper, must be 'led by the party committees at every level' and it must be on its guard against those who threaten public order and 'sabotage the revolution by sabotaging production'.

All reference to 'splits' in the top levels of the party was dropped.

What Nixon's visit - planned by Teng but carried out by his adversaries - made clear is that neither faction of Chinese Stalinism will carry through the political revolution, to eliminate bureaucratic privilege and unite the Chinese working masses with the international working class.

For this the construction of a new, Trotskyist leadership will be necessary - a leadership which bases itself upon a scientific understanding of Stalinism and brings the masses themselves into the struggle to eradicate it within the workers movement.

ZIMBABWE

ARMED STRUGGLE ONLY WAY

"I don't believe in black majority rule ever in Rhodesia - not in a thousand years" said racist premier Ian Smith this weekend.

This is the reaction of the white settler regime to the final breakdown of the protracted negotiations with right-wing nationalist Joshua Nkomo.

The collapse of talks has even prompted President Kaunda of Zambia to state that it has now been demonstrated that "nothing can be achieved by a peace strategy"

INTENSIFY

Africa, he said, now had no option but to help intensify the armed struggle in Rhodesia "which is now in full swing".

British Labour MP Gwilym Roberts has revealed allegations of recruitment of British mercenaries to fight for Smith's regime. He timidly asked Callaghan to "probe" these reports.

Callaghan, however, has refused to give any undertaking that the British government, let alone mercenaries, will not intervene against the African liberation struggle.

Smith has already said that, in view of the 'changed situation' in Southern Africa, white Rhodesia's "best bet is to say to the British you must come in and play a more positive and permanent role". The British and Rhodesian governments, he demanded, should "get together and see if we can solve this problem".

Successive Labour governments since the time of UDI have done nothing to remove Smith's racist regime. Sanctions, always a fiction have been gradually whittled away.

For example, legal export of ferro-chrome and nickel from Rhodesia to the USA is now possible, and is an indication of the absurdity of hoping for sanctions to be effectively imposed against Rhodesia.

Tory MP Eldon Griffiths, in a press conference in Salisbury last week, expressed admiration for the developments which had occurred in the Rhodesian economy in spite of international sanctions.

PLEASANT

The *Financial Times* correspondent pointed out:

"it is almost impossible to overstate how pleasant life still is for most whites, with their groaning dinner tables, full shops, and obedient Black servants".

But it is this 'way of life' that is now to come to an end.

So far, the war for the liberation of Zimbabwe has been on a small scale. The Rhodesian government claims that since December 1972, eighty-two whites have been killed - including some South African soldiers and eighteen civilians and 748 blacks.

The successful liberation struggles in Mozambique and Angola now threaten Smith with a more serious struggle and an inevitable defeat.

15,000 Cubans are estimated to be in Angola with the MPLA, and the MPLA's leader Dr. Neto met Fidel Castro in Guinea last week to discuss "liberation problems in Angola and in Southern Africa as a whole".

TALKS

The talks - which also included Guinea's President Sekou Toure and Guinea-Bissau's Luiz Cabral were described by Louanda Radio as "an historic encounter which will help increase aid to peoples struggling against apartheid, colonialism and imperialism".

Smith stakes everything on the imperialists being able to help him against that struggle. That is why he now makes statements claiming that the introduction of democratic forms in Rhodesia would lead to Russian intervention.

These demands are completely in line with the statement by Callaghan's junior at the Foreign Office, David Ennals. He has said that: "Britain could become involved in policing operation", and Callaghan has confirmed that an end to 'illegality' (i.e. Smith's declaration of UDI) would make British military intervention possible.

EXCUSE

This, he knows, is the kind of excuse the imperialist powers need to back a white regime. Callaghan and Wilson had three meetings with the Russian ambassador in London while the Smith-Nkomo talks were going on, amid Foreign Office briefings on 'British fears' of Soviet or Cuban intervention.

Labour MPs like Gwilym Roberts, who protest at the idea of a few mercenaries going to Rhodesia from Britain must demand that Callaghan promise the Labour movement as a whole that there is no possibility of any British government aid to Smith, and that the Labour government will support all struggles against the racist "rebel" regime.

E. EUROPE OLD STALINISTS REHABILITATED

Immediately after the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in Moscow came two indications that Soviet Stalinism is resurrecting the man, as well as the methods, Stalin himself.

Pravda of March 10th carried a lengthy tribute to Andrei Zhdanov, one of Stalin's chief henchmen in the post-war period, and the leader of the Cominform in 1947. Stalin had dissolved the Communist International in 1943 as a sop to Roosevelt and Churchill).

Zhdanov was also the man who acted as Stalin's chief literary and scientific censor in the late 1940's

Freud and Picasso.

But *Pravda's* memorial - written on the slender pretext of the eightieth anniversary of Zhdanov's birth - mentions none of this.

The author (one Rodionov, deputy director of the so-called Institute of Marxism-Leninism) says:

"Zhdanov directed his attention above all to ideological problems and those of the theory of Marxism-Leninism. His interventions on scientific, literary and artistic questions, which he assessed with a perfect knowledge of the matter, brought a serious contribution to the ideological education of the Soviet people and to the development of its spiritual culture."

And on the day after Moscow's rehabilitation of its chief 'cultural' policeman came an article in the Warsaw weekly *Polityka* commemorating

of the Polish CP from Gomulka's first removal in 1948 to his own death in 1956, and one of the most devoted of all the Eastern European lackeys of Stalin's person and politics.

TRIBUTE

But his obituarist, the 'historian' Rechowicz, is not so unkind as to dwell on the 'negative' aspects of Bierut's personality. On the contrary, he smothers him with praise, including a tribute for his 'giving particular attention to the fraternal regulation of Polish-Soviet relations'. Mr. Rechowicz goes on to explain that:

The fact (sic!) is that apart from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, no party, since the twentieth Congress of the CPSU has

of personality".

and he adds that Bierut

"struggled sincerely for the liquidation of the cult of personality, and for the restoration of Leninist norms in the party".

What is the truth behind these lying euphemisms? The fact is that Bierut was always a hard-line Stalinist and that he fell ill and died in Moscow where he was attending the twentieth Congress of the CPSU at which for the first time Krushev officially confirmed Stalin's crimes!

Consequently Bierut's 'sincere struggle' could unfortunately have lasted at most only a few days and was conducted from a hotel bedroom in Moscow.

And if one wished to know why Bierut found himself in the top leadership of the Polish CP after the

had the vast majority of its leadership shot as 'agents of the Gestapo' and 'Trotskyists'.

Most of those who survived did so because they were fortunate enough to be in the jails of the Pilsudski dictatorship at the time and were unable to return to Moscow when summoned. Naturally, during Bierut's tenure of office comment on this 'incident' was not allowed to mar the 'fraternal regulation of Polish-Soviet relations'!

These resurrections of Zhdanov and Bierut - politely ignored by the leaders of the western CPs - provide a clear political warning.

Brezhnev and the entire leading clique of the Soviet bureaucracy have every intention of using Stalin's methods against the political revolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and they are

..... SPAIN Continued

Even the PSOE has been permitted to hold open, publicly advertised meetings addressed by its leader Felipe Gonzalez, recently lauded by the *Times* as a kind-of Spanish J.F. Kennedy.

This situation of semi-legality for reformist parties, like the softening of censorship over the bourgeois press, suits the regime very well: it can present an image of liberalisation while retaining all the powers of control it requires.

Furthermore, the law to legalise parties has to be passed by the Cortes - an unlikely event, as the regime knows. That, too, allows the image of liberalisation with none of the reality.

While these tiny changes in the appearance of Francoism create great excitement among bourgeois and reformist politicians, they have not distorted the perception of the mass of workers who see the organisers of strikes arrested and jailed without trial and their comrades shot down in cold-blood.

The Euskadi general strike is important evidence that the mass of workers are not deceived by a mere change of expression on the face of Francoism.

Nonetheless, the fact that the strike lasted in most places only a day and that it was for the most part restricted to Euskadi is evidence of the obstacles which still stand in the way of the workers' struggle against fascism.

The strike was restricted to Euskadi not only because that was where the murders took place but because it is the area of Spain where the Communist Party wields *least* power within the workers' movement.

Elsewhere the Communist Party was able to use its position to

prevent a national general strike, though the demand for such a strike went up all over the country.

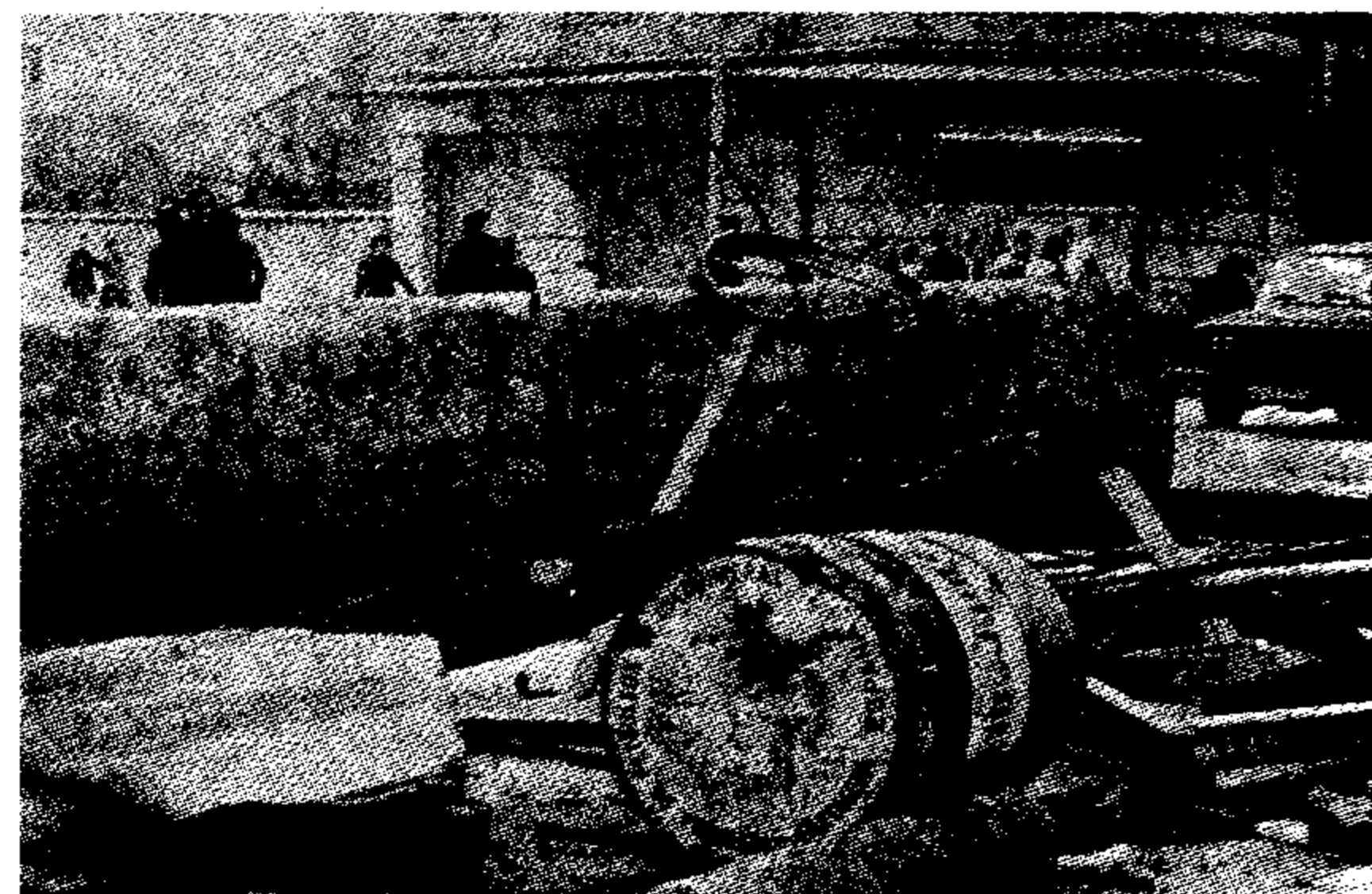
In that situation the general strike in Euskadi could not be maintained without more national support.

In Vitoria, however, workers in the steel plants, where the strike over wages began two months ago, are still refusing to return to work until their leaders, (now charged with criminal offences) are released.

The possibility of a new upsurge of this struggle is, therefore, very strong; and its immediate objectives have become more explicitly political.

The Communist Party is as fearful of this possibility as the government. It is a major threat to the Communist Party leaders' tireless effort to keep a tight lid on the mass struggle - both as to its methods which must be peaceful and its objectives which are to bring bourgeois democracy to Spain.

The party talks occasionally of socialism, but this is an objective postponed to an indefinite future. Like the French CP, the Spanish party has now *dropped* the goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat from its programme.



Barricades in Vitoria

The practical form of this strategy is through the class collaborationist alliance, the Democratic Junta.

Participating in this alliance have been the Maoist Labour Party (Partido de Trabajo), the tiny right-wing social democratic Popular Socialist Party, intermittently the centrist Communist Movement (Movimiento Comunista de España) and the Workers' Commissions.

The CP has tried to attract more bourgeois political groups to the Junta. In this it has been less successful than the Socialist Party's

closely linked with the Socialist Party.

On March 17th the Junta and the Platform made a joint statement of "immediate unity" of the two alliances. The main pressure for this unity has come from the Christian Democrats, the ORT and the Communist Party.

Most of the resistance has come from the anti-communism of many sections of the Socialist Party. A unified "democratic alliance" formed it will represent at least an organisational gain for the Communist Party's strategy of class collaboration.

DOUBTFUL

But it is very doubtful whether politically it can strengthen the strategy which, as the Euskadi general strike shows, is being increasingly rejected by the working class in favour of an independent class position.

It is purely in response to pressure from the masses that the CP a few weeks ago abandoned its plan to disband the Workers' Commissions and establish instead a 'left' faction within the corporatist "trade union" organisation, the CNS (Central Nacional Sindicalista).

CRISIS

Four members of the CP's Central Committee were summarily expelled during the internal crisis concerning this change of line.

While the Stalinists argue about exactly how to collaborate with the ruling class, revolutionaries in Spain are faced with the task of fighting for the complete independence of workers' organisations in a *working class* united front to prepare coordinated action to force the downfall of the regime and the establishment of a workers' government.

By a Special Correspondent in Spain.



Ruiz-Gimenez

SUBSCRIBE to Socialist Press

BRITAIN	EUROPE
6 issues £1	6 issues £1.15
12 issues £2	12 issues £2.30
24 issues £4	24 issues £4.60

REST OF THE WORLD	
6 issues £1.50	
12 issues £3.00	
24 issues £6.00	

I would like to take out a subscription to *Socialist Press*. I would like . . . issues, I enclose £ . . .

NAME
ADDRESS

COMPLETE and SEND to: 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

I would like more information on the Workers Socialist League.

Name
Address

COMPLETE and SEND to: 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR



100,000 demonstrate at the funeral in Vitoria

According to the Spanish CP, the Franco dictatorship must be replaced by bourgeois democracy; this they say is historically possible because it is the aim of the most powerful section of the Spanish bourgeoisie (including sections of the present regime) and is part of the strategy of the EEC and the United States'

In other words, the Spanish Communist Party defines the tasks of the working class by reference to what is aimed at and permitted by the bourgeoisie!

Platform of Democratic Convergence which contains the section of the Christian Democrats (Izquierda Democratica) led by former Franco Minister Ruiz-Gimenez. With them are to be found the monarchist Carlist Party, several Social Democratic groups, several right wing nationalist groups such as the Basque Nationalist Party, the centrist group, the Revolutionary Workers' Organisation (the ORT, with complex origins partly among left Catholics) and the General Workers Union (UGT) which is

IRAN 'WORKERS STRUGGLE'

More and more now, the crisis of imperialism reflects itself back into the countries of the Middle east.

The Shah of Iran, too, has over-spent his oil revenues, not least in such ways as the Empress Farah's use of an Iranian Boeing 707 jet last month to transport three tons of marble to decorate a new swimming pool.

If the Shah has been running a much-publicised 'anti-corruption campaign' at home, there is little sign that this will allay the growth of popular discontent and the re-awakening of the working class movement in his country.

At least fourteen 'terrorists' have been executed by the Shah in recent weeks. Some of them allegedly killed Mohammad Sadegh Fateh (a notorious landlord and exploiter of child labour) twenty of whose workers were shot down during a strike in 1971.

One notable feature of these barbarous regimes is the cordial support given to them by British Labour and trade union leaders.

The visits by Trade Secretary Shore and other Labour ministers to see the Shah in Teheran and St.

Moritz is already notorious. TUC General Council member Lord Briginshaw also visited Iran before his recent retirement.

The notorious trumped-up charges against twenty-one Iranian students who protested against one of the Shah's series of executions were carried through by the British authorities, but eventually had to be dropped.

The price of this cooperation is the maintenance of an illiteracy rate of over 50% in Iran, together with an average income of less than £8 week in the rural areas.

The oil wealth goes into the pockets of a few millionaires and the multinational companies are allowed to exploit the Iranian masses in ways which help to undermine workers' conditions everywhere.

This is why we welcome the appearance of leaflets and other material produced by a group of Iranian workers in this country called 'Nabarde Kargar' (*Workers' Struggle*) pointing out the conditions under which oil wealth is produced, and initiating a 'Campaign for the Restoration of Trade Union Rights in Iran'.

The group points out that 'if

the Shrewsbury Two had been Iranians, they wouldn't only have been wrongly jailed, they would have been executed'.

They show the links of the multinational companies and their desire to earn profits where there are no 'labour troubles' (trade unions have not been allowed in Iran since 1953).

They point out further that "there is a link between unemployment, redundancies and wage cuts in this country, and the lack of trade union rights in Iran."

The Workers Struggle group calls for the right to set up unions, to bargain and to strike, as well as for full freedom for all political prisoners in Iran.

They call on trade unionists and Labour Party members 'to support the idea of a British Labour Movement Mission of enquiry to visit Iran and find out the real conditions under which workers struggle for trade union rights'.

We feel sure that readers and supporters of this paper will want to give their support to this campaign and to obtain more material about it from Nabarde Kargar at PO Box 21, 197 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1

BOOK REVIEW

Review by John Lister of 'The Battle for Trotskyism' - Documents of the Opposition expelled from the WRP in 1974. Price £1.

The subject of this book is leadership, the fight for a revolutionary party able to mobilise and politically direct mass support within the working class in the struggle for power.

All of the issues of principle and programme, of party regime and of orientation towards the workers' movement which emerge in the documents brought together in *The Battle For Trotskyism* are of decisive importance to all revolutionary socialists.

The "Battle" referred to in the title was as many now know, the fight within the ranks of the Workers Revolutionary Party in the closing months of 1974 for a change in its sectarian political line and a return to the methods of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme.

INDUSTRIAL BASE

It was a fight which began in the industrial base of the WRP, in Cowley, Oxford, and was begun by Alan Thornett, who started to question what at first were only isolated aspects of the practice and perspectives of the WRP leadership, headed by its General Secretary, Perry Healy. As the account of the struggle in the Third Document tells us:

"...differences over party perspectives began to emerge in Oxford from December 1973. These were over the three day week, the practice of the party leadership in drawing a mechanical connection between economics and politics, and, later, the perspectives advocated during the oil crisis, of military coups and police-military dictatorships.

Differences also emerged over the designation of reformist class collaborators as 'corporatists', the constitutional changes, the wrong positions of the leadership on nationalisation and workers' control and, most important, the revision of the Transitional Programme - the founding document of the Fourth International". (p84)

These were deep-going political differences - but within a truly democratic-centralist party they could have been freely and honestly discussed and a fight waged to change the leadership of the WRP itself.

The party had *not* crossed class lines to give support to the bourgeoisie, *nor* had it advocated unprincipled alliances with Stalinism or centrism.

TROTSKYISM

It remained a party which for all its wrong positions contained a vital core of Trotskyism - though that core was continuously coming under threat from the liquidationist course of the leadership, a course which was accelerating rapidly.

But in September 1974, once Thornett's opposition had begun to appear more distinctly, Healy demonstrated clearly that to achieve a full discussion within the WRP was virtually impossible. The September 14th. Central Committee meeting was a set-piece political frame-up of Thornett, designed to silence him within the movement:

"When the discussion started, Healy demanded a contribution from the Western Area and Alan Thornett spoke. He said that the working class had been on the offensive all of that year. The miners had forced the Tory government to resign; this offensive had continued through a wages movement, and now it looked as if the working class were going to replace the minority Labour government with a majority Labour government. He went on to say that such a government would come into power under conditions of great economic crisis and that the battles to be fought in the coming winter would be between the working class and the Labour



Slaughter

Cliff Slaughter then got up and altered completely what Thornett had said. Thornett, he said, was of the opinion that the working class would come into conflict with capitalism through a Labour government.....Alan Thornett vigorously protested that he had been misquoted, but this was brushed aside by Healy". (pp90-91).

From that time to this day, Thornett and those who supported his criticisms of the leadership have been on the strength of this incident cynically branded as "soft on social democracy" by Healy and others - though not a single shred of evidence from written sources has been produced to back up the allegation!

The book makes clear that Alan Thornett's first reaction to this frame-up was a *wrong* one. He resigned next day from the WRP. Only further reflection on the political responsibility to fight for an understanding of Healy's methods, combined with an undertaking by Healy that there would be full discussion on his differences with a Conference before the end of the year persuaded him to reverse this position.

Healy's undertaking was of course never carried out - by the time of the Conference every WRP member even suspected of supporting Alan Thornett had been expelled or excluded as a delegate!

As the third document shows, this only became Healy's clear policy in the course of the fight, and was his response to the political strength of the opposition case.

ADAPTATION

Indeed at first, moves by Healy were not so much for immediate expulsion but *adaptation* to Thornett's position, seeking to head off a fight in order to keep hold of the WRP cadre of workers in Cowley. Thus after two Central Committee meetings on October 12th and October 19th, when Thornett had spoken at length on the party's abandonment of the transitional demands in its election manifesto, Slaughter attempted to write in a lengthy section on "programme" to supplement the leadership's original document.

This was to give the impression of moving closer to Thornett's position, while at the same time, the Healy leadership viciously attacked Thornett himself, within the party ranks, in the hope of splitting off Thornett's support in the Cowley factory branch.

It resulted in the edition of *Workers Press* dated October 26th 1974 which carried for the first time a front page including transitional demands, the day before the

But at the Rally itself, Healy spoke at length without once mentioning the new programme!

By November 1st, Thornett had completed the First Document and submitted it for discussion on the Central Committee next day. The whole document, including the background reading had been worked up from tentative criticisms in only a matter of weeks.

This work of course threw up even further questions as to the roots of Healy's wrong method and the broader implications of the sectarian degeneration of the WRP on the International Committee of the Fourth International which it dominated.

These points could not be brought into the first document, but clearly had to be answered if Healy was to be fought down the line on his politics.

In the course of the upheavals that had taken place in Oxford several comrades had begun to grasp the issues involved and to give support to Alan Thornett's fight for an understanding of the Transitional Programme, contributing to the work for the First Document.

Further work immediately began to prepare additional material which would hopefully form a second document. When Healy challenged Thornett in front of a Western Area Aggregate meeting on 24th November, therefore, to answer a series of questions on the degeneration of the WRP, Thornett was able immediately to ask permis-

The first two political documents reproduced in this volume were therefore produced under these difficult material conditions: the need to develop nagging doubts, uncertainties, half-formulated objections into a coherent written form, probing the very method of the leadership on the one hand; and the harrying and manoeuvring of the WRP leadership added to the pressures from the need to maintain the local movement, and the continuity of the struggle in the factories on the other.

The documents are *not* masterpieces of prose or fully rounded theoretical statements. They are documents of *struggle*, bearing at times the imprint of their hasty and complex preparation.

INTERNATIONAL

The nature of the WRP itself (and in particular its attitude towards international questions) is also a key factor in understanding these documents.

While the general line of attack is almost always correct, major weaknesses of approach and areas of ignorance of the WRP membership show through.

This is true particularly in the section of the Second Document on the International Committee and most glaringly in the section on Ireland.

But in turning towards seriously working through these questions and turning in a *practical* way first of all to points of *programme* to advance the struggle of workers and peasants internationally the opposition made a conspicuous development beyond WRP positions in that document. It is a strength which continues today within the WSL.

In taking up the historical development of sectarianism within the Healy leadership, the opposition turned also to a study of the

It was in struggling to understand this material in the writing of the Second Document that several basic unresolved problems of the world movement began to come into focus, laying some of the groundwork for the WSL's later International Perspectives document *Fourth International - Problems and Tasks*.

NOT DEVELOPED

But, it must be stressed that the issues touched upon in the opposition documents were only seeds of change, by no means as developed as the current positions of the WSL.

It must also be remembered that the first two documents were written as internal discussion documents to *change the wrong course* of the WRP. There was nothing cynical in this approach, and those who worked on the documents made serious adjustments of tone and phrasing in order to create fewest barriers to objective discussion within the WRP. We held back consciously from use of abusive and denigratory terms in relation to the WRP leadership. For this reason also we were at pains to focus on the *political roots* of the organisational abuses coming into play against the opposition, rather than piece together a superficial catalogue of bureaucracy and internal corruption.

Of course the first two documents also reflect weaknesses. They fail adequately to come to grips with the WRP's liquidation in the youth work, and the omit any mention of Healy's complete and abject failure to put forward a perspective for the struggle for women's rights. On both of these issues the WSL now has sub-committees drafting perspectives documents.

The expulsion of the opposition was carried out in the beginning of December 1974 by Healy to cut short the very rapid strides that had been taken towards an all-round critique of the leadership, and to seal off any possibility of a threat to the old leadership which had kept the SLL/WRP in its grip since the mid 1950's.

The Third Document, especially when taken together with the documents and letters in the Appendices to the book, details these expulsions and their scale. The entire WRP organisation in Oxford, Reading and Swindon was wound up, with only isolated individuals left supporting Healy.

Suddenly outside the party as a result of this were the trade union cadres developed over years of patient and principled struggle in the Cowley factories and in other unions in the Oxford area. The trade union penetration in Reading, Swindon and parts of Yorkshire achieved by the WRP was also thrown overboard in Healy's subjective defence of bureaucratic power.

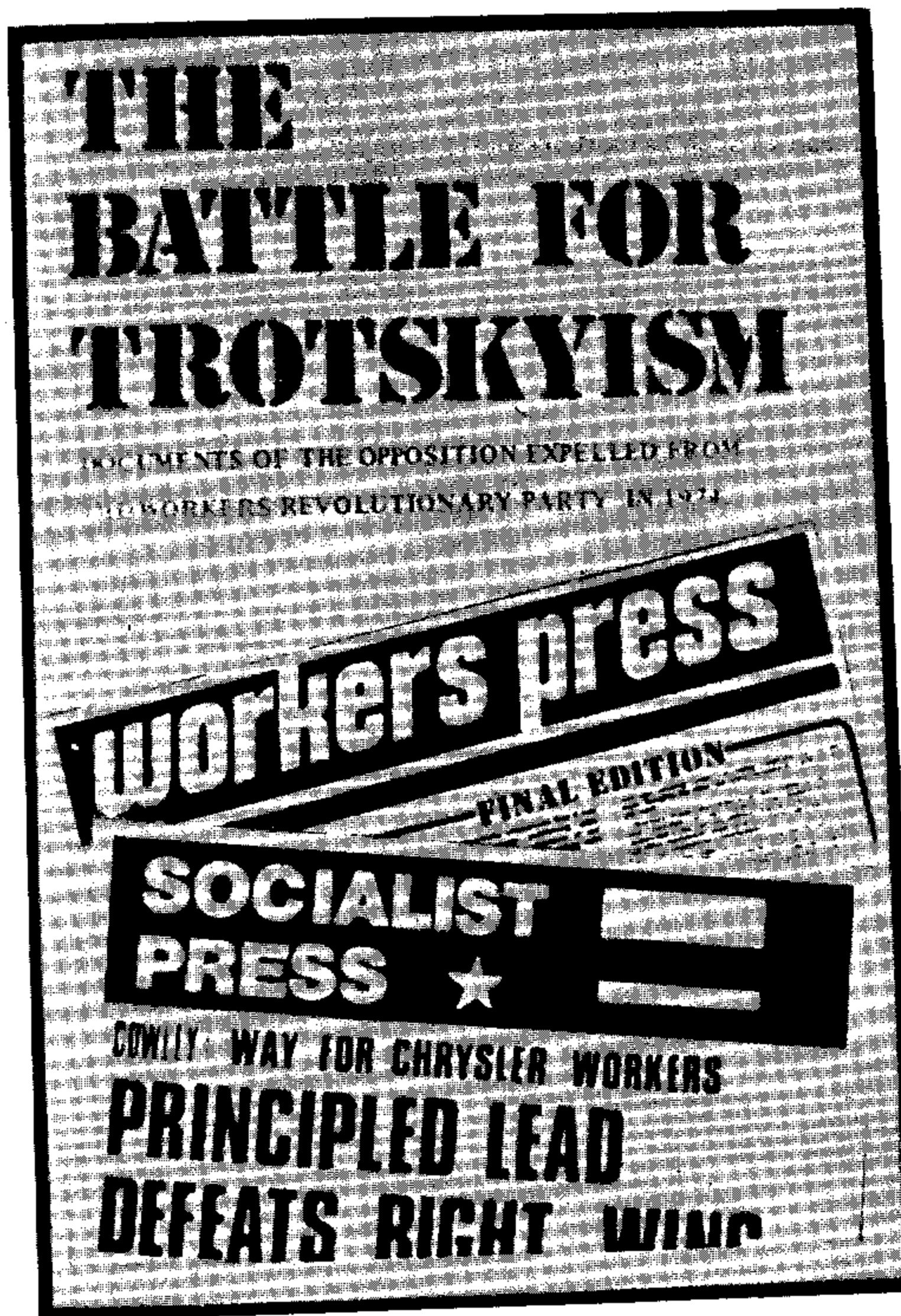
CONTINUITY

This immediately confronted the opposition comrades with a dilemma - either to immediately organise a centralised grouping, now inevitably *outside* the WRP, to ensure a continuity of the fight for leadership inside the working class - or engage first in lengthy haggling over abstract "perspectives" and "orientation" in the course of which the inherent strength of the movement and cohesion of its forces could be wasted away.

The decision taken was at once to draw together a provisional organisation - which took place the week after the 1st. Annual Conference of the WRP, and immediately to build up the necessary resources to launch an independent newspaper.

The growth and the proud record in struggle of the WSL from that day on has been a testimony to the correctness of those decisions. In its *practice* the WSL has established the possibilities opening up for a disciplined revolutionary leadership taking the method and demands of the transitional programme into the daily struggles of the working class.

While those small forces among those expelled by Healy who did *not* want to build an independent revolutionary leadership have left the movement in order to drift off into the quagmire of reformism, the WSL has gained all round in strength and programme. *The Battle for Trotskyism* shows the



Cover of the new book.

sion to produce a second document to do this.

It was Thornett's readiness to tackle what Healy plainly thought were unanswerable questions which decided him to press ahead to immediate expulsions. The WRP's Control Commission which had been working behind the scenes building up a fraudulent dossier of lying and slanderous allegations against Alan Thornett, was brought in as the means to expedite the expulsions:

"Healy organised a meeting of the Control Commission first thing the following morning, Monday 24th November. Nothing had happened between the end of the aggregate meeting and the Control Commission meeting, yet the decision was taken to overturn the decision taken by the Central Committee only two days earlier and

documents of the 1953 and 1963 splits within the Fourth International. It became plain to those involved in this as soon as we were able to look at this material objectively, that Healy had for years completely mis-educated the WRP cadres on their own history and created a completely distorted picture.

This was compounded in the publication of the selective documentary history *Trotskyism v Revisionism* by Cliff Slaughter's lying Introduction, which claimed in defiance of all the evidence that:

The letters of G. Healy show how the British leadership entered the [1953] fight in an endeavour to carry forward the building of sections of the international and to educate its cadre in the struggle

WOMENS' RIGHTS

TRIBUNALS NO ANSWER

by Gill Blackwell.

December 29th 1975 was hailed by the social democrats as 'freedom day' for the women of Britain. This was the day the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act — five years after it was passed in Parliament — became law.

Both of course, as with all reforms, are a gain for the working class, but a very hollow gain as they are conceded at the time when the massive attacks by the Labour government on behalf of capitalism on the social, health and education services hit both at workers jobs and living standards.

Women are disproportionately hit both by the cutbacks in jobs (over 70% of teachers are women, and an even larger percentage of hospital and school auxiliary workers), and by their traditional role in the family of caring for the sick and the children which means that the burden of responsibilities shed by the social services falls on them in the home.

These reforms come also at the time when the Commons Select Committee on abortion has been reconvened to do its job of severely limiting women's access to abortion facilities.

So while the capitalist state has the Labour government and the collaboration of the trade union leaders to police the working class in holding down its material conditions, it feels it safe to give into the pressures from the labour movement and liberal and petty bourgeois forces of the womens movement, and concede these legal reforms for women's rights.

BOOM

The principle of equal pay has been a part of the programme of the Labour Party for decades but it wasn't until the boom of the 1960s with the increasing strength and confidence in the working class, and the growth of the womens liberation movement, and their consequent pressure on liberal sections of the bourgeoisie to grant reforms, that Barbara Castle finally acted on the issue.

The moves by the working class in the late 60s were characterised by the Fords Dagenham strike, and there were moves in many other industries (British Leyland Cowley Assembly Plant won an equal pay agreement in 1970.)

Barbara Castle introduced the Equal Pay Act in 1970 — but under conditions whereby employers had 5 years to "make preparations". And make preparations they certainly did!

The Act provides that where a man and a woman are doing the same, or similar work, or work graded the same on a job evaluation scheme, then they should receive equal pay rates. Or where there is a collective agreement for rates with different conditions for men and women then the women's rates have to be raised to at least that of the lowest male rate.

MANOEUVRES

Now the years of manoeuvring began. The Act gave carte blanche to employers to introduce job evaluation schemes on the pretext of 'preparing for equal pay' but in reality using them as a preparation for speed up and redundancy and an opportunity to make up their own categories of skills. (Thus men and women working side by side filling paint cans are classified as 'heavy paint fillers' or light paint fillers' according to sex — and paid accordingly!)

In some cases the lowest male rates in collective agreements were dropped. The role of the trade union bureaucrats here is of course the crucial one. These manoeuvres of management could not have taken place without the active collaboration of the bureaucratic layer in the unions — which

stretches in some cases down to convenor and shop steward levels.

Their attitude is based on their acceptance of management's logic that raising women's wages will be a threat to the jobs of the male workers, and therefore the issue is seen by them as a threat to their basic support.

Hence the refusal to struggle for womens wages and conditions and their inability to bring women into active trade union membership — in some cases actually abandoning factories where women have fought for the beginnings of trade union organisation — are directly connected.

LEADERSHIP

We cannot accept their arguments that women are too concerned about their homes to bother about trade unions — without a leadership which appreciates the problems involved for women workers who are also housewives and mothers, and struggles for their wages and conditions, women will see no advantage in trade union membership.

The massive turnout on the TUC Women's Year demonstration in May last year clearly showed how women workers will act when leadership is given.

So now 5 years later the Act is law and women have won equal pay — or have they? The present hourly rate of pay on average is 66% that of the male average rate! This is mainly due to the concentration of women workers in the public services and in traditionally low paid industries such as clothing and light engineering.

Again the role of the trade union leaders here is vital. Last year we saw the spectacle of the employer hiring a special train to take the workers of his mill, which he was closing down to Parliament to lobby and call for import controls — led by their trade union leaders and the local 'left' MPs.

These leaders unquestioningly accept the argument of the employer — that he "cannot afford" decent wages and conditions, because of "competition" from cheap labour abroad.

The Sex Discrimination Act legislates against employers treating a woman (or a man) differently "simply because she is a woman" (or he a man). It deals also with sex discrimination in education, and discrimination against married people.

However vast areas are left out — social security and pensions for example. And again the concession is made at this time when the vast cutbacks in education and social services serve very effectively in preventing mothers from getting jobs.

This act has been described as the "most complicated piece of legislation this century" — which adequately describes the numerous loopholes it contains. There are also ominous signs, as in the case of the Newcastle headmaster who says that he will now cane girls as well as boys in the spirit of equality, that the law is being used to equalise oppression rather than rights.



Barbara Castle, NCCL



Radiographers march for more pay in 1974 - majority of hospital staff are women workers.

As communists of course we fight for the fullest democracy in bourgeois society to break down barriers and divisions within the working class, and bring out more clearly the class and social conflicts between workers and capitalists. We know that while we fight to force concessions, even the fullest political equality under capitalism cannot emancipate working class women. For this we need to remove the woman's social subordination within the family.

FAMILY

This task requires a fight against capitalism, to which the family is integral. It is *this* which the union bureaucrats and Labour 'lefts' cannot undertake, given their reformist commitment to defend capitalism.

The bureaucracy's abject failure to fight for women's interests in the unions stems from their acceptance of the main root of women's oppression — the family — and the bourgeois notion that their place 'is in the home', and that in times of high unemployment they should be the 'first out' of a job.

There are moves being made to remove the protective legislation which prevents employers forcing women workers to do night shift work or extra long working weeks, on the bogus argument that a woman must have the 'right' to choose her own hours of work, and that now men and women are "equal" they should have "equal" conditions.

These are dangerous arguments and must be seen as playing directly into the employers' hands. The aim of course must be to equalise rights — male workers also should have more protective laws covering their conditions, and no worker should have to work night shift. In this sense there is a common fight of men and women workers against the employers which the employers wish to prevent.

The most dangerous aspect about the two pieces of legislation is in their enforcement procedures — the industrial tribunals. These are the same tribunals as those used for unfair dismissal cases and their sole function is to separate workers off into individual cases and isolate them.

They comprise a legal expert, a CBI nominee and a TUC nominee — usually a bureaucrat nearing retirement age (the fee is £20 a day).

The odds therefore are heavily stacked against a worker from the start and anyway the tribunal can only award compensation if the case is proved against the employer — the worker is still without a job, or equal pay conditions.

The low levels of compensation and distant vague threats of criminal proceedings for going in breach of the tribunal's decision are hardly deterrents against an employer who is determined not to

concede equal pay or employ women.

The only weapon the working class has against these employers is that of united action.

Those elements within the womens movement who are planning to train advocates to function as advisers for women taking their cases to these tribunals are on a very dangerous path, and they play directly into the hands of the trade union officials who suggest this way in order to head off a struggle.

The Communist Party joins these elements by boosting the credibility of the reformist NCCL organisation, which is advocating this plan, by printing uncritically NCCL statements in their womens journal *Link* (Winter issue).

These tribunals are a diversion away from the trade union movement, and must be recognised as such. Those left groups like IMG which simply turn to flaws in the Act or query whether it will be implemented have refused to confront the need to fight these tribunals.

CONTROL

The gains of these Acts will only be felt by women workers if the workers' movement itself fights to control their implementation. The tribunals must be boycotted and no illusions placed in the functioning of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Next Saturday's National Assembly on Unemployment called by the Greater London Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions will have more than 2000 delegates in attendance.

Such bodies as the Scottish TUC, various union executives, shop stewards committees, Labour Parties and others have elected delegates.

The strong response follows on the 20,000 strong unofficial demonstration against unemployment held last year. Like last year's demonstration, the TUC has not supported and the response comes precisely because of their lack of fight over jobs.

The organisers, however, showed at their press conference last Friday that their policies are just as bankrupt as those of the TUC. They offer no way forward to workers faced with the threat of redundancies or closure, nor any policies for the unemployed themselves.

Instead, in Trade Union branches, sub-committees should be elected, composed of both men and women workers, to take up fight on the special problems facing women workers, as part of overall fight against the employer.

On such committees we will fight for these problems to be seen as linked completely to transitional demands — equal pay for equal work, for instance, must be linked with the fight for a sliding scale of wages to defend living standards of all workers.

The only way equal opportunity can be established in practice is not by pleading to a tribunal, but through the fight for workers control of manning levels, hiring and firing, as part of which trade union sub-committees must demand information of all applicants to make sure no discrimination is exercised by employer.

At the same time women workers must be sought to play a full and leading role in the struggle of the working class against the laws and the public spending cuts. In these struggles they will learn political lessons necessary for the building of new working class leadership.

* The recent principled action by the pro-abortion members of this committee in resigning and therefore drawing attention to the extremely reactionary nature of the majority, is to be supported, as the demonstration called for April 3rd in London demanding for abortion rights.

Alf Lomas, secretary of the London Co-op Political Committee said: "Instead of restriction wages, demand for goods should be increased to bring down the jobless total. Cuts in public expenditure should be reversed and the expenditure of capital should be curtailed to provide money for Britain's economy."

The call to "expand the economy" is precisely the way that the TUC originally argued in going into the social contract. It is an entirely reformist path and can only lead to betrayal.

The politics of the main organisers of the Assembly are those of the Communist Party which using it as a safety valve to avoid any fight in factories in which they dominate.

The response to the Assembly is an indication of the feeling for fight. That is why it is correct to attend and put forward alternative policies that give direction to the militants who want to fight to defend jobs.

These are the transitional demands that WSL members will be fighting for.

In February 1917 three days of street fighting broke out in Petrograd followed by a mutiny of the troops and a virtual seizure of power (betrayed only by the social democrat leaders) of the city, and soon the whole country, by the masses.

The Tsar abdicated, the provisional government and soviets were set up and the struggle between the workers and peasants on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other which was to result in October in the second revolution of 1917 was set in motion.

Decisive in the successful seizure of power in October, however, was the struggle for leadership which began in February, although in many senses, of course, it had begun long before.

"SPONTANEITY"

Liberal observers have always stressed what they saw as the spontaneity of workers' actions in the February events. For Trotsky however:

"History was picking up the threads of the revolutionary threads broken by the war and tying them in a knot." "In every tavern, in the military hospital, at the transfer stations, even in the depopulated villages, the molecular work of revolutionary thought was in progress... Elements of experience, criticism, initiative, self-sacrifice, seeped down through the mass, and created, invisibly to a superficial glance but no less decisively, an inner mechanic of the revolutionary movement as a conscious process." This thought process was scientific. Not only because it was to a considerable degree fertilised with Marxism, but still more because it was ever nourishing itself on the living experience of the masses."

The living experience of the masses in Petrograd in February 1917 was sufficiently severe to have produced a general rebelliousness and tenseness in the city which was alarming the authorities, even though the exact moment of the uprising on the 23rd caught them, and the left groups, by surprise. Food and coal were in extremely short supply, prices were rising rapidly and severe restrictions had been imposed on workers' meetings and even on their changing jobs.

On February 21st a lock-out had been imposed at the Putilov Works after a section of the workers had demanded a 50% wage increase and the next day most of the workers there were out on strike. There was only 10 days' supply of flour left in the city, and the daily queues a mile long and four deep were particularly outraged at the rumours of rationing, the prospect of the authorities even attempting to control eating habits.

WOMEN'S DAY

February 23rd was international women's day and demonstrations were planned. Striking had been discussed, but the Bolsheviks for instance had advised against it with their women's sections mainly because they feared that undisciplined street fighting would ensue. In fact they were quite annoyed when in spite of this decision women textile workers came out in force, sending off messengers to other factories and soon joined by the bread queues who had been told there would be no bread that day.

"Bread!" they shouted. "Down with autocracy!" and "Down with the war!" as they marched on the municipal duma demanding food. 10,000 workers were on strike that day and half the Petrograd industrial workforce, 240,000 workers, the next. Transport was at a standstill and school students on the streets.

Trotsky brilliantly describes the inevitable stage in any revolution when the masses began to win over the soldiers. Most of the soldiers were peasants of course, youngsters, in reserve units straight from the countryside, with little training. Moreover, the authorities, who were doubtless unaware of the scale of the uprising, the Tsarina, for instance, describing the crowds

orders that the crowds should not be shot at, because of the bad impression it might create on the Allies and also because of the shortage of ammunition. Also, the demands for bread appealed to the soldiers' class loyalties in a way political slogans such as 'Down with the autocracy' would not. Even so, the crowds themselves approached the soldiers in a new way.

SURROUNDED

The masses tried to get near them, look into their eyes, surround them with their hot breath. A great role is played by women workers..... They go up to the cordons more boldly than the men, take hold of their rifles, beseech, almost command: Put down your bayonets - join us! Even the Cossacks, 'those age-old subduers and punishers', when ordered to charge into the demonstrators, held their horses steady while the masses dived under their bellies.

By the third day the city headquarters had lost contact with the greater part of the capital. Police stations had been sacked, individual officers killed, a great many had fled. At this stage the government sharpened its counter-attack. Demonstrators were fired on, 100 or so political activists arrested and there was talk of calling off the strike. 'We must lay it down as a general rule for those days that the higher the leaders, the further they lagged behind', writes Trotsky.

Only one of the revolutionary groups, the Mezhrayonka, close to the Bolsheviks, had so far even issued a leaflet. It called on workers to fraternise with soldiers and appealed to the soldiers to come over to the people. But it was at that moment that the second vital stage in the February revolution was beginning, the mutiny of the troops. Initial approaches by workers to barracks had been met by officer gunfire, but on the 27th, largely in revulsion no doubt at the shootings they had been ordered to make on the previous day when 40 demonstrators were killed and another 100 injured, the first company mutinied and shot its commander.

BARRACKS

"Having burned their bridges behind them the Volinsti hastened to broaden the base of the insurrection" says Trotsky. They rushed off to the other barracks and were soon distributing arms, disarming the police, freeing political prisoners from gaol and spreading the revolution of the less active parts of the city. That evening Khabalov, 'the formidably empowered, but not at all formidable' military commander in Petrograd was arrested.

It was also during the 27th that the Soviet was formed, part of the Tauride Palace, the building where the Duma sat, but also close to several barracks and to the militant Vyborg district, being taken over as the revolutionary centre.

Leftist Menshevik intellectuals, realising that the uprising had virtually taken command of the city, went first to the Tauride Palace to establish a headquarters.

They were soon joined by newly released political prisoners, members of the moderate Labour

Groups of the War Industry Committees, and formed the Provisional Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers Deputies. The Bolsheviks had always been implacably opposed to worker participation in industry - initiated by WICs. They described the Labour Groups as 'lackeys of imperialism, helping war profiteers to exploit workers in the war industries.'

The Bolsheviks were at that point concentrating on waging the battle of the streets with the workers and soldiers and the same was true of the Mezhrayonka (the Petrograd inter-district committee to which Trotsky belonged, These were Bolshevik in all but name, and joined with them in August 1917, possibly not before simply for security reasons. In February this group had been putting out leaflets calling 'Down with the autocracy, Long live the revolutionary government, Down with the war!')

One Bolshevik, Shlyapnikov, was at the Tauride Palace, however, and he managed to delay the sitting of the Soviet until 9.30pm, in order to give the workers deputies time to be elected and to arrive.

At his suggestion the main socialist parties, the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks were allowed three extra deputies. A Praesidium was elected, Chkeidze (a Menshevik) and Kerensky (a Social Revolutionary) both members of the Duma, Skobolov (also a Menshevik), and three secretaries.

DAILY PAPER

Military and Food Commissions were appointed to protect the revolution in the city and distribute food. It was agreed to produce a daily paper *Izvestiya* and this responsibility fell to Bonch-Bruевич, a Bolshevik with experience of organising a newspaper in the 1905 revolution.

In the first edition he included a Bolshevik manifesto, greatly to the anger of the Soviet leaders. It called for a provisional revolutionary government, whereas the Soviet leaders were calling for a Constituent Assembly.

Copies of *Izvestiya* were distributed all over Russia, thanks to the railway system which was kept running throughout the next few weeks as revolution seized the whole country and workers and soldiers threw out functionaries of the Tsar's government.

The telecommunications system by contrast broke down completely, causing great confusion among the remaining old authorities.

CLOSED

The Petrograd Duma was closed on February 27th, but no reinforcements were sent to Petrograd for several days because the Tsar refused to take news of the uprising seriously. Nor did the military commanders in Petrograd act with authority to replenish supplies during the night or to build up the morale of the troops.

In fact 'The fabric of the regime had completely decayed; there was not a living thread left', says Trotsky. The generals themselves were half expecting the overthrow.

When the Tsar himself set out to Petrograd and called up additional companies, their arrival was prevented by the railway workers

THE RUSSIAN



Part Six: THE FEBRUARY

By Pru Chamberlayne

and insurgent soldiers. On one train the officers' carriage was split off from the soldiers' and left stranded while the troops were hastily told of events in Petrograd and persuaded to turn back.

Another train ran out of water, another broke down, another had to be diverted. Only on this journey, after all his generals including those on the front line had begged the Tsar to abdicate, did he do so, on March 2nd.

Meanwhile, the bourgeois and liberal leaders who for years had been expecting the end of the Tsar's regime and who on several occasions had drawn up lists of leaders for the new government, now found themselves quite unable to act decisively.

Rodzyanko and Milyukov, president of the Duma and leaders of the Kadets respectively, were terrified of the authority of the Tsar and the fate that would befall them if he were to regain power.

On the other hand they were nervous of a revolutionary overthrow by the masses and knew they themselves must take command to prevent this.

ON A PLATE

In fact, power was being handed to them on a plate - the workers and soldiers were coming to the Tauride calling on the Duma to take power, but they were still stalling.

Only Kerensky had gone out to welcome them, demagogically calling on them to arrest the ministers, seize the post offices and telecommunications, occupy railway stations and government offices.

When Rodzyanko, by contrast, addressed the mutineering soldiers who were bedecked with red ribbons and proclaiming their readiness to die for the revolution to the last drop of their blood, he addressed them as 'brethren', and told them not to believe the stories that they had mutinied, rather they were patriotic soldiers asking for an efficient government to 'save the motherland'.

TENDENCIES

The Duma included many political tendencies, some maintaining that it should take power in the name of the Tsar, some, like Milyukov and Rodzyanko, trying to engineer a monarchist coup d'etat. Kerensky as a Social

that a republic be set up, with the Duma sharing power with the Soviet.

This then was the classic situation of a bourgeoisie too weak to make its own revolution, only coming to power on the shoulders of the proletariat and peasantry, in whose hands the possibility then lay of sweeping through the historical stage of bourgeois rule to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The revolution of 1905 had brought Trotsky and then Lenin to realise that, particularly in countries late in overthrowing feudalism and in entering the capitalist stage of development, the Marxist 'stages' of history might not be so clearly separated and rather that that change might occur in a process of permanent revolution.

The difference between Trotsky and Lenin until about 1915 or so was that although Lenin saw that the bourgeoisie would need the proletariat to come to power and that bourgeois democratic rights would only be achieved under a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat, he considered that the overthrow of capitalist relations of production (and therefore the achievement of socialism) would lie well beyond that stage when industrial production was much more advanced.

He thought however that the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat would act as a great spur to revolution in the more advanced capitalist countries and that this in turn would speed up the process of historical change in Eastern Europe.

PEASANTRY

Trotsky, by contrast, argued from the beginning that permanent revolution would mean passing straight on from the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat to the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, even in an economically backward country, provided of course that the peasantry were won over to the proletariat.

By 1916 Lenin's views were changing, but his writings proclaiming the possibility of the revolution in Russia had not been seen there. There the deeply embedded assumption among all socialists was that just as the autocracy would inevitably fall so



REVOLUTION



Mass demonstration in Petrograd, March 1917.

REVOLUTION

established, however important a role the proletariat and peasantry played in that.

How deeply held these beliefs were became clear from Lenin's position of total isolation, particularly among intellectuals, on his return to Petrograd and in his fight within the Bolshevik Party for the acceptance of the April Theses, which repudiated the call for a parliamentary republic and called instead for a republic of soviets of workers, farm workers and peasants.

These orthodox views of historical change were certainly strongly held by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries who were in the leadership of the Petrograd Soviet. These "leaders", in their petty bourgeois fashion, were actually terrified of the independent power of the working class.

CRUMBLING

Despite the obvious crumbling of the autocracy; despite the obvious incompetence and indecisiveness of the liberals and bourgeoisie; despite the obvious strength of the workers and soldiers who were in virtual command of the city, occupying the state bank, the Treasury, the Mint and the Post Office, these leaders of the Soviet (which was the only body from which the main sectors of workers and soldiers would take orders) were "looking around with alarm to see if they could find a real boss!"

As Trotsky says, they were "The petty bourgeois democrats and socialists of the Sukhanov type, journalists and politicians of the new middle caste, who had taught the masses that the bourgeoisie is the enemy but themselves feared more than anything else to release the masses from the control of that enemy."

On March 1st when the leaders of the Soviet met with the Duma committee to discuss the conditions under which the soviets would accept the new provisional government, the true extent to which they would betray the masses was revealed.

TERRIFIED

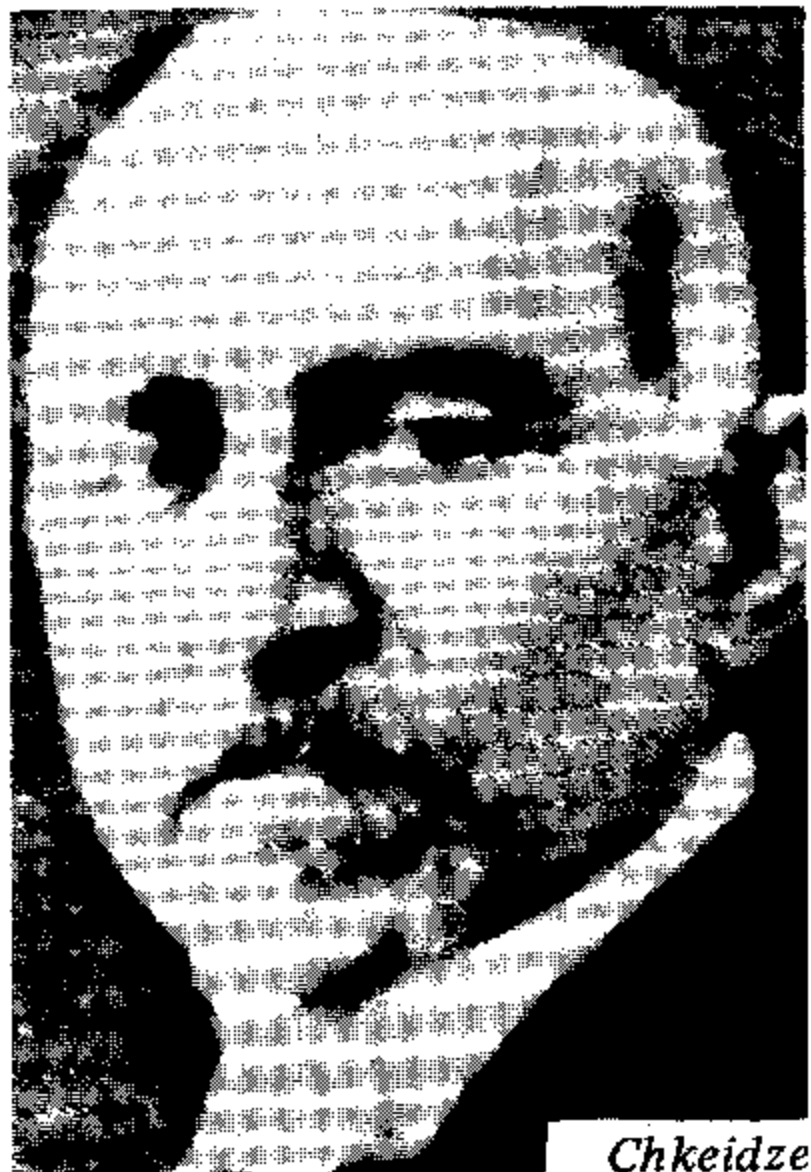
Milyukov was terrified by the demands he assumed the Soviet would make; he and all the members of the Duma were quite expecting to be arrested by the Soviet any moment.

But he found himself faced by

an equally fearful set of representatives, who made no mention of the main demands workers had been rallying around throughout the war and indeed long before that: the 8-hour day, land reform, peace, the republic.

The only demands put were for freedom of political action for political parties, including an amnesty for political prisoners. The calling of an elected Constituent Assembly was also agreed to, but no date fixed.

No wonder Milyukov looked relieved and pleased as these leaders gave their agreement that he should now proclaim the establishment of the Provisional Government 'with the agreement of the Soviet' on such minimal demands! No doubt he was also delighted when Kerensky, who regarded himself as the paladin of the revolution (and who had declared he would only maintain his seat on the Duma if doing so did not conflict with his position as president of the Soviet, although he never attended it), agreed to be made Milyukov's



Chkheidze

Minister of Justice.

Thus the Duma was given a 'left' cover. For despite his revolutionary talk Kerensky was an out and out reformist. He believed that Socialists should take part in the Duma so that all shades of political opinion would find expression at the centre of the government, that the Soviet should act as a watchdog over the Duma and only assume control if necessary.

Chkheidze by contrast refused a ministerial post at the direction of the executive committee of the Soviet who voted 13:8 that socialists should remain unhampered by belonging to bourgeois organisations to fight for the next stage of



Lenin

revolutionary change; and that the only participation of socialists at this stage should rest in winning certain guarantees.

By accepting the Provisional Government on these terms, Trotsky says, "The Compromisers betrayed the confidence of the masses by calling to power those against whom they themselves had been elected."

ALLIANCE

In effect the Social Revolutionaries, whose main base lay in the peasantry and therefore in the army and the soldier delegates to the Soviet, formed an alliance with the landlords on the question of land, and the Mensheviks, who predominated among workers' representatives, formed a block with the industrialists and with bankers.

"In voting for such leaders the proletariat and peasantry erected a partition wall between themselves and their own aims. They could not move forward at all without knocking into this wall erected by themselves and knocking it over."

Thus it was that with official support of the Soviet (only 15 out of 900 or so delegates voted against the Soviet-Duma agreement), the Russian Government declared its promise to "unswervingly carry out the agreements with our allies". Tsarist officials were left at their posts so as not to offend anyone unnecessarily; and Rasputin ministers, although in prison, were voted a pension.

The workers and soldiers of Petrograd, although seriously impeded, were not confined to the cowardly betrayals of the Soviet leaders. There was great anger when the Soviet appointed Military Commissioner, Mstislavsky, agreed to merge his command with that of Colonel Engelhardt who had been appointed by the Duma.

To some extent there was an alliance of interest between the Duma and the Soviet in that both were frightened of the danger of Tsarist units being kept from the front and also of the officers in Petrograd organising resistance to the new order. There was therefore a common interest in disciplining the soldiers, who on February 27th and 28th were still ransacking and setting fire to police stations, courts and government buildings.

THREATS

Colonel Engelhardt issued a warning, which included the threat of executions, against officers confiscating arms from soldiers and the Duma agreed to a pledge from the Soviet that no units should be transferred out of Petrograd.

The soldiers themselves were not satisfied with these "guarantees" however and marched to the Duma demanding the signing of an order which would give them not just the same political rights as civilians but also the right to elect their own officers. When refused this by the Duma they marched to the Soviet where their demands, General Order No.1, were adopted.

This order was included in *Izvestiya* as a supplement and consequently distributed and used as a model throughout Russia. So strong was the pressure from the garrisons that the Soviet was forced to accept it or lose support and thus, against the inclinations of the Soviet leaders themselves, was set up an irreconcilable conflict between the Soviet and the Duma.

On March 5th the Soviet began to call for an end of the strike and a return to work. Workers however, led by the Vyborg district, refused to do so unless on the basis of an 8-hour day and increased pay, and extended the strike for 20 days until March 25th.

DIRECT TALKS

This forced the Soviet to negotiate directly with the employers over the heads of the Duma and the demands were won. Contrary, therefore, to the demands of the reformist Menshevik and Social Revolutionary leaderships that the Soviet should act as a watchdog and pressure group on the Duma interpreting the will of the masses to the government, a state of dual power existed in which the masses were by their own independent action forcing fundamental changes.

The Bolsheviks, only a handful of whose Petrograd central executive committee were in the city at the time of these events, were at first weakly represented on the Soviet.

Their influence had been much greater than their numbers indicate however and they had considerable strength in the Vyborg district, for instance, the working class district from which the uprising had started. It was the Bolsheviks who in the first three days of street fighting had opposed the call to arms of the masses, arguing rather that to prevent confrontation between soldiers and workers, soldiers should be called on to hand over their arms.

The part played by Shlyapnikov in ensuring greater worker participation and also the representation of soldiers on the Soviet and the part played by Bonch-Bruевич in using *Izvestiya* to circulate throughout Russia both the Bolshevik manifesto and the soldiers' General Order No.1, have already been mentioned.

The Bolshevik manifesto which was probably written by the Vyborg District Committee a few days earlier before Milyukov's Provisional Government was formed, called on the working class and the revolutionary army to create a provisional revolutionary government and to nationalise land, win the 8-hour day and call for a Constituent Assembly, on the four-point formula of direct, equal, secret and universal ballot and for 'merciless struggle'.

FURIOUS

No wonder the Soviet leaders were furious when this document was reproduced in *Izvestiya* without discussion. But the fact that nothing was done to recall it or

move Bonch-Bruевич from his position also showed the popularity of such demands. When on March 2nd only 15 Soviet delegates voted against the Soviet-Duma agreement some of the Bolsheviks proposed starting a new uprising of the workers' boroughs against the government.

The leaders agreed, but on the appointed day failed to appear.

The Bolsheviks also passed a resolution describing the government as "at bottom counter-revolutionary and with which no agreement could be reached". Some Bolsheviks were calling 'All Power to the Soviets', whereas others, such as Shlyapnikov, were advocating, like many Mensheviks, that socialists should seize power without installing socialism immediately. Some, like Bonch-Bruевич, were adopting a national-defencist position on the war.

CONFLICT

There clearly was a conflict within the Bolsheviks between the party in the Vyborg district which was demanding 'All Power to the Soviets' and the leadership of the central committee. The first issue of *Pravda* announced, "The fundamental problem is to establish a democratic government", clearly leaving the struggle for socialism as a separate and later goal.

When Kamenev and Stalin arrived from Siberia and assumed control of the Party and of *Pravda*, official Bolshevism lurched even further to the right. Under them even outright opposition of the war, always an unshakeable plank of the party before, was dropped. Instead, they called on the Provisional Government to: "make an attempt to induce the warring countries to open immediate negotiations ... and until then every man remains at his fighting post."

INDIGNATION

These positions caused bewilderment and indignation in the factories where workers demanded the resignation of the editors from Siberia. Kamenev's and Stalin's policies were also in direct conflict with the telegram sent by Lenin on March 6th: 'Our tactic: absolute lack of confidence; no support to the new government; suspect Kerensky especially; immediate elections to the Petrograd Duma; no rapprochement with other parties.'

By contrast, Kamenev's view was "What purpose to speed things up when events are taking place at such a rapid rate?" These questions of leadership and perspective had to be fought out to pave the way for the October revolution.



Kerensky

IMG ATTACKS BOLSHEVISM

The *Red Weekly*, paper of the International Marxist Group, has published a series of polemical articles challenging the political positions of the Workers Socialist League. We welcome the start of such an open discussion, and publish here the second of our articles in reply to the points the IMG raise.

The editorial board of the IMG's paper 'Red Weekly' has over several weeks been twisting the history of Bolshevism and Trotskyism in their series of polemics against the Workers Socialist League.

While we welcome the fact that the IMG have ventured into print in reply to some of the differences on principle and programme that divide the WSL and the IMG, we can only deplore the fact that to do so they feel obliged to distort the history of Bolshevism from the very beginnings.

Our last edition carried a reply to the fraudulent "united front" conception put forward by the IMG, and the linked issue of that group's refusal or inability to take a verbal programme into the struggles of the working class movement.

Now we will concentrate on the more developed attacks on Marxism contained in the *Red Weekly* series entitled *Faction or Party?*

The first of these articles attempts to hurl the continuity of Lenin's struggle for the Bolshevik Party out of the window: the "bond abuses and twists the vision of Trotsky in the light of the defeat of the German working class by Hitler in 1933 that a new, Fourth International must be formed."

But in the third of these articles the purpose of the IMG's revisions of these principled questions is made more openly: they want to "cover over and avoid serious political discussion on the split in the Fourth International in 1953. In laying the basis for this, they attempt to prune the history of Lenin's fight for democratic centralism to make it seem to fit in their own history and their opportunist inner-party time."

COVER

The IMG obviously feel obliged to provide a cover for the so-called "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USFI) of which they are a part. This body is of course to all intents and purposes two bodies, one section of which supports the majority Secretariat, and the other grouped round the Socialist Workers Party (which is prevented by US law from formal affiliation).

It will come as no surprise to those militants who have observed the continuous public divisions within that "United" international body (the latest display being the SWP's pacifist slogan "Get the troops out of Angola", clashing with the USFI majority's call for "Victory to the MPLA") to find the IMG now telling us in all seriousness that the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were in reality a single party until 1912 - and that the split between them was organisational, not political! Our article in this issue will deal centrally with this particular question.

Firstly, in case anyone thinks we are distorting the IMG, we will quote extensively from *Red Weekly* (2.76):

"No Bolshevik Party was created in 1903. What was created was the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Furthermore, not merely was no Bolshevik party formed at this time, but Lenin was relentlessly opposed to any split into two parties. The struggle after 1903 was a political and ideological faction struggle against the Mensheviks and simultaneously a struggle for a united Party against what he termed the 'anarchistic' actions of the Mensheviks, which threatened the Party with a split"...

"Furthermore the actual split into two different parties through the expulsion of various elements did not take place because of the Mensheviks' political views [!], but because of a rejection and violation of the organisational principles of the Party with a split"...

the Party . . ."

If we were to accept this point of view, then to call themselves members of a revolutionary party, people would obviously need no agreement on programme, strategy or tactics - just as long as they adhered to some form of "organisational unity".

This is quite obviously a case of special pleading on behalf of the IMG, within which only the most notional political unity exists.

But it is worth examining in some detail the real relationship between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks during the period of "unity" referred to by *Red Weekly*.

The division first emerged in the open in 1903. Lenin, when analysing the historical

So as far as Lenin is concerned in retrospect therefore, (though for a number of reasons he may have made varying pronouncements in the heat of the struggle), the Bolsheviks after 1903 were a distinct party grouping which at times made temporary, formal unity arrangements with the Mensheviks.

Zinoviev in his *History of the Bolshevik Party* makes the same point at length. In describing the 1903 Conference he concludes:

"The Congress closed with a split. The Central Committee was elected by the Bolsheviks alone . . . The Menshevik delegates set off for Russia and formed their own special 'bureau' which at once declared a boycott of the Bolshevik

party conferences - from the north, the south, Moscow and other areas - put forward a plan for creating in Russia a 'Bureau of Committees of the Party Majority' as a counterweight to the Menshevik Central Committee. Once an all-Russian central organisation of Bolsheviks had been founded in this way and came into direct conflict with the Menshevik Central Committee, Comrade Lenin gave his final agreement to an organisationally separate party . . ." (p. 113).

This "organisationally separate party" went on to call on their own behalf the Third Congress of the RSDLP - which the Mensheviks refused to participate in!

So "united" was the RSDLP at this point that Bolsheviks and Mensheviks each had separate, simultaneous conferences in different cities, both taking completely different political positions.

It was not until the ebb of the revolutionary wave after 1905 and increasing mass pressure from working class supporters towards 'unity' that the joint Unification Congress at Stockholm was convened in 1906.

OUTVOTED

All-round political conditions were unfavourable for an open division at this point, and the Bolsheviks were outvoted at the Congress. But there is no very promising material for the IMG "unifiers" to pick up from this turn. As Zinoviev points out:

"... the Unification Congress did not in practice re-unite the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in any way and we left Stockholm in fact as two separate factions. . . But at the same time the Bolsheviks had set up during the Congress their own internal and, for the party, illegal, Central Committee . . . It was a situation where two parties were seemingly operating from within the structure of one". (emphasis added).

On the 1907 Congress again Zinoviev wrote that "this forced marriage with the Mensheviks" could not last, and "the Bolsheviks had to be independently organised". The development amongst the Mensheviks of a growing tendency which fought to liquidate the illegal party apparatus in order to move closer to the 'liberal' bourgeoisie sharpened this political conflict:

"After the 1908 Conference, and more especially after the 1910 plenum, we Leninist Bolsheviks said to ourselves that we could not work together with the liquidator Mensheviks and that we were only awaiting a convenient moment to break finally from them . . ."

CONSCIOUS

The IMG of course knows this very well, and there is conscious deception when they use a 1911 quotation from Lenin to back their case. The quote comes from Lenin's Introduction to a pamphlet by Kamenev which was revealingly titled - "Two Parties"! In the article, Lenin writes-

"Kamenev has proved conclusively that in point of fact [Lenin's emphasis] the liquidationist group represents a separate party, not the RSDLP Party. His evidence sums up the experience primarily of the years 1909-11, which confirmed the resolution of December 1908." (Collected Works, Volume 17 p225)

What then, about Lenin's repeated calls to unity, vaunted by the IMG? The fight for unity carried on by Lenin was inseparable from the fight for clarity on real differences. He attacked the "one view on unity" which he described as:



(Top) SWP 1968 demo demands "Withdraw troops from Vietnam" while (bottom) IMG calls for "Victory to the NLF".

development of the Bolshevik Party (writing after the Revolution with rather more background knowledge than *Red Weekly*) was in no doubt:

"As a current of political thought and as a party, Bolshevism has existed since 1903". (*Left Wing Communism*, p8).

and again: "In 1908 the 'left' Bolsheviks were expelled from our Party for stubbornly refusing to understand the necessity of participating in a most reactionary 'parliament'" (p19).

POLITICAL

Surely, IMG comrades, this passage refers to a political split, in which ultra-lefts within the Bolshevik Party were expelled?

Lenin is even clearer on the question of "unity" with the Mensheviks:

"Between 1903 and 1912, there were periods of several years in which we were formally united with the Mensheviks in a single Social-democratic Party, but we never stopped our ideological and political struggle against them as opportunists and vehicles of bourgeois influence on the proletariat" (p55).

"[placing] in the forefront the "reconciliation" of "given persons, groups and institutions". The identity of their views on Party work, on the policy of that work is a secondary matter. One should try to keep silent about differences of opinion and not to elucidate their causes, their significance, their objective conditions. . . . Live and let live. This is philistine "conciliation" which inevitably leads to sectarian diplomacy". (Collected Works, Vol 16, pp 209-19)

This of course rings very loud with parallels in today's IMG and USFI. The other view, subscribed to by Lenin, was that:

"The process of unification does not necessarily take place among "given persons, groups and institutions", but irrespective of given persons, subordinating them, rejecting those of them who do not understand or who do not want to understand the requirements of objective development, promoting and enlisting new persons not belonging to those "given", effecting changes, reshufflings and regroupings within the old factions, trends and divisions". (ibid)

In the years of reaction, the reunification of the two wings of the RSDLP was also clearly understood by Lenin as the necessary step for the preservation of a cadre for the future:

"The proletariat is now confronted with the elementary task of preserving its proletarian party, which is hostile both to the reaction and to counter-revolutionary liberalism". (Collected Works, Vol 16 pp 387-92)

NUCLEUS

Of course if Lenin had not regarded the Bolshevik faction as operating as a party there would have been no nucleus around which forces from Menshevism could have been won.

Indeed to look back over these turbulent years of "faction" struggle we can only draw the conclusion of Lenin - that for certain periods a formal agreement for unity existed, while for the most part the two tendencies organised themselves with or without the name as opposed parties.

This too was the verdict of the SWP leader James P. Cannon, in 1953 when he drew the lessons from the Bolshevik experience as part of the fight against the liquidationist politics of the International Secretariat:



Zinoviev

"The [workers] sometimes presented the simplest argument: the more of us the better. It was only with difficulty, and by learning the lessons that history taught, that the working masses digested the fact that there are situations when to split is the sacred obligation of a revolution-ary"

"Didn't he [Lenin] organise a faction in 1903, the Bolshevik faction, and didn't that remain a hard and fast faction all the way up to the revolution? Not entirely. The faction of Lenin, which split with the Mensheviks in 1903, and subsequently had negotiations with them and a various times united with them in a single party, but nevertheless remained a faction, was a faction only in its outward form.

In the essence of the matter, the nucleus of the Bolshevik Party of the October Revolution was the Lenin Bolshevik faction. It was a party. And the proof of the fact that it was a party and not an exclusive faction of Lenin was that within the Bolshevik faction there were different tendencies. There were left wing and right wing Bolsheviks. At times some of them openly polemicised with Lenin. The Bolsheviks even had splits and reunifications among themselves..... Lenin's faction was in reality a party." (*Speeches to the Party* p. 186, emphasis added).

Cannon sums up the position quite clearly. But the IMG writers know this already! Why then have they put together a wrong position in their article *Faction or Party?* Because the IMG leaders are quite determined to separate organisational questions from politics.

SELF CONTRADICTIONARY

To attempt to justify this, they use arguments which patently contradict their own case. They cite Lenin to "prove" that the split was on organisational questions:

"It was precisely after the Plenary meeting of 1910 that the above mentioned chief publications of the liquidators Nasha Zarya and

Mensheviks as the vehicle of bourgeois ideology in the workers' movement, even though the first expression of that appeared to be a simple difference of wording on the conditions of membership! Lenin saw clearly that a tendency which sought to "make Party members of all and sundry" was a political tendency hostile to democratic centralist revolutionary leadership.

SENSITIVE

Here, of course, we touch on a sensitive area for the IMG, noted on the one hand for their enthusiasm to "make a Party member of all and sundry", and on the other for the repeated public divisions on programme and policy amongst their members.

Democratic centralism, we remind the IMG, is *not* just a method of giving tendencies faction rights and facilitating endless debate. It is an organisational method to ensure a discipline in the activities of the party, subordinating the individual to the party majority, welding together a combat party equipped to lead mass movements of the working class.

This side of democratic centralism is clearly foreign to the IMG who daily make mockery of the Transitional Programme's cogent formulation:

"Without inner democracy - no education. Without discipline - no revolutionary action. The inner structure of the Fourth International is based on the principles of democratic centralism; full freedom in discussion, complete unity in action."

In abandoning this fight for discipline the IMG become *unable* to train and harden a firm revol-

begin with a single programme. But it is bound by its very nature to become hospitable to different and even contradictory programmes. Nothing is going to be done about it in the realm of action anyway, so why get excited?

The Leninist principle of organisation is designed exclusively for a combat party, and is strictly derivative from a single programme and perspective of revolution....." (*Speeches to the Party* p. 284, emphasis added).

Organisational principles thus flow from political assessment. The sloppy, opportunist USFI, publicly divided against itself, reflects the propagandist political standpoint of its leadership. And no amount of praising up the virtue of "unity" can outweigh this. Unity in the revolutionary party must be on principle and programme if it is to mean anything. The "democracy" of Bolshevism without its centralism becomes just a front for liberal phrasemongering.

FACADE

The "unity" of the IMG, like its "united front" activities are a facade behind which they carry on an opportunist diplomacy with whatever forces are around. In addition, the major factional groupings within the IMG and the USFI have become so entrenched and case-hardened in this practice that they have only the most passing relationship to democratic centralist practice. Cannon wrote revealingly against "permanent factions": "There is no greater abomination in the workers' political movement than a permanent faction. There is nothing that can demoralise the internal life of a party more than a permanent faction". (*Speeches to the Party* p. 185).

.....permanent factions become cliques and they exclude everybody else. If a permanent faction happens to get control of the leadership of the party and runs the party as a faction, it is bound to exclude others from any real place in the leadership. By that very fact it drives the others into the organisation of counter-cliques and counter-factions, and there is no longer a single cadre in the leadership of the party". (p. 187).

It ill becomes the IMG, which acts more as a coalition than a party, or the USFI, which is anything but an organising centre, to lecture the Workers Socialist League (or anyone else) about democratic centralism.

PABLO'S HERITAGE

The liquidationist political heritage of Pablo, whose wrong opportunist politics led to corrupt, bureaucratic organisational methods (which combined with internal weaknesses of post-war Trotskyism to destroy the International Secretariat as an organising centre in 1953) can still be seen today in the IMG's attacks on Bolshevism, and the pliant adaptations of the USFI.

Our next article will take up some of the unresolved political questions from the 1953 split and the so-called "principled reunification" with the SWP in 1963.

BACK ISSUES

TROTSKYISM TODAY

Theoretical Supplement to Socialist Press

Back copies available including WSL International Perspectives: "Fourth International: Problems and Tasks"

Available from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

LETTERS

We welcome letters from readers. Letters for publication should be kept as brief as possible. Send to the editor, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

IS RIGHT TO WORK CAMPAIGN

"NOT A POLITICAL MARCH"

When WSL members in Coventry went with their banner on the Rank and File Organising Committee's Right to Work March last week, they were thrown off by the organisers and told that this "was not a political march".

This of course is a lie. It is a political march - though the politics are the opportunist politics of the International Socialists.

The Rank and File Organising Committee was set up by "rank and file" organisations all of which were set up by IS members as fronts in the Trade Unions for the politics of IS.

One good example of this is in the ten "calls to action" of the march, one of which reads "no to all participation schemes". But at a recent conference of the so-called carworker 'rank and file' group the policy adopted was to work *within* participation schemes (ie 'no' to participation - unless the employer wants it!).

OPPORTUNISM

This is simple opportunism and follows on a long line of similar positions of IS on such issues as Measured Day Work (which they first of all verbally opposed, but, when the employers pushed it, immediately changed to a position of working within it).

Such an opportunist course is taken in order to avoid any conflict with the present consciousness of whole sections of the working class and in order to steer clear of any struggle against the Stalinist and reformist trade union bureaucracy.

The disgusting position of barring political banners on the Right to Work March plays right into the hands of the capitalist class - since by saying that the fight for the right to work is 'not political' you leave the Labour government unchallenged.

It is, of course, the Labour government which is carrying out these attacks on the working class. IS policies leave the "lefts" to carry on politically covering up for Callaghan, Healey and the right-wing. The role of these "left" Labourites in the leadership contest is clear. They will *not* challenge the policies of Wilson. Benn says only that he wants more participation, (ie more of the policy that is being used to attack BLMC workers).

Heffer isn't even standing and both of them alongside the other "lefts" last week voted for a motion of confidence in the economic strategy of the government.

ABSTAINS

There could not be a better period for exposing both right and left reformism - but the IS abstain from these political questions, descending to pure protest gimmickry.

Their 'no politics' position also assists the reformist trade union leaders such as Jones and Scanlon whose own politics of cooperating with and supporting the attacks of the capitalist state at present dominate in the unions.

The whole perspective of the march avoids fighting these people

because instead of turning *into* the trade unions in order to fight them (and in the process of this developing a mass based, genuine rank and file movement where the fight could begin for revolutionary politics, the IS simply want to get together a few individual militants and then direct them into separate committees outside the fight in the unions.

TRADES COUNCILS

When the WSL fights for the setting up of committees by Trades Councils and other trade union bodies to deal with the problem of the unemployed we see in this a political fight. Trotsky, in his pamphlet *Marxism and the Trade Unions* outlined the main fight in the trade unions.

"In other words, the trade unions in the present epoch cannot simply be the organs of democracy as they were in the epoch of free capitalism and they cannot any longer remain politically neutral, that is, limit themselves to serving the daily needs of the working class. They cannot any longer be anarchistic, ie, ignore the decisive influence of the state on the life of peoples and classes. They can no longer be reformist because the objective conditions leave no room for any serious and lasting reforms. The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat". (p9).

REACTIONARY

So 'no politics' is a reactionary position and leads to the Right to Work March and Rally being only a protest action. As *Socialist Worker* says, it is an 'anger march'.

Even when the call for nationalisation is brought into their demands it amounts only to a propaganda demand because it in no way creates a bridge between the present trade union level of consciousness of the working class and the necessity for socialist revolution. The call for 'nationalisation' on its own in no way brings in demands that develop workers' control in preparation for workers' management.

'MILITANCY'

The other demands such as a 35-hour week are just trade union demands and effectively imply that all that is needed is to be 'more militant'.

The IMG show that they accept fully this position of IS when in *Red Weekly* they merely attack the protest nature of the march ignoring the bankruptcy of programme and not even mentioning that political banners were not allowed on the march.

The IS, by refusing to focus workers' hostility to unemployment on the central political issues facing the working class, and by avoiding any fight to develop beyond trade union militancy, have ensured that their march will do nothing to resolve the crisis of leadership and the real problems of the next period.



Mandel

Dyelo Zhizni, definitely turned to liquidationism all along the line, not only "belittling (contrary to the decision of the Plenary meeting) the importance of the illegal party", but openly renouncing it, declaring the party was "extinct", that the Party was already liquidated....calling upon the workers to regard the nuclei of the Party and its hierarchy as "dead", etc". (emphasis added).

Tell us, IMG, are these not political differences? One member publicly advocates winding up the party - the other members are prepared to die to defend it. By what stretch of the imagination can this be described as an organisational question?

Have not the different political assessments of the liquidator placed him organisationally outside the party in all but the most formal, literal interpretation?

DISCIPLINE?

More tangibly, if IMG members produced a newspaper, or wrote in *The Guardian* that the IMG was "dead", and others began advocating winding up your independent apparatus, would you be content to brand them as "in breach of discipline" - and not seek the *political motivation* for such action?

Of course if we argue a real case we see that "organisational" differences are merely a reflection of deeper-seated class political positions as they emerge in the practice of the movement. This is why from 1903 Lenin attacked the

utionary cadre. And by stepping aside from this they cut themselves still further adrift from the possibility of a working class base.

This is both a political and an organisational question.

"Opportunism in programme is naturally connected with opportunism in tactics and opportunism in organisation". (*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* p. 193).

BAG

The IMG's scorn for this organic link between organisation and politics is an expression of their conception of a party. For them it is a conglomerate of largely autonomous factions - a kind of elastic sided bag which stretches to accommodate every twist and turn of the membership, with room for all comers.

It is a "united" party which is able to move only in the manner of a rugby scrum - unpredictably, with each tendency pushing in different (and often opposing) directions, only half realising where the "ball" is that they are seeking!

This can only continue under the conditions of the propagandist limitations of the IMG. Cannon correctly pointed to this, writing in 1953:

CIRCLE

"A propaganda circle which has no intention of taking part in any actions - and that is the central, governing feature of such a formation, as distinct from a party.. has even less use for the Leninist system of democratic centralism. Such a group may begin, or think it

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE: NATIONAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

NO CONFIDENCE IN WILSON POLICIES!

ABC BAKERY CLOSURE

Announcement of the closure of ABC (Aerated Bread Co.) bakery has brought nearer the final death of industry in the London Borough of Camden.

Bakery workers are being told that a fall in the sale of cakes (itself an effect of the capitalist crisis on workers' buying power) means that more than 300 must go on the dole!

Workers Socialist League members in Camden are campaigning for a real struggle by the trade unions against the redundancies. WSL leaflets issued last week explained how capitalist rationalisation destroys jobs.

ABC Camden is not just one bakery in trouble. ABC is part of the Allied Bakeries Group - which controls 49 bakeries and 2355 shops and restaurants in the UK.

Allied Bakeries, in turn, is just one section of Associated British Foods. As well as Allied Bakeries, ABF controls the 842 Fine Fare supermarkets and shops, a chain of 42 supermarkets in Ireland, 21 flour mills, 7 Twining tea and coffee houses throughout Europe, and more. It has 77,000 workers in Britain alone.

SHARES

Who owns Associated British Foods? Most of the shares are held by Wittington Investments Ltd., a huge food empire which also controls the "millionaires' grocer" Fortnum and Masons in Piccadilly and the Sunblest Bakeries chain, besides massive holdings in the food industries of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

And who owns Wittington Investments? That company is completely owned by multi-millionaire Mr. W Garfield Weston and his family!

Weston has already closed down bakeries in Welwyn, Acton, Plymouth, Sheffield and York. He is closing ABC because - he says - it lost him £158,000 last year.

But in 1975, Associated British Foods announced after-tax profits of more than £20 million. And over £5 million of that was given away to shareholders.

Just 3% of what was handed over to those shareholders would have wiped out ABC's loss and saved more than 300 jobs!

But the capitalist system exists for profits - not for workers' needs.

MODERN

This is why Weston, hand in hand with his list of closures, is opening new bakeries, with more modern machinery and less labour, on the outskirts of London.

The Bakers' Union has completely caved in to the bosses, and is doing nothing to protect its members' jobs. They told us "We are forced to recognise the realities of the economic situation. We can't make a case for keeping ABC open".

The workers at ABC are angry and frustrated, but this sort of line has also created demoralisation.

It is possible to wage a successful fight for jobs in cases like ABC, but only with policies which come to grips with the nature of the crisis and take up the struggle for a socialist alternative.

The reformist trade union bureaucrats must be fought and pushed aside if they refuse to defend the workers' interests.

The answer is *not* to close the bakery, but to produce what workers want and need, instead of defending the profits of multi-millionaires!

Open the books of ABC to a committee of trades unionists. Whose pockets did the Labour government's food subsidies go into? What about Associated British Foods and Wittington Investments? Take the profits out of food. Fight for the nationalisation of the food industry under workers' manage-

This statement, adopted by the National Committee of the Workers Socialist League at its last meeting was circulated to branches the day before Wilson's resignation from the Labour leadership was announced. The statement is an assessment of the new questions arising from the Parliamentary defeat of the Labour government brought about by the abstention of 37 left-wing MPs on the vote to endorse the White Paper proposing Healey's spending cuts.

Although press attention since Wilson's resignation has (to the obvious relief of the 'lefts') very much shifted away from the actions of these 37 MPs - who abstained on the one day, but who loyally trooped in to vote to uphold Wilson's economic strategy the next day - we are convinced that these political questions are in no way altered by the present hullabaloo of leadership elections. The very fact that the 37 have again "abstained" rather than stand a candidate in opposition to Wilson's policies shows the accuracy of the political assessment in the statement.

The defeat of the Wilson government in Parliament last Wednesday, 10th March marks a new stage in the fight for working class leadership. It is a reflection of the growing discontent and opposition throughout the working class to this government and its reactionary policies.

The present Labour government was not elected under normal conditions. It was thrust into power by the mass movement of the working class which, spearheaded by the miners, forced the hated Heath government to resign in January 1974, and returned a minority Labour government.



Benn and Heffer

RESISTANCE

The mass resistance of the working class to Tory policies which attacked living standards and basic rights then continued under the Labour government. The miners, who had defied pressure from both 'left' and right in order to remain on strike throughout the year, forced a massive pay increase, and wage militancy continued to grow in 1974, particularly in the state industries. The National Industrial Relations Court, retained by the Labour government, was confronted by the miners and withdrawn in the face of a national strike action. In October, workers returned a majority Labour government, determined to see no return to the Tories.

The Labour government's response to this was to consolidate its reactionary wage-cutting "social contract" with the TUC bureaucracy, while turning to state mass unemployment and rising inflation to rocket. The TUC leaders, fearing the forward movement of the class could unseat them from their privileged positions, willingly joined in this attempt to hold back the working class.

RAILMEN

But the developing resistance of the working class emerged last summer in which both TUC and government "guidelines" and even TUC leadership itself were held aside and a 30% pay increase forced through.

From then on Chancellor Healey was to turn even more openly to what he described as "Tory policies" to curb the wage increase. His most powerful ally in the T&GWU leader Jack Jones, was forced through acceptance of "voluntary" TUC pay reductions which were immediately made enforceable at the behest of the Wilson government.

At the same time a sharp turn towards mass unemployment began as the government started consciously to create a pool of unemployed to weaken the working class - the number has now topped 1 1/2 million, on its way towards 2 million.

two key factors: on the one hand the historic depths of class collaboration by the TUC leaders, who are presiding over and advocating the biggest-ever cut in working class living standards in this country, without a single voice of principle raised against; and on the other, the spineless capitulation on every sharp issue by the 'Tribune' group of 80 'left' MPs, who have refused at any point to fight for the removal of the Wilson-Healey leadership, or to challenge the betrayals of the TUC leaders.

(for the first time in any numbers) abstained on the vote for Healey's White Paper of social services' spending cuts and hand-outs to industry. They did not of course take the correct position and vote against these proposals, but their action still caused a Parliamentary defeat for Wilson.

But rather than press home the political lessons of this defeat and withdraw all support from Wilson on this issue, the 'lefts' then trooped next day into the lobbies to vote confidence in Healey's economic strategy! This simply restored the contents of the White Paper, and confirmed to Wilson yet again that the 'lefts' are no serious opposition.

VOTED FOR

The 'lefts' have voted for the state pay laws, the Ryder plan, the Chrysler plan for mass sackings and speed up, and successive Healey Budgets, every one of which has diverted money from the working class into the coffers of private employers. Their timid bleats of 'opposition' have been restricted to calling on Wilson to implement the reactionary and nationalistic policy of import controls, and placing faith in the National Enterprise Board - the body set up by Wilson to direct government subsidies to hard-up capitalist industries.

The cringing capitulation of both TUC and 'lefts' runs completely contrary to the growing hostility and resistance to Wilson's betrayals amongst the strongest layers of workers. The solid strike action at Chryslers Linwood factory; the narrow majority won by the NUM right wing in the recent ballot against the national pits overtime ban; the militant action of Eastern Region railwaymen who struck unofficially against the cuts in rail services last week and were only with great difficulty forced back to work by the ASLEF leaders; and the widespread support for demonstrations and rallies against the government spending cuts on the social services, are all indications of this.

PALE

The Parliamentary upheavals of last week were just a pale reflection of this strengthening of workers'

WRONG

We say clearly: the 'left' MPs must be supported in having given no backing to the White Paper (though they should have opposed it); but they were absolutely wrong next day to reverse this stand by giving Wilson's policies a vote of confidence which will now prop up still longer this reactionary Labour leadership.

There must be no confusion on the issues posed. If Wilson were defeated in Parliament on such a question and forced to go to the country in an election, then the responsibility would rest entirely with Wilson. Even if a Tory government were returned as a result of such a struggle, this would be the outcome of two years of Wilson betrayals and attacks on the working class, not the fault of those who now oppose him.

NEW LEVEL

Indeed the removal of Wilson within the Labour Party would take the whole struggle for working class leadership to a new far higher level - with the most advanced layers of workers putting down further demands on the 'lefts' who finally stood and fought Wilson.

This process would do far more to strengthen the working class and develop revolutionary leadership even under a Tory government, than years of opportunist phrase mongering and 'left' apologies for

It now seems clear that the days of this government are numbered. The Tories, thriving on the demoralisation of Labour supporters under Wilson and its complete subordination to the interests of industry and the bankers, are confident they could win an election.

They are now preparing the right moment to move in and defeat Wilson. It is precisely now that the fight to drive the Wilson-Healey leadership out of the labour movement is so crucial. Until this takes place this government will continue to create confusion and frustration in the working class.

There are other stirrings which indicate that if the 'lefts' did now launch an all-out drive to defeat the cuts and expel Wilson, they would find firm support among the most militant sections of workers. The calls last week from the NUM Executive and ASTMS for a recalled TUC to discuss the pay laws indicates the growing unease of the bureaucracy faced with restraining the mass movement. In these new conditions we would support the call for a recall TUC - insisting it discuss a programme of opposition to Wilson's attacks.

The fight for the sliding scale of wages, work-sharing on full pay, and the sliding scale of public spending could then be focussed on the national union bureaucracy.



Foot - forced to withdraw Industrial Relations Court

But the latest events highlight the fight for leadership in the Labour Party. Our demand for a recalled Labour Party Conference is more vital than ever to expose the 'lefts' refusal to carry through the fight against Wilson and their complete lack of alternative programme.

These demands for us flow from the new turn in the situation. They are not generalised slogans to be bandied about indiscriminately, like the WRP's "Bring down the Labour Government!", or the IMG call for a recall TUC, separated from any programme of demands.

These new events make all the more vital a clear fight for principle and alternative policy in the struggle to win leadership of workers in the coming period, in conflict with reformism and opportunism.

TUC RULE 14

Move to strangle Trades Councils

Seven London Trades Councils have now voted to reject the reactionary 'Rule 14' which the TUC have attempted to impose, which would have the effect of shackling Trades Councils hand and foot to TUC policy. This policy includes support for wage cutting and unemployment at present being carried through by the Labour government. Main advocates of the new Rule are the Communist Party Stalinists, who, from being the main targets of Rule 14 in the 1930's are now the main prop of the right wing in the TUC.

This new rule is the latest in a series of blows against union democracy from a corrupt and reactionary bureaucratic leadership.



Oxford Trades Council march against the cuts

FIGHT ON IN CAMDEN

At their recent AGM, the Camden Trades Council soundly defeated the imposition of the TUC's gag 'Model Rule 14' by a vote of 37 to 31. The vote came after much discussion of the risk of disaffiliation by the TUC.

It was clear that a battle would have to be waged against the bureaucracy on a level which embraced all forces in the trade

union movement prepared to fight against the TUC's attempt to make easier their reactionary collaboration with the Labour government on pay policy and public spending.

But the Stalinists of the Communist Party, who in Camden were the main supporters of the TUC on Rule 14, did not give up. At the meeting of the trades council on March 16th they were back in force, having put the question on the agenda despite heavy opposition on the executive committee,

at whose meeting they refused even to put issues to the vote!

The Stalinists tried scare tactics, brandishing a letter which they claimed threatened immediate exclusion of the Trades Council from the TUC.

They shed crocodile tears over the rule, and tried to push the fight against it off into the trade union branches. (Of course it is important to struggle there too, but the Stalinists also refuse to do this).

Even so, they were unable to call forth the two-thirds majority needed to adopt the rule, although they did succeed in suppressing discussion of a motion to set up an action committee to contact other trades councils and try to carry the struggle to a national level.

It now emerges that despite their inability to sway the Trades Council, the Stalinists are organising for branches to be circulated with a letter stating that the branch can only send delegates if they accept Rule 14.

Militants in the Camden area must organise to give the TUC/Stalinist bloc the massive defeat they deserve.

Indeed, the Stalinists seemed to have little support except for their own members and the right wing. A scandalous exception to this was the WRP member of the Trades Council, who stood up to be counted with the CP in their attempt to help the TUC suppress independent initiatives in the working class!

FOOTNOTE

Further indication of the WRP's growing contempt for even the most basic elements of workers democracy was Sunday's conference of their front, the "All Trades Union Alliance".

This conference had invited trade union branches to send delegates but when of the two delegates elected from the NUJ Book Branch arrived with credentials at the door, he was refused admission, though no reason for this was given.

This kind of behaviour from a group calling itself Trotskyist is unparalleled in today's workers' movement.

THE NEW BLACK CIRCULAR

Dear Colleague,

Proscribed Organisations

The 1975 Congress approved revisions to Rule 14 of the Model Rules and Standing Orders for a Trades Council on proscribed organisations and also the optional clause on disruption by delegates. A copy of the present Model Rules is enclosed.

The revised Model Rule 14 does not entail any change of principle or of TUC policy with regard to these matters but brings the rules up to date and in line with the advice which the General Council already gives from time to time to Trade Councils.

The present rules and advice along with the revisions adopted by Congress are dealt with below.

Optional Clause on Disruption by Delegate.

At the individual level, Trades Councils are currently able to adopt an optional rule refusing to accept the credentials of delegates from trade union branches who are members of the Communist or Fascist Parties or of an organisation proscribed by the General Council. During its review of this clause the General Council and the Trades Councils' Joint Consultative Committee took the view that all trade unionists acting in the best interests of the trade union movement should have the same democratic rights, including that of becoming delegates to Trades Councils. In this context the test should be the individual's actions, rather than his party membership. It has therefore been decided by Congress that in place of the existing optional clause in the Model Rules there should be substituted a new optional clause which reads:

"The Council has the right to refuse to issue credentials to, or to withdraw credentials from, a delegate who has disrupted the work of the Trades Council."

Whether or not a Trades Council has an optional clause is a matter for each Trades Council to decide.

Model Rule 14 on Proscribed Organisations.

In relation to the organisational level, Model Rule 14 for Trades Councils which by a decision of the 1934 Congress had to be adopted by all Trades Councils (and CATCs) recognised by the TUC, stated "In no circumstances shall the Council co-operate with or subscribe to the funds of the Communist or Fascist Parties, or any subsidiary organisations of these Parties, or any industrial organisation which has been proscribed by the General Council."

In its review of this rule the General Council and the TCJCC noted that the TUC had never published a list of subsidiary organisations of the Communist or Fascist Parties or a list of proscribed organisations because the titles of such bodies varied from time to time (but not necessarily the personnel of such bodies). Until the 1950's the interpretation of what was meant by the Communist Party and its subsidiary organisations extended to all so called "front" organisations which were closely identified with the views and policies of that Party.

The General Council and the TCJCC recognised that in recent years other political parties and groups and unofficial trade union bodies have emerged which directly or indirectly seek to use or involve Trades Councils in their activities. These bodies operate outside the established policy-making machinery of their own unions and the TUC, and adopt and pursue policies which are contrary to declared Congress policies.

It is TUC policy to advise Trades Councils not to associate in any way with such bodies. This is because Trades Councils, as local agents of Congress have the responsibility of carrying out Congress policy and they should not therefore associate with or support in any way unofficial organisations which pursue policies contrary to those decided by Congress.

Model Rule 14 has therefore been revised to take account of the existence and activities of the above bodies. Specific reference to the Communist and Fascist Parties has been deleted but the revised rule covers any organisations whose policies or activities are contrary to those of Congress. The present Model Rules and advice permit Trades Councils to establish links with the local Labour Party, and the Trades Councils Guide points out that there are many matters in which a Trades Council and local Labour Party have a common interest and that co-operation between the two bodies can be of advantage to both. The present provisions dealing with the Labour Party have therefore been retained. However, the revised rule will also make clear that a Trades Council cannot support any other political party.

Revised Model Rule 14: Political and Industrial Organisations.

The revised Model Rule 14 on Political and Industrial Organisations which, by a decision of Congress, must now be included in the rules of all Trades Councils and CATCs therefore reads:

"In no circumstances shall the Trades Council co-operate with or subscribe to the funds of any organisation whose policies or activities are contrary to those of Congress. Nor shall the Trades Council co-operate with or subscribe to the funds of any political party other than the local Labour Party with which the Council may co-operate providing that no part of the funds of the Council derived from the general funds of affiliated trade unions shall be applied directly or indirectly in the furtherance of the political objects specified in Section 3 (3) of the Trade Union Act 1913."

Adoption of revised Model Rule 14.

As in the case of the former Model Rule 14 it will be a condition of recognition by the TUC that Trades Councils and CATCs adopt and operate the revised Model Rule 14. Trades Councils and CATCs are therefore asked to set in motion the procedure for altering their rules to enable Trades Councils and CATCs to adopt the revised rule at their Annual General Meeting in 1976. A motion to substitute the wording of the revised Model Rule 14 for the former rule should therefore be placed before the Trades Council and CATC. I would be glad if Trades Councils and CATCs would notify the TUC on the attached form that they have incorporated the revised Model Rule 14 in their rules.

Any Trades Council which does not adopt the revised Model Rule 14 will not have complied with TUC registration requirements.

LIONEL MURRAY

General Secretary.

OXFORD MARCH DEFIES RIGHT WING

Over 150 trade unionists, students and housewives joined the demonstration against the cuts called by Oxford Trades Council last week - the best such march through the town for several years.

The strong response was a vindication of the Trades Council's decision to defy the organised disruption and sabotage of its work by right-wing and Stalinist delegates (as reported in Socialist Press 29) and to press ahead with action against the cuts.

The day before the march, over 40 delegates turned out to a well-attended Trades Council meeting and voted overwhelmingly to reject a TUC letter "advising" the Council to cease operations until the verdict of a TUC inquiry into its affairs was known. The same meeting further decided to proceed in one month with its Annual General Meeting, disrupted in February when 18 right-wing and CP delegates walked out led by Trades Council President Joe Richards, while 37 delegates remained in the meeting.

The frenzied antics of a bloc of Stalinists and right wing to prevent any leadership being given in the fight against social service cuts and

redundancies have continued in the intervening period.

While on the one hand Richards - a Stalinist - has made repeated press statements as Trades Council President calling on delegates "not to attend" constitutional Trades Council meetings, local bureaucrats and centrally the NUPE leadership have also attempted to erect a direct rival to the Trades Council in the form of a so-called "joint trade union committee of public service unions".

In every one of these manoeuvres the narrow base of support on which the right wing and Stalinist local bureaucracy rest within their branches is exposed. This accounts for their fright at the very idea of calling even a protest demonstration or rally. They know all too well they have no policies to present, while there are forces coming forward in the town prepared to challenge for leadership.

The success of the Trades Council demonstration under these conditions is a crucial blow against the right wing and the Communist Party. To defend themselves they are now forced to resort to even more bureaucratic lengths in the repression of trade union democracy, and in attempts to smash the Oxford Trades Council.

Our Answer

As working class opposition to Labour's policies mounts, the TUC desperately tries to limit and hold back any real resistance.

This is the meaning of the new Rule 14 which the TUC have instructed Trades Councils to adopt.

Murray's letter (reprinted above) makes it a condition of recognition by the TUC that Trades Councils accept Rule 14. Under this rule, Trades Councils are prevented from cooperating with any organisation whose policies run contrary to those of the TUC. Delegates can be banned as "disruptors" if they fight against these policies.

Cuts Committees, which continue to spring up all over the country in opposition to government spending cuts, are clearly one of the main targets.

These attempts by the right-wing and their Stalinist allies to sabotage working class resistance to the government's policies must be fought on every Trades Council and in every union branch.

WSL members delegated to Trades Councils are calling for a national conference of those Trades Councils opposed to Rule 14 in order to co-ordinate the fight back against the right-wing.

We call on all militants to take up this call in their own union branch or Trades Council.

SNAKE BITES LIRA

It seemed from last week's headlines that every currency capitalist Europe was being devalued, and that with the pound was crumbling the position of their governments.

The European 'snake', tying currencies to the value of the Deutschmark in the attempt to establish a monetary bloc for the common market, coiled out of control.

A wave of speculation, starting in London, passed to Paris and swiftly moved south to inundate the political situation in Italy.

Although the pound is not part of the 'snake', the attack on it which was triggered by German and Middle Eastern selling of sterling assets, and for the first time drove its value below the symbolic two dollars mark, quickly placed other weak currencies in the front line.

French state reserves of foreign exchange drained away as selling of the franc, and at the beginning of last week President Giscard d'Estaing - after a midnight attempt to negotiate a joint revaluation of the franc and devaluation of the Deutschmark - was forced out of the 'snake'.

From there the pressure moved to Rome. As the delegates to the

national congress of the Christian Democrats - the vast menagerie which does service as Italy's main capitalist political party - converged on the city, massive selling hit the lira, driving its total devaluation against the dollar to over 30% since the beginning of the year.

Thus two rescue operations became necessary - of the lira on the one hand, and of the minority Aldo Moro government, (lacking parliamentary support since the withdrawal of the Socialist Party from the 'centre-left' coalition) on the other.

ITALIAN ROAD

And central to the rescue of Italian capital was the Communist Party, its Stalinist leadership newly returned from proposing an 'Italian road' to socialism in Moscow.

What this 'road to socialism' means took form in the labyrinthine 'debates' among Christian Democratic leaders in Rome's 'Palace of Sport'.

In the presence of a strong CP delegation the Christian Democratic magnates (their ranks sadly depleted by recent bribery and corruption scandals!), set about the intricate shadow-boxing necessary to arrange just the right

forms of Stalinist support for a cabinet which can press on with the attacks on the working class necessary to underwrite the lira.

POPULAR FRONT

The essential political formula was hammered out on the anvil of the currency crisis - a popular front in content, but with a form to conserve the Communist Party leadership for future use. On the night of March 17th-18th Prime Minister Moro completed a rapid round of political 'consultations', starting with CP leader Enrico Berlinguer.

The following day he announced savage tax and interest rate increases to protect the lira, including a hike in the price of petrol to over £1 a gallon.

Berlinguer bowed to both left and right. With the trade union organisations calling a token general strike for Thursday, he acknowledged the economic crisis was 'grave'; but at the same time he gave roundabout authority to the government 'package' by taking his distance from the earlier call from fellow Stalinist chief Amendola for the resignation of finance minister Emilio Colombo.

And at the Christian Democratic Congress this arrangement

began to take on more permanent shape. A minority faction round Amintore Fanfani, who led the party through a virulently anti-communist local elections campaign last summer, spoke against CP entry into the Cabinet.

But CD party secretary Zaccagnini picked up the suggestion that for the time being the minority Christian Democratic government should continue in office, but that it should continually renew its support through a series of semi-official 'consultations' with the opposition parties, including above all the Stalinists.

To which the CP replied? Not 'yes', but on the other hand, not precisely 'no'!

Far from calling action to force an immediate general election, and a bloc with the other working class parties to remove the Christian Democrats, the Stalinist leadership commented that Zaccagnini's address was:

"The serious speech of a man conscious of the severity of the crisis, and who does not wish to disguise with rhetoric the responsibility of his party".

Thus the Stalinists declared their intention to tie the workers' movement to the bourgeois parties, and at the same time prop up a government which could

not survive more than a minute without their support - and all this without even a handful of seats in a cabinet!

That Italian politics are not formed in Rome was clear. The latest government crisis was brought to a head by a currency crisis throughout Europe.

With the open splits exposed at the Congress of the CPSU in Moscow, it poses before French and Spanish, as well as Italian workers, the reality of CP support for capitalist governments in the near future.



Kremlin boss Brezhnev

And the latest Italian 'solution' could not have been agreed by the leading Christian Democratic factions without the unofficial endorsement of the US State Department, which allowed it to be understood in Washington last week that - while opposed to a formal coalition with the CP - it saw no alternative to a more public political 'agreement to differ' with them.

Islington Cuts Conference

Delegates from 20 local council branches, four Labour Party wards, Tenants Associations, political and community groups passed a fighting programme at the recent conference of the Islington Campaign Against the Cuts.

The programme in its final form included the following demands: to fight for increases in public expenditure and wages to keep pace with inflation; the election of "open the books" committees to investigate future plans of Islington Council and the local Area Health Authority; a call for union branches to fight for a programme of useful public works to offset unemployment; and the demand that the four 'lefts' fight for a recalled conference of the Labour Party in opposition to the cuts.

RECALL

Much of the discussion centred on the demand for a recalled Labour Party conference and the demand to put demands on the 'lefts' to fight to remove the right-wing leadership.

In opposition to this there was an interesting line up between on the one hand those supporting "rank-and-file" politics and on the other, two people from the "left" "Islington All Trades Council Alliance".

These latter also unsuccessfully proposed an amendment to delete a call on councillors and MPs to fight for this programme, and to delete the demand for a programme of public works monitored by committees of trade unionists.

Instead, their amendment demanded the usual WRP propaganda demands for nationalisation of the means of production combined with making the Wilson government resign. No hint was given as to who was to fight for it, or how such a struggle could be developed in the Labour movement.

ACTION

Proposals for action to fight the cuts came from the second session.

To begin the fight in the sectors of housing, social services (including the under 5's), health and education, the first action is to be a march of the Islington Labour

Council on Tuesday 23rd March where they will vote on next year's budget, cuts included.

The major role being played nationally by the Communist Party - trying to hold back any struggle in defence of social services, jobs or living standards - was shown in the fight for this Cuts Conference.

SABOTAGE

The CP-dominated Trades Council has tried to sabotage the Campaign since last October when they saw it going beyond their protest limits.

They would not support the delegate conference. When support for the conference was called for in the North London NUT branch, the Stalinist-dominated executive ruled it "out-of-order" - as the Trades Council did not support it!

Even the CP-dominated Federation of Tenants Associations backtracked on a previous decision to support the conference and attacked those who wished to attend.

The support shown at the conference now gives the possibility of further intervening on a concrete fighting programme in all the working class organisations in Islington and removing this present leadership.

MARCH ON APRIL 25th!

A national demonstration is being organised by the National Co-ordinating Committee against the Cuts in the NHS (formerly the Medical Committee Against Private Practice) together with NALGO.

It has been organised in opposition to all the proposed cuts in the National Health Service, and other Public Services and is calling for the abolition of private practice.

The weakness of the demonstration is the lack of political directive. There are no slogans which criticise the 'left' MPs who are not willing to fight the right-wing proposals of the present administration.

The WSL, however, will give full support to this important demonstration fighting the cuts in the public services. We call on all

POLICE ATTACK

We reprint below extracts from the *Socialist Worker* account of the police attack on the Right to Work March.

"The marchers, having arranged

to meet building workers at the huge Staples Corner flyover site, arrived at about 2.30 pm, walking up a ramp to the site.

After talking to the workers



Detail of the police attack (Photo: Socialist Worker).

for 15 minutes they came back down the ramp and turned into the Edgware Road, heading south.

The police were in confusion. Some were calling the marchers forward, others telling them to stop.

(....) Suddenly, Frank Jones, who was carrying one side of the lead banner, felt a tremendous blow to his head.

'My glasses fell to the ground' he said. 'They were smashed'.

(.....) The march reassembled. Campaign Secretary John Deason took the loud hailer and said: 'Let's hope the police can be more disciplined'.

(....) Attack No. 2. Suddenly police - their helmets off - charged out of a coach parked across the street, just outside the West Hendon police station.

They rushed straight at the march. There was another violent fight. Five people were arrested.

Again, the march reassembled and moved off. It went over the North Circular Road.

(.....) The police bus whizzed past the marchers and parked sideways across the road outside the Smiths Industries factory. Then came Attack No. 3.

The police lined up on both sides of the march. An inspector shouted: 'Get the guy in the middle'.

Two groups of police converged from both sides, clearly aiming for John Deason, who was in the centre.

This time they were wielding truncheons without mercy.

42 marchers were arrested - and this by a police force which was said in radio bulletins to be outnumbered four to one!

Publication Fund

The publication last week of *The Battle for Trotskyism*, the first of our series of books and pamphlets scheduled for publication, is a big step forward for the WSL. And alongside this development we have had a strong response to our special appeal for £500 in a special Publications Fund to be collected by Mayday.

Since we last went to press we have received: Islington £27; London(South) £11; Liverpool £10; Oxford (BLMC Assembly) £17; Oxford (BLMC Body) £13.85; Oxford (General) £14.50; London (Central) £20; Birmingham £5; Coventry £5; Leamington £1; Nuneaton £2; S. Yorkshire £6; Portsmouth reader £1.80; London readers £4.00; London Collections £5.

Total received since last edition: £143.15. Total so far: £232.15. Please send all donations to: WSL Publications Fund, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

Don't forget to order your copy of the book from the same address!

SOCIALIST PRESS £500 Monthly Development FUND

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