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Major purge hits WRP



Healy

A wave of disciplinary charges and expulsions amounting to a wholesale purge is taking place within the Workers Revolutionary Party as we go to press.

A crisis Congress of the Party, convened on February 24 in London is still in session on 5 March and seems likely to last at least another week.

Among those expelled is

long-serving WRP Central Committee member and *Newsline* journalist Stephen Johns.

Johns had argued that the WRP's present policies lead it away from the working class, and threatened to resign if his criticisms went unheeded.

In a characteristic manoeuvre, the WRP leadership moved in and put a motion to the Congress that Johns withdraw from it. Once this had been carried out and Johns excluded, a motion for his expulsion was carried in his absence.

The Central Committee has been reduced in number by six, while branch and district leaderships are bearing the brunt of disciplinary action as the Party leadership around Gerry Healy try to heap the blame for the WRP's dwindling membership and organisational chaos on to its remaining local activists.

Disintegration

A picture of the disintegration of the WRP can be seen from one sub-district in which a

paper "membership" figure amounts to 257; this figure however is reduced to around 85 who actually pay subscriptions regularly to the WRP; and of this 85 only 8 can be regarded as active members.

Responsibility

Four branch secretaries in this sub-district alone are included in the present purge.

The daily *Newsline* itself faces a mounting crisis, with one sub-district piling up debts at an estimated £200 per week.

There is no doubt that the political responsibility for this acute crisis flows from the Healy-Banda leadership.

Their refusal to direct towards any practical struggle in the labour movement for the demands of the Transitional Programme and subservience to petty bourgeois nationalist regimes in Libya and Iraq as well as the PLO leadership provide no political basis for the building of a Trotskyist movement.

Their latest attempt to foist

the blame for the present state of affairs onto the membership is a repeat of their behaviour in previous crises: and the expulsion of Johns is an ironic echo of the expulsion of Alan Thornett and 200 other WRP members in 1974 after they attempted to raise political criticisms of the line of the Healy leadership.

Indeed these criticisms anticipated precisely the present liquidation of the WRP's cadre and the Transitional Programme.

Danger

The biggest danger is that the victims of this new purge will become demoralised and drop out of politics at a crucial point in the class struggle. This would be a tragedy.

The WSL invites WRP members past and present to discuss with us the real lessons of the crisis of that Party and our perspective for the building of a Trotskyist party in Britain and the reconstruction of the Fourth International.