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FROM JOINT PLATFORMS WITH TORIES

WILSON CONFRONTS RAILMEN

The world economic crisis now forces Wilson, acting for capitalism, to confront the working class in order to drive down wages and increase the rate of exploitation.

To do this he must take on big, organised sections of workers and defeat them in battle.

It is in this context that the importance of the decision of the NUR to call a national rail strike from June 23rd can be seen. That decision is now central to the defence of the living standards of the whole working class. If Wilson defeats the NUR, an all-out offensive will begin against every section of workers.

The British Rail Board met the NUR decision with a statement threatening that if the strike went ahead, 10,000 more rail jobs would be lost. Yet the railwaymen are not making an extravagant claim. The 27.5% offer made by the Board would, if accepted, represent a substantial *reduction* in real wages when translated into take-home pay at today's rocketing prices. A *third* of the Board's offer is simply consolidating *previous* threshold payments.

Yet, speaking on behalf of the Government, Gerald Barrett, chief secretary to the Treasury, said last Monday that British Rail would not get cash assistance to cover "unnecessary" wage rises. He too threatened rail jobs, saying:

"Limited resources cannot be used to subsidise overmanning and inefficient use of labour."

He went on:

"There can be no question of simply paying for a high wage settlement and being in hope of improved productivity; we have been doing that for too long."

Barrett says this under conditions

where British Rail reduced its manpower by 20% last year (with full collaboration from union leaders), and has cut it by two thirds since the war. The policy he is advocating is clear: break the NUR in order to attempt to cut inflation, and make workers pay for the crisis of capitalism.

The same strategy underlies the vigorous campaign by Wilson and the Labour right wing to remain in the capitalist Common Market. They succeeded in winning a "yes" vote in the referendum.

UNDEFEATED

The importance of this decision for Wilson is that it creates the best terrain on which to fight the coming battles with the working class. How complete is Wilson's victory, however, is yet to be decided. It is one thing to create favourable conditions, but the battles still have to be fought against an undefeated working class.

Even as the Labour leaders were sitting on pro-Market platforms with Tories, and Prentice was making his 'national unity' speech, the strength of the working class was emerging through the 20 - 3 vote for strike action on the NUR Executive.

Under the pressure of this movement of the class even extreme right wingers like Tom Jackson of the postal workers union are forced to pledge support to the NUR. Demands must now be put that the other rail unions, ASLEF and TSSA join the action.

Weighell has done everything in his power to avoid the strike (including fighting for and using a reactionary vote at the NUR branch secretaries' conference). Yet he is now forced to lead the action.

He will of course sell the action out, given half a chance. The NUR Executive, despite the correct call for action, itself has no programme to defend railwaymen's living standards against raging inflation. At no time have they put forward the demand for the new wage agreements to include a sliding scale of wages tied to a cost-of-living index worked out by trade union committees - which is the only answer to inflation.

The Labour government is determined. If the strike goes ahead it will be a battle in the traditions of the last two miners' strikes. It will have a profound effect on the struggles of the whole working class.

This means that the whole trade union movement must pledge support for the railwaymen now. If Wilson declares a state of emergency he must be opposed throughout the whole labour movement.

'LEFTS'

Vital in such a fight is the role of the 'lefts' in the Labour Party. They must declare where they stand on this question. In the 1966 seamen's strike not a single 'left' voted against Wilson's state of emergency, which was used against the strikers. The eyes of every trade unionist will be on their actions in 1975.

These latest developments - the NUR strike vote and the referendum - bring sharply forward therefore the question of working class leadership. The politics of the referendum campaign cannot be separated from the struggles emerging after it.

The role of the 'lefts' was decisive in the referendum battle.

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BEHIND THE REFERENDUM

If you are threatened with losing a game played according to one set of rules, the best way to avoid further defeat is to force your opponent to play another game with the rules that you invent yourself.

This was the method of the British capitalist class in the referendum when it rallied and bamboozled 16 million voters into supporting the decision to stay with the reactionary, anti-working class Common Market.

The Parliamentary election game is always played with regulations developed by the ruling class with the help of their allies in the mass media and their agents in the labour movement.

The sharpening of the economic and social crisis during the 1970's has weakened the force of parliamentary majorities especially since the decisive struggle of the miners overturned the Tory government early in 1974.

Nevertheless, the ruling class needed to put a bogus 'seal of approval' on its policies of "rationalisation" and international monopoly. What better method of doing this than to take up the suggestion of 'left' cabinet minister Benn and hold a referendum?

A referendum is in *no* sense a democratic method of arriving at political decisions. It is *not* the case, as Benn claimed in Hyde Park on May Day, that the editor of the *Times* and the ordinary elector have the same influence on the outcome. All the cards are stacked on the side of the millionaire controllers of the mass media.

QUESTION

The questions to be voted on can always be posed in a way that makes it easier for the views of the ruling class to succeed. The June 5th referendum asked whether British Capitalism should stay in the EEC on terms "renegotiated" by the Labour government. How different might the answer have been if the question posed had been whether Britain should join in the first place.

A decisive role in the campaign was played when the leaders of the Labour Party endorsed the plans of the Tories and the monopolists.

They turned a blind eye towards virtually every opinion ex-

pressed within the working class movement, and joined in open alliance with Tories and Liberals in a sickening betrayal of everything Labour voters support the party for.

In the face of this, the bleatings of the lefts about "sovereignty" and "British interests" could only serve to obscure the basic class issues that lie behind the consolidation of the EEC. They simply allowed the mass media to mount the favourite game against "extremists".

Even Powell and Du Cann, whose semi-racist and anti-working class rantings are often reported with approval, were cast out of the "moderate" sunshine in which the rest of us were invited to bask.

The clear lesson from the experience of the referendum is that it has been an important step towards dictatorial methods of rule. By going beyond the "democratic" Parliamentary methods, it allowed the capitalist-directed media to direct the outcome on behalf of the ruling class.

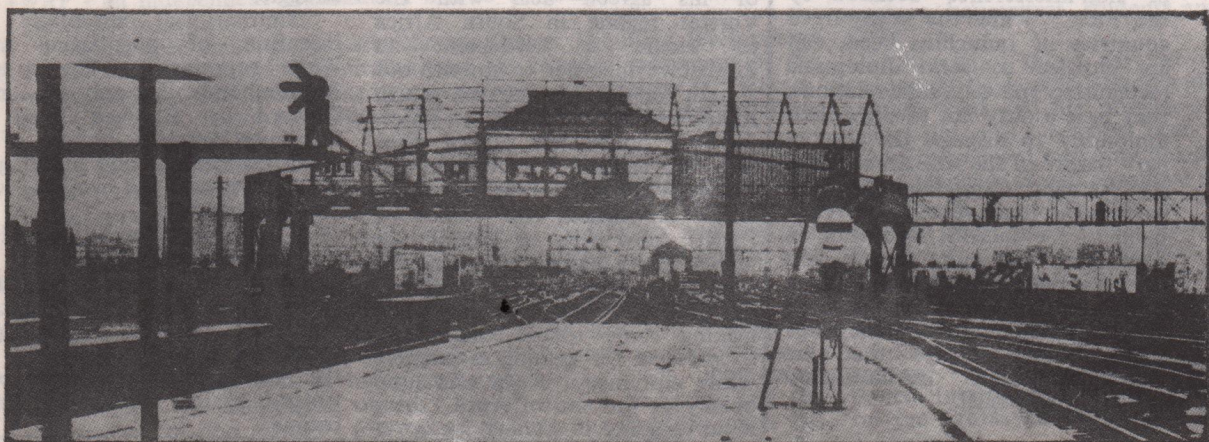
ILLUSION

The referendum is the classic method for right-wing dictatorship to create the illusion of mass support for their policies. It certainly could become that in Britain too.

In view of the massive pressures placed on the electorate before June 5th, and the confusion sown by Labour leaders both right and left, it is a considerable achievement that nearly 8½ million people voted against the capitalist EEC.

There is little doubt that only a small section of these votes came from extreme nationalists. The vast majority constitute the solid irreducible working class Labour vote. Despite the enormous pressure on them, working class electors stood firm, much more than, for example, in 1931.

This 8½ million represents the organised working class, the force that, given clear and decisive leadership, can win around itself all those shifting and uncertain social layers who were deceived into rallying behind the Tories and their friends on June 5th. It is on the solid basis of these 8 million "extremists" that a revolutionary leadership can be built to take the steps necessary for the struggle for socialism.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

S.E. ASIA SHOCK WAVES SPREAD

Just over twenty million people have been freed from the rule of American puppets by the liberation of South Vietnam and Cambodia. But in the states south and west of China lives a population of over 300 millions, the enormous majority of them as poor and oppressed as the people of Indochina were.

The area as a whole — loosely known as South East Asia — is exploited by almost every type of parasite: American, Japanese and European capitalist firms; local capitalists, bankers and money-lenders; capitalist and feudal landlords; national military cliques sheltering in the anti-communist shadow cast by imperialism.

LAOS

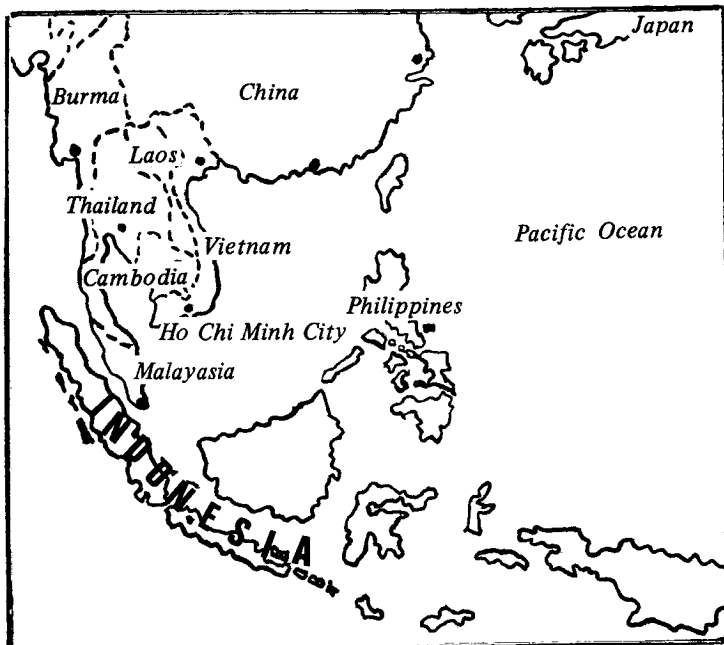
This whole region — from the Chinese border to the islands north of Australia — received an enormous political shock with the fall of Phnom Penh and Saigon. Most immediately affected was the kingdom of Laos, divided since 1973 by an uneasy truce which left the Communist Pathet Lao forces in control in many of the northern areas, but the southern towns and many of the rural areas in the

entered Savannakhet to be welcomed by the whole population, including government officials and the high-school heads who a few days before were held prisoner by revolutionary students. All the forms were preserved — the royal government, the faction of neutralism, the participation of the Buddhist monks in the liberation ceremonies. The Pathet Lao even pressed for jobs in the coalition cabinet vacated by right-wingers to be filled by similar figures, instead of their own representatives. But it was no 'peaceful road'. Imperialism's eviction from Vientiane is the direct fruit of the bitter fighting for Phnom Penh and Saigon. Imperialism's power is rotten, and when its props are removed, it falls.

For almost ten years pro-Chinese guerrilla forces have controlled large areas of northern Thailand, with military support from North Vietnam. It is the threat they represent which now forces the corrupt Pramoj government to retreat from its military agreements with the US, and hasten towards better relations with Vietnam.

BURMA

In Burma, again, the military regime has lost large areas of the north to military forces led by the pro-Chinese Communist Party.



South East Asia

hands of rightist generals, feudal warlords and CIA-backed mercenaries. During May their power crumbled. Following anti-American student demonstrations, Pathet Lao forces took over Savannakhet, Thakhek and Pakse, the main centres in the south.

Nothing could more clearly show the combined and uneven character of the struggle in Indochina, the working through of the permanent revolution, than Laos. The impact of the victories in Cambodia and Vietnam has been immediate. With the fall of Saigon, the value of the Laotian currency plunged, and planes and boats to Thailand filled with fleeing right-wingers. US imperialism has been unable to use military power to 'stabilise' the situation, and in the political vacuum left the local 'democrats' evaporated. The Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Thouma — one of the professional 'neutralists' of Aisa to whom the terrible blows struck at the revolution have given the appearance of an independent political role — has simply handed the Vientiane government over into the effective domination of the Pathet Lao.

Eye witnesses described how Pathet Lao columns, headed by Soviet tanks with garlands of flowers round their gun-barrels,

Although leading Communists were killed, and some territory regained, when government forces made a drive into the Pegu mountains in April the liberation forces have still a large area under their control.

The Malaya government also faces a guerrilla movement in the country-side, and has done since the second world war, despite the most brutal repression by British forces in the 1950s. The city-state of Singapore, under the police rule of Lee Kuan Yew, has held opposition leaders in gaol for the last ten years without trial, and suppressed independent trade unions.

INDONESIA

Indonesia, with a population of over 120 millions, has been ruled by Suharto's military dictatorship since 1965, when hundreds of thousands of Communist Party supporters were murdered following his coup. With oil production totalling \$5,600 million last year, Indonesia represents the focus of imperialist economic interests in the area. But large demonstrations against Japanese imperialism in 1974 in the capital, Djakarta, showed that the regime is unable completely to suppress the underground opposition.

The Philippines, which the US protege Marcos placed under martial law in 1972, faces both Communist guerrilla forces throughout the area, and an increasingly radical Muslim liberation movement in the south. The victories in Indochina have driven the government to threaten withdrawal of the huge American military facilities at Clark Field and Subic Bay. And the dictatorship of Park in South Korea reacted to the American rout in Indochina with a wave of repression, including the arbitrary execution of eight left wingers just before the fall

NO STRATEGY

None of these regimes possesses much greater intrinsic stability than the former governments in Indochina. They exist on the backs of the bloodiest defeats and repressions of the working people, and with the direct and indirect support of imperialism. Yet the policies of the Vietnamese leaders — and still less those of Peking — represent no clear strategy to lead and strengthen the movement against them.

Peking — which bears a heavy responsibility for the 1965 massacre in Indonesia — has already let it be known that it would tolerate the maintenance of some US bases in the area as a counterweight to Soviet military strength. This flows directly from the Chinese leadership's reactionary 'theory' that the Soviet Union is a 'social fascist' state character. Last month the conference of foreign ministers from ASEAN states (Association of South East Asian Nations — Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia) in Kuala Lumpur dispersed, the delegates unable to agree any sort of common policy in face of the revolutionary victories in Indochina, or on any sort of collective re-arrangement of their relationships to US imperialism. But right after the conference ended an editorial in the Hanoi daily Nhan Dan (expressing government policy) declared that:

'After the victory of the Vietnamese people and that of the Cambodian people, several governments have spoken of a new policy of international sovereignty, of their intention of re-examining their military alliances with the United States, and have declared their intention of recognising the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. There are so many positive signs which go in the direction of the national interests of these countries, and which reflect in some measure the will of the people to eliminate the pressure of American imperialism, in order to follow the road of independence and of democracy.'

INTERNATIONALISM

And during May the Provisional Revolutionary Government in Saigon established diplomatic contacts with Burma, Malaysia and Thailand. Such 'diplomatic' language is in line with the policy of 'non-interference' declared by the PRG. While the newly-freed countries of Indochina need, and are entitled to seek, diplomatic recognition and economic relations, they have a duty not to allow their diplomacy to disguise the reactionary nature of the ASEAN regimes. As Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos have shown in practice, the development of the socialist revolution in Asia more and more clearly calls for a break with the Stalinist standpoint of 'socialism in one country', and political leaderships fighting on policies that are uncompromisingly revolutionary and internationalist.

SPAIN FRANCO ARRESTS

The instability of the fascist Franco regime in Spain is shown clearly in the mass arrests of workers, students and youth in Madrid last week for participating in a one day general strike.

These repressions follow hard on a continuing series of arrests including university professors and well known lawyers. In Madrid on May 27th for instance police arrested a group of 14 which included four professors, five lecturers and five students, meeting in the university Law Faculty. Another group of 21 people including lawyers and workers was arrested in Valladolid.

The Madrid strike, called by the illegal Communist Party and Socialist Party as a "day of struggle" affected a wide range of industries including metal working, banking, and insurance offices, as well as schools.

Although officially-censored news reporting claimed that fewer than 100 had been arrested in the police swoop on militants, a spokesman for the illegal 'popular front' organisation the 'Democratic Junta' claimed 300-400 had been jailed. These included strike pickets who attempted to spread the strike action, and groups of students who tried to stop rush-hour traffic, shouting 'down with fascism'.

The repressions, together with the continuing state of emergency in the Basque provinces, indicate the nervousness of the regime at the continuing offensive of the working class, which has drawn great strength from the downfall of fascism in Portugal.

As *Socialist Press* has pointed out, continuing illegal strikes and the impossibility of completely suppressing them have forced the regime to introduce legislation which gives Spanish workers the right to strike for the first time since Franco took power in the 1930s. Yet the restrictions included in the legislation would still leave the overwhelming proportion of strikes

illegal — in particular political strikes and solidarity strikes are still banned.

US imperialism is clearly concerned at the tottering state of the dictatorship. This is the reason for President Ford's special trip to Spain while he was in Europe for the NATO summit conference. Just as American support for the EEC is angled towards ensuring an economic bulwark against the European working class, so the bolstering of the counter-revolutionary NATO alliance and the drawing closer of Spain is seen by the US bourgeoisie as the military preparation to defeat the revolutionary struggles which are on the agenda throughout Europe.

Yet the reluctance of many leading Spanish military figures to get involved in confrontations outside Spain itself is reflected in the surprising move to de-colonise the Spanish Sahara, in the face of a probable long and politically unwinnable struggle to maintain Spanish rule.

In addition, the growing hostility to US bases in Spain from Spanish workers is reflected in a statement issued by six (illegal) political parties calling for their withdrawal, timed to precede Ford's visit.

The statement said that no renewal of the bases agreement would be valid without the "consent" of the Spanish people, which would presuppose the guarantee of personal liberty, universal suffrage, the recognition of political parties, a democratic Parliament and trade union rights. The statement's signatories included the Socialists, Social Democrats and Christian Democrats.

Every action of the Spanish dictatorship speaks loudly of the fears of revolution. The Madrid strike, as a part of increased working class militancy in the growing struggles for democratic rights suggest that the downfall of fascism might even precede the rapidly approaching death of the ailing Franco.

ZIMBABWE SMITH SHOOTS WORKERS

The brutality of the Smith regime in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) showed again last week with the murder, by the police, of 13 Africans and the wounding of a further 28, following violence after a meeting of the African National Council (ANC).

The meeting itself revealed major weaknesses in the ANC and indeed its complete inability to carry forward the National liberation struggle.

The beginnings of a factional struggle between the diplomacy orientated ZAPU and the guerilla orientated ZANU reflects the fact that these organisations were forced into a merger under the umbrella of the reformist ANC by the bourgeois heads of state of Black Africa, led by Kaunda of Zambia.

Kaunda insisted on this part of his agreed deal with the Vorster regime in South Africa to secure a 'settlement' in Zimbabwe in order to smooth out a path for detente between South Africa and the Black African states.

This policy has played right into the hands of Smith and the Rhodesia Front. Ever since the arrest of Sithole (the leader of ZANU, now free in Zambia) in March Smith has been playing for time, trying to exploit the weakness of the ANC alliance and while making some token concessions, to preserve for as long as possible White supremacy. As he said quite openly at the end of April "there is never going to be any handover

(of power) in Rhodesia".

Smith now sees his chance. Three days after the shootings he comes forward with the offer of 'unconditional talks' dropping his previous prerequisite of a total end to guerilla activity meanwhile insisting the ANC drop its demand of release of all political detainees.

By subordinating the armed struggle to "negotiations" with Smith, the liberation struggle is weakened. The conference of the so-called 'Organisation of African Unity' — the talking shop of the African bourgeoisie — in Dar es Salaam in early April agreed to support the guerilla struggle only after negotiations had "clearly failed".

This reactionary posture is enforced by Wilson and the Right Wing Labour leaders who, at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in Jamaica flatly refused any British aid to the armed struggle.

Smith has absolutely no intention of negotiating away White supremacy. The struggle for Zimbabwe can only be carried forward by a break from the reformist bourgeois politics of the ANC leadership and building a unity between the working class and the peasants.

This unity can be forged on the basis of the struggle for the expropriation of the land held by the white settlers, and of capitalist industry. On this political platform the armed struggle can win the mass support which can bring victory against the racist Smith regime.

Vietnamese Trotskyists

Great victories for the workers' movement bring the greatest disorientation to political centrists and confusionists. Nothing more sharply illustrates this rule than the treatment of Vietnam by the leadership of the Workers Revolutionary Party and its paper Workers Press in the last weeks.

The last thirty years of war in Vietnam, the monumental sacrifices of the Vietnamese masses to drive out imperialism, have been the political responsibility of world Stalinism and its attempts to reach 'equilibrium' with imperialism.

The French lost Indochina to Japan during the Second World War. They only reoccupied it as a result of the attempts at compromise pushed through by Stalin's main representative, Ho Chi Minh. To allow the French to return the Stalinists had to destroy the Trotskyist organisations, which held mass support in south Vietnam by August 1945.

As we show below, these events did not just happen to coincide. The Trotskyists were winning mass backing for policies to:

Arm the workers and peasants
Expropriate French property
Establish full national independence
Give power to the workers' and peasants' committees already set up.

Without crushing the Trotskyists, Stalin could not have carried out his bargain with imperialism at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, which involved returning Indochina to France.

STALIN'S BARGAIN

To point this out is not a 'factional' question. The enormous price paid for the liberation of Vietnam is the direct result of Stalin's colossal betrayal of the international workers' movement at the end of the war. At key points he cynically used his influence on the Communist Parties to carry this out. This lesson is a bitter part of the experience of today's workers' movement.

But how do the WRP leadership explain to their members and supporters this political responsibility of Stalinism? First came weeks of general and unequivocal enthusiasm for the politics of the NLF.

In *Workers Press* on May 10th the Provisional Revolutionary Government's foreign policy was described - without qualification or criticism - as 'revolutionary internationalism'. On May 12th it spoke of 'the consistent revolutionary line pursued by the NLF since they first took up arms in 1941'.

Only after *Socialist Press* on May 15th had pointed out that this 'consistent revolutionary line' included the murder of the Vietnamese Trotskyists in south

Vietnam in 1945 did the WRP leadership even refer to the real lessons of the Vietnamese struggle.

Their 'International Committee of the Fourth International' met in May and issued a 'Manifesto' (*Workers Press*, June 2nd). As a whole this is a superficial resume of world politics, in language which sounds ferocious but is prudently vague. It contains this short passage on the struggle for revolutionary leadership in Vietnam:

'These achievements in Indo-China - empirically made at enormous cost - do not in any sense, invalidate the principles struggles of the Indo-Chinese Trotskyists - murdered by Ho Chi Minh's agents - for the programme of Permanent Revolution.'

'Their martyrdom was not in vain and their policies are indelibly inscribed in the progress of the revolution. New generations of Indo-Chinese revolutionaries inspired by the struggles and victories of Trotskyism will once again turn to the example of these Trotskyist pioneers in the coming period.'

This is shabby deceit. The Vietnamese Trotskyists were not only martyred, they were physically and politically defeated by Stalinism in 1945, and with their 'martyrdom' came a historical set-back for the Vietnamese revolution whose price has been paid in thirty years of war.

The NLF and Hanoi leaderships have learned 'empirically' only through a series of compromises and defeats. The policies of revolutionary internationalism are not 'inscribed' in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City - nor anywhere in the pages of *Workers Press*, which has written precisely nothing on the political struggles within the liberation and anti-imperialist movement in Indo-China.

It is a duty for Marxists to draw out the political lessons which the Vietnamese - Stalinists, nationalists and Trotskyists alike - have paid for in blood at the hands of imperialism. The revisionists of the WRP, jumping from mood to mood and impression to impression, will not do this. But the following short chronology sets the record straight:

1929-30 Vietnamese Communist Party founded by Moscow-trained Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh). Groups different tendencies together, affiliates to Third International, starts mass work in Vietnam.



Gollan, ex-CPGB Secretary, meets Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi

1930 Communists lead peasants and workers in strike and land occupation wave. But slogans those of national 'democratic' revolution.

1931 Massive reprisals by French army and police. About 10,000 Vietnamese killed, 50,000 deported.

1933 Vietnamese Trotskyist organisations formed from opposition to Stalinist policies within Communist Party. Tu Tha Thau founds 'Struggle' group in Saigon; 'October' group founded by Ho Huu Tuang. From 1933-39 Trotskyists and many Stalinists operate unity agreements for legal work, including some elections, despite slanders from Stalinist leaders. Trotskyists make important gains in Saigon and surrounding area. Despite repression and imprisonment Trotskyists and Stalinists maintain clandestine organisations.

1937 Thu Tha Thau and other Trotskyists head poll for Vietnamese seats on Saigon Municipal Council, beating Stalinists and nationalists.

1941-45 Japanese forces in effective military control in most areas. French colonial administration manoeuvres between Vichy government and 'Allied' forces under De Gaulle.

Early 1945 Japanese forces retreat in Pacific. Military-nationalist organisation of Vietnamese Communist Party ('Vietminh') gains ground, especially in north. Trotskyists and revolutionary nationalists also make gains in south.

August 10, 1945 Japan surrenders. Revolutionary and nationalist forces take weapons from many Japanese forces in Vietnam. But Stalin has promised the 'Allies' to return Indo-China to France.

August 16, 1945 Ho Chi Minh holds 'People's Congress' near Hanoi to form provisional government. Trotskyists in south demand: expropriation of French colonial pro-

perty, no re-occupation, militias to defend workers' and peasants' committees (hundreds of which hold local power in the Saigon area), full national independence. Many nationalists support them, but Stalinists denounce them as saboteurs.

August 23, 1945 Stalinists oust coalition of left parties in Saigon, replace it with their 'Committee of the South', claiming they have an 'independence' agreement with the French.

September 2, 1945 Hundreds of thousands demonstrate in Saigon. Mass opposition in the contingents to Stalinist policies.

September 4, 1945 Stalinist leader in Saigon, Tran Van Giau, violently attacks Trotskyists. Their organisations banned, hundreds arrested, many of whom disappear. Among those killed are Tu Tha Thau and Tranvan Trach, founders of Vietnamese Trotskyism. French colonists and officials released from prison.

September 10, 1945 Mounting fears of invasion force Stalinists to include left nationalists in 'Committee of the South'.

September 12, 1945 British army detachment under General Gracey enters Saigon. First French forces arrive, seize port and arsenal.

September 17, 1945 Vietminh leaders call general strike in Saigon.

September 21, 1945 General Gracey declares military rule in Saigon. French and British forces soon control many towns in South Vietnam. Resistance by Vietminh and other anti-imperialist forces spreads in south; Vietminh control north.

October 9, 1945 Ernest Bevin, British Labour Foreign Minister,

recognises French administration in south.

March 6, 1946 Ho Chi Minh signs 'independence' agreement with France: Vietnam to remain in 'French Union'; 25,000 troops to be stationed in the country.

March-November 1946 French manoeuvre while preparing war plans against Vietminh.

November 23, 1946 French forces attack Vietminh in Haiphong. Within days Ho Chi Minh and other leaders driven from Hanoi to countryside.

March 1947 Communist Party ministers in French cabinet vote funds for Indochina war. They remain in the government till May.

1954 Crushing defeat of French army by Vietminh at Dien Bien Phu. But Ho Chi Minh agrees to armistice at Geneva, with partition of Vietnam at 17th parallel.

January 1955 Washington starts military aid to Diem regime in South Vietnam.

February 1965 US planes begin systematic bombing of North Vietnam.

1968 Over half a million US troops in South Vietnam.

April 1975 Liberation of Saigon by NLF.

The Workers Socialist League stands unconditionally in support of all struggles against imperialism, whatever the political differences and irrespective of the great crimes of Stalinism against the Trotskyist movement.

LEADERSHIP

The liberation of Indochina is for us a great victory - and it immediately strengthens our own work to construct a revolutionary leadership in Britain. But we do not for a moment relinquish our right - in victory or defeat - to draw out the essential lessons of the history of the international workers' movement.

As we indicate in this issue (see page 2) the foreign policies of the Vietnamese leaders are far from what is needed for the development of the revolutionary movement in south east Asia. This leadership, and those who have supported them, have suffered most heavily of all in their thirty year effort to defend themselves against imperialism.

Much of this price has been due to the politics of Stalinism, its repeated attempt to strike a 'balance' with particular sections of imperialism and their proteges.

The Vietnamese Trotskyist movement was based on an understanding of these dangers. Their deaths will not be 'in vain' only on this condition - that there is a fight to grasp and defend their work by today's revolutionaries. Such prices must not be paid again.

WHAT IS THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE?

The Workers Socialist League was formed on December 22nd 1974 as part of the fight to carry forward the method and principles of Trotsky's Transitional Programme, the founding document of the Fourth International. The WSL now represents the continuity of the struggle for these principles in the workers' movement.

The formation of the League followed the expulsion of over 200 members from the Workers Revolutionary Party, carried out bureaucratically by the WRP leadership in order to prevent discussion of their own abandonment of the Programme both in theory and in practice. These mass expulsions showed that there could be no hope of correcting the WRP - an independent organisation had to be founded to maintain the fight for Trotskyism.

Such a split came out of particular conditions. The rapid development of the economic crisis of capitalism and the forward movement of the world working class, which has now overthrown imperialism in Vietnam and Cambodia, began to produce the conditions to build revolutionary parties internationally.

At such a point the importance of a fight for the method and principles of the Transitional Programme, against both sectarianism and opportunism is paramount in the preparation of revolutionary leadership. After a hard period of isolation from the mass movement, Trotskyism now emerges as the only tendency with a programme and a history of struggle to lead the working class in the taking of power.

The defence of jobs through the fight for work sharing on full pay, run by trade union committees; the defence of living standards through the fight for all wage agreements to include a sliding scale to compensate for all increases in the cost of living as determined by trade union prices committees; the challenging of the "rights" of the employer and the preparation of the struggle for power through the fight to open the books of industry, and to establish workers control in the fight for

nationalisation under workers' management: all these policies are now called for in this situation. As they are fought for and workers are mobilised to win these demands, they begin to form a bridge between the present level of political consciousness of workers and the need for the working class to take the power. Yet the WRP refused to take up a fight for this method.

For this reason the most important developments in our work have centred on a break from WRP sectarianism and propagandism, bringing important gains in trade union work and opening up completely new areas. We are beginning to recruit and train from the new forces thrown into struggles in this period - not only trade unionists, but also professional workers, housewives, students and youth - in the fight to construct the party.

Our record shows that we continue to fight uncompromisingly to expose all those who attack and revise Marxism - not only the WRP but also the 'rank and file' policies of the IS group who refuse to defend the Soviet Union as a workers' state, and the IMG, who liquidate the revolutionary movement into unprincipled blocs and liaisons with anti-revolutionary tendencies, as well as against Stalinism and reformism.

Already it is clear that throughout the world the movement of the working class poses similar questions for those groups calling themselves Trotskyist, particularly sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International, producing similar splits and offering a rich possibility of developing a truly international movement based on the Trotskyist programme. For this reason the WSL is now engaged in a process of internal discussion prior to a full founding conference, a vital part of which is to hammer out and adopt perspectives for the building of the Trotskyist Fourth International, and the development of revolutionary parties based on the Trotskyist programme in every country in the struggle to end capitalism.

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WRP PUTS MARXISM ON THE

The Workers Socialist League was founded on December 22nd, 1974. It was formed after bureaucratic expulsions and the suppression of discussion within the Workers Revolutionary Party had made it impossible to carry forward within that party the fight for a return to the principles and method of Trotsky's *Transitional Programme*, the fundamental document of the Fourth International.

The main target of the WRP leadership was the comrades supporting the positions put forward by Cde Alan Thornett, in defence of the *Transitional Programme*, in two WRP internal documents. These formed the starting point for the work of the WSL and our paper, *Socialist Press*. Since the WSL was founded, the WRP leadership has attempted just two responses in public to the political and theoretical questions we have posed: Cliff Slaughter's "Thornett's Philosopher" (*Workers Press*, 8th April 1975), and Michael Banda's series "Whither Thornett" (*Workers Press*, May 5th-20th, 1975). Both of these, and especially Banda's unreadably evasive series, are an attempt to justify after the event the conduct of the WRP leadership, and divert from the fundamental questions at issue in the split - in the course of which the WRP lost its main working class base, and since which it continues to lose members to the Workers Socialist League.

We do not yet possess the space for a point-by-point reply to the innumerable red herrings and falsifications of which Banda's series mainly consists. We concentrate here, therefore, on some of the most central theoretical questions.

The assortment of attacks made on the Workers Socialist League by the Workers Revolutionary Party can be divided into two categories: those which have the appearance of a defence of Marxism; and those whose light-minded fraudulence declares itself on the surface. The two types have, however, a common political content. Marxism, from being a guide to action, is debased to a collection of misquoted snippets to be used as a factional weapon against opponents and to blind the members of the WRP with unintelligible 'science'.

Let us deal first with one of the numerous examples of self-evident frivolity. Banda's turgid fourteen-part epic contains just one fragment of reply to our detailed and documented accusations on the WRP's falsification of the history of the Fourth International (in Cde Thornett's Second Opposition Document and *The WRP School of Falsification*). We pointed out that in his Introduction to Volume 1 of the WRP's *Trotskyism versus Revisionism: a documentary history* Cliff Slaughter simply invents a leading role for the British section, headed by Gerry Healy (now National Secretary of the WRP) in the struggle against the revisionist grouping of Michel Pablo within the International in 1951-3. Far from attempting to refute the charge, Banda quotes our question: "...Why does Cliff Slaughter's commentary distort and invert the fight against revisionism and make it look as if the British section played a leading role, when in fact it produced not a political word?" (emphasis added).

And then Banda continues: "Leaving aside the lie contained in Thornett's assertion until later (much later - Banda's ten following instalments never return to it!) what is most important is that he elevates the word (the idea) above the deed. He ignores, and deliberately so, the actual fight in practice against all forms of revisionism for which the WRP, and before it the SLL, is so rightly hated in the discussion circles of our opponents. For Thornett the only real activity is theoretical activity divorced from the material and social life." (*Workers Press*, May 8th 1975, p9)

"LOGIC"

Such 'logic' has a charm all its own. Even to refer to what others have said (or not said) brings the charge of 'idealist philosophy' from Banda. Perhaps he thinks that political struggles can be conducted without benefit of words? But no - he himself is the author of fourteen wordy instalments against us, studied with paragraphs beginning (quite accurately) 'Risking repetition....' and 'In other words....' And

a mere half-page later he is accusing us of nothing less than....silence - on the capitalist state!

Such methods of polemic are nothing better than dragging Marxism in the mud, as the following - more central - examples will show.

The series begins with an attempt by Banda to paper over the cracks exposed in the WRP's version of "Marxist philosophy" by Cde Thornett's Second Opposition Document and by an article in *Socialist Press* (no.4) * taking up the reply to this document by G.Healy. The sentence to which Banda, like Healy objects is the following:

"All knowledge begins from the struggle of man against nature, now in the form of the class struggle - the conflict of revolutionary theory in the form of the Party with spontaneity in the form of the class".

This is the only quotation from Thornett taken up in Banda's first article, and is deliberately isolated in order to tear it from its context. It comes from a whole section dealing with the way in which the WRP substituted interminable abstract and academic though heated debates on philosophy for any concern whatsoever for programme and the party's practice in the class struggle, specifically its orientation towards the working class and the unions.

DIFFERENCE

This was a fundamental difference that emerged between the cadres now in the WSL, for whom Marxist philosophy was, in the words of Lenin and Engels, a "guide to action" and the WRP leadership, for whom philosophy became (during a period of political degeneration within the movement) a rationalisation of the WRP's separation from the class, and its inability to penetrate the unions.

Banda sums up this contempt for programme and rigid separation of theory from practice when he writes in part 7: "the struggle for the dialectic is the struggle to develop programme and perspective".

For him, programme is developed in abstract debate on philosophy, rather than philosophical understanding tested and developed at each point in the fight for programme in the daily struggles of the working class. Ideas for Banda are worked out in the head and then presented to the class in the form of ultimatums.

Yet while this is the idealist philosophical position of the WRP leadership they have to dress it up as Marxism in order to befuddle and discipline WRP members. One of the most abused works of Marxism in this process is Volume 38 of Lenin's *Collected Works* (the *Philosophical Notebooks*).

On the basis of quotations snatched from this volume the WRP leadership attempts to create a prestige, an aura of authority. Yet this in itself is a degeneration from the early days of this leadership. Cliff Slaughter [WRP CC member] wrote in 1962, for instance, in *Lenin on Dialectics*: "Anyone undertaking a systematic



G. Healy and actress Vanessa Redgrave:

WRP becoming a sect of middle class radicals

study of Lenin's Notebooks will have to have beside him [NB, emphasis added] Hegel's *Logic*; only in this way can one see the continuity between separate notes and extracts. Even without this, Marxist students will find many of Lenin's brief notes very stimulating and worth detailed study...But these notes and extracts are part of a single project, and are therefore best taken as a whole, read through and reworked several times by the student in the light of his own knowledge of Marxism and of Lenin's own writings and actions". [p7]

This insistence on seeing the necessity to enrich theory through practice is correct, and is the position of the WSL. Banda however, desperate to defend Healy's "philosophical" jungle of snippets and distortions, has to throw this aside. Thus we read (part 3): "Before one can understand Lenin, says Westoby wagging his finger at the Oxford 'uneducated' WRP, one must have read Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Indeed one can only read Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* in 'parallel' with Hegel's *Logic*, according to this arrogant and politically shallow man. Quite the opposite is the case!" [emphasis added]

Where does Slaughter stand on this question now?

WILDS

Throw away your Hegel (and your Lenin) and follow Banda, therefore, into the wilds of philosophy and such gems of clarity as this:

"Dialectical thought concepts are now entering matter through us via the self impulse of the universal movement of matter. As this takes place we arrive at the moment of actuality which is causality. Lenin explains that 'The unfolding of the sum total of the moments of Actuality NB equals the moments of dialectical cognition (Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol 38, p158). At this dialectical moment of causality, the cause (essence) cancels itself into the effect (abstract thought already posited in us as a part of a previous dialectical process). Likewise the effect cancels itself into the cause. This is the only way to grasp the dialectical relationship between man and nature". [emphasis added]

On such a passage - which closely reproduces one in Healy's *Notes*.... - we can only be brutally frank. In our opinion it is simply

gobbledygook. It has nothing to do with 'grasping the dialectical relationship between man and nature' or with the struggle for an understanding of Marxism within the revolutionary party. It simply strings together - without the slightest explanation - a series of categories from several hundred pages of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Being culled from a piecemeal and opportunist reading of Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* it gets them hopelessly confused. If Banda - or Healy, who has so far made no public reply in writing - think they can explain with reasonable clarity (and brevity) what they mean by, for example, 'the cause (essence) cancelling itself into the effect (abstract thought already posited in us)', our columns are open to them. In our view the only purpose of such passages is to establish on a bogus theoretical basis the authority of the WRP leadership which, in the field of programme and practice in the national and international workers movement, is now completely bankrupt.

Banda continuously retreats from any analysis of class questions into the abstract realm of "philosophy". Thus man's development in unity and conflict with nature through production is separated rigidly by Banda from present-day class society, and the form now taken by man's struggle with nature.

Man's unity with nature remains what it always was - that man (like the material world itself) is a material being and a part of the universal movement of matter. This is elementary Marxism, which we do not need Banda to tell us. But clearly Banda needs reminding that man's struggle with nature goes through a historical development, at the centre of which is the development of the means of production which in turn force changes in the relations of production - different forms of society.

It is this struggle which has developed man and his knowledge of the world, whilst at the same time changing the world he lives in.

Indeed rocks, plants, animals, the oceans and the air all share the same "unity" with nature as Man. They are all material bodies. Yet only Man has developed tools, production relations, knowledge and the material class struggle. If our "philosophy" is not to descend to the meaningless and the general therefore it must advance beyond discussing the general conditions for man's development of know-

ledge, to the process of struggle through which that development takes place.

Banda pulls back from this step and indignantly protests:

"Westoby wants to 'prove', using the authority of Lenin, that the struggle of opposites is more fundamental, 'more essential' than their unity".

This is a crass one-sided distortion of our article on Healy's revisions of Marxism. But even given this, has Banda stopped to consider the content of what he is saying? How does he reconcile his present position with Lenin's extensive quotation from Hegel in the *Notebooks* which includes this key passage (stressed and restressed a previous SLL/WRP cadre school summer camps)?

"But it has been a fundamental prejudice of hitherto existing logic and of ordinary imagination [ie idealism] that Contradiction [ie conflict] is a determination having less essence and immanence than Identity [ie 'unity']; but indeed, if there were any question of rank, and the two determinations had to be fixed as separate, Contradiction would have to be taken as the more profound and more essential. [emphasis added] For as opposed to it Identity is only the determination of simple immediacy, or dead Being, while Contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality, and it is only insofar as it contains a contradiction that anything moves and has impulse and activity." [C.W. p139]

Banda and Healy want to leave us then with 'unity', 'Identity', or 'dead Being' cut off from the living struggle of opposites.

REVISION

A central revision of Healy, Slaughter and Banda is that they make man merely a part of an objective natural process, eliminating therefore the need for a leadership rooted in the working class, exercising leadership over real sections of the class. The ending of capitalism is thus viewed by the WRP in a similar way to the erosion of a cliff by the sea or the sprouting of a bed of daffodils, as a natural process within which conscious preparation becomes irrelevant. This is done by sophistry. Banda writes:

"At one point Westoby makes the astonishing remark that 'Healy thus reduces the class struggle to a mere natural process'. Now if the class struggle is not a natural process, what is it? Tell us, Mr Westoby; is it a supra-natural process?...His use of the word 'mere' serves 'merely to cover his tracks'".

No, Mr Banda, the struggle of classes is a natural process within which Marxists fight for leadership. Healy belittles this fight and we exposed his position. But now Banda assures us that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat is just a natural process, and the role of the WRP is merely to observe and correctly identify the process, while throwing a few ultimatums at the working class.

Trotsky began the *Transitional Programme*:

"The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat".

"NATURAL"

For Banda and Healy however the situation is now simply a stage in the 'natural process' towards socialism, the "universal movement of matter" towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will presumably irresistibly drive workers towards the WRP (despite its refusal to put forward or fight for policies to develop and train new layers of workers). The *Transitional Programme* is thus reduced by the WRP to a few handy phrases and i

THE BRACK

Marxist method and starting point abandoned.

Thus there is no reckoning in Banda's articles with the central charge made in the Philosophy section of the Second Document - that the WRP leadership separates theory from practice and thereby lifelessly counterposes its abstract schema of maximum demands (nationalisation without compensation under workers control of all industry, banks and land) to the mass movement of the working class, in such a way that workers are cut off from the political means of struggling for these demands.

NO DISCUSSION

Because the WRP permits no discussion on the *practice* of the party, as was shown by the suppression of discussion on Cde Thornett's original document (not one aggregate or meeting was held for Cde Thornett to put his position outside Oxford and the Western Region) this separation continues.

The maximum programme is clearly taken up and exposed by Trotsky in the Transitional Programme - a document which comes in for sustained attack by Banda in four parts of the fourteen part series. This begins most significantly (Part 7) with an attack on the method of the Programme, in particular the concept of the "bridge".

For Banda and the WRP the 'bridge' between the present consciousness of the working class and revolution is to be the sudden realisation one day by the mass of workers that the whole economy must be nationalised without compensation under workers control, and that therefore they must in their millions join the WRP.



Banda

This idea is termed by Healy and Banda a "leap" and is supposedly brought about not by any principled and continuous intervention in workers' daily struggles, but by paper sales, recruitment drives and more paper sales. Meanwhile workers supposedly wait for the WRP to knock on their door.

Trotskyists, however take their starting point from the Transitional Programme:

"It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat".

This seems pretty clear to most readers. It is the founding document of the Fourth International. While the details of some of the demands might well have changed since 1938 the task and the method expressed here remain, and it is this task which is rejected by the WRP.

Reformists and Stalinists reject the need for a 'bridge' because they do not intend to overthrow capitalism. But Trotskyists do need to bring workers, in struggle, to the

point where the full programme of revolution can win mass support.

This is the Marxist method; but contemptuously thrown aside by Banda. Why do workers need to struggle in order to learn these lessons when they can read all the right slogans in *Workers Press*? Why bother with programme if you have "philosophy"? He ridicules the concept of fighting for a programme including transitional demands in the mass movement, stating: "Thus the party becomes transformed from an opposite to an adjunct of the spontaneous movement. The crisis of leadership becomes reduced through the method of Thornett into a crisis of self-mobilisation of the working class - and Marxism is flung unceremoniously out of the window". [Part 8]

But, on the contrary, the question taken up by the WSL is the mobilisation of the working class (ignored by the WRP) through the struggle for demands which go beyond reforms, posing the questions of power and leadership:

"It is easier to overthrow capitalism than to realise this demand [sliding scale of hours] under capitalism. Not one of our demands will be realised under capitalism. That is why we are calling them transitional demands. It creates a bridge to the mentality of the workers and then a material bridge to the socialist revolution. The whole question is how to mobilise the masses for struggle". [Trotsky's Writings 1938-1939 pp 43-4]

Thus Banda directs all the time away from the practice of the WRP which refuses to take this starting point, and so finds itself a dwindling force even in those unions where it did once have strong positions.

WORKERS

Banda rhetorically asks "Where [in WSL's analysis of the WRP] do rank and file workers fit into this scheme, or are they of no account?" [part 6]

The answer is painfully obvious - rank and file workers, insofar as they are attracted by the oratory and journalism of the WRP, are offered no Marxist training and no programme on which to struggle. They do not "fit in" to the WRP, and usually remain only for short periods, seldom reaching leading positions.

Workers are not turned by the WRP to the fight for leadership in the unions and so learn little of the power of the Marxist method and programme. Meanwhile the WRP continues to degenerate into a sect of middle class radicals mouthing phrases of revolution, but further each day from carrying it out.

Trotsky wrote of sectarianism (and this is not answered by Banda though quoted at length by Cde Thornett): "Marxism has built a scientific programme upon the laws that govern the movement of capitalist society and which were discovered by it. This is a colossal conquest! However it is not enough to create a correct programme. It is necessary that the working class accept it. [emphasis added] But the sectarianism in the nature of things, comes to a stop upon the first half of the task. Active intervention into the actual struggle is supplanted for him by an abstract propaganda for a Marxist programme". (Writings 1935-36 p 26)

The reactionary side of such sectarianism, which entirely epitomises the WRP leadership, emerges when Banda (Part 13) attempts to answer Cde Thornett's exposure of the inadequate programmatic demands put forward by the International Committee to recruit the basis of a section in Bangladesh must not be separated from the abstract, ultimatum demands, divorced from any concrete perspective for Bengali workers, put forward in

1972 by the IC. Banda is certain on the other hand that the IC was not wrong - it was the Bengalis' fault - they were too backward and religious to respond to the IC!! He writes:

"But if we did not recruit a sizeable group it was not for want of trying.. Nationalist feeling was and is extremely intense and the support for Bhashani and Rahman was very intense. There were no developed trade union groups in Britain and little or no socialist consciousness even of a rudimentary kind...When the Pakistan army capitulated and Bangladesh was proclaimed, the Bengali workers - almost to a man - lost interest in the socialist struggle". [Part 13]

It is scandalous that such words appear in a paper calling itself Trotskyist. Blaming the working class and Bengali peasantry for not correctly rallying round the IC banner is the lowest level of opportunism, worthy of any right winger.

The harsh fact is that the IC offered Bengali workers no programme, nothing to draw them towards socialism. It did not call in a concrete way for land nationalisation, workers and peasants councils, workers militia or workers control.

It did not put forward any way in which Trotskyism could become a living force in the working and peasant masses of Bengal, and abandoned these millions to the tender mercies of reformism, Stalinism and Sheikh Mujib.

LENIN

We must take up briefly one more major attack on Marxism in the Banda series. He talks as if Healy were Lenin, and the WRP were itself the Bolshevik Party.

This comes ironically from a party which has done much to besmirch the name of Trotskyism and Bolshevism in the British and international Labour movement by its bureaucratic expulsion of its first opposition tendency since 1961.

Banda states for instance: "The following extract from Trotsky's appreciation of Lenin's struggle for Bolshevik principles against Menshevik vacillation and opportunist equivocation confirms [!], unquestionably [!], that Cde Healy's [!] life-long struggle for a democratic-centralist revolutionary Marxist party is based entirely on the precedent created by Lenin." [emphasis added, part 11]

We need scarcely add here that Trotsky did not refer to Comrade Healy once in the cited extract. Nor indeed is it possible to see any relationship between Lenin's "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" and S.Torrance's bureaucratic attempts to stifle inner-party discussion in the WRP prior to its 1st Annual Conference. Yet Banda boldly asserts: "Let Thornett remember this: slander the WRP and you slander Lenin!"

Many other points form Banda's series stand in need of reply. Yet the prevailing methods - distortion of what is said, attributing to us things not said, fraudulent swaggering in the use of quotes supposedly 'proving' the WSL wrong, attacks on Marxist philosophy and the founding programme of the Fourth International, preparatory to blaming the masses for not joining the WRP, these methods run through the whole series.

What is confirmed again and again by Banda is the degeneration of the WRP, its inability now to reckon with its own past and practice, and the necessity of constructing the WSL to fight this wholesale revision of Marxism, and for the continuity of the Trotskyist programme and tradition.

Footnotes:

*The article was prepared by the Socialist Press editorial board. Banda - and Slaughter - chose to attribute it to Cde A. Westoby, a university educated member of the WSL.

**Notes Towards a Study of Thornett's Philosophy; G.Healy WRP Internal Document.

REVIEW

THE PARTY

A Review of Trevor Griffiths plays 'The Party' and 'All Good Men' by Ann Baye.

Trevor Griffiths has made a name for himself writing "didactic", "political" plays. One might well describe him as a political peeping-Tom. His play *The Party*, commissioned by the National Theatre and performed there in 1973-74, deals with the idea of the Revolutionary Party and has as its central figure (acted by Sir Laurence Olivier) a barely-disguised Gerry Healy!

Griffiths's acquaintance with revolutionary theory and left groups and personalities in Britain in 1968 would seem to date from his attendance then at one or two of the SLL/WRP's Friday evening classes designed to woo to the party those bourgeois intellectuals showing an interest in left politics. (Some of the 'big names' of the WRP were recruited through these classes).

REPUTATION

Griffiths has made a lot out of his observations on these classes - one successful play and a reputation for an intimate knowledge of the left and left politics - all without spending tedious long years fighting in the revolutionary movement. He sums up the position himself: "Imagine a life without success. The intellectual's problem is not vision, it's commitment. You enjoy biting the hand that feeds you but you'll never bite it off". (J. Tagg-G. Healy, end of Act 1).

The Party comes on strong with huge posters of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky as stage backdrops, film clips of the 1968 student-police battles in Paris, long passages quoted from Marx and Lenin, an exposition of revisionism countered by Tagg-Healy's good solid WRP orthodoxy. This ends, interestingly enough - in the light of the recent developments in the WRP, with this: "There is only one slogan worth mousing at this particular historical conjunction. It is *Build the Revolutionary Party*. There is no other slogan that can possibly take precedence".

All this appears alongside a parade of degenerate intellectuals: the impotent TV producer, guilt-ridden by his easy success and growing distance from his working class roots; the drunken playwright who "can't bear the thought of himself as successful in a society he longs to destroy", but who knows all the reasons why revolutionary politics isn't necessary or possible. And the melodrama of the Revolutionary leader who wants "to be right just once", fighting to build his party because he is *dying of stomach cancer*. Plus nudity, sex, masturbation, infidelity, drugs, drunken violence, a Czech au-pair girl who wears a track suit and sings folk songs, and a guinea pig named Novotny. You name it, *The Party*'s got it to titillate the bourgeois audience the National Theatre exists for.

"TRUTH"

After the 1973 premiere of *The Party*, the *Guardian's* drama critic praised Griffiths for "telling the truth" (alla Gramsci: "It is a revolutionary duty to tell the truth"), while at the same time "showing us the intimate relationship between the private and public man". This linking up of political "truth" and private lives would seem to have become Griffiths' speciality.

Another of his plays, *All Good Men* (could the title be a tip-off?) is ending a lunchtime run at the Young Vic in a good production with excellent performances by the four actors involved. This play was written for the 'Play for Today' BBC-TV series and shown on 31st January 1974. Griffiths having progressed from revolutionary politics to the Labour Party, this play deals with a LP leader, William Waite (Waite - wait, get it?) about to be given a peerage. (Some suspect a parallel is intended here with Lord Robens).

The play's four characters are all stereotypes: the loveable, grandfatherly labour leader who "always gave more than he took", championing the working class through reformism, who believes that "reality is priorities" and who agrees with Beatrice Webb that the 1926 strike was a "proletarian distemper that had to run its course"; the son Edward, wild-eyed, uncompromising revolutionary who is a lecturer in politics at Manchester-University; the daughter Maria, embittered by her lifelong contact with politics, and her broken family and marriage, who defends her working class background and hates privilege; and the trendy TV producer, public school educated, smart, slippery, principle-less and cunning, bound to expose to the TV-viewing world the class betrayal of a working class politician tempted by power and prestige.

COMPROMISE

Once again "truth" is liberally smeared about the stage - "truth" in the speeches of Waite on the importance of Labour reforms since 1924, and on the compromise necessary in the democratic process; commitment to "truth" by the son Edward who, having in the course of his research uncovered voting records which show that his father voted (by secret ballot) six times against the 1926 strike and ended up sitting on the committee of owners to deal out discipline to the strikers. He accuses the old Waite of being a class traitor and of suppressing his record on the strike, and then goes on to turn over photocopies of the relevant documents to the TV producer (who is planning a hatchet job on the old Waite in his 'special'). There is "truth" also in the family and class loyalty of the daughter Maria.

For Griffiths all is the "truth", just as all are "good men". He will not follow Edward Waite's advice to the unscrupulous TV producer and "declare an interest", but rather follows the producer's phoney line of "I present, others judge".

Griffiths will not take a single clear position and work to win the audience over to his point of view. How can you be didactic if you will not declare an interest? Has there ever been a good teacher who did not exude his own special subject? Who says a trendy parade of a variety of "truths" is political?

A Marxist playwright would attempt to comprehend human practice by examining what people do and asking why they do it. He/she would then in this way try to teach us to know what we do - to help us to a measure of self-cognition. Griffiths has no method of analysis which could enable him to do this, and so he leaves us every time knowing no more about the objective world or about ourselves than we did when we got to the theatre.

FASCISM historical lessons

The recent attempts by the National Front to intervene through meetings and parades openly on the question of the EEC together with the increasing frequency of violent attacks by NF thugs raises the necessity for a clear understanding of the question of fascism and exactly what type of threat it constitutes to the working class today.

Fascism first arose in the 1920's and 30's in Germany and Italy due to the severity of the economic crisis. This, coupled with the political weakness of the capitalist class meant that massive unemployment, wage cuts and speed up could only be effectively imposed on the working class with the complete destruction of all independent working class organisations.

"Fascism is not merely a system of reprisals, of brutal force and of police terror. Fascism is a particular governmental system based on the uprooting of all elements of proletarian democracy within bourgeois society."

(Trotsky - *What Next*)

The essence of fascism is that the ruling class is unable, despite the acquiescence of the reformist leadership of the working class movement, to impose slump on the working class. In Germany the fragile political framework of the Weimar Republic was a totally inadequate vehicle for dealing with the working class by a bourgeoisie already racked by massive inflation, war reparation payments and industrial collapse.

A fascist corporate state was required, in which the trade unions were destroyed. Since the very existence of the reformist leadership of the unions and the Social Democratic Party was tied to the existence of independent working class organisations to destroy these meant also to destroy social democracy itself.

As Trotsky showed in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay":

"Monopoly capitalism is less and less willing to reconcile itself to the independence of trade unions. It demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labour aristocracy who pick the crumbs from its banquet table, that they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class. If that is not achieved, the labour bureaucracy is driven away and replaced by the fascists." (emph added) (*Marxism and TUs* p. 11)

Class Collaboration

Thus despite the abject class collaboration of the reformists they cannot serve the same function as that of fascism with its state-run corporate unions set up and controlled by fascists. Trotsky stresses this point:

"Incidentally, all the efforts of the labour aristocracy in the service of imperialism cannot in the long run save them from destruction." (Ibid, emph. added)

The possibility of the crushing of working class organisation rested on the possibility of fascism developing as a mass movement as a force which the ruling class could employ to carry through this task. The mass movement of the fascists, such as the Nazi Party in Germany, though it drew in certain sections of demoralised workers, found its main strength in the petty bourgeoisie of small farmers and businessmen and a diverse rabble of declassed ex-soldiers, unemployed middle class youth and professionals and petty officials, who swelled the ranks of the armed uniformed brownshirt thugs which constituted Hitler's power on the streets.

Trotsky thus characterised fascism as "a specific means of

mobilising and organising the petty bourgeoisie in the interests of finance capital." (*Bonapartism and Fascism* 1934)

In Germany in the 1920's this class (more numerous than in Britain) found itself caught in a vice. On the one hand lay its antagonism for the banks who refused credit to shaky small business and the big monopolies who out-competed with it for the diminishing capitalist world market. On the other hand lay its even stronger hatred for the working class whose attempts to defend living standards ate into the fragile profits of a petty bourgeoisie on the verge of bankruptcy.

Despite the strong anti-big business sentiments of some sections of the Nazi party the petty bourgeoisie remained committed to the defence of private property and capitalism since it was a capitalist class itself. Thus the ruling class could take the calculated risk of letting Hitler come to power in order to unleash a regime of terror on the working class.

The ruling class knew that the Nazis, in order to defend private

no viability in modern capitalism. The repatriation of immigrants would in no sense solve the economic crisis even for the petty bourgeoisie. The racism and nationalism of the NF comes rather from the same need as it came for the Nazis: the need to find a place for the petty bourgeoisie in the face of all the economic pressures of the capitalist crisis by substituting for an analysis of the actual working of society, a concept of "unity" of society conceived in terms of race or nation.

Trotsky, writing about the Nazis brilliantly portrays the historical bankruptcy of fascism:

"The petty bourgeois is hostile to the idea of development for development goes immutably against him; progress has brought him nothing except irredeemable debts. National Socialism rejects not only Marxism but Darwinism. The Nazis curse materialism because the victories of technology over nature have signified the triumph of large capital over small... The petty bourgeoisie

in place to speak of 'fascism' for Britain." (Trotsky, *Writings on Britain Vol. 3* p. 49)

The key point that Trotsky raises here is the question of the revolutionary movement. The conditions under which the bourgeoisie will support fascism are not simply where it is weak and the working class is strong.

The working class in Britain at this moment is strong in relation to the capitalists. It is for this reason that they cannot simply unleash a military Bonapartist dictatorship on the working class much as they would like to and are forced to rely upon Wilson to carry out their requirements demanding only that he clearly assert his control over Benn.

The ruling class prepares to unleash fascism to smash the strength of the organised working class when the working class movement though strong falters through the failure of the reformist leadership either to lead or to effectively discipline the workers while at the same time it lacks a revolutionary alternative leadership having the allegiance of decisive sections of

glé - organisations, the press, meetings, etc. Fascism threatens all of that directly and immediately.....

[pp 24-25]

Trotsky is of course talking about a situation where large, armed bands of fascists were in action on the streets against French working class organisations in 1935-6. As yet the National Front is only beginning to assemble these kinds of forces, and has not grown to the level of Moseley's movement in the 1930's. But the struggle by workers in defence of jobs and wages will grow more intense and as Trotsky showed:

"Should the resistance of the workers to the offensive of capital increase on the morrow, Fascism, despite what Thorez [CP leader] says, will not evaporate but instead grow with redoubled force. The growth of the strike movement will impel the mobilisation of the strike-breakers. All the "patriotic" thugs will participate in the movement. Daily attacks against the workers will be put on the order of the day. To close our eyes to this is to walk towards certain defeat".

[*Whither France*, p76]

In these conditions the importance of the *Transitional Programme's* call for workers' defence is brought home sharply:

"The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory - and ends in the street. Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are nuclei of the fascist army. Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure.... It is necessary to give organised expression to the valid hatred of the workers towards scabs and bands of gangsters and fascists. It is necessary to advance the slogan of a workers militia as the one serious guarantee of the inviolability of workers' organisations, meetings, and press".

[*Transitional Programme*, pp27-8]

Leadership

It is vital to understand therefore that the struggle to defeat the NF is completely inseparable from the fight to build a revolutionary leadership in the working class through the struggle for a transitional Programme. It is only the fight for a programme, carried out by a revolutionary party, which can give a perspective to the middle class and bring them under the leadership of the working class.

It is the petty bourgeoisie who stand to lose through the harsh pressure of European capitalist rationalisation facilitated by the EEC and who therefore the NF attempts to recruit with its extreme nationalist anti-EEC position.

Trotsky clearly understood the connection between the failure of the Communist Party in Germany to find a road to unite the working class and the turn of the petty bourgeoisie towards fascism. Speaking of the elections of September 1930 in Germany in which the fascists made big gains he wrote:

"When revolutionary hope embraces the whole proletarian mass it inevitably pulls behind it on the road of revolution considerable and growing sections of the petty bourgeoisie.

[Trotsky - *The Turn in the Communist International* pp59-60]

In other words the NF must be fought politically in the working class as part of the struggle for programme and leadership. It must be made absolutely clear from this that only this struggle in the working class movement can combat fascism.



Police drag off anti-fascist demonstrator in Glasgow

property and capitalism, would be forced to defend big business and in order to secure the survival of capitalism would have to concede the eventual liquidation of small firms in the interests of rationalisation and capital concentration.

The inability of the Nazis to carry through the interests of the class that constituted their mass base is reflected in their methods of organisation and their ideology. Terror, violence and gangs of armed thugs are the necessary forms of organisation of fascism. This arises from the political and economic powerlessness of the petty bourgeoisie.

The workers have the power of the factory occupation and the strike, the ruling class have the state. The petty bourgeoisie has neither. It can for this reason only demonstrate its power and seek to exercise political power through the control of the streets by violence and terror.

As Trotsky says in *Whither France?*:

"Fascism unites and arms the scattered masses. Out of human dust it organises combat detachments. It thus gives the petty bourgeoisie the illusion of being an independent force. It begins to imagine that it will really command the state." (p. 19)

This is why to the National Front the ability to march openly and to hold public meetings openly is vital to its growth and that is why mobilisation to prevent these is a necessary part of the struggle against the NF.

Furthermore for fascism to form a political party in the usual sense it would need a programme. But any programme that takes its starting point as the preservation of capitalism, must, in a period of general economic crisis dictate the liquidation of the petty bourgeoisie. For this reason it is a mistake to expect a coherent political programme from the NF.

The extreme economic nationalism of the Front has absolutely

needs a higher authority which stands above matter and above history and which is safeguarded from competition, inflation, crisis, and the auction block... Hitler's nation is the mythical shadow of the petty bourgeoisie itself, a pathetic delirium of a thousand year Reich." (Trotsky - *What is National Socialism*)

'Blackshirts'

In Britain during the nineteen thirties Mosley's Blackshirts did not become the basis for a mass fascist movement. His attempts to gain a base were defeated by the working class. Furthermore, the British ruling class had no need to abandon parliament and the independent trade unions to deal with the working class. The defeat of 1926 brought about by the betrayals of the reformists and the lack of alternative leadership from the CP, meant that the British working class entered the slump politically weakened.

This paved the way for the MacDonald betrayal of 1931 and the National Government. This government proved sufficient for the ruling class as a vehicle for inflicting measures to deal with the crisis upon the working class. Writing about the 1931 government, Trotsky commented:

"The present government... has received unheard of support from 'the nation'. Only the growth of the revolutionary movement in Britain can force the government to tread the path of naked ultra-parliamentary violence. This will without doubt take place but at the present time this is not so. To place today the question of fascism on the first plane is not here motivated. Even from the standpoint of a distant perspective one can doubt in what measure it is

workers.

Trotsky saw clearly how in Germany the betrayal of the Comintern with its disastrous adventurism of attacking the reformist leadership as "social fascist" failed to build a bridge to the majority of workers or to unite the class in struggle and thus allowed the ruling class to seize the time and use the fascists to smash the divided and confused working class movement.

At present the ruling class is certainly not prepared to allow Tynard and Webster to march on Westminster and Congress House. Wilson and Murray are still the main weapons that the capitalists rely on. However, the NF can still fulfill a vital role in assisting the bourgeoisie through intimidation and attacks on workers. This has to be fought now.

Clearly no faith can be placed for this defence in the police to whom the fascists have an appeal and in many cases a direct link. The Italian fascist movement, the MSI, enjoys considerable police collaboration, and so clearly does the National Front.

The strong movement of the working class against the Wilson government poses the need to the ruling class for various mechanisms to discipline the working class. A large part of this consists of course in the strengthening of the police and the vital role (from the viewpoint of the ruling class) of the training of the army in Ulster, at Heathrow, and in exercises of urban "counter-insurgency".

Workers must defend their organisations therefore independently of the State, as a part of the mobilisation of the class to defend living standards and basic rights. This means that workers defence squads must be selected in each area physically to defend the trade union movement and anti-fascist forces from NF thugs.

Trotsky wrote in *Whither France?* "To struggle, it is necessary to conserve and strengthen the instrument and the means of strug-

Workers Diary

DIPLOMATIC GESTURE

The reputation for diplomatic finesse developed by the representatives of British imperialism over many years is being upheld.

Amongst the rioting Leeds supporters at the Leeds-Bayern Munich football match in Paris was a minor official from the British Embassy who, dissatisfied with a decision of the referee to disallow a Leeds goal, threw a moped through a chemist's shop window.

YAK-DOOR SALESMAN

At times of economic crisis and balance of trade deficit, British capitalism will go to any lengths.

The latest example of this was shown in a competition called "Incredible exports" run by a firm of distillers.

This gave the first prize to a firm which exported tom-toms to Nigeria, maracas to Caracas and bongos to the Congo. Amongst other entries was sand to the Arabs, ice lollies to Iceland, Chow Mein to Hongkong, spaghetti to Italy and one firm was selling snowploughs to Dubai!

The firm with the biggest market was selling prefabricated Yak huts to Outer-Mongolia. Maybe crisis hit BLMC could cash in on prefabricated Yaks?

U.S. SUPREME COURT ATTACKS UNIONS

In a decision which the Association of General Contractors of America, a leading employers federation, called a significant recovery of the "right to manage", the nine-member Supreme Court, America's highest legal authority, ruled that where unions insist that managements use only unionised subcontractors they are violating the anti-monopoly laws by creating a "sheltered market".

An executive director of the Association Mr James Sprouse said: "The ruling could very well have wide implications in the field of construction and in American industry as a whole".

The response of the AFL/CIO union leaders to this attack on trade union organisation, against not only the defence of unionised subcontractors but also those who have been banning the use of pre-fabricated materials in the building industry because of the loss of jobs, has been to say: "We don't think its impact across the industrial spectrum will be all that great".

CUBAN GOVERNMENT HANDS BACK SKYJACKERS TO U.S.

The Cuban government has handed three skyjackers, who had sought asylum in Cuba, back to the US government. This move is a gesture to the US government in order to get the trade embargo against Cuba lifted and shows the level of Castro's internationalism.

NF MEMBER FINED

One of the National Front "honour guard" who participated in the charge on the anti-fascist demonstration on May 12th in Oxford was fined £100 and bound over for 2 years by an Oxford magistrate.

An example of how well prepared the NF were can be seen by the fact that he was carrying a bicycle chain around his neck which he said he was "going to use if he had to". He was also wearing a gum shield and a cricket box.

IS OPPORTUNISTS EXPOSED

A letter in the May 31st edition of *Socialist Worker*, paper of the International Socialists, shows the opportunist relationship this organisation has with workers and its complete lack of principle. The full letter reads as follows:

"AUEW members from IS branches in Yorkshire recently attended a school in Leeds. At one of the sessions we discussed the fight against redundancies. The main problem at the moment is the fight against *voluntary* [emph added] redundancies.

Those present at the school voted to take up the idea of the Speke Trade Union Committee, reported in *Socialist Worker*, that no worker accepting voluntary redundancy money should ever be employed in our factories.

To help enforce this, we will push for resolutions through branches and district committees to have anyone accepting voluntary redundancy expelled from the union on the grounds that they have acted against the interests of the union.

We hope trade unionists in other areas of the country will press for similar resolutions".

If the last paragraph of this letter was acted upon, then top of the list for expulsion would be Jock Wight, National Committee member of IS, who chaired the last 'Rank and File Conference'. He was one of the first to take voluntary redundancy from the BLMC Body Plant at Cowley.

The local IS branch say that Wight was given clearance to do this by the IS National Committee. On this committee sits also Tommy Healey, who is *chairman* of the Speke Trade Union Committee! How did Healey reconcile Wight's position with the principled opposition to voluntary redundancy in Speke?

Also on the IS N.C. of course would be the Editorial Board of *Socialist Worker* who decided to print the above letter and reported the activity of the Speke Trade Union Committee, thus giving the *appearance* of fighting voluntary redundancy, while at the same time sanctioning it for a leading member. Will Jock Wight and those responsible now be expelled from IS, or are the requirements for trade union membership more demanding and more principled than membership of IS itself?

RECORD

The record of Jock Wight in the plant has been throughout one of a non-political militant, who when faced with a fight could never understand the right wing or the Stalinists.

In October 1973 Wight was victimised by the management. He was a steward in the press shop, and when he was sacked the press shop night shift, and all bar 12 of those on the day shift came out on strike. The management told the union that they wanted Wight's stewards card taken from him.

The right wing leadership of the plant refused this but asked him to give them his card whilst they carried out an enquiry into the management's complaints. Wight gave them his card 'to get the men back to work' saying that he 'trusted' the right wing leadership.

Even though the enquiry cleared him, Wight still left all action in the hands of the leadership, repeating that he 'trusted' them. A massive witch-hunt had been developed against him by the management, and when they refused to accept the enquiry's findings and decided

to suspend him for two weeks and transfer him on to day-shift (thus losing his stewards card), though the night-shift in the press shop came out immediately, the Stalinist nights convenor called an immediate mass meeting which rejected support. This was used by the day-shift stewards, who refused to fight for supporting action, and Wight himself then told the press shop night shift to go back to work to "save losing any more money".

The experience gained in this victimisation was used by BLMC management in the Cowley Assembly Plant in the victimisation, 6 months later, of Alan Thornett, then T&GWU deputy senior steward. He too had pressure put upon him to relinquish his steward's card, but unlike Wight refused to do so, and still remains a steward on the Transport section.

The IS in Oxford said that Wight had made "a mistake" when he helped to get the day-shift in the press shop back to work, but less than a year later he was chairing the 'Rank and File' conference!

Voluntary redundancy is now a *major weapon* in the hands of the employers, used to weaken trade union organisation and to avoid conflict and occupations against compulsory redundancy. It has been a *decisive factor* in the present level of unemployment.

PRINCIPLE

Opposition to voluntary redundancy is a *principle*, though hard to fight for. Those who accept it are helping to create unemployment instrumental in forcing speed up on those they leave behind, and then go on to take other people's jobs.

If leading militants take voluntary redundancy then this weakens the fight against unemployment and gives credibility to the right wing who are accepting it all over the country in order to 'avoid confrontation'.

IMG

A leading member of the IMG at Cowley has also applied for voluntary redundancy. What action do the IS and IMG intend to take against these people? From the history of these groups the answer is clear: they will continue with their same old opportunist relationships.

● Since this article was written the *Socialist Worker* has published a report of the IS annual conference. The resolution dealing with redundancies and lay-offs reads: "7. Opposition to voluntary redundancies - or those accepting voluntary redundancies to take the end of the job queue, for union registration of jobs, maintenance of 100 per cent closed shops, control of hiring."

One delegate from Liverpool argued that in one factory they had "agreed that anyone who took voluntary redundancy would lose their union cards" and another argued "that workers who took voluntary redundancy should be denied access to work in their factories, and should be branched by their union (have their cards taken away)". He saw the difficulties in enforcing the policy but "you have to do something and there's nothing left you can do."

We wait to see if anything is done about Jock White inside IS and those who cleared his voluntary redundancy.

NATIONALISM IN MARKET DEBATE

On Monday 2nd June at 9.10 pm the TV programme "State of the Nation, a debate" was typical of the many television programmes on the Referendum campaign with one exception.

One of those scheduled to appear in the Parliamentary-style debate, Wedgewood Benn, refused to appear because it meant him sitting alongside Tories. He was replaced by another 'left' cabinet minister, Judith Hart. Although his action was an entirely correct stand, and with his refusal to sit with Powell at an anti-market press conference was one of the major points of the campaign against the Market, it places a question mark over the whole of the rest of the campaign including the programme itself.

Benn was originally *willing* to wind up the debate for the opposition, led by Enoch Powell. This only added to the confusion sown by the 'lefts' who sat with the Tories. The programme could have been a focal point around which the whole issue of sitting with Tories could have been fought and the campaign for the expulsion of the right wing carried forward.

If the 'lefts' had refused to appear it would have left Jenkins and Hattersley in their rightful place, alongside Heath and Maudling, and the nationalist position of Powell, Neil Marten, Henderson - a Scottish Nationalist, and others, would not have been given credibility by having Labour MPs sitting alongside them.

Instead these people were backed up by statements such as Judith Hart's: "Britain has a very special wisdom, in international affairs, built up over hundreds of years", and "I do not want Britain to lose her voice in international affairs, this is the single most important issue". Of course, this is the voice

of British imperialism with its gun boat policy, participation in two world wars fought for markets, and the murder, torture and concentration camps for millions of colonial peoples.

So all Powell's talk about sovereignty, "whether the House of Commons was to continue to exist" was only given credibility, so much that at one point when 'left' Peter Shore was talking about VAT Powell could be heard shouting "Hear, hear!"

The resolution "that Britain's economy would be stronger outside the EEC than in" was moved by Douglas Jay, Labour MP and was of course enthusiastically supported by Neil Marten who throughout the campaign has been concentrating on the danger of European socialists and Communists legislating for Britain, and in fact was at one point interrupted by Heath and charged by him with "creating a scare about communists". On the other side, Roy Jenkins adopted a completely unified position with Heath, Maudling and business man MP John Davies. He on several occasions took it upon himself to talk for them: "We on this side, what we mean by sovereignty...."

Programmes like this have shown very much that the political situation in this country will never be the same since the referendum. The problem isn't just the right wing sitting with Tories - they vote with them anyway over major questions like the Common Market. The problem is that the 'left' covers for them when they themselves sit not only on TV but also on anti-Market bodies with Tories.

The question is fighting for the expulsion of the right wing. In this fight the 'lefts', the Communist Party and others who cover up for them will be exposed and the alternative *revolutionary* party for the working class will be built.

Fight White's Bill

A system which forces a woman to endure 9 months of pregnancy to produce an unwanted child, or forces her to risk the dangers of the 'backstreet abortionist', can only be defended by the most reactionary right-wingers.

The responsibility of bearing a child is one which remains with the woman, drastically altering her life, for many years to come. She therefore must have complete freedom to decide whether or not to go through with a pregnancy, and safe abortion facilities must be provided by the National Health Service.

Steel's Abortion Act was a limited gain in this field and must be defended against the attacks of James White's reactionary amendment, which attempts, through whipping up middle class and religious hysteria over the 'rights of the foetus' to severely restrict the conditions under which the NHS can carry out abortions.

For instance a victim of rape would have to carry through a resulting pregnancy to full term unless evidence of abnormality in the foetus is produced. At the same time it seeks to turn sympathetic doctors away from performing abortions by the threat of assuming them guilty and putting the onus on them to prove themselves innocent.

James White is a Labour MP - sent to Parliament by the Glasgow working class. Yet he links up with most reactionary elements of the ruling class to maintain the role of woman as permanent child-bearer and to further increase the burdens of working class families as they fight against the attacks on their standard of living and jobs by the employers.

This move must be fought

through the organisations of the working class - the trade unions, and through the Labour Party. Demands must be made on the trade union leaders to take up a real fight on this issue and not just leave it on the level of abstract talk - Clive Jenkins says he believes in the individual's right to full control over their own body - is he leading a fight for NHS abortions on demand?

The National Abortion Campaign is campaigning against White's amendment by holding public meetings and fund-raising garden parties around the country, and urging women to petition their MPs and convince 'prominent people'. The campaign is strictly defensive - to defend the status quo of existing legislation. We say that this is in no way an issue simply for women but that the whole of the working class would be affected by this reactionary measure.

The class nature of this attack must be clearly identified - it is not as seen by the Women's Liberation Movement and the NAC, simply a matter of *men* restricting the rights of *women* but the bourgeois state maintaining the oppression of working class women in the family unit. The privileged bourgeoisie will of course continue to be able to purchase their abortions, as they did before 1967 and as they do now in Italy where abortion is a crime.

The call by the National Abortion Campaign for a national rally on June 21st at 2.30 from the Victoria Embankment must however be supported. The WSL in supporting this rally, does so as an independent body supporting the fight to defend the gains of the present Abortion Law, but fighting to secure the unconditional right to abortion as a part of the fight of the working class against the capitalist state.

'MODERATION' MEANS WAGE CUTS

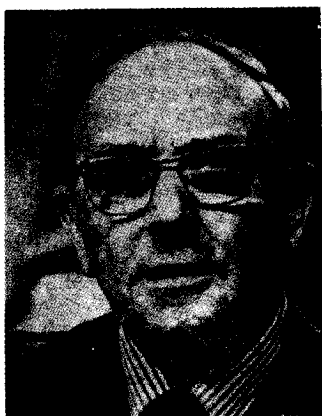
Jack Jones' latest scheme to impoverish his membership in the name of "moderation" and "social justice" was announced with delight by the Tory press last week-end.

Jones is calling for flat rate wage increases below the increase in the cost of living, and a deal between the TUC and the CBI in order to "fight inflation".

This, like the document for discussion at Wednesday's economic committee of the TUC, (calling for autumn's pay increases to be "negotiated" lower than the current rate of price increases) ignores completely the fact that inflation in relation to wages and prices is now acting in the interests of the employers.

PRICES

Soaring prices slash the value of all wage settlements as soon as



Jack Jones

they are won, and erode the value of even the largest settlements. Far from wishing to prevent this the employers have clamoured continuously for an end to all price controls - to give them free rein to raise the cost of living through the roof. At the same time as the TUC

and Jones move in this way openly against workers' living standards, they find support from the right wing of the Labour leadership. Anthony Crossland, Environment Secretary, called at the weekend for an "incomes policy" and talked of "Britain's [ie British capitalism's] suicide course", in a speech which centred on threatening unemployment to those workers who refuse to settle for cuts in living standards.

"EXTREMISTS"

Yet if we listened to the Tory Press, we might think all these leaders are not right-wingers, but "moderates", and all those who oppose them were "extremists". [As if 400,000 NALGO workers, or the NUR were all "extremists"!]

Education Minister Reg Prentice, with the encouragement of the press, and Tories Margaret Thatcher and Sir Geof-

frey Howe, is now emerging as the High Priest of "moderation", but other claimed "moderates" include such extreme right wingers as Roy Jenkins and Shirley Williams, and, in the unions, John Boyd new AUEW General Secretary.

JAILING

What is remarkable about these "moderates" is the extreme anti-working class measures they favour. Prentice actively supports the jailing of pickets (dockers in 1972, and now the Shrewsbury Two), surcharges on the Clay Cross councillors, public spending cuts which are throwing thousands more on to the dole, and cuts in the Health Service and Education which threaten the lives and future development of workers and their families. All this "moderation" goes on for the sole purpose of defending private

profit, while those who challenge the employers' right to create unemployment and cut living standards are branded 'extreme'.

The TUC proposals must be thrown out with contempt and the interests of the working class defended through the struggle for full compensation for the rising cost of living through a sliding scale of wages to be incorporated in all agreements on top and by no means instead of big pay increases. The only answer to inflation is not wage control under capitalism, but a planned socialist economy based on the nationalisation of basic industry. The extreme right wing must be exposed and replaced by a leadership prepared to fight for these policies, and to defend the basic class interests of workers against the employer.

AFM Must Free Maoists

Maoists are still being held in gaol without trial or proper charges in Portugal. While the capitalist press throughout the West blows up the issue of 'Republica' - the newspaper supporting the right-wing reformist policies of the Socialist Party leadership - they remain silent on the much more serious attacks by the military-Stalinist government against the revolutionary left.

Republica was closed under government pressure, following action by Communist Party supporters among the print-workers. After intricate negotiations between the military chiefs and Soares, leader of the Socialist Party, it got official permission at the weekend to recommence publication.

Meanwhile, however, members of the Maoist MRPP (Movement for the Reconstruction of the Proletarian Party) remained in gaol.

They are held in Caxias prison on the outskirts of Lisbon. This is the gaol in which victims of the fascist regime were locked up and tortured by Salazar's PIDE (Secret Police) before the overthrow of fascism in April last year.

Most of the reactionaries held there since then, and following Spinola's attempted coup on March 11th, have been freed. But last week the armed forces movement confirmed reports that MRPP members had been beaten with truncheons - claiming that the violence had been used when they attacked the warders.

These shameful facts demonstrate the thoroughly reactionary character of the policies now being pursued by the leadership of the AFM and the Portuguese Communist Party.

The only government which can guarantee the interests of Portuguese workers is one based on the elected committees of workers, soldiers and peasants, uniting these to form the framework of a workers' state.

These policies cannot be fought for without the fullest freedom of discussion and political struggle among working-class political organisations.

For this reason the WSL - despite our fundamental political differences with all forms of Maoism - calls on the labour movement in Britain to demand the immediate release of the MRPP members.

CORRECTION

In issue 9 of Socialist Press, page 2, the article on TOM should have called for the independent mobilisation of the British and Irish working class and not simply the Irish working class.

CAR INDUSTRY

The first meeting of the new Motor and Ancillary Workers Joint Shop Stewards Committee was held in Birmingham on June 9th.

The committee had been set up following a meeting of stewards from the whole industry convened by the Leyland Stewards Committee.

Only 45 delegates turned up and the organisers proposed that the meeting be abandoned as "unrepresentative". Leading stewards, including IS supporters from Tractors and Transmissions, failed to show up.

The decision to abandon the meeting was wrong. It should have gone ahead and fought to become established.

The decision was a blow to the struggles in the motor industry. With such a committee it would have been possible to fight for a programme to unite the whole industry in opposition to the bureaucracy who keep each plant isolated.

Only a week before this a meeting of BLMC convenors voted to accept the Ryder report. The implications of such a decision go far beyond the motor industry.

The committee elected to meet Ryder were unanimous in recommending acceptance. They included leading Stalinists such as Robinson from Austin's at Longbridge and right-wingers such as McGarry from Standard Triumph.

The only reservation they could find was on the details of the "worker participation" section. They are seeing Ryder again about this and will call a further meeting.

In contrast to this a principled position has been taken at Chrysler's Linwood plant where a meeting of shop stewards has rejected the same deal which was accepted at Stoke and are instead demanding £15.00 per week with no strings.

This challenges the attempts of Chrysler to implement the deal on a corporate basis and is therefore a crucial demand.

At Ford's Dagenham plant the door hangers' strike goes on and

has stopped all production. After 8 weeks it still gets hardly a mention in the capitalist press.

In Halewood it is reported that the shop stewards have recommended a strike against short-time working and support for the Dagenham workers.

In Cowley several strikes of assembly workers have taken place over the past week in defence of the movement of labour agreement. This is the latest of a series of agreements which have been broken by management since the right wing leadership was installed by the T&G regional bureaucracy just over a year ago.

As we go to print, a stewards' meeting has decided to recommend continued strike action to a mass meeting tomorrow.

A motion to turn the strike into an occupation, because Leyland are unable to continue selling their stock, was defeated by only one vote. The only WRP member in the plant argued and voted against the occupation motion. (Workers Press is continually calling for occupations and correctly calls for sit-ins in the event of labour pools being created).

YORKS UCATT BEGINS FIGHT

The resolutions passed at this conference, held in Scarborough, made it clear that UCATT members will not pay for the economic crisis by accepting wage-cutting and unemployment.

Central to this of course is the question of leadership. A motion was passed declaring 'no confidence' in the Executive for their past handling of their wage claims as well as a motion 'deprecating' the attitude of the Executive. Another motion rejecting the idea put about by the employers and their newspapers - that wage increases are the main cause of inflation - and condemning the social contract as a "subtle form of wage-cutting" was also carried, as was also a motion calling for a campaign throughout the area against the 'lump'.

The bureaucracy made its position clear on the question of the Shrewsbury 2. They refused to allow an emergency resolution to be put calling for the mobilisation of the working class to free the Shrewsbury 2 - one of whom is a UCATT member. Delegates from the Hemsworth branch stated that they had sent in such a resolution which had not got on to the printed agenda.

An important resolution put forward a programme to fight unemployment and wage-cutting on which the union's national leadership has no policy. This

motion was passed unanimously. The delegate from the Castleford branch spelt out exactly what the resolution entailed. The resolution called for:

- A sliding scale of wages - this means that agreements would assure an automatic rise in wages in relation to the increase in the price of consumer goods - this rate to be determined by trade union committees.
- Sliding scale of hours where redundancies are threatened - all the work on hand would be shared out, within each trade (obviously bricklayers should not do joinery and vice versa) with average wages not being lower than in the old working week. This work sharing would be run by elected trade union committees.
- Programme of public works - this would finance works to ensure full employment, and to guarantee essential services such as hospitals and schools. This should be linked with nationalisation of the building industry and land so that private firms do not drain off this finance in profit.

£500 fund

Please send donations to our £500 monthly fund to: 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

continued from front page

Their refusal to fight handed the advantage to Wilson. They would not turn the 2-1 "no" decision at the Labour Party Special Conference into a national campaign and neutralised the Labour Party apparatus, while Wilson spoke as the government.

To the extent the 'left' fought the EEC they put forward a capitalist position - that remaining in the Market would be bad for "Britain" [ie British capitalism], a bringing in the nationalist conception of "sovereignty" - refusing to raise the class questions or socialist alternative.

By putting forward this position they were unable to break through the massive confusion - probably the biggest factor in the referendum - created by Wilson's fraudulent claim to speak for the Labour Party.

'UNITY'

This betrayal creates dangers for the working class. The Labour leadership has shifted decisively to the right. "National unity" means Wilson carrying out Tory policies in practice.

Wilson now rests on a Tory vote in the Commons. This is opening the road for Tory preparation. While Thatcher and Joseph will vote with Wilson against the working class, they are only waiting in the wings for the right moment to challenge for power.

W.S.L. PUBLIC MEETINGS

HULL

Wednesday June 25th 7.30 pm. Central Library, Albion Street.

"Who controls the Labour Government?"

Speakers: A. Thornett, J. Nolan.

BRADFORD

Friday June 20th 7.30 pm. Central Library, Princes Way.

"Programme to Fight Unemployment"

Speakers: J. Nolan.

LEEDS

Sunday June 22nd 7.30 pm. Leeds Trade Council Club

"Policies of the Workers Socialist League"

LONDON

Thursday June 26th 7.30 pm. Newington Small Hall, Manor Place London SE 17 (Elephant and Castle, off Walworth Road)

"After the referendum: The struggle for wages and jobs"

It is in the Tories' interests for a Labour Government to fight out the wages issue against the working class. On the basis of the confusion this will create there could arise then the chance for a right-wing Tory Government to bid for power.

These are the dangers. In these conditions the 'left' and Benn have a responsibility to fight Wilson and the right wing. Benn should not be saying he accepts the referendum vote or agreeing to work within the EEC but be demanding the removal of Wilson.

RESOLUTIONS

For this reason any attempt to remove Benn as Industry Secretary must be resisted. Wilson would seek to do this only to appease the Tories, and strengthen the grip of the right wing within the Cabinet.

Resolutions must be put in the Labour Party and in the trade unions both for full support for the railwaymen and for the removal of those MPs who supported the Common Market against Labour Party policy. They must be replaced by people prepared to carry out policies in defence of the working class.

- * Full support for the railwaymen.
- * Smash the social contract.
- * Remove pro-Market MPs and Ministers.