

SOCIALIST PRESS

FORTNIGHTLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

NO 14 * AUGUST 6th 1975 * 10p

'SACK THEM! SAY UNION CHIEFS



Port Talbot Steelworks

In the steel industry the trade union leaders have accepted compulsory redundancies. In doing this they have not simply retreated in front of the employers, but have actually advocated redundancies as a means of "solving the problems" of the industry. At the same time in Strathclyde the national leadership of the Fire Brigade Union has expelled the nine members of the District Committee who were organising resistance to Wilson's state pay laws.

Both of these actions are of major importance. For a union leader to advocate redundancy is to consciously fight to make the working class pay for the crisis of capitalism. To expel workers who want to fight the pay laws is to act entirely as the policeman of the working class in the interests of capitalism.

These actions show that the only way any section of workers can fight to defend their jobs or living standards is to fight the trade union leaders who are the mainstay of this Labour government as it fights to prop up crisis-ridden capitalism.

In their actions these leaders attack the very basis on which the trade union movement was established in struggle - to defend and improve the wages and conditions of the working class.

The leadership of the steel unions has argued that redundancies must be accepted in order to "make the industry viable" and thereby avoid further redundancies later.

But when he launched the state pay laws at the T&GWU conference Jack Jones argued that the working class should tighten their belts to end inflation and thus avoid unemployment and bring better days later. He is still claiming more would be unemployed if not for the pay laws.

WILSON

Whilst the trade union leaders were in this way organising attacks against their members, the Labour government took the decision to let Norton Villiers Triumph go to the wall.

This marks a major change in policy and must lead to the bankruptcy of many similar firms up till now propped up as 'lame ducks'.

Wilson takes these decisions with unemployment already over one million and rising fast, knowing that now tens of thousands of school leavers are finding it impossible to get jobs.

The WSL has warned continuously that the issues of wages and jobs cannot be separated. The decision of the TUC leaders to accept state pay laws has led quickly on to outright advocacy of redundancies

This is because they start from the complete support of the capitalist system. Therefore, when capitalism needs to attack the working class they are there to do the job.

Unemployment and inflation are the two ways that the capitalist system disrupts the powers of production and becomes unable to provide the basic requirements people need in order to live.

SLASH WAGES

The creation of a pool of unemployed is designed to force a further slashing of workers' wages. Meanwhile price increases drive the lower-paid, the pensioners and the unemployed below the bread line.

In the midst of massive technological resources and scientific knowledge, with huge factories capable of producing goods of value working at only 60% or half capacity, workers are finding their living standards cut, and their livelihoods destroyed in the name of private profit.

Only a socialist programme, establishing a planned nationalised economy, can resolve the contradictions of this economic crisis.

Capitalist nationalisation is no answer. British Steel, as a nationalised enterprise is still run by capitalist managers in the interests of the capitalist state. In this situation of crisis it acts no differently from the big private employers.

WORKERS' MANAGEMENT

It is important therefore in fighting speed-up and redundancy that the demand for workers' management is actively fought for. Elected committees of workers must be set up to control the nationalised industries.

These committees must defend the jobs and living standards of workers and form the basis of workers' management.

The more the socialist solution is seen to be the only solution to the problems facing the working class, the further the Labour leadership,

and with them the 'lefts', retreat from the call for nationalisation, the main plank of a socialist economy.

The new situation of mass unemployment and state pay laws has been met with a deepening silence from the 'lefts'.

It was the 'left', Benn, who produced the plan to 'substitute' nationalisation for redundancy at British Steel only a few months ago.

We warned at that time that speed-up and nationalisation - far from being an 'alternative' to redundancy, would in fact create it. This is exactly what happened. Steel-workers, thanks to Benn and their leaders, have ended up with both.

But Benn's role was not restricted to BSC. It has now been revealed by NVT shop stewards that at the same time as Benn was posing as the champion of the Meriden co-operative he had written to Roy Hattersley, local MP for one of the NVT factories, saying that the co-operative would at no time be given preference over the privately-owned NVT company.

Benn went on to say that the financial aid given to the co-operative was a once-off thing, and would never be repeated.

BENN

Benn has, therefore, been a part of the Labour Government's attack on the working class from the beginning.

Today Wilson has called his top ministers to a discussion at Chequers to prepare the next round of the attack, which will take the form of further and harsher cuts in government spending and social services, again directly creating unemployment.

Under these conditions the working class must have a programme on which to fight.

Inflation must be combatted by the demand for a sliding scale of wages linked to figures compiled by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives.

Jobs must be defended by the

demand for work-sharing on full pay, and, when redundancies and closures are threatened, workers must demand that the books of the employers be opened to trade union committees.

In this way the case for nationalisation can be established and the fight prepared for workers' management of the industry.

Nationalisation must be linked to the demand for state contracts to keep the factories open and in production.

Preparations must go ahead within the Labour Party to defeat the right wing at the Party Conference. Motions for the removal of Wilson and the right wing, for the ending of the pay laws and against unemployment must be submitted.

Workers must demand that the 'left' MPs begin not simply to talk about these demands in the LP and PLP, but that they actively campaign for them in the trade union movement, to bring the greatest possible forces to bear against Wilson. Those 'lefts' who refuse this challenge will be exposed as nothing more than the henchmen of Wilson.

WILSON BACKS PORTUGUESE COUNTER REVOLUTION

Portugal could not be other than the central item of the agenda of the Helsinki 'summit' last week.

Stalinism, the European Social Democracy and many of the world's most reactionary capitalist politicians met in the Finnish capital to 'reestablish' Europe against the proletarian revolution.

As Harold Wilson, who was one of the main organisers of meetings among the social democrats, said on his return, the 'spirit of Helsinki' will be "judged not by what was signed but by how far the promises were carried out".

In a word, by how soon capitalist rule can be securely reestablished in Lisbon.

His statement came in a situation where Soares and other leaders of the Portuguese Social Democracy were openly conspiring with General Spínola and the fascists who

back him.

It is this threat which has forced the reorganisation of the AFM leadership under a 'Troika' in which the central figure is the 'revolutionary' Otelo de Carvalho, head of the COPCON internal security force.

POPULAR FRONT

The Supreme Council of the AFM is to be relegated to an advisory capacity and a number of officers have already resigned in protest or are on the way to being forced out. Among them is so-called moderate Melo Antunes, former foreign minister and architect of the AFM's abortive 'economic plan'.

The new Troika is expected to announce plans for a 'United Popular Front for the Defence of the Revolution'. The only poi-

itical organisation supporting this outside the AFM leadership will of course be the Stalinists of the Communist Party, whose hands are still covered with the blood of workers betrayed and defeated by previous 'popular fronts' - in Spain and Chile.

The AFM leaders' Popular Front - meaning the subordination of independent working class organisation and struggle to the defence of the capitalist institutions - has to be seen in the context of Gomes' call for a 'slowdown' in the revolution and for Portugal to 'realise its dependence on Western Europe'.

Alongside this goes the continued refusal of the AFM regime to relinquish power in Angola despite the MPLA call for the withdrawal of the remaining 27,000 Portuguese troops.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

ITALY

Right Wing in Disarray

'Why is it so hard to find an honest man?' This was the question being asked - in one form or another - right across the Italian political spectrum last week.

It was prompted by the surprise election of the unknown Benigno Zaccagnini to replace Amintore Fanfani as national secretary of the Christian Democratic party, the vast, faction-riven political sprawl that has done service as Italian capitalism's main party ever since the fall of fascism at the end of the war.

Fanfani was removed by an accumulation of political pressures. A long-standing figure in Christian Democratic and coalition governments, he was also an apologist for Mussolini's corporate state during the fascist period.

Boss of a powerful party machine in the area round the central Italian city of Arezzo, he has recently been embarrassed by accusations of corruption and political manipulation on his own home ground. But what finally brought his fall was the substantial swing to the left in the regional elections held throughout the country in the middle of June.

ANTI-COMMUNIST

Fanfani led the Christian Democrats into the campaign on a thoroughly anti-communist, law and order platform. His intention was to procure an overall shift to the right and to put an end to the behind-the-scenes negotiations by tendencies in his own party and in their main coalition partners, the Socialist Party, with the Communist Party leadership.

The Communist Party fought the election on a ticket tailor-made to their strategy of the 'historic compromise' - entry into a coalition with the Socialists and most of the Christian Democrats.

Far from putting forward a socialist programme to meet the sharpening economic crisis, they

met and unanimously endorsed the public statement by party secretary campaigned on 'democratic' and 'anti-corruption' slogans such as 'Our hands are clean!'. And since the election they have carefully held back from any struggle to remove the present coalition and clear the Christian Democrats out of office.

None the less, the vote of June 15th - which showed an increase of almost 6% in the Communist Party poll and losses for the Christian Democrats and all other right-wing parties - forced open the present suppurating crisis in the Christian Democratic leadership.

As the inner-party manoeuvres to remove Fanfani came to a head, the leadership of the Socialist Party

De Martino in favour of a 'new relationship with the Communists'. This means that the present centre-left cabinet of Aldo Moro - which has been in a state of virtual suspension since the election result - will almost certainly not be reformed without a more explicit agreement with the Stalinist leaders.

At the same time the election of Zaccagnini in no way resolves the crisis of leadership and direction of the Christian Democrats and the capitalist class they represent. Virtually unknown beforehand, Zaccagnini 'emerged' because the leaders of the main currents within the party were unable to find a majority for a leading figure which would leave the organisation intact.

A doctor by profession - specialising in the care of babies - Zaccagnini also had the rare advantage of being (so far) untouched by rumours of scandal or, in fact, by fame of any sort. As a minor member of Prime Minister Moro's faction he was chosen with the hope of some sort of continuity in the new round of clandestine negotiations opened up with the Socialist and Communist party leaders.

But within the party he has already collected bitter enemies, including the 'clan' supporting

Flaminio Piccoli, whose candidature initially got backing from other factions, but only in order to remove Fanfani.

All the strings of Italian capitalist and bureaucratic policies - from the pro-fascist tendencies on the right of the Christian Democrats to the grouping round Enrico Berlinguer which leads the Communist Party - now pass through Zaccagnini's hands.

But everyone recognises that more is needed than a clean-faced baby-doctor to find a cure for the political crisis. Whether or not he is able - as the Communist Party leaders hope - to act as midwife to a 'Popular Front' deal for the national government, the Christian Democrats face continuing crisis and risks of disintegration.

BOMBINGS

In this situation the capitalist class must look increasingly to the extreme right wing to take on the working class. The dozens of bombings and attacks by underground fascist groups in the last few months provided the pretext for Fanfani to pass legislation giving the police greatly increased powers.

The policy of the Communist Party neither answers the economic issues - continuing inflation and sharply increased industrial unemployment - nor offers the working class any way to defend itself against the right. It cannot, since the 'historic compromise' requires agreement with precisely those politicians who are most determined to make the working class pay for the crisis.

The central task within the Italian working class movement is the reconstruction of a revolutionary leadership, able to organise on a class basis against the extreme right, and breaking decisively with the Stalinist leaders and all those who seek a way out through compromise with the Christian Democrats.

FRANCE Wave of Occupations

Thousands of French workers are now involved in factory and workshop occupations in defence of their jobs, in support of wage claims and against the imposition of short time.

A report issued by the main French trade union confederation - the Communist Party dominated CGT - at the end of July draws up a 'balance-sheet' of some of the main struggles now taking place. It reveals that on July 22nd over a hundred thousand workers were on strike - the highest ever for this time of the year in France.

A hundred and eighty different employers were involved, and of this number the workers in no less than forty two plants had occupied them. At the beginning of the month struggles were still more widespread - on July 1st workers were on strike against a total of two hundred and sixty employers.

The largest number of actions were principally over pay. At the Singer plant in Mantes strikers accepted a ten per cent increase; at the Cadot bakery in Paris they won 18 per cent, while in the SIL clothing factory in Nevers workers accepted rises of from 10 to 15 per cent.

Yet even the largest of these increases barely keep abreast of the continuing rise in the cost of living - even as reflected in the official index. And in many cases pay increases were conceded not on the basic rates, but on various fringe elements such as holiday pay.

A number of struggles centred on short-time. At the Alfa-Laval plant, also in Nevers, a thousand

workers successfully struck for an all-round reduction of hours with no loss of pay. They are to be paid the rates for the former 48 hour week, while working time is reduced to 41 hours.

In twenty three plants the struggles centred on threatened sackings or closures. But in only three cases did workers successfully fight off plant closures - for example at the small Lartigue ceramics factory in the south-west of France.

The CGT report underlines the unprecedented combativity of the French working class. Since the massive general strike of May-June 1968, factory occupations have been much more widespread.

Many different sections of workers are discovering in practice that it is impossible to fight for even the most elementary and limited demands without challenging the employers' rights of control and of hiring and firing.

At the same time the CGT report reveals that the trade union bureaucracy, far from fighting the struggles through to a finish, and uniting them, has worked to limit them and sell compromises to the workers involved. CGT officials were involved in the vast majority of the actions reported.

The CGT's Stalinist leadership, instrumental in the betrayal of the 1968 general strike, publishes such a report as a warning to the employers and the government. It has been written to bury the very questions raised by these dozens of occupations - those of workers' control and a campaign for nationalisation.

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Carvalho

But it is equally clear that Socialist Party leader Soares' call for a 'Government of National Salvation' is simply reaction assuming another face.

Soares calls for the defence of the Constituent Assembly as a 'decision making body' in which the socialists have a majority of seats. At the same time he calls for a limitation of the power of workers' committees and legislation to enforce their election by secret ballot.

BONAPARTIST

The 'radical face' of the AFM leadership's consolidation of power as a bonapartist dictatorship 'above classes' is represented by Carvalho, head of the security force COPCON, on his way back from Cuba.

But while the new leaders attempt to short-circuit the 'parliamentary democracy' that Soares appears to be defending, they seek to tie the working class directly to Portugal's dependence on Western Europe through incorporating workers' councils into and under the control of the AFM hierarchy.

Soares' call for 'democracy' meanwhile opens the door for the mobilisation of all the reactionary elements seeking a return to fascism. Soares' attack on the AFM leadership is the excuse for anti-communist thugs to come out into

Meanwhile it is acknowledged that the ousted President Spínola visited Europe in July, and met Portuguese social democratic leaders in Paris.

Moreover Spínola's supporters are continuously at work; by courtesy of the Fascist regime in Spain, organising the run of arms to the 'Portuguese Liberation Army', a force lead largely by former officers who got their military schooling in Portugal's brutal African wars.

It is certain that Spínola and his backers now hope for the support of 'moderate' elements in the AFM as they launch an armed attack.

ECONOMIC PLAN

To call for the defence of the constitutional powers of the constituent assembly is no defence against such manoeuvres. In the first place the assembly only ever envisaged its role as a rubber stamp for the policies of the AFM Leaders. It is powerless.

Only the organised strength of the working class, winning the support of soldiers and peasants, can defend democracy in Portugal, prevent a fascist counter-coup, and solve the rapidly deteriorating economic situation of mounting unemployment and inflation.

This latter requires the construction of an economic plan involving the complete expropriation of the capitalist class and landowners, and comes into absolute confrontation with the AFM leaders' 'recognition' of Portugal's 'dependence on Western Europe'.

The defence of democratic liberties against a fascist counter-attack requires the absolute resistance of workers and soldiers to the AFM attempt through Carvalho's 'direct democracy' plan to incorporate workers' committees into AFM control.

What is required is the break of rank and file soldiers from the AFM and their incorporation into an independent workers' militia prepared to effect and defend a working class seizure of state power and the construction of a socialist economic plan. This is the only

ARGENTINA Release Political Prisoners

The repressions against working class organisations in Argentina, and in particular the assassinations of militants carried out by the fascist AAA (Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance) are notorious.

But despite the defeat inflicted on Peron's government by the general strike against wage restraint, more than 1,100 militant workers, students and popular activists are still held in jail by the regime, most with no formal charges against them.

Many are themselves members or supporters of the Peronist move-

ment, held because of Peron's fears of the further mobilisation of the working class.

Among the most outstanding of those in jail are:

Pichinini: leader of the regional branch of the UOM (Metal Workers Union) in Villa Constitucion (probably the most militant area of the working class in Argentina). The workers there struck for two months demanding the release of Pichinini and the rest of the UOM leadership who were imprisoned on the basis of an alleged "subversive plot to halt industrial production" in the region.

Talento: student leader of the JUP (University Peronist Youth), and

president of the student union of the University of Buenos Aires.

Ongaro: leader of the FGB (Union of Press Workers of Buenos Aires). Ongaro took part in many of the 1974 struggles of workers, which although then defeated, paved the way for the present labour upsurge.

The repressions have also kept imprisoned members of the PST (Socialist Workers Party), most of them since November 1974. In addition fourteen PST regional headquarters have been bombed. Those still held include:

Luisa Segura: a student leader arrested on November 14th while standing in the dining room of Tucuman University.

Juan Carlos Orsonio: he was arrested and tortured during the federal take-over of the Ledesma sugar workers union in northwest Argentina, and is a long-time member of the PST.

Resolutions

The defence of these and all political prisoners held by the reactionary Peron regime is the task of all socialists. In Argentina it must be an integral part of the struggle to oust the Peron government and replace it with a workers and peasants government, along with the break from the Peronist movement of the trade unions.



STALINISTS' HELSINKI BETRAYAL

On August 1st, rulers and representatives from every European country (except Albania), the United States and Canada, gathered in Helsinki to sign a book full of resolutions, at once vague and compromising, on questions of European 'security' and 'cooperation'.

Just thirty years ago, at the Potsdam conference following the defeat of Germany, the Soviet Union treacherously agreed with the Western capitalist powers to a partition of Europe, ensuring their own bureaucratic control of the East European countries while consciously committing Stalinist parties to a policy of holding back the revolutionary tide in the West.

The Helsinki agreement, which the Soviet Union began to work towards as long ago as 1954, is the apotheosis of detente. It confirms Moscow's willingness to sell out the working class of western Europe and determination to keep a firm thumb on her satellites.

TEXT

The Helsinki text is full of pious sentiments and much of it is downright meaningless. The section on trade, which ran into particular difficulty during the pre-conference negotiation, is a model of how to say nothing at great length.

The articles on non-aggression mean just what such statements always mean: they express a balance of forces, an assessment of mutual advantage, and would not survive for a moment any substantial change in that balance.

More interesting is the clause on sovereignty: 'The participating states mutually respect their sovereign equality and their individuality, as well as all the rights inherent in and comprising their sovereignty, including, in particular, the right of each state to juridical equality, territorial integrity, liberty and political independence. They respect as well the right of each of them to choose and freely develop its political, social, economic and cultural system, as well as the right to determine its laws and regulations'.

ACCEPTANCE

For the Soviet Union these high-sounding phrases mean the acceptance of the right of European capitalism to solve its problems at the expense of the working class, whether through the stealth of the Labour government

and the class collaboration of the trade union leadership in Great Britain or by General Franco's fascist repression in Spain.

Instead of helping the working class of the Western European countries to defend its vital interests by struggling for state power, the Soviet Union - true to the Stalinist policy of socialism in one country - embraces the status quo as part of the price for its own facade of political and economic "stability".

CRISIS

The world crisis of capitalism hardly figured in the conference's formal agenda, although it was very much at the centre of the flurry of talks between heads of state in the days before their converging on the Finnish capital.

Events in Portugal, Greece and Turkey, however, show clearly that the working class is little interested in the machinations of the thieves' kitchen in Helsinki.

This latest betrayal by Moscow Stalinism points up once again the urgent need to build a Trotskyist revolutionary leadership in every European country, in order to fight for the independence of the working class and to lead it to power.



GREECE KARAMANLIS REPRESSES MASS DEMONSTRATIONS

From Tony Richardson in Athens

The removal of the Papadopoulos military junta in Greece has been followed by the election of the right wing bourgeois democratic government of Karamanlis.

This government continues, using the same laws as the old regime, to act against the mobilisation of the working class in defence of jobs and living standards.

Last week violent struggles took place in Athens when police attempted to break up a demonstration of building workers.

Here *Socialist Press* interviews a Greek Trotskyist building worker on the events and lessons of the demonstration.

Were you on the demonstration on July 23rd? Yes.

Why did the demonstration take place? It was a 24-hour strike against the levels of unemployment faced by building workers today - 45% are out of work.

The Greek TUC officially supports the Karamanlis Government, and they tried to sabotage this strike, but about 7,000 builders held a meeting in Athens, at 10 o'clock on the morning of Wednesday 23rd July.

From the Perote Theatre we moved off to Agiou Constantinos Street, where we were confronted



Greek builders confront armoured cars

in the middle of the road by special police armoured cars known as *avres*, which had been built by the Papadopoulos regime.

DIVERTED

The police talked to the strike committee members, who were all Stalinists. They agreed with the police that the march be diverted away from the Ministry of Employment.

The Stalinists led the way into the smaller streets where they were confronted by *avres* and police who started to fire tear gas grenades. The police were specially armed, a technique copied by Karamanlis from the Paris police. The diversion was a 'rap'.

The builders fought back for ten to fifteen minutes, before splitting into groups to fight the police in different sections - which is a usual tactic.

The fighting between the groups of builders, joined by students, workers, along with other professional people from Athens, and the state power, continued until midnight.

The police have a long record against the working class. Two days before in a very big cloth factory ETMA, they also used tear gas against strikers.

The day before the march the students had had a big demonstration against the new state laws aimed at bringing their trade union under the control of the Karamanlis "democratic" state. The students were not attacked because the police had plans to attack the builders the next day.

The Greek TUC said that the troubles were started by "provocat-

eurs", "junta supporters", and *Nea Taxis* ('New Order' - a fascist group) supporters.

The following morning, all the papers (including the Stalinists) said that the troubles were started and continued by provocateurs. With one voice they all said it had not been building workers, and mixed in together Fascists, Maoists and Trotskyists.

Some MPs, including PASSOK members, despite the fact that their leader, Andreas Papandreu later denounced this, wanted laws against all left groups not represented in Parliament. This was helping prepare attacks on the semi-legal left organisations.

Was it an official demonstration? It was an official 24-hour strike of all building workers throughout Greece. The police allowed the demonstration but wanted to divert it.

PROGRAMME

What was the programme of the demonstration?

- There were five points:
- * A 7-hour working day to be legislated.
 - * A rise in wages.
 - * Security of employment.
 - * An increase in social security.
- Now for example a building worker who has been permanently unemployed for 2 years will have received in that time only 9,000 Drachma (£1,300).
- * Independence of the trade unions from the state.

The Trotskyists fought for these demands, along with a sliding scale of wages and the establishment of trade union joint committees of employed and unemployed workers to organise the struggle.

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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MILITIA WOMEN

LESSONS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

PART ONE

When, on July 17th 1936, General Franco took command of Spanish troops in Morocco and issued his manifesto calling for an authoritarian state in Spain one thing was very clear. The army was not in this case supporting one bourgeois faction against another as it had done so often in the past. The programme advanced by Franco was the same in its essential points as that of Mussolini or Hitler. The workers and peasants of Spain faced the deadly threat of fascism.

Fascism is the method of rule that the capitalist class resort to when they can no longer tolerate the existence of independent working class organisations. As long as the capitalists can dominate the working class through the reformist leaders of the Social Democracy they will do so. But in a period of acute economic crisis even the existence of social democracy and trades unions which provide a rallying point for working class resistance can become an intolerable burden for the ruling class. In order to impose measures of slump on the working class, the capitalists can feel the need to put an end to all independent working class organisations.

SUPPORT

In preparation for this, Fascist parties which have for years remained small in size, rejected by the bourgeoisie as unnecessary for the time being, suddenly receive the full support of the ruling class, from the banks funds pour in, enabling the fascist party to grow in strength, attacking workers organisations and polarising layers of support, particularly amongst the petty-bourgeoisie. Where it takes power fascism immediately sets about smashing up the political parties and trades unions of the working class. Once working class organisations are destroyed, and state-run bodies substituted for them, workers confront the bosses from a position of extreme weakness and are open to the most ruthless repression and exploitation. Before the fascists could come to power in Spain, however, they had to defeat a powerful working class resistance, which fought the stronger because it had seen Hitler's liquidation of the German labour movement after his victory in 1933. It was not simply a question of the bourgeoisie "deciding" to impose fascism, but only decided in pro-

the most dire economic and political crisis forced the bourgeoisie to take the fascist road.

For over a century, Spain had been a monarchy straining to give birth to a new regime. But if a bourgeois democracy was to be able to develop, a number of tasks would first have to be carried out by the Spanish capitalist class. It was their inability to solve these fundamental problems that led to the crisis in which the alternatives of socialism or fascism were posed. Spanish capitalism had only been able to develop in the period before and during the First World War. Spanish neutrality had then opened the world's markets to its capitalist class. But the end of the war meant that Spanish industry had to compete on the world markets with other, industrially more advanced nations, a task for which it was ill-equipped.

"PROTECTED"

Not only was Spanish capitalism incapable of competing on world markets, it was even incapable of producing goods for the home market cheaper than its foreign rivals. In order to protect the home market, Spanish Dictator, Primo de Rivera introduced enormous tariffs on imported goods. This in turn led to retaliation, particularly by England and France which devastated the prospects of Spanish agriculture.

Agriculture in Spain accounted for over half the national income, two thirds of Spain's exports and half the government's income. The division of land was the worst in Europe. Of the five million peasant families in Spain, only two million owned their land.

Most of these holdings were on such poor land that these families like the other three million landless peasant families were forced to hire themselves out to the big landowners, some of whom owned half a province.

The peasantry lived in a state of perpetual poverty and frequent starvation. There were continual raids on granaries, seizures of land and even guerrilla warfare. The First World War gave Spanish agriculture a boost from which the landowners benefited, but not the peasant. When Spanish agriculture collapsed after the war, however, the landowners were very quick to pass on the effects to the peasantry.

The biggest blow to Spanish agriculture came in 1930, when Britain and France raised tariff barriers against Spanish agricultural products. It was this crisis that ushered in the Republic.

The bourgeois democratic revolution began in April 1931 with

the creation of the bourgeois republic. The bourgeoisie, however, proved incapable of carrying through the tasks this development posed.

Spanish industry could only develop in an expanding world market but in the early 1930's the world market was contracting as a consequence of the Wall Street Crash. Spanish industry could only be developed with the protection of a monopoly of foreign trade. The bourgeois government could not introduce this because it feared further reprisals from the imperialist powers.

Similarly with agriculture. The only solution to the terrible starvation and poverty confronting the peasants was the redistribution of the land amongst the whole peasantry. But even this in itself which called for dispossessing the landowners would not be enough. State aid on an enormous scale would be needed to help the peasant introduce more modern techniques of farming and increase the productivity of his land. Confiscation of the land would also mean confiscation of bank-capital. That is why the bourgeois republican government, committed to defence of private property, felt unable to confiscate the land.

Two major institutions also stood in the way of the bourgeois democratic revolution, the army and the Church. The army had always played a large part in the government of Spain even when the government had been a civilian one. The army was very top heavy, with one officer for every six men in the ranks and it was provided with an enormous budget.

Because the middle class in Spain was so small the officers were mainly drawn from the old ruling class and had ties of kinship and friendship with the major industrialists and aristocratic landowners. The army therefore represented a threat to the republic but the republic refused to break the power of the army.

CHURCH

The Church was also the enemy of the republic. It had opposed every previous revolution of the 19th century and wielded enormous economic power. In 1931 the Jesuits owned a third of the country's wealth. The task of separating the Church from the State was therefore posed, but again the republican government, valuing the restraining influence of the Church on the working class, refused to tackle the problem despite enormous anticlerical feeling throughout the masses.

For Marxists, the failure of the bourgeoisie to complete the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution

came as no surprise. Trotsky as early as 1905 had explained that in the epoch of imperialism the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution could only be completed under the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasantry.

Indeed it was the working class of Spain, with a series of strikes, risings, gun battles and the threat of an all-out general strike in 1931, who had been instrumental in the setting up of the republic. Within weeks after its foundation, workers were involved in bloody clashes with soldiers, as they took up a struggle against the Church.

REFORMISTS

While the working class were going into independent actions against their enemies their reformist leaders were arguing for participation in the bourgeois government. Rejecting the theory of permanent revolution, the Spanish socialist leaders argued, as had the Mensheviks in Russia in 1917, that before socialism could come a long period of capitalist development would have to take place.

The task of socialists therefore they claimed was to recognise that the revolution was a bourgeois one, and to support it and "defend it against reaction" by joining the government. This is the formula of social democratic class collaboration in every country, and of course completely contrary to everything that Marxism teaches us.

The only way that the working class can fight against reaction is through its won independent class organisations. In Russia these had taken the form of the Soviets. In Spain the call had to be likewise - for committees of workers and peasants to safeguard and take forward the gains of the revolution. To tie the struggle of the working class to a bourgeoisie that fears the masses is to invite retaliation at a later stage. In Spain, by July and August 1931, Republican artillery was being used to crush a strike wave, while the socialists claimed "Spain is a republic of workers of all classes" - this was written on their initiative as the first article of the new Spanish Constitution.

Despite the collaboration of the socialist leaders with the bourgeoisie, the working class and peasantry continued to try and solve the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution in their own way, through attacks on the Church, the seizure of land and economic and political strikes against the government.

REPRESSION

The refusal of the socialist leaders to support the masses in these struggles and their open support for increasingly repressive measures against the masses led to a government crisis in 1933 in which the right wing were elected to power. This reactionary government stepped up the repression of the working class and this led to greater unity between the political organisations of the working class movement, particularly at a local level.

The largest trade union in Spain was the UGT, the socialist trade union. The anarchists, who were particularly strong in Catalonia were organised in the CNT. The Stalinist Communist Party at this time was still extremely small. The Socialist Party was the largest single workers party in Spain and its forces were organised around Caballero on the left and Prieto on the right.

None of these organisations were imbued with a Marxist understanding of the need to organise the proletariat supported by the peasantry to take the power in Spain as the only way to complete the tasks of the bourgeois revolution and defeat the reactionaries and fascists. Apart from POUM, a centrist organisation of ex-Trotskyists, only *Claridad*, the paper of the Socialist Party left wing, put forward anything like a Marxist position. Because this was a centrist tendency, however, it tended to waver from a correct policy exactly at those times when it was most urgent that a correct policy should be fought for.

THREAT

Despite the class collaboration and inadequacy of the leadership of these organisations, there can be no doubt that they, and their members doubly so, recognised the threat to their existence posed by fascism.

From the very beginning working-class power was used against fascist rallies.

Gil Robles, the fascist leader, planned three major shows of strength, at Escorial near Madrid, in Madrid itself and at Covadonga, Asturias, in 1934. In each area general strikes were called, street car rails torn up, trains stopped, food and accommodation made impossible, roads blocked and the fascists driven back and dispersed, inflicting a major setback to fascism.

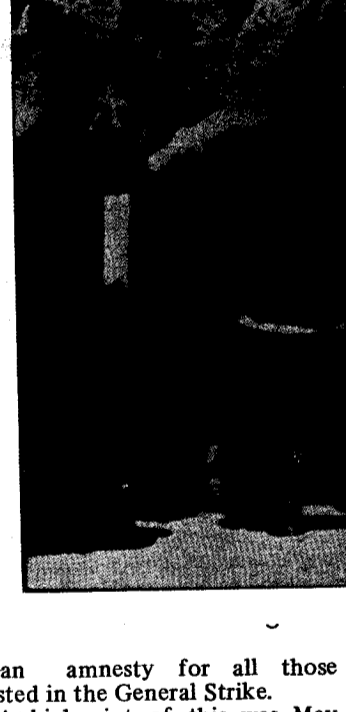
In answer to this the right wing attempted to bring three fascists into the government. Within six hours the reformist-led UGT called a nationwide General Strike. Armed clashes took place between workers and soldiers.

In Madrid, Bilbao and other cities, production and commerce were paralysed, but in Asturias the most solid resistance took place. Workers, armed with dynamite from the mines, set up a Workers' and Peasants' republic which gave land to the peasants, seized the factories and put reactionaries on trial.

ALLIANCES

For fifteen days they held off the Foreign Legion and Moorish troops. At the centre of this struggle, which was finally defeated only through isolation, were Workers' Alliances, committees of workers from the different organisations, which the Trotskyists had fought to build.

Despite the losses and the setback of this confrontation (3,000 workers were killed in Asturias, mainly after the surrender) it in no way weakened workers' resistance to the continuing fascist offensive. Realising that the real battle was still to come, they meantime set about fighting



for an amnesty for all those arrested in the General Strike.

A highpoint of this was May Day 1935, when despite the preparations of the government, a general strike paralysed the entire country except only the public services manned by government troops.

MASS RALLIES

Great anti-fascist rallies demanded dissolution of the Cortes and new elections. Meetings of a hundred thousand became common. Pressure on the right-wing government grew so intense that in February 1936 they called fresh elections expecting the centre parties to win.

In the 1936 elections the left socialists rejected a joint election ticket with the bourgeois republican parties. The right socialists under Prieto and the Communist Party, however, agreed a joint programme with the republicans won the elections and formed a Peoples Front government.

In order to arrive at a joint programme with the bourgeois republicans, the programme could only be that of the bourgeoisie. The programme thus opposed nationalisation of the banks and industry, proposed more effective tariffs, opposed the nationalisation and free distribution of the land to

the peasants, and left the church and army intact.

The People's Front, once in power, moved sharply to the right even of its programme as the working class continued to move leftwards. The new President, Azana, prolonged press censorship and postponed municipal elections in order to appease the reactionaries. The fascists and the landowners egged him on and gave full support.

On April 17th 1936, however, a general strike, called by the anarchist CNT to protest against fascist attacks on workers, and winning the support of UGT workers, crippled Madrid. Doubtful if even the military could prevent such strikes, Azana sought the aid of the right-wing reformist Prieto to end the working class militancy.

Yet the reformist Socialist Party was itself splitting down the middle. The Madrid organisation for instance declared in April that the bourgeoisie could not carry out the democratic tasks of the revolution, and that proletarian revolution was the order of the day. Though the 'left' leader Caballero would not break formally with Popular Front policy, he could not break at this point either with the revolutionary masses who re-elected him overwhelmingly to leadership of the UGT, and he opposed Prieto publicly.

While the Stalinists thundered support for the Popular Front, the centrists of the POUM, refusing to enter the struggle in the Socialist Party and lead its revolutionary wing, joined the Popular Front for the municipal elections.

STRIKES

All the while, despite the bankruptcy of leadership, the working class gained in strength. Port and ship workers won nationwide



strikes, and railway workers had just voted a national strike when Franco declared his revolt. Peasants began seizing land. The Asturian miners, former Prieto supporters, carried out a series of political strikes. Mass strikes and general strikes continued throughout June and July 1936. The Popular Front was clearly incapable of holding back the masses.

The immediate response of the People's Front government to the fascist uprising was to hold back the news from the working class and attempt to come to terms with Franco. The four bourgeois parties in the People's Front government were more frightened of the masses than they were of Franco. The masses threatened social revolution whereas Franco had no intention of overthrowing capitalism and was in fact defending it from the working class.

The fascists refused to compromise with the republican government and as news of the uprising spread the workers did not wait for the government to organise against the rebels. On July 19th the workers began storming army barracks in the main towns and cities of Spain.

In this industrial Catalonia led the way. Half the Spanish proletariat were concentrated in this province and the parliamentary reformism of the socialist-led UGT had never found a foothold

ist parties (PSUC) had fewer members on July 19th than did the centrist POUM. The workers were almost wholly organised in the anarchist union, the CNT.

ARMS REFUSED

The government refused to arm the workers, but nevertheless, within 24 hours the army barracks in Barcelona was in the hands of the workers. This story was repeated throughout Spain. Without waiting for the republican government, the working class had acted to prevent the army from carrying through the rebellion on the mainland.

The crucial question now was to organise the fight against Franco. In Catalonia the working class set up their own organisations to prosecute the war. The "Central Committee of Anti-fascist Militias of Catalonia" brought together all the workers organisations in the province.

Peasants seized the land, militias were set up, transportation was organised by workers' committees and the factories, though still owned by the capitalists, were brought under workers' control. The Catalonian militias then marched into Aragon, conquering it as an army of social liberation.

By creating local militia, giving the land to the peasants, placing captured reactionaries on trial before the village assembly and thus transforming the village, the Catalan columns could march on knowing that they were creating fortresses for the revolution.

In civil war politics is the determining weapon. Peasants formed the bulk of the fascist army for the simple reason that the republic had given them nothing. If the working class could establish dual power alongside the People's Front government and help the peasants seize the land, organise agricultural production and cooperate in the task of transportation and trade, then the peasant armies of Franco would melt away.

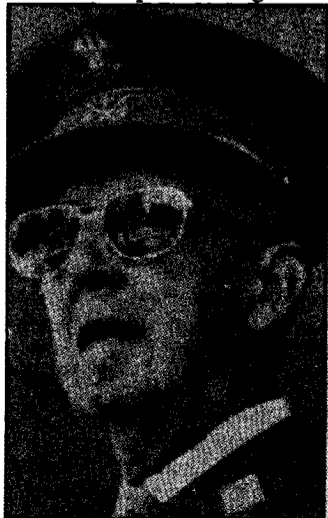
In other words, the only way fascism could be defeated was by going beyond dual power to the social revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry.

Thus, as we shall show further when we examine the way the struggle proceeded, the central question in Spain in 1936 was one of revolutionary leadership with a programme to unite the working class and peasantry, standing independent of the bourgeois Popular Front.

CENTRISM

Only with the sharpest struggle for clarity and principle against the centrist movements could such a leadership be built. Thus in April 1936 Trotsky wrote that "the situation in Spain has again become revolutionary" and stated clearly that "Marxist action in Spain can begin only by means of an irreconcilable condemnation of the whole policy of Andres Nin and Andrade (POUM centrist leaders who had joined with the Popular Front) which was and remains not only false but criminal".

Thus in fighting to unite workers and peasants against the



Francisco Franco

danger of fascist annihilation of their basic organisations, Marxists should in no way abandon principle. Only through defending the complete political independence of the class from the bourgeoisie can the massive strength it displays be mobilised successfully in the struggle for power.

LENIN & WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

LETTER

from P.C., London

As your article in *Socialist Press* makes clear, when Lenin says 'No organisations for women', he is referring specifically to special organisations within the party. Otherwise in fact Lenin emphatically was in favour of special forms of organisations among women.

'Nevertheless we must not close our eyes to the fact that the Party must have bodies, working groups, commissions, committees, bureaux or whatever you like, whose particular duty it is to arouse the masses or women workers . . . We need appropriate bodies to carry on work amongst them, special methods of agitation and forms of organisations' [*Women, Marriage and Sex* in *Reminiscences of Lenin* by Zetkin]

Lenin was enthusiastically in favour of Zetkin's proposal for a non-party International Women's Congress in the early 1920s. It was to include women in trade unions, in working class political organisations, in bourgeois women's organisations of every sort including women doctors, teachers, journalists, etc. It was to deal with the questions of unemployment, equal pay for equal work, protective legislation for women, trade union and professional organisation, social provision for mother and child, social institutions to help the housewife and mother, the position of women in marriage and family law and in public-political law. The purpose of the congress was to induce the largest possible mass of women, peasant and petty bourgeois women as well as proletarian women to deal seriously with all these questions and to direct their attention to Communism

OPPOSITION

In fact, as Zetkin had feared, the congress ran into opposition from Communist women comrades, particularly in Germany and Bulgaria. Like the writer of the article in *Socialist Press*, these women were opposed to special forms of organisation for women. Lenin's response was, 'A pity, a great pity!' The comrades have let slip a brilliant opportunity to open a way of hope to masses of women workers, and so to bring them into the revolutionary struggles of the working class . . . You must find a way of reaching the women who have been thrust by capitalism into frightful misery. You must, must find it. The necessity cannot be evaded. Without organised mass activity under Communist leadership there can be no victory over capitalism . . .

Lenin said "It is right for us to put forward demands favourable to women." The demands would show "That we hate, yes hate everything and will abolish everything which tortures and oppresses the woman worker, the housewife, the peasant woman, the wife of the petty trader, yes, and in many cases the woman of the possessing classes". The demand would also show that the proletarian dictatorship would have consideration for the interests of women.

These demands, which would change according to prevailing circumstances, but which would always be connected with the general interests of the proletariat, would not lull women into inactivity like reformist demands, but call upon women as equals to take action in transforming society. Of course, the struggles for our demands for women must be bound up with the object of seizing power, of establishing the proletarian dictatorship.

Lenin also criticised the attitude of male party members to work among women. There was a tendency to treat it as an occasional issue and as an affair only concerning women comrades. Instead recognition of the necessity and value of a powerful, clear-headed Communist women's movement should be the constant care and obligation of the Party. He said, 'Unfortunately it is still true to say of many of our comrades, "scratch a Communist and you find

mentality as regards women. Could there be more damning proof of this than the calm acquiescence of men who see how women grow worn out in the petty monotonous household work, their strength and time dissipated and wasted, their minds growing narrow and stale, their hearts beating slowly, their will weakened? . . . We must root out the 'old master' idea to its last and smallest root, in the party and among the masses. This is one of our political tasks . . .

All these points have important implications for the Trotskyist movement. WRP has consistently opposed the setting up of special women's action committees in trade unions at branch, regional or national level and has opposed the call for special investigations by union research sections into discrimination against women. Similarly it has opposed the Working Women's Charter, which is the very kind of instrument Zetkin and Lenin considered necessary, if correctly used, for mobilising the mass of women, in order to direct them towards revolutionary struggle and Communism. All the questions planned for discussion at the International Women's Congress are included in the ten points of the Charter, together with demands for equal educational and training opportunities and freely available contraception and abortion.

The problem, as *Socialist Press* has pointed out, is to use such instruments as the Working Women's Charter in order to convince women of the need for the building of a revolutionary party. How this should be done was dealt with only abstractly in *Socialist Press* No. 9. The crisis will not magically 'arouse the mass of women and draw them from the confines of the family'. It may well drive them further into the family and even towards fascism. Of course women should be involved in organisations of workers control, in factory committees and in the equivalent bodies in the sphere of reproduction. But how do we get them to that point, and how do we combat the sexism that has pervaded and divided every organ of the labour movement so far?

Many women have been turned away from revolutionary politics by the sexism of the revolutionary groups themselves at the theoretical, organisational and personal levels.

Most Trotskyist groups have been extremely tardy in taking up women's issues, have done virtually no theoretical work on the specific forms of the exploitation of women and have developed no political strategy of the kind Lenin considered necessary. And the personal behaviour of many revolutionary comrades is very sexist. Again Lenin, in speaking of rooting out the 'old master idea' to its last and furthest root was aware of the problem.

NO SUBSTITUTE

Socialist Press 7 castigates the consciousness raising groups of the women's liberation movement. Clearly they are no substitute for revolutionary struggle, but it should be acknowledged that it was out of them that the force of the women's movement grew in all its hybrid forms and with its considerable influence on the trade union movement, as well, latterly, on groups on the revolutionary left. They have also contributed important understandings of sexism in bourgeois society, how it is transmitted from the earliest socialisation of children, induces oppressive attitudes and behaviour in both men and women and severely weakens class struggle. Rather than viewing the division of sex as being above the class struggle, many tendencies in the women's movement regard it as a problem in addition to and linked with but certainly not reducible to the class struggle. This is clearly the Leninist position, and similar to the question of racism.

The entry of women on a mass scale into production has not proved sufficient to their emancipation, as Engels implied it would. The women's movement has taken the theories of the early Marxists an important step further from its

women's oppression and exploitation. It has stressed the effect of women's role in reproduction in the home on the continuing sexual division of labour in production and in the subordinate position of women in the labour movement. One in three married women now work, compared with one in eight in the 1930s, and virtually all women work for substantial periods of their married life. But their jobs tend to be in 'women's work', in those jobs that are an extension of their role in the reproduction of labour power in the home, in food and clothing manufacture, in cleaning, health education, welfare as well as commercial services. This division of labour will not necessarily be changed by the socialisation of domestic labour.

BENEFITS

Moreover the personal benefits derived by male workers from the traditional role cast for women in marriage, results in direct opposition within unions to women's struggles for greater independence. Zetkin's view was the 'proletarian anti-feminism' must be confronted. Our task as revolutionaries is to show how sexism which helps maintain women as a cheap labour force and makes it doubly difficult for women to become fully involved in struggle, not the least task, this is the understanding and combatting of sexism in ourselves. We must also convince the working class that the functions of the family can be replaced much less oppressively and more efficiently by other forms of social organisation. Necessary demands here are a full day care provision for children, public, but not institutionalised, canteens, and designed housing. The workers in these services should of course be men as well as women, be paid average industrial earnings and accorded as high status as other workers.

REPLY

The author of the article in *Socialist Press 7* writes:

While I agree with the main points in this letter, it does not prove that the "bodies, working groups, commissions" etc., that Lenin speaks of should consist only of women.

Indeed it is precisely in order to begin to combat the "sexist" attitudes prevalent in revolutionary groupings in the past that it is important to reemphasise the need for the Workers Socialist League to take up the fight for women's rights as a party question, and not merely the sphere of its women members.

It would have been right for the WRP to oppose "special women's action committees in trade unions if (but only if) these have been confined bureaucratically solely to women members.

The WSL fights through trade union branches and trade councils for the maximum mobilisation of the whole trade union movement in support of each section involved in struggle.

In exactly the same way we must fight to unite the whole strength of the movement in the struggle for women's rights. This must entail a fight for support from the traditionally better organised and more militant male-dominated sectors of industry.

To talk about organising a non-party, all-women Congress after the overthrow of capitalism is one thing. But we must be clear on the difference between the role of a small revolutionary party struggling under capitalism to win the most politically conscious layers of workers, and that of a mass party which has just led the working class to the successful taking of power.

For the mass revolutionary party under such conditions the task is to begin to lay the foundations of socialism. For the revolutionary party today the question is one of preparing the leadership to take the working class to power - this is a qualitative task which cannot be jumped over.

So whereas I agree that committees of action on women's oppression must be organised, these must not be all-women committees. Here is the beginnings of our fundamental disagreements with the Womens Liberation movement.

IRELAND THE WAY FORWARD

Two months after it was set up the Northern Ireland Convention is still in business. The Convention, however, has little more chance of a peaceful conclusion than any of British imperialism's previous attempts to solve its 'Irish problem'.

The partitioned Ireland which was formed after the First World War was never an ideal solution for Britain. With the first imperialist war, the Russian revolution, and the Easter Rising dealing severe blows to the old methods of imperialist control, the flexible British ruling class responded with a first essay in neo-colonialism.

The compromise of Home Rule was accepted wholeheartedly by the Sinn Fein politicians Michael Collins and Arthur Griffiths. The bourgeois politicians of the North encouraged by the Tory Party only demanded that they be excluded from Home Rule and drew the Protestant workers behind their campaign to maintain the sectarian structure of Ulster capital.

The social revolution that could have been necessary to overcome unionist resistance in the North East was feared both by the bourgeois nationalist politicians of the South and by the British ruling class.

UNFINISHED

The result has been an unfinished national revolution which has left the South economically dependent, the nationalist population of the North imprisoned within the repressive statelet, and the Protestant workers trapped in a reactionary alliance with their own Unionist employers and local gentry. The absence of a revolutionary workers' party capable of leading the national struggle to its conclusion led to partial results directed solely against the working class.

The bourgeois leaders of the nationalist movement in the South compromised with imperialism, social Labour leaders abandoned the national question and Republicanism became the ideology of those workers who resisted imperialist oppression.

But without a working class leadership capable of developing a movement against both imperialist domination and its own exploiters, the national revolution could not be carried through.

The problems shelved by partition have not gone away. They burst out with renewed force in the North East in the late 1960's through the Civil Rights movement. The decline from the time it was set up, the disintegration of the Northern state accelerated after the Second World War.

In the last 30 years 47,500 jobs disappeared in agriculture and two traditional industries, linen and shipbuilding, which were the mainstay of Ulster capital declined catastrophically. Faced with intensified competition and now sharpening its claws on the world market the Ulster capitalists were driven out of business.

INVESTMENT

Only the intervention of the state, creating directly and indirectly 75,000 jobs over the post-war period, prevented a total collapse of employment. As local capital drained away to the more lucrative London market and with emigration in the 1950's at an average of 9,000 a year, the present government with British encouragement moved to create the infrastructure necessary to attract outside investment.

Ulster capitalists had been concentrated in small and medium sized labour-intensive firms geared to the UK market. It was here that the Orange alliance had gained its strength through its control of the allocation of jobs. This structure of ownership which extended from

discrimination in employment to housing and local government tied the Protestant workers to their own employers.

As the economic base of Ulster capital declined, the British government moved to reform the sectarian structures which made Ulster unattractive to foreign capital. Britain's attempts at reform met the resistance of the Unionist alliance it had itself encouraged to maintain the division of the working class.

The strength of Unionism had not declined in proportion to the fall of local Ulster capital. Under the new title of 'Paisleyism' it frustrated every attempt to date of the British government to reform the Northern Ireland statelet. Thus the three Unionist leaders, O'Neill, Chichester-Clarke, and Faulkner who tried to initiate the reforms that monopoly capital needed and the Catholic population demanded

tain the Protestant workers chained to an alliance with Unionist capital.

The loyalist politicians' new willingness to condemn Protestant sectarian murders is not an indication of a change of heart, but their response to a changed situation.

As a minority in the power-sharing Executive, Craig, Paisley and West organised punch-ups and walkouts as part of a strategy to rally Protestant support against that particular British solution, thereby setting the scene for the strike by the Ulster Workers' Council that brought down the Executive. In the Convention things are very different. A majority that confidently waits for Britain to transfer power to its hands must conduct itself in a different fashion.

Ian Paisley, the leader of the Unionists in the Convention, rode to power on the back of Protestant

movement cannot even solve the national question.

In the North, however, as well as the South, the economic crisis of British and Irish capitalism and the rapid growth of recession is opening up new avenues of struggle.

In the South this poses the break of the Labour Party from the reactionary coalition, and the fight for policies to defend jobs, wages and the living standards of small farmers.

In the North it presents opportunities seriously to pose a united struggle of Catholic and Protestant workers, in which advanced Protestant workers can be won to the struggle for a united independent Ireland.

The cutbacks in government spending and its support for nationalised industry, the slashing of health and education services being prepared by the Labour govern-

control of production and the demand for the nationalisation of industry under workers' management, with a full programme of useful public works.

In mobilising as a class defending its interests against the employers, the Protestant workers would soon encounter the armed intervention of the British imperialist army which would be used against occupations. The campaign to remove imperialist troops from Ireland and for self-determination would gain immensely in strength.

As such committees, from the inevitable small beginnings, started to gain in strength, the terrorist tactics of the outright fascist wing of Loyalists would be turned against them in an attempt to prevent the independent action of workers as a class. It would therefore be necessary for joint forces of workers' militia drawn both from Catholic and Protestant workers to protect the class and its leaders from attack.

Through all these struggles the immense power of the demand for the complete independence and unification of Ireland would be more forcibly established, since at every point the enemies of the working class would be exposed as the Loyalists, their fascist gunmen, and the British army.

SUPPORT

Yet the destruction of the reactionary statelet in the North cannot be carried through without the mobilisation of workers in the South for the removal of the coalition government, and to replace it with a workers' and farmers' government, which must give full material and political support to all anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles of workers in the North.

There can be no economic solution to the problems of North or South without the expropriation of the large capitalists, landowners and banks.

Further, the state-isation of credit to facilitate the development of industry and cheap credit for agriculture, together with the imposition of a state monopoly of foreign trade, are the only way to prevent Ireland's continued domination by foreign capitalists.

Within such a united Ireland it must be made clear that religious minorities would be guaranteed equal rights and opportunities, while for the first time in their history Irish workers would be free to determine their way forward in the fight for socialism.

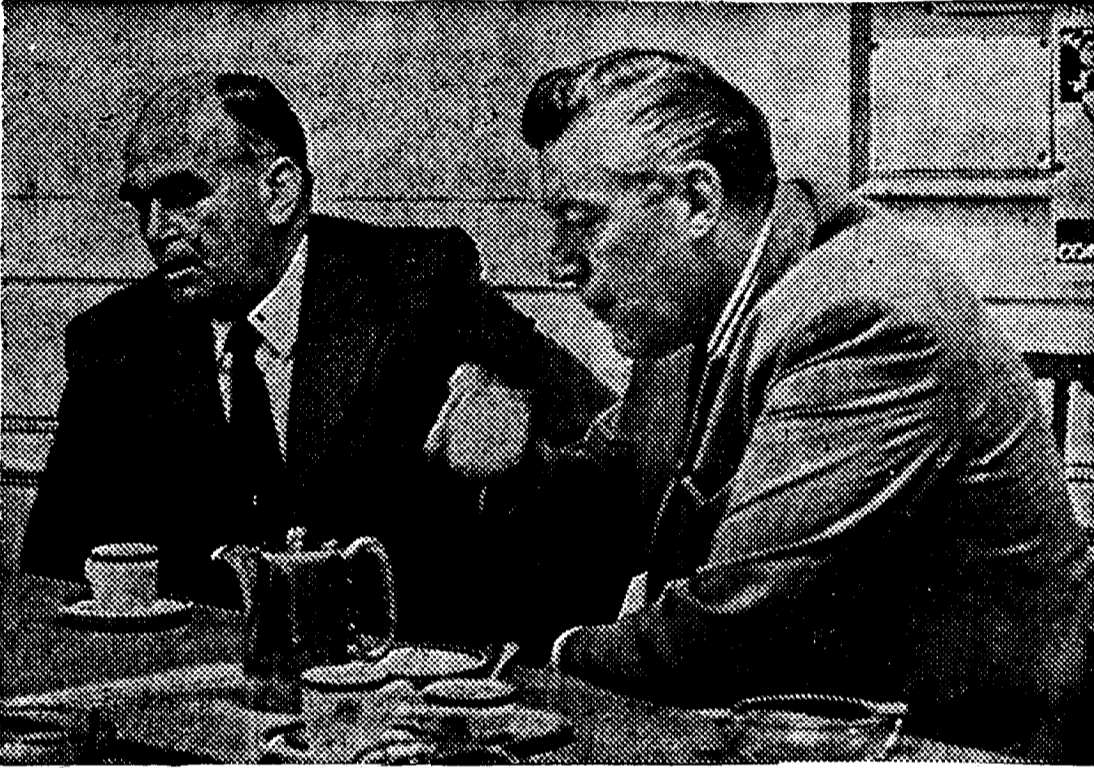
The Labour government in Britain, which sent the troops into Ireland in 1969, today attempts to disguise its role by pleading that it is concerned to overcome 'sectarian' divisions and reconcile the 'two communities'. In fact, just as it attacks the working class in Britain, it is protecting imperialist interests in Ireland.

'LEFTS'

The 'left' Labour MPS who express their belief in self-determination for the Irish, but refuse to call for the immediate and complete withdrawal of British imperialism, aid the preparations of British capitalism to establish a new Loyalist regime.

Stan Orme, so-called left who holds a Minister's responsibility for Ireland, is the clearest example. This job means an acceptance of British imperialism domination of the Irish working class. Orme must be forced to resign at once and to fight alongside Irish and British workers for the withdrawal of troops.

A fight must be taken up in the trade unions to support the right of the Irish people to self-determination and for the immediate withdrawal of British imperialism from Ireland. Only in this way can the struggles of British and Irish workers be united.



Loyalist leaders West and Paisley

found themselves toppled, one after another, by what had been their mass base.

Thus all Britain's plans failed, squeezed as they were between the loyalists' reactionary determination to maintain Protestant ascendancy and the struggle of the oppressed minority in the North, headed by the IRA, for national self-determination.

Britain's latest attempt to produce a stable regime for capital in Ireland is the Convention. The first moves that the loyalist majority made in the opening sessions guaranteed that the finished report to be offered to the British government will be more or less the United Ulster Unionist Council's election manifesto demand for a restored Stormont.

This they did by the simple device of using their majority to rule against the presentation of minority reports. The nature of the Convention is clear. It can be no more than a preparation for a return to Unionist control.

The SDLP who remain in the Convention, by their presence, enable the British government to portray the Convention as an attempt to reconcile the 'two communities'.

The Unionists, confident that the Convention will do their bidding, have felt strong enough to express the hope that a spirit of reconciliation will inform the Convention's proceedings and ensure its success. The SDLP clutches at these straws to disguise its capitulation before the schemes of British imperialism.

The successful boycott campaign mounted by the Provisional IRA against the Convention elections indicates that the nationalist population despite five years of military occupation are not ready to accept this latest British solution.

The rhetoric of the British government about uniting the 'two communities' is a thinly veiled disguise for restoring a regime based on the unionist forces which will continue the savage repression of the Catholic workers and main-

sectarian violence. Out of his Ulster Protestant Volunteers emerged the UVF and the Shankill Defence Association which devoted itself to the Christian task of terrorising and burning Catholics out of their homes in Protestant areas and 're-allocating' the abandoned houses.

The successful petit-bourgeois revolt within Unionism has brought Paisley and similar leaders from resistance to the 'Civil Rights' initiated by Britain to the position heading the only force the British government can entrust with imperialist interests.

In preparing for power the loyalist politicians must distance themselves from their own petit-bourgeois base. Thus the twenty plus candidates for the Convention that the para-military groups thought they had earned, were refused to them; and loyalist leaders are now prepared to condemn violent excesses. This is, however, not in the cause of reconciliation, but of preserving imperialist rule.

As Britain prepares for a restoration of Unionist control, a correct policy for the Irish working class is vital. The struggle for national independence cannot be carried forward except by a Marxist leadership which combines the struggle against British imperialism with the struggle against capitalism.

The weakness of the Republican movement, for all its valiant struggle against British imperialism, is that it falls short of offering any programme to the Irish working class. While we support their anti-imperialist stance, we must fight for political clarity in their struggle.

We must be clear that in no way is the Republican movement a socialist organisation and that it turns away from the necessary fight for a base in the organised working class.

Thus Irish workers face a dilemma in which the Irish Labour Party struggles only on a reformist programme having long ago abandoned the fight for a united Ireland, while the Republican movement turns its back on class questions.

In this epoch such a nationalist

ment's spending limits, together with the drop in demand for shipbuilding and aircraft threatens the jobs of workers in Northern Ireland - both Protestant and Catholic.

At the same time the £6 statutory limit on pay increases imposed by the Labour government is an attack on the living standards of all workers in Northern Ireland who are subject to the same massive inflation as British workers.

This opens the opportunity for advanced layers of Republicans (many of whom are increasingly aware of the inadequacy of pure nationalism) and organised sections of Catholic workers to take the initiative and publicly propose a united struggle with Protestant workers in defence of all jobs and living standards.

While in no way relaxing vigilance, and while stating clearly that any provocations or armed attacks on Catholic workers will be met by the full armed strength of the Republican forces, the fullest support must be given to every struggle of workers - whether Protestant or Catholic - in defence of jobs or against the pay laws, whether this takes the form of occupations, strikes or other industrial action.

Such support would provide a living proof in struggle that the main enemy of Protestant workers is not Catholic workers, and that the main threat to their jobs and living standards is the capitalist system defended by Craig and Paisley.

By selectively defending those who begin to break from loyalism by fighting the employers over jobs and wages, and condemning those who act as the puppets of the Orange order, some advanced layers of Protestants can be won on the basis of principle towards the struggle for socialism.

Central to such unity must be the demand for work-sharing on full pay. It must be fought for through committees which attempt to unite the mass unemployed with those at work. It connects immediately to the fight for workers'

VARLEY SINKS NORTON VILLIERS TRIUMPH LABOUR'S FIRST 'LAME DUCK'

Hard on the heels of the government's decision to refuse further aid to a stricken Norton Villiers Triumph, management has already declared the liquidation of the subsidiary Norton Villiers Ltd. threatening the jobs of over 1,000 workers at the Wolverhampton plant - not to mention those in components industries.

The Tory press has been full of praise for this example of the government's conscious moves to increase unemployment over and above the million mark and hold down public spending in defence of capitalism. In the Midlands unemployment is already way above the national average. Many of those made redundant through Varley's decision could be unemployed for years.

It is clear that the timing of Varley's announcement to coincide with the annual holidays, was a conscious attempt to minimise opposition from those

threatened with loss of jobs.

As long ago as June 30th the Export Credit Guarantee Department refused to renew a £4m. line of export credit.

"SLIMMING DOWN"

Dennis Poore, NVT chairman, has said that the future situation depends on the attitude of the unions. An intensive speed-up and de-manning exercise, like the one carried out at Meriden, is projected for NVT.

It is hoped that with drastic "slimming down" of the labour force to a 'realistic' level of 50% and greater productivity an annual production of between 15,000 and 20,000 units will be possible.

There must be no redundancies. If insufficient work is available then a programme of work-sharing with full pay, across all factories, administered by trade union committees must be fought for by the unions. This must involve all three factories including Meriden.

The NVT management have blamed loss of sales on "foreign

imports" and tried to lay the basis for an appeal to workers to save the firm.

Their argument for restrictions on imports is reactionary. It ties workers to defence of "their" firm and "their" nation against other workers and diverts them from a struggle to defend jobs.

Poore, posing as a friend of the workers, has even hinted at support for a sit-in.

A further sinister aspect has appeared in the shape of the Tory Heseltine and his demagogic appeals for a "full public inquiry".

OPEN THE BOOKS

Together with a carefully orchestrated press attack on Benn the Tories, (who have been clamouring for just such savage cuts in public expenditure), along with the management, seek to turn attention away from the real cause of the problem - an increasingly crisis-ridden capitalist system.

Yes, there must be an inquiry, but one organised and run by the

workers. The government and NVT must be forced to open the books to trade union investigation.

The fighting spirit of the NVT workers is high. Already a 24-hour picket has been put on the Wolverhampton factory with instructions to let nothing out.

UNITY

There has already been talk of a sit-in. What now remains is the need for a clear policy on which to fight. Along with work-sharing on full pay, the remaining 49.9% of NVT (now owned by Manganese Bronze) must be nationalised without compensation and a programme of state contracts opened up to guarantee jobs threatened by the shrinking capitalist world market for motor cycles.

The opening of the books by workers must lay the basis for trade union committees which can begin to draw up a planned development of the factories into the future.

Only in this way can the unity

and job security of the workers at Meriden, Small Heath and Wolverhampton be established.

The intervention of the Labour Party over the past months graphically illustrated the role played in delivering workers to the right wing.

Nuneaton MP, Leslie Huckford, in the forefront of the campaign for a co-op at Meriden, now distinguishes himself by writing and explaining the need to support Labour's anti-working class laws. Benn's promises to the workers stand exposed.

Such leaders can only demonstrate a working class fighting spirit and defend its standard of living.

ACTION

Now Renee Short comes forward with tales of "depression" she is at the government's decision.

The working class needs action, not tears. These so-called Labour leaders must fight for the position outlined above or make way for those who will.

SKILLED MEN OR "SEASONAL WORKERS"?

A leaflet issued by the Newark Action Committee of the AUEW (Engineering and Construction) and the Boilermakers Society highlights one of the ways the economic recession is attacking skilled workers.

It shows how construction workers (or indeed any worker who becomes unemployed) can be branded as "seasonal workers" by the Social Security and thus denied unemployment benefit. This is because the only appropriate work available to many skilled Steel Erec-

tors, Fitters, Riggers, Tubers and Welders is in the repair of boilers for the Electricity Board.

Such work is vital to maintain plant and equipment, but is concentrated in the summer months, when demand for electricity is at its lowest. Therefore despite the lack of alternative work, despite the dangerous, dirty, insecure and important nature of the job, the Social Security argue that this "establishes a pattern of seasonal employment" and rules out payment of dole money for the intervening period.

This situation of course has been worsened by the Labour Government's policy of mass unemployment and restricting government spending. As the action committee's leaflet points out:

"... the Construction and Building Industries are always the first to feel any cut-back in Public Spending. In the Newark area there has been no major construction work since the completion of Cottam Power Station in 1968".

The action committee calls for union action to change the law on payment of benefits to those out of work. Far more important, however is the fight against unemployment - for the nationalisation of the construction industry and a programme of public works to provide work for the thousands of builders and tradesmen made redundant by bankrupt capitalism.

The clear direction of the Labour government however is towards further mass redundancy. The unions must therefore mobilise against these attacks by forming joint committees of employed and unemployed workers on a local, regional and national level to lead the fight.



WRP COINS 'MARXIST' TERM

Anxious to cover their own complete absence from the T&GWU Conference (where they had neither a single delegate nor a single resolution passed at any one of the T&GWU's 9,000 branches), the Workers Revolutionary Party has launched a double page attack on Alan Thornett, a delegate to the Conference, who is a member of the WSL.

Their reporter Stephen Johns, writing in *Workers Press* (22.7.75) conveniently omitted the fact that Thornett was the only opposition to Jones and the bureaucracy, and that it was because he refused to composite any of the resolutions from 5/293 branch on which he was mandated, that they were discussed at the Conference.

The motions moved by WSL members in the branch, declared opposition to the social contract and defence of free collective bargaining; the demand for a sliding scale of wages; and the call to fight unemployment through a sliding scale of hours along with official support for factory occupations.

DISTORTIONS

Johns' article is studded with breathtaking lies (such as: "Thornett echoed a familiar defence of the social contract") and the usual WRP distortions, but concludes on an issue which is of great importance to those who, unlike the WRP, see Marxism as a science. Johns writes:

"The two roads are clearly mapped out. The one leads to workers' power through the building of the WRP, the other road leads to the bureaucracy and the corporate state. Thornett and his followers have

anomic form of organisation imposed by monopoly capitalism after the physical liquidation of the independent organisations of the working class. To impose it, the trade union leaders and militants are shot or imprisoned and state unions are imposed on the working class.

"Corporate state" is therefore the correct term for Mussolini's Italy, for Nazi Germany, for Franco's fascist Spain, or for Portugal before the coup which ousted the Caetano dictatorship, and present-day Chile.

FASCISM

To say then that Thornett and the WSL have opted for the "corporate state" is to say they have become advocates of fascism. Is this what the WRP intends to say?

But the question goes further than this. It is not merely the WSL who are accused of being fascists. The WRP has coined the term 'corporatist' which clearly means an advocate of the corporate state, or linked with the bourgeois drive to fascism.

This term has been applied for several years by the WRP indiscriminately to class-collaborators and reformists in the trade union and Labour movement. This not only looks back to the extreme ultra-leftism of the Stalinist movement of the 1930's which branded Labourites and union leaders as "social fascists" but avoids all distinction of the degree of the betrayal.

Thus in his article on Thornett Johns describes the social contract (which was a voluntary agreement by the TUC leaders to cut their members' living standards) as "corporatist" but is then without the means to differentiate between this betrayal and their present collaboration with state-imposed pay laws.

Worse still he is even incapable of seeing the difference between laws against the unions, and the destruction of trade unions through

course the WRP notion that fascism could in some way be introduced peacefully into Britain, since through the trade union leadership joining with the employers.

It is an absolutely revisionist and reactionary conception which has not only held the WRP from any mobilisation to defend the labour movement against fascist provocations) but which also separates the WRP from trade unionists who, though they daily witness the class collaboration of leaders, correctly find it hard to see them as fascists.

Trotsky was clear on the nature of the bureaucracy and of fascism when he wrote:

"monopoly capitalism is less willing to reconcile itself to the independence of trade union demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labour aristocracy who pick up the crumbs from the banquet table, than they are transformed into its political agents in the eyes of the working class."

But here Trotsky is talking about the trade unions still existing on their old foundations - as workers' organisations, though by hand and foot by the class collaboration of their leadership therefore goes on to say:

"If that is not achieved, the labour bureaucracy is driven away and replaced by the fascists. In fact, all the efforts of the labour aristocracy in the service of imperialism cannot in the long run prevent them from destruction." [Marxism and the Trade Union]

REVISIONIST

The WRP has long maintained its revisionist position on "corporatism" which is flattery open to the whole of Trotsky's work on fascism.

It is important therefore that the WSL representing the working class in the struggle for the

WSL PUBLIC MEETINGS

LONDON

Tuesday 12th August, 7.30pm
Limehouse Public Library
638, Commercial Road, E.14.

"A Programme to Fight the Cuts" in the Social Services"

BIRMINGHAM

Tuesday 19th August, 7.30pm.
Digbeth Civic Hall, Lecture Room 3
"The Labour Government's Attacks on Jobs"

LIVERPOOL

Sunday 24th August, 7.30pm
The Mitre, Dale St.
"The Fight against Unemployment"

YET ANOTHER 'BROAD LEFT' CAREERIST

The opportunist nature of the union officials who are members of the Communist Party was shown clearly by the recent move of Bernard Panter, who after losing his job as an AUEW district official, gave up his membership both of the AUEW and of the CP, in a bid to get a job with the right-wing Electrical and Power Workers Union.

Now another leading Communist Party member, Pat Farelly, who was recently defeated in the election for Southern Divisional Organiser, and who had been a union official for nearly 20 years

Bagnall, the fork-lift truck company, a firm he used to negotiate with on behalf of his members!

FIRST-CLASS

The firm said: "With his union background we feel he is a first class man for this employee relations job."

As long as Farelly was ready, while an official, to do the job of the CP and attack Trotskyists during the occupation struggles against the closure of the BLMC Thornycroft's factory in Basingstoke a couple of years ago, the CP made no criticism of him. This exposes the nature of the

BOSSSES EXPECT SLUMP TO LAST

scale recession is way in Britain, according to the latest survey put out by the 'Financial Times'.

figures, and their intention by this mouthpiece of British capitalism, serve to expose the TUC of state pay laws protection. Indeed the *Financial Times* main headline, "Pay has Failed to Boost Confidence", shows that the crisis of British capitalism goes much further than simply seeking to cut on the work-

CREDIT

massive expansion of credit in the "boom" period which led to the establishment of industries is now working through the capitalist in the twin forms of monetarism and a continually increasing rate of profit.

means that large quantities of capital (now embodied in factories, stocks and labour force) must be taken out of production, while the productivity of labour, the only source of profits, must be increased

The *Financial Times*' survey shows that British capitalists are certain that the slump must deepen in the pursuit of profit by the fittest firms. Thus its subsidiary headlines announced: *Industry is still pessimistic; The recession worsens; and Unemployment will increase.*

Among those replying to the survey only 5% of companies expected their labour force to increase in the next 12 months, while 45% expected it to drop (among building and construction firms 72% expected a drop in the number employed). In addition to this 42% expected capital expenditure (new and replaced plant) to decrease, and 36% expected to run down their existing stocks of components and raw materials.

The gloom from the *FT* survey

is almost matched by that of Phillips & Drew the brokers who conservatively forecast a drop in workers' real earnings of 4-5% as a result of the pay laws, and anticipate a drop in consumer spending, while unemployment reaching a 1.5 million 'peak' in 1976 will, they estimate, remain at around 900,000 until at least 1979.

DEEPENING

The expected deepening of the slump is reflected in the mortal crisis of the British machine tool industry - a sure barometer of future growth. Hardly any of these companies are now working at more than 60% of capacity, and one major company did not receive a single order from a British company last month. Only production for export has kept the industry going at all.

The case for socialist nationalisation as the only alternative to long-term slump can hardly be more clearly expressed.

WHISTLING IN THE DARK

like a drowning man clinging to a serpent, economic and politicians in Western Europe and the USA cling desperately to "certain indications" that an economic recovery is under way.

These indications are two-fold. First, the improvement in the rate of payments in Western Europe and the USA; and secondly, the fact that the rate at which industrial production is declining in the United States has recently

shown improvements in the balance of payments, far from establishing pre-conditions for an economic recovery, is an indication of the severity of the crisis!

factor here) and export less. They therefore tend to become less indebted to each other.

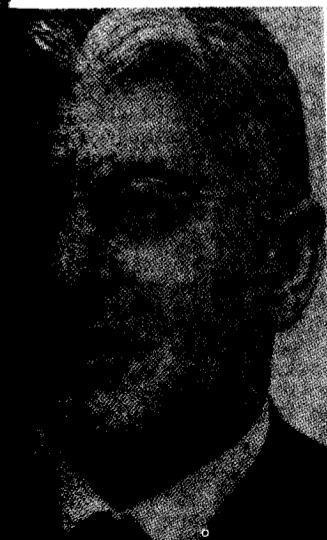
Nevertheless, mesmerised by this consequence of their own bankruptcy, the governments of the USA, France, Germany and Italy prepare to reflate - increase government spending and the issue of credit - to cure "unacceptable" levels of unemployment.

They do this totally oblivious of the fact that until just recently they were boasting about how they managed to unleash on the working class had cured "unacceptable" levels of inflation!

Of course they cannot have it both ways. In the USA, President Ford after slowing down the rate of increase of the slump proclaims it has ended. But as he begins urging reflationary policies he now finds that the rate of inflation in the US has shot up from 6% in May to 9.6% since June while unemployment remains at over 8 million.

Reflation under such circumstances would push up inflation as increases in credit enabled sectors of industry otherwise certain to go bankrupt to remain in business. Such reflation would also increase the severity of the slump in the long run as price increases pushed up industrial costs.

The inherent laws of the capitalist crisis cannot be wished away. Until massive amounts of capital value are destroyed to leave room for the restoration of the rate of profit for the survivors, involving the creation of mass unemployment throughout the capitalist world and bringing the increasing threat of imperialist war, capitalism cannot be put on a stable basis.



Arthur Burns: US whistler

Industrial production has slowed and millions are thrown out of work, of course capitalist countries import less (and the oil imports is the main

£500 Monthly Fund

A £500 Monthly development fund is made the more urgent by the complete bankruptcy of leadership in the working class in the face of the growing economic recession. The building of the Workers Socialist League and the election of *Socialist Press* are vital if the right wing is to be fought.

JONES MUST GO



Jones

Jack Jones, leading advocate of the TUC's wage-cutting plan to limit rises to £6, which is now being enforced by law by the Wilson government has now claimed that the wage-cutting measures have held down unemployment.

In an article in the *T&GWU Record*, Jones appeals for union "solidarity" behind the government which, through deliberate acts of policy has thrown 1 million on the dole.

LIE

Still peddling the lie that the wage controls are "voluntary", Jones refuses to oppose what he hypocritically calls the "shocking figure" of unemployed, and offers no prospect of defending the thousands more jobs threatened by government spending cuts, by speed-up and closures in the coming months.

Instead, he claims the figure would have been worse if the union leaders had not "come to the aid of the government."

In fact it has been Jones' complete solidarity with the CBI and the right wing leadership of the Labour government that has ensured that workers are confronted with both a cut in real wages, and mass unemployment.

But all is not going Jones' way even within the T&G itself. The

London and Home Counties Region of the union has voted 48 - 4 to urge the union and the TUC to abandon the social contract.

This move is just a first reflection of the struggles against bureaucrats like Jones which will break out as workers fight to defend jobs and wages in the coming period.

The demand now must be not just rejection of the social contract and complete opposition to the reactionary policies of the Labour government, but the removal of Jones, the architect of this historic TUC betrayal of the working class.

Jones, who now speaks for the extreme right wing must be replaced by a leader prepared to use the power of Britain's largest union to give full official support to all workers fighting now for jobs and wages.

Democracy Needed

trainee officers says "For the first six months employment will be on a probationary basis, as a trainee official ... at the end of that period, the appointment shall be reviewed by the General Secretary, acting on behalf of the National Executive Council of the Association." raises the question of democracy within the union.

The need for elections, not selection of officials (including Clive Jenkins) is immediately posed.

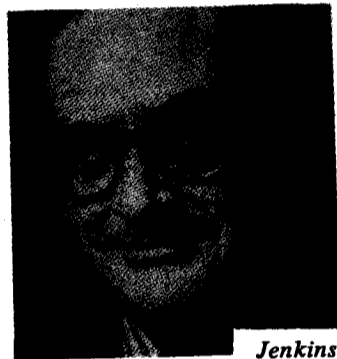
A letter circulated throughout the union by Len Wells (ASTMS President) and Clive Jenkins (Gen-

eral Secretary) to explain the situation says:

"These matters are very difficult to deal with simply because one is looking for qualities of excellence in all our officer staff, and there must always be room for difference about this."

There certainly must be room for difference!

Socialist Press would like to invite letters from any ASTMS members who may have come across a full-time ASTMS official with any qualities of excellence!



Jenkins

While many members of the white-collar union ASTMS may not be mourning the loss of Stalinist trainee officer Judy Cotter, her dismissal raises questions far more wide-reaching than the security of jobs of the other full-time ASTMS officials.

The fact that the contract for

CO-OP DANGER AT N.V.T.

The refusal of the leaders of the Transport & General Workers Union to use the industrial strength of the union as a whole to force the Labour Government to nationalise NVT threatens the jobs of the labour force in each of the factories.

Because of the lack of a programme on which to fight, NVT workers in the Wolverhampton and Small Heath factories may be forced into hopeless workers' co-operative projects supported by the trade union leaders as "safe" utopian actions with all the politics left out.

NVT workers should reject this trap, which would lead them

into speed-up via the 'viability' agreement and eventual defeat.

MANAGEMENT

The real nature of co-operatives is shown by the attitude of the NVT management, who have said that they support the idea, and by some of the NVT suppliers - who have already offered credit to a future co-operative.

It is through the suppliers and the distribution that a workers' co-operative remains within the orbit of capitalism and workers

become super exploited, through massive speed-up, as an article entitled *The Myth of Co-operatives* said in February this year:

"The capitalist, as Marx pointed out, is only the carrier and the personifier of the capitalist relations of production. The physical absence of the capitalist in a particular case does nothing to annul those relations."

The only course of action for NVT workers is an occupation to force the nationalisation of NVT under workers' management and with state contracts to keep the factories open.

SIRS RIDES THE TIGER

want to secure its survival."

But the capitalist press, unlike the bureaucracy, know that there can be no protection of jobs through speed-up and closures - indeed the same article goes on to say many of the 135,000 BSC workers "are being asked to make considerable sacrifices now for what at best can be uncertain future gains."

ORIGINAL SCHEME

The author shows how, under the original six-point speed-up scheme agreed between ISTUC chiefs Wedgwood Benn and BSC chairman Finnieston, many workers stood to lose up to 33% of their previous earnings in the name of "securing the survival" of British Steel. This was why on

local officials refused to co-operate with the deal, preventing its implementation.

Now Sirs has the task of imposing what he estimates as 6 000 compulsory redundancies on his own members, while telling those left in work that he has agreed the guaranteed working week can be "waived" by management, throwing temporarily "unwanted" steel workers on to the dole.

As a BSC official told the *Financial Times*, "I am sorry for the man, his job is like trying to rise a tiger between Scylla and Charybdis". In other words Sirs a diehard reformist, refuses to challenge capitalism and must balance between BSC and his members.

The need for new leadership in the steel industry has never been more acute.