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## DANGERS IN 'GET BRITAIN OUT' PLATFORM

Saturday February 1st saw Enoch Powell and Clive Jenkins sharing a 'Get Britain Out' platform at Folkestone.

Trade Union leaders like Jenkins ignore the fact that the Common Market is a class question, and that lining up with these enemies of the working class exposes it to danger.

These actions are given a left cover by the nationalist propaganda of the Communist Party. Yet this even causes problems within the CP's own ranks.

John Gollan's statement on the Common Market that: 'At the heart of the matter is the supreme issue of British sovereignty, our right to make our laws and decisions on the crucial questions concerning the future of Britain at the moment when it faces its greatest post-war crisis,' has even caused a stir inside the Communist Party as shown by the number of letters in the 'Morning Star' taking it up.

(The 'Star' Editor obviously only publishes critical letters if he has to.)

As the struggle against the Common Market builds up towards the referendum the pages of the 'Morning Star' are more and more filled with Gollan's nationalist position, while the statement by Karl Marx in the Communist Manifesto that 'the working men have no country' is of course forgotten.

### COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY

This is not because as the revisionists say the CP is reformist (though of course it is) but because it is counter-revolutionary as is Stalinism on a world scale. The British CP echoes the statement of Carillo, the General Secretary of the Spanish CP: 'The reality of Spain today is that freedom has to be restored and every thing has to be subordinated to the national necessity.' ('Star Jan 21st)

Tony Chater, Editor of the 'Star' puts his alternatives to the Common Market in an article on Jan 11th: 'Furthermore, we could seek to open up the vast potential market of the developing third world, where, by advancing the necessary credit, there could be long-term trade deals and economic co-operation. This approach offers a real alternative to the Common Market. And it maintains the sovereign rights of the British people to impose their will through Parliament for basic progressive changes in our political, economic and social life which would be in the interests of the overwhelming majority.'

### NATIONALISM

This nationalist, Parliamentary Road put forward by the CP is designed to turn the workingclass away from the fight against the Market on clear class lines, which must be based around the perspective and struggle to attain the United Socialist States of Europe. This demands

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## BENN PROTECTS BOSSSES' SECRETS

## JAIL FOR

# 'OPENING THE BOOKS' ?

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

The Labour Government's new proposed Industry Bill, which would set up a National Enterprise Board run by Wedgewood Benn, has the objective of drawing the trade union bureaucracy right in to the inner workings of the board-room. The purpose of this is to hold back more effectively the coming struggles of the working class in defence of jobs, wages and conditions.

Written in to the legislation is provision for Benn to obtain an order for the opening of the books of selected firms to the accountants of the Enterprise Board and to selected trade unionists - but this is only under conditions where, as the 'Times' said (Saturday 1st February): "A trade unionist who passes on anything he may have learnt about his company which happens to be subject to an order, may also find himself subject to criminal proceedings."

### OPEN THE BOOKS

So, as the force of the demand begins to grow in the working class for the opening of the books of the big monopolies to the scrutiny of elected trade union committees, to expose the wheeling and dealing and profiteering which is today threatening thousands of jobs, the 'lefts' and the right wing join forces to legislate protection for business secrets, with the threat that: "under clause 26 any person who contravenes the confidentiality of information given to the Minister under an order is guilty of an offence carrying the possibility of up to 2 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine. There are no exceptions listed." ('Times' Feb 1st)

Even under these stringent legal safeguards, the reformists are so hesitant over challenging board-room secrecy that they have written in an elaborate appeals procedure, tied to the Conciliation and Arbitration Service, which would enable the employers to remain silent if disclosure of facts to Benn could be judged "against the national interest."

£2,000m.

The main purpose of the Industry Bill, of course, is to continue the Labour government's policy of propping up flagging sections of British industry with state finance. £2,000 million is being made available to carry through what the Labourites term "a long term strategy for industry to allow the British people to rebuild our own industry upon which our future depends."

In other words the cuts in education and health spending and the increased taxes thrown on workers' backs by the Labour government are doing no more than providing a pool of cheap credit and subsid-



Benn

ies to guarantee the profit margins of the employers. Also, at the back of all government finance is now coming the threat - as to British Leyland workers - that if they do not accept rationalisation and speed-up the company will not be sustained by the government.

Under these conditions, with the reformists slavishly defending a bankrupt capitalism, the ending of the 49% restriction on the state shareholding in a troubled company, also contained in the Bill, means increased state underwriting for the profit-producing private sector - profit which goes straight into the pockets of the capitalist class. At the same time workers have their living standards slashed and face mass redundancies - the capitalists themselves take no risk whatsoever. This concept of "nationalisation" is a complete fraud.

Certain sections of the capitalist class, already reconciled to the eventual need for an all-out struggle with the working class to increase the rate of exploitation, are now howling at Benn's measures, which they know will massively increase inflation, causing more problems for these employers and eroding any profits they succeed in making. But this only reflects the divisions within British capitalism itself, which as a whole is poised on the brink of bankruptcy.

No such divisions appear within the ranks of the reformists, how-

ever; both 'left' and right are agreed on the need for state support for capitalism. Benn's devoted followers in the 'Tribune' group, for instance, have issued a statement on the crisis in which they say that a massive £20,000 million must be invested in the coming period in British industry 'if there is to be any prospect of Britain achieving higher living standards.'

### REFORMISTS

This statement, together with the continuous references to 'our' industry, and 'long-term strategy' shows how completely these reformists have discarded any thought of a socialist answer to the crisis, and have become a left cover for the right wing. They will not challenge the existence of capitalism, and so end up putting proposals on how to run the system 'more efficiently'. Thus the 'Tribune' statement expresses the capitalists' concern at the 'huge rise in the unit costs', and from this reactionary standpoint approach the question of apparently opening the books: so that, in their view, "Everyone could know the true position of the companies in which they worked and join in key decisions, giving the greater confidence needed to understand and then overcome deep seated industrial troubles."

One thing is clear from the position of all these reformist leaders: they will not recognise that the fundamental 'industrial trouble' is the inability of the bankrupt capitalist system to provide the working class with a decent and improving standard of living. It is from this analysis of capitalism, from this class position, that the Workers Socialist League campaigns on the demands put forward in Trotsky's Transitional Programme for the opening of the books and the end of business secrets.

### NATIONALISE

In revealing to the working class the actual springs and cogs of capitalist economy, it brings out more clearly the need to end capitalism once and for all.

The WSL insists that no state cash is handed out to private industry. That firms in financial difficulties must be forced to open their books to elected trade unionists, and if they are proved unable to sustain their workforce, they must be nationalised without compensation to the major share holders, and placed under workers management with a full programme of public works to guarantee employment. We therefore demand left MPs vote and campaign against the Industry Bill, and take up these socialist demands in its place.

## CRISIS IN TORY LEADERSHIP

The Tory leadership crisis which has remained unresolved since the Heath government was brought down by the miners last February re-emerged on Tuesday in the first ballot of the Tory leadership elections.

The 130 votes for Thatcher against 119 for Heath, reflecting confusion and tactical manoeuvring of many Tories, sets the scene for the real battle in the next round on Tuesday February 11th.

As we go to press the contenders for the second ballot are Thatcher, Whitelaw, Prior and Du Cann. Keith Joseph had not declared a position.

Reflecting all the divisions within the Ruling class itself the Tory Party has to tackle its requirements of leadership under conditions of the rapidly worsening economic crisis, the immediate prospect of mass unemployment and a working class strong and undefeated and prepared to defend its jobs and conditions.

## IMPERIAL WORKERS GIVEN NO LEAD

The threatened sacking of 1,400 workers at the Imperial Typewriter plant in Hull and 1,000 at Leicester has not succeeded with talk of a "rescue" operation.

In a recent interview with the Hull Daily Mail the chairman of Litton Industries, of which IT is a subsidiary said 'We will close on February 21st.'

Faced with this situation workers are given no leadership from the trade union leaders - except to ask Benn for a feasibility study and organise a petition to Wilson.

The AUEW official Walter Joester commenting on the closure statement in the Hull paper said "There is no point in considering a workers take-over because it has been unprofitable for the last 7 or 8 years."

February 21st is drawing close. IT workers must demand an end to the futile protest actions and demand the occupation of the plants to fight for the nationalisation of Imperial Typewriters with government contracts to keep the factories in operation.

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## CHINA

### THE OLD GUARD CONSOLIDATES

"The Cultural Revolution has already been going on for 8 years. It is now time for things to quieten down." So proclaimed Chairman Mao in a wall poster in Peking in December.

The 4th National Peoples Congress, held under conditions of clandestinity, was staged in order not to allow the Chinese workers and peasants to decide their destiny but to confirm the most conservative section of the bureaucracy in power.

It was only after the event that foreign pressmen in Peking learned that the 2,864 delegates of the National Assembly had met in closed session on the 13th to 17th of January.

### SECURITY

Careful security precautions ensured that the delegates were spared the distress of seeing possible anti-party elements — by being brought to the conference hall each day through specially built tunnels under the streets of Peking!

In line with this withdrawal from the eyes of the workers, the Assembly changes the constitution to strengthen the dominance of the Party bureaucracy and to centralise control in the permanent committee of the Peoples Assembly.

This acts as a warning to especially the young workers and the Red Guards that the days of struggling against the bureaucratic deformations of their revolution are being officially ended. Further struggles will be in conflict with the old guard.

### DENOUNCED

The most obvious sign of this consolidation of the 'Old Guard' is in the elevation of Teng Hsui-Ping to second-in-command to Premier Chou En-lai.

Teng, who is 71, was removed from all positions when he was denounced at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 as 'the Second Party man taking the Capitalist road' (The late Liu Shao-Chi was the first). It is rumoured that he was sent to work on a farm in Inner Mongolia. He is now, after Mao and Chou, the most powerful man in the People's Republic.

The 88 year-old Chu Teh has remained the president of the Assembly; and Yeh Chien-ying, age 76, one of Mao's oldest political allies, has been appointed head of the army. All these proposals of the Central Committee of the Party were unanimously adopted by the Assembly.

### CONFERENCE OVERDUE

Of course, the bureaucracy have great difficulty curbing the revolutionary demands and aspirations of the young workers and peasants.

The fact that this Assembly was 5 years overdue indicates the difficulties the Party leadership were experiencing in holding back the Chinese masses.

Even in the constitutional changes they were forced to make some concessions; for example, guaranteeing the right to strike.

It is the youth above all that they fear and they know that Mao's death will strengthen them once more in the struggle for political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy and defend and develop the Socialist gains of 1949.

For this struggle to be successful the revival of the Chinese section of the Fourth International will be an essential starting point.

## ITALY

The paper of the Italian Communist Party, *Unita*, in a special issue at the end of January commemorating the 54th anniversary of the party's founding in 1921, completely failed to mention the name of Antonio Gramsci — its own founder and a revolutionary comrade-in-arms of Lenin, who died in Mussolini's gaols.

This ludicrous omission symbolises the cynical and mealy-mouthed 'anti-fascist policy' of the Italian Stalinist and Socialist Party leaders in face of the renewed wave of terrorism from Mussolini's political descendants.

When two policemen were shot dead at Empoli (near Florence) on January 24th by a young fascist, the official leaders of the labour movement joined harmoniously in the chorus of protest from the 'democratic' capitalist parties, and called a 'general' strike on January 27th — of five minutes' duration!

On the same day the trial opened of a group of 13 fascists accused in connexion with the series of bombings which culminated in the death of 17 people when a Milan bank was blown up in December 1969, at the height of a wave of unofficial strikes in northern Italy.

The fascists have been brought to trial only after strenuous efforts from within the police and judiciary to pin the blame on anarchist Pietro Valpreda and his comrades.

On both political and economic issues the Italian labour 'leaders' continually fritter away the energies and unity of the trade unions — on token national strikes of a few hours, and by dividing the struggle up industry by industry.

### STALINIST COMPROMISE

This policy is part and parcel of the Italian Communist Party's strategy of an 'historic compromise' — entry into a coalition government with the Socialist Party and the Christian Democrats, Italy's largest capitalist party.

These popular front policies carry the greatest dangers for the Italian and European working class. The capitalist politicians, feeling the political situation slipping out of their control, are deeply split among themselves.

While Fanfani, Christian Democrat party secretary, launched a campaign last month to rally his faction-riven party behind a right-wing 'law and order' campaign, other groupings are insisting on the need to deal with the working class through an 'understanding' with the labour bureaucrats, including the Stalinists.

They are anxious not to jeopardise the Socialist Party support in parliament which props up Prime Minister Aldo Moro's coalition government.

### SCANDALS

On top of the economic crisis (prices rose by 25 per cent in 1974), leading figures in the political parties and the state apparatus face a complex of scandals of Watergate proportions.

Fascist deputies in parliament failed last month to block a parliamentary investigation into the Military Intelligence Services (SID).

Enquiries centre on SID's role in a series of fascist conspiracies for a coup d'état in the last ten years, their complicity in the bombing of an express train near Bologna, (a Communist Party stronghold) early in 1974, and in the 1969 bombings.

And this is not all. Parliamentary enquiries also continue into allegations of massive corruption by Christian Democrat ministers involved in state finance of the petrochemical industries.



Soldier in Lisbon

## PORTUGAL

### STALINISTS HOLD BACK MASS MOVEMENT

Capitalism in Portugal is tottering. Its main support now comes from the coalition of Stalinists and Social Democrats in the provisional regime set up after the overthrow of Caetano's fascist dictatorship last April.

Freed after decades of fascist repression, the political energies of the working class and poor farmers have thrown up hundreds of local organisations holding real power.

Ruling class hopes centre on the elections to a capitalist Constituent Assembly now scheduled for early April.

While the situation cries out for socialist policies to bring together and strengthen the independent bodies of the working class, the Stalinist leaders complacently fall in with social-democratic foreign Minister Soares's plans for a capitalist government, and support the armed forces remaining in it.

Lisbon printworkers, in stopping the production of a newspaper not clearly opposed to fascism, showed their resistance to such class-collaboration. So did the Maoist students and the workers who stopped the congress of the extreme right-wing Catholic Centre Democratic Party in Oporto on January 25th. So did those who marched on the streets of Lisbon on January 31st in defiance of the tanks sent out by agreement between Stalinists and Social-Democratic leaders.

Both Soares and Communist Party leader Cunhal use the threats of foreign invasion in their attempts to hold back the mass movement. Yet the threat is a real one. Massive NATO manoeuvres at the end of January concentrated 11,000 men off the Portuguese coast in an exercise ominously named 'Locked Gate 75'.

But the imposition of a capitalist parliament and its laws on the hundreds of workers', peasants', and tenants' committees already set up and functioning can only help the plans which are undoubtedly being hatched by the CIA and others to impose military dictatorship once more.



Cunhal

## FRANCE

Three workers were injured on January 17th when they sat in the road to stop scab lorries at the Buda textile factory, near Toulouse in south-west France.

Only their action stopped management bailiffs, armed with legal writs, removing valuable stock and equipment from the factory, threatened with closure since early 1974.

Ever since the workers decided to fight closure and sackings with an occupation — in August 1974 — support has grown from trades unionists and workers in the Toulouse area and beyond. It is this which stopped the employers from using police strength to break the struggle.

Following the occupation of the LIP watch factory last year, Buda — though only a small plant of 60 workers — has become an example for the fight against unemployment in the whole of France.

## MIDDLE EAST

Cairo Airport is this month the bus-stop of world politics. Following Egyptian President Sadat's return at the end of January from his weapons-buying visit to France came the announced 'courtesy' trip by Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko.

Immediately following him, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is due on yet another whistle-stop 'peace' tour of the Middle East.

Meanwhile the politicians of the (mainly Arab) oil-producing states prepare to reassemble at a summit conference in Algiers on February 21st.

### ARAB MASSES

Behind the comings and goings lies not simply the price of oil in the inflationary crisis which now grips the whole capitalist system, but the inability of even the most reactionary cloak-and-dagger diplomacy to contain the revolutionary movement of the Arab masses.

Ford, Kissinger, Gromyko and the Middle East politicians all know that the peoples of the Middle East will not stand peacefully by while the Palestinian homelands are signed away to Israel, the creation of imperialism and the direct agent of the United States.

Any American attempt to occupy the oil fields or bring direct military intervention to bear will be fought to the death, creating a confrontation which would dwarf the Vietnam War.

The world crisis has split the capitalist states more deeply than ever before over the Mid-

## IRELAND

### A NEW PHASE IN THE IRISH STRUGGLE

The betrayals of the Labour Government can be seen clearly in its policy on Ireland. It was the Labour leaders who first sent British troops to the North as part of their desperate efforts to maintain the six-county statelet in existence.

They are planning every day with all their 'token gestures' and special 'assemblies' to find an effective way of maintaining the power of imperialism in Ireland, and propping up her native landlords and capitalists.

In the Irish Republic, the coalition government, which currently includes members of the Irish Labour Party, is also consistently hostile to the struggle for national freedom and independence.

This can be seen most dramatically by the refusal of the Irish government to negotiate political status for the Provisional Republican prisoners currently on hunger strike in Portlaoise Prison.

### IRISH INDEPENDENCE

There must be no hesitation in the British working class movement in asserting that we are at an important turning point in the centuries old struggle for Irish freedom and national independence.

This is the case however much the capitalist media build up anti-Irish chauvinism on the basis of hastily attributed bombings, or to whatever extent Orange workers in the North of Ireland are deceived into kissing the chains of slavery imposed upon them by their local Orange masters.

In the difficult situation which the hysteria of the capitalist press and broadcasting media has created for us, it is essential that here in Britain we should fight throughout the working class movement for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, and for the independence and self-determination of Britain's oldest colonial possession.

At the same time the single-issue protest of the 'Troops out Movement' offers only a latter day reappearance of the old Irish Solidarity Campaign, Anti-internment League, and though on a different level, the old Vietnam Solidarity Campaign.

Before rushing in to joint action with the motley grouping of 'lefts', liberals, and revisionist groups in the Troops out Movement, workers should ask what happened to these other movements, and why did they disappear as quickly as they arose?

The reason is that they were only constituted on the most limited and opportunist basis, and as soon as simple protest proved ineffective to force change, the question of political policy and perspective arose and split the bogus 'unity' down the middle. We do not necessarily reject work in mass protest movements but we would do such work only under conditions where we could freely criticise the other tendencies involved.

Only where there is a firm fight for principle can any lessons be learned by those involved in such movements, and the major principle is the political independence of the revolutionary party.

### MARXISM OR TERRORISM

We recognise that the Provisional IRA are revolutionists acting on behalf of an oppressed people and entitled to pursue their aims in whatever way they think fit.

As Marxists and revolutionary socialists we do not support either the terrorist means or the pro-capitalist political aims of the Provisionals.

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We agree with Engels, who as long ago as 1867, ridiculed 'the idea of liberating Ireland by setting a London tailors shop on fire'. Individual heroism, however forceful, can achieve nothing without a programme to fight to rid Ireland of landlords and capitalists who tie her to imperialist rule.

Thus the latest phase of the Provisionals' bombing campaign will not further the essential aim of winning the support of English workers for the withdrawal of British troops and for Irish self-determination.

Such methods have since turned away from the need to find a road to the Protestant working class of the six counties. It is only under the leadership of the working class that national reunification and independence will be achieved.

#### 'NEW PARTY'

Recent developments within the Republican movement have emphasised the sharpness of the political problems facing the independence struggle.

The official Sinn Fein have long since given up any pretensions to militancy or to socialist aims other than in the long term.

As a result, a group known as the Irish Socialist Republican Party has been formed through a split in their ranks.

This new organisation has expressed itself opposed to 'foreign ideology', and continues to argue for socialist policies as 'our long term aim'.

Like all such centrist formations however hard the ISRP puts forward propaganda for socialism, it will be unable to achieve anything without revolutionary theory, even if it will have to thank non-Irish men for this.

#### LEADERSHIP

Above all this theory will have to be fought for in the struggle for leadership in the working class. In our epoch, only the building of the Fourth International can prepare such a leadership.

At the time of writing, it seems that the Provisionals may also be rent with internal dissension and division, particularly on the issue of whether to resume their cease-fire.

Whoever sups with the devil needs a long spoon, and any revolutionary or any Irishman who tries to peacefully negotiate Irish independence with a British capitalist government is either blind to history or a prisoner of the most limited aims he has set himself.

Those who want to continue the fight however must at some time begin to ask themselves how its ultimate success can be secured.

#### MARX

We agree with the view expressed by Karl Marx a hundred years ago that Ireland must have 'Self-government and independence from England'.

We also agree with him that the achievement of such aims should be seen as a 'precondition for the emancipation of the English working class'.

We warn those English workers who are deceived by the hysteria of the capitalist mass media, as Marx warned them in 1870, that such campaigns are a 'pretext' to make it possible to develop a 'big standing army, which, if needs be, can be used against the English workers after having done its military training in Ireland.'

This warning applies not just to the army, but also to the battery of repressive legislation that is being introduced by Labour's great 'liberal' Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins.

Finally, we insist that it is only in the building of the Fourth International that the historic struggle for Irish freedom can triumph.

Here in England the campaign for the withdrawal of British troops, the disbanding of the standing army, and for independence and self-determination for Ireland must be taken into the workers movement, as part of the struggle for the building of revolutionary leadership.

## OBSCENE CIRCUS OF LIES

"Workers Press", daily paper of the WRP, has plumbed a new depth in hack journalism with their "Comment" section of January 18th

A piece by Jack Gale sweats and heaves to try and establish that there is a connection between the Workers Socialist League and, of all people, the 'Tribune' group of fake lefts!

Naturally Gale can find no evidence to go on and is forced to tear out of context the short cynical statement in 'Tribune' of January 17th (reproduced here in full).

Gale claims 'Tribune' "has suddenly become very keen on defending one particular shop steward - Mr. Alan Thornett." He goes on to say " 'Tribune' is now solidly behind Thornett, having never had a kind word for him before, for the sole reason that he is in opposition to the Workers Revolutionary Party, and has formed his own organisation."

Readers are invited to judge for themselves whether such a snippet in 'Tribune' constitutes 'solid' support.

Sensitive to hard facts, however Gale reacts also to the correct charge made by the WSL that until the recent period the WRP had "done not a thing to defend Warren and Tomlinson". In answer he refers to the evasions of a previous Workers Press, where half a page of print was devoted to creating the illusion that the WRP had always been in the forefront of the struggle to free the pickets, and avoiding the fact that on December 20th Workers Press denounced the TUC lobby of Parliament as an "obscene circus of protest"

#### BLUSTER

The bluster and the attempt to brand the WSL as 'Tribunite' conceals the real opportunism of the WRP itself.

It appeared on the TUC lobby not as the independent revolutionary party, but subordinated to an opportunist relationship with the "Wigan Builders Action Committee", which resulted in WRP members giving out a non-political leaflet which did not even call for a General Strike to release the two!

Further, it set aside the vital struggle to expose the fake lefts by demanding they fight in the Labour Party to remove Jenkins.

Only the WSL put forward these vital points of programme in their leaflet. Gale's article is a desperate attempt to cover the WRP's political bankruptcy.

## TROTS IN TROUBLE

"ALONGSIDE this confusion goes the opportunism of the Workers Revolutionary Party. Only three weeks ago, Workers Press was denouncing the lobby (of the House of Commons in favour of the release of the two Shrewsbury pickets) as an 'obscene circus of protest.' Yet, having done not a thing to defend Warren and Tomlinson, and finding themselves isolated from the mass movement for this

lobby, the WRP last week announced 'unequivocal support' for this 'obscene circus,' and participates in it."

Who wrote that? Why none other than that jewel in the crown of the Workers Revolutionary Party, Alan Thornett, about the one shop steward which that part of the Trotskyite movement actually had. He, if you may remember, played a not negligible part in some of the disputes at Cowley, Oxford.

Mr Thornett it appears has now been expelled from the WRP and has formed his own Workers' Socialist League. In a leaflet handed out in London this week, Mr Thornett says he was "expelled for fighting against that Party's sectarian positions. Will Vanessa Redgrave be next?"



## MOVE TO THE RIGHT IN AUEW ELECTIONS

The results of the AUEW elections represent some important changes which must be analysed.

In the first round of the vote for General Secretary Bob Wright the Broad Left candidate received 42,388 votes as against 89,514 for extreme right winger John Boyd.

In the ballot for the three National Organiser positions, the Broad Left's candidate Phil Higgs lost to a right-winger, and Len Brindle and Cyril Morton (all members of the Communist Party) were knocked out in the first round. In the vote for Divisional Organiser in the Reading, Southampton and Basingstoke area Pat Farrelly, a C.P. member, lost the position he had held for 20 years.

#### SOCIAL CONTRACT

It is clear from this that the right wing is organising strongly, using the rule change which sends ballots to workers homes rather than votes in branches.

This does not mean simply a return to "Carron's Law" and compromise of the 'boom' period but a leadership dedicated to collaboration with the social contract and directly assisting capitalism and its attacks on the working class.

The leadership of the 'Broad Left' is in the control of the CP and is entirely devoted to their policy of boosting Scanlon, Wright and the so-called left. This means they have taken a whole series of unprincipled positions, particularly as Scanlon has been forced further to the right.

#### VACILLATION

After the victory against the Industrial Relations Court they were responsible for withdrawing the TASS resolution against the Social contract at the TUC Congress. The man who carried this out was leading Stalinist Ken Gill.

Such vacillations have without doubt strengthened the right wing.

The high vote for Lawrie Smith, ex-member of the WRP, whose election address was full of vague left positions shows that if candidates with a record in the union and with a principled programme had stood then the vote could have been different.

The Stalinists obviously realise that Smith has now been 'tamed', because they are now calling for a vote for him in the second ballot.

The WRP, engrossed in their General Election campaign missed the chance to stand in these elections and of testing the reaction to their policies.

#### RANK AND FILEISM

The revisionists of the IS, having supported Broad Left for years, now say what is required is a "genuine rank and file movement in the union so the members will control the officials they support instead of the officials controlling the members".

This reactionary rank and fileism lead them to support the principle of ballots to homes, the tactic introduced by the right wing.

Whilst opposing ballots in homes on principle, WSL members must of course support the "left" candidates in the next round of the ballot in order to expose them in action. But the real task remains that of building the revolutionary party as an alternative leadership to the reformists.

## AN AUEW MEMBER

# WHAT IS THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE?

"Socialist Press" is the fortnightly paper of the Workers Socialist League. The League was formed on Sunday 22nd December, after nearly all the founding members had been expelled from the Workers Revolutionary Party by its leadership headed by Gerry Healy.

The reason for the expulsions was that Alan Thornett, who was at the time a Central Committee member of the WRP, after a lengthy period of critical analysis of the practice of the WRP itself, set out to bring about a discussion within that party on what were the wrong positions being taken by the Healy leadership and in its daily paper 'Workers Press'.

The issues were first raised on the Central Committee, and that Committee agreed to circulate a document written by comrade Thornett, containing a statement of his differences, and to arrange a 'full and free' discussion within the party prior to the 1st Annual Conference. That free discussion never took place. Tiny quantities of the document were circulated to 'reliable' members, and no meetings were held for comrade Thornett to put his position other than in his own immediate area.

To understand the response this document produced in the WRP, forming the basis of a major split on the question of programme, it is necessary to recognise the period we are now entering. As many articles in this first issue show it is as in Trotsky's Transitional Programme a period of struggle for the entire working class.

The defence of jobs through the fight for the sliding scale of hours without loss of pay; the defence of living standards through the fight for the sliding scale of wages related to rising prices; the challenging of the employer and the preparation of the struggle for power by the fight to open the books and establish the power of factory committees and occupations - all of these struggles are now called for by the developing situation.

Yet the WRP, right up to the opening of the discussion by comrade Thornett on the CC, had never seriously fought for any of these demands.

Instead it had restricted itself to the sterile maximum demand: 'nationalise the economy without compensation under workers control.' Comrade Thornett fought this position and for the demands from Trotsky's Transitional Programme to be included in the WRP's struggle for leadership, in order to form a bridge over which workers could move from their present struggles

to the need to take power.

The WRP leadership however was formed in the past under conditions where the Trotskyist movement was isolated from the working class and reduced for that reason to propaganda demands. A second document, produced in the course of the battle in the WRP showed this clearly, and was suppressed by the leadership.

They could not make the necessary break in to the new period now developing, and as a result defended their own subjective positions by bureaucratically expelling all those who supported Alan Thornett's documents. Thus 200 were expelled, including the whole of the WRP membership in Reading, Oxford (except one) and Swindon, and large numbers in London and Yorkshire.

We have therefore formed the Workers Socialist League as an independent organisation which will maintain the traditions and principles of Trotskyism.

We continue, as this first edition of the paper shows, to maintain pressure and critique of the WRP leadership. But most important for us is our ability now to break from their methods, the methods of the past, and to turn to recruiting and training the new forces thrown in to struggle in the coming period - trade unionists, professional workers, housewives, students and youth - in the fight to construct the new party.

Already it is clear that our struggles for Trotskyism in Britain take place under conditions which must create similar splits and discussions throughout the world. We are confident that our movement will soon be able to play an important part in the strengthening of the Trotskyist Fourth International and the development of revolutionary parties in every country to fight to end capitalism.

"Socialist Press" is a big development for such a new movement. Only five weeks after forming the League we have been able to accumulate the necessary political, editorial and material resources to begin regular publication of a Trotskyist newspaper. We are certain we can win a big response and very rapidly go forward to a weekly paper as the organiser of a movement with considerable political strength.

We invite all our readers to participate in discussions with our comrades on the policies and perspectives of the WSL and to seriously consider joining us in our fight to build a new leadership in the unions and a revolutionary party to lead the working class in the struggle to take state power and establish socialism.

(A review of) Karl Marx and Frederick Engels' Collected Works, Volume One, Marx: 1835-45, published by Lawrence and Wishart at £3.)

Alan Clinton

'Kant and Fichte soar to heavens blue  
Seeking for some distant land,  
I but seek to grasp profound and true  
That which - in the streets I find.'  
(p. 577)

These words, written before he was yet nineteen years old, show that, though Karl Marx was not to make himself a poet, he was the best friend poetry ever had. Struggling to find his feet in the ferment of German idealist philosophy in the 1830's, Marx began the rich and harsh journey along the road where, together with Frederick Engels, he constructed the bedrock of scientific socialism.

A study of their Collected Works will make it possible to trace all the steps on this road, from its first stirrings within the realm of philosophical idealism to its culmination in the struggle to build revolutionary leadership in the working class.

The systematic presentation in English for the first time of all the works of Marx and Engels must be the occasion for celebration by revolutionary socialists. There can be no doubt that the materials provided will play an essential part in the development of that scientific theory essential for the emancipation of the working class.

This preliminary volume, which is well produced and inexpensive by today's standards, contains writings which, however remote they seem at first, play a part in today's struggles of the working class.

Before expanding on this point, something more needs to be said of why it is that only now in 1975, with Marx dead for more than 90 years and Engels for 80, we have before us the first of fifty volumes of this tremendous undertaking.

#### COMPLETE EDITION

It will be some years yet before we will have a complete edition in our language of all the works of Marx and Engels, and they have been a long time in coming.

These delays are the result not of a series of unfortunate accidents, but of the betrayal of the heritage of Marxism on the part of those leaders of reformism and Stalinism who have falsely claimed to carry it forward.

In Britain before 1900 very few of the writings of Marx and Engels were available to workers. There were some editions of the Communist Manifesto in which together they set out their main ideas about the development of class society, and put forward the call which has long since echoed down the generations "Workers of the World Unite!"

In 1900 only the first volume of *Capital* was available in English. It was here that Marx set out his analysis of the nature of commodity production and the laws of motion of capitalist society.

A summary of some aspects of these economic theories was available in two pamphlets entitled *Wage Labour and Capital* and *Wages, Price and Profit*.

At the turn of the century the only statement of the philosophy of dialectical materialism available to British workers was contained in those chapters of Engels reprinted under the title *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*. Engels' book on *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* could be obtained, and this must have been useful for those seeking to understand the nature of capitalist industrialisation.

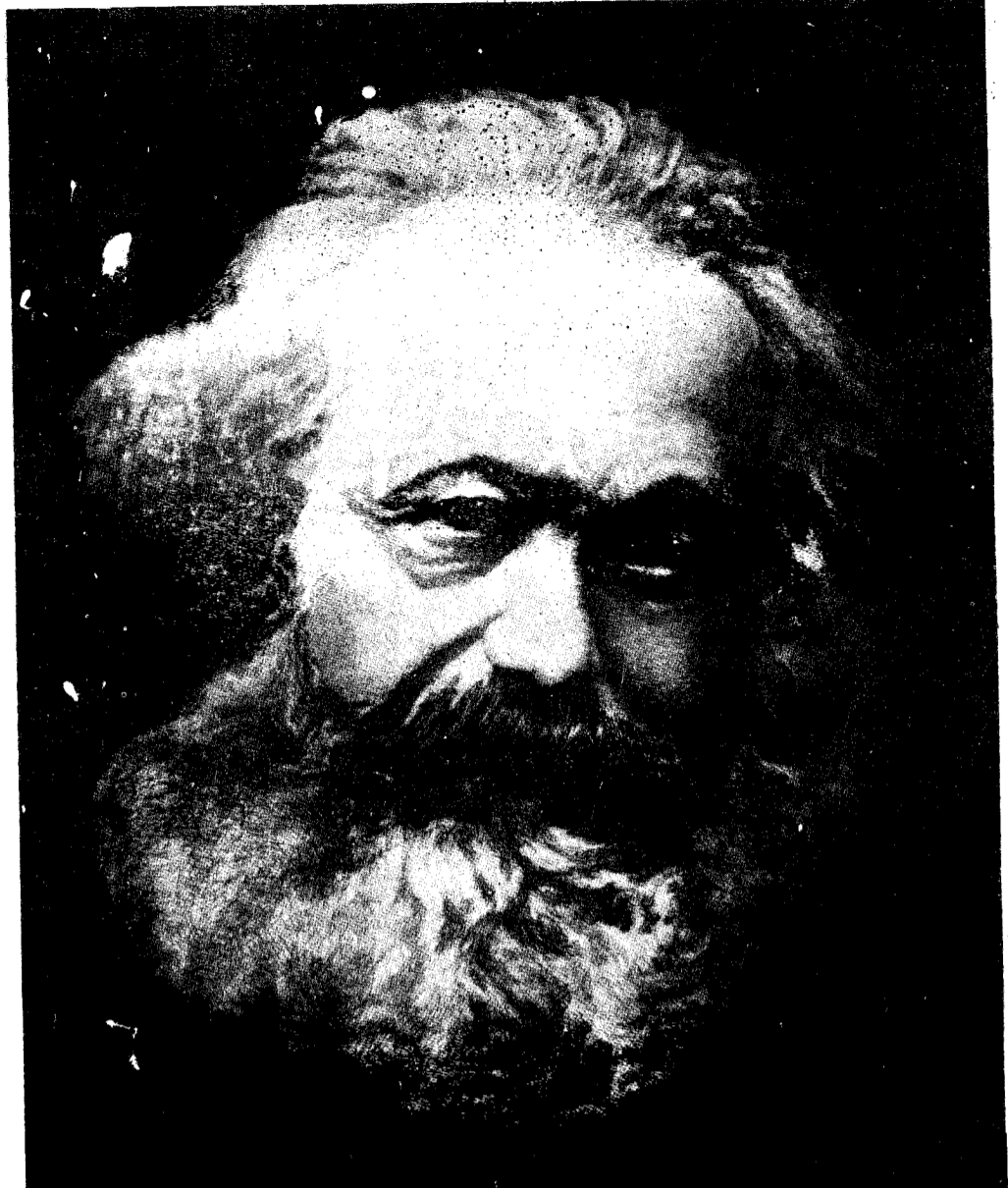
Also available at that time, though in very expensive editions, were some of Marx's collected journalism, and his attack on the petty bourgeois anarchism of Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

#### OPPORTUNISM

It is not surprising that, with so few of the works of scientific socialism available to them, British workers found their difficulties compounded when they were confronted

with the opportunism of their trade union leaders, and the doctrinaire rigidity of the self-appointed Marxists of Social Democratic Federation.

Engels considered this organisation the first in Britain claiming allegiance to Marx's theories, to have 'ossified' its programme and, by re-iteration of its dogma and, by re-



# KARL MARX FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

is not orthodox Marxism (and that a Marxism which contains much that is erroneous), that is, by pursuing the exact opposite of the policy recommended in the *Manifesto*, it renders itself incapable of ever becoming anything but a sect.

The need for a break from such sectarian conceptions has by no means disappeared from the British working class movement to this day. However, this break requires, amongst other things, a firm grasp of the basic principles and method of Marxism in a way which has only become possible in the years since these problems first arose.

It has only been in fits and starts that the works of Marx and Engels have become available, and then they have not always appeared in a complete form, with the notes and background information necessary for their study.

After Marx and Engels died, the papers containing all their writings, most of which were unpublished, fell into the hands of the leaders of the German Social Democratic Party, who each embarked on the road to revisionism and class betrayal.

Edward Bernstein was given the task of editing the later sections of 'Capital' for publication, but in 1898 decided that capitalism was no longer a system of crisis and contradiction.

The defence of orthodoxy against these attacks on its basic principles was undertaken by Karl Kautsky, who for all his erudition and correct statements, saw Marxism as a dogma rather than as a method for developing the class struggle at every turn. It was for this reason that he took part, together with nearly all the other German Social Democratic leaders in the betrayal of the struggle

that the working class needed to carry out in 1914 against imperialist war.

It is hardly surprising that, in the hands of people such as these, few of the works of Marx and Engels were prepared for publication, and in some cases they were even censored or suppressed.

After the achievement of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, it seemed that at last all the resources might be found for a proper edition of all the works of Marx and Engels.

In 1923, the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow announced that they were preparing an edition of the complete works under the editorship of David Ryazanov, a founder of the Russian workers movement and one of the great Marxist scholars of his day.

However, it was not long before it became clear that such a restoration of Marxism would put in question many of the policies of the Soviet bureaucracy. Thus the project collapsed in 1930, when Ryazanov was arrested and disappeared into a prison camp.

#### MANUSCRIPTS DISPERSED

After 1933, when fascism came to power in Germany, the manuscripts of Marx and Engels were dispersed, most to Amsterdam, and some for a time to Oxford.

It was only very slowly after the War that the East Germans began to bring out a German edition of the Collected Works, and it is on the basis of this that the fuller and more accessible English version has been produced.

What is clear from this very first volume is that Marx did not embark on the road to scientific socialism

by looking at the appearances he saw around him, but by moving out to what were then the furthest frontiers of bourgeois thought.

However, this volume also shows that he immediately came up against oppression, poverty, and political struggle. As soon as Marx began to confront the very first theoretical problems of his life, he moved towards precisely those issues which were crucial in the development of his theory.

Thus there was no 'epistemological break' in Marx's thought, no moment when he suddenly rejected or overturned what had gone before.

The starting point of Marx's writings and researches may appear strange, particularly to those who are used to the crudities of the world of Anglo-Saxon empiricism, where reality is assumed to consist essentially of 'one damn thing after another'.

Thus Marx says that a legislator does not invent (laws), he only formulates them, expressing in conscious positive laws the inner laws of spiritual relations'. (p. 308)

This method of approach despite its idealist form, assumes a connection between all aspects of being and appearance which is essential for anybody who sees the need to understand the world, and to change it.

Such a view of the world is superior not only to empiricism, but also to that of the priests of Kantian idealism, whom Marx attacks in his earliest notebooks as having to 'tell their beads over their own powerlessness in the face of things'. (p.429)

It also leads on very quickly to a hostility to the more vulnerable forms of idealism, especially religion. Thus as early as 1842, Marx had already developed the opinion that

'religion in itself is without content, it owes itself not to heaven but to the earth'. (p. 395)

It is of some interest to note that this same passage is quoted by James Klugmann, the Stalinist sage, in his review of this volume in the *Morning Star* of 9th January. However, Klugmann also quotes the section which follows asserting that religious theory 'will collapse of itself'.

This view is not consistent with Marx's more mature opinion that 'the criticism of religion is the highest of all criticism'.

However, Marx's early idealism does fit in somewhat with the so-called dialogue conducted between Klugmann and various representatives of organised religion.

Other reviews, such as the one by Ken Coates in 'Tribune' have drawn attention to the liberal political opinions expressed by Marx in his earlier pieces of journalism.

Thus Marx opposes censorship, supports divorce, and generally expresses opinions which the Stalinist editors can happily characterise as 'democratic'. To talk about Marx's views in these terms is, however, to obscure one of its essential aspects.

#### NEVER A LIBERAL

He was never a liberal in the 'Guardian' or 'New Statesman' sense. As can be seen from his early opinions about the nature of law, he never saw the various political problems that confronted him simply as isolated injustices, but as aspects of a situation that had to be dealt with in terms of the world as a whole.

This approach immediately places Marx in a stronger position than the many liberal protesters who continue to this day to inhabit the political horizon.

In his early journalism, Marx wrote about many of the immediate political questions of his day, such as the reforms of local administration in the German statelets, which had just begun to move towards unification.

#### CONFLICT WITH IDEALISM

It was in taking up another issue that he wrote about the debates in the Prussian assembly on a proposed law to prevent the peasants from taking wood from the forests for their use, as had been their custom.

In considering these debates, Marx soon came into conflict with those aspects of the Hegelian world-view that provided his starting point. It was clear that what was being declared illegal was 'that which is harmful to the interests of the forest owner'.

He thus saw already that his 'philosopher's stone' could only be found in the 'demand for the poor, politically and socially propertyless', to maintain their 'customary right' to take the wood.

Thus when he moved from his general notion of law to considering real laws, Marx immediately found that he could not agree with any Hegelian concept of world-spirit that manifested itself by 'making the rights of human beings give way to that of young trees' (pp. 249, 230, 226).

Thus it was that right from the very start, Marx found the categories if not the methods of Hegelian idealism coming into conflict with the problems he had to consider. He wrote movingly about where his activities were forcing him.

'Anyone who often has to hear directly the ruthless voice of want among the surrounding population easily loses the aesthetic tact by which his thoughts can be expressed in the most elegant and modest images. He may perhaps even consider it his political duty for a time to speak in public in the popular language of distress, which in his native land he had no chance of forgetting.' (p.332)

In asserting his qualified support for the materialism of Feuerbach, Marx wrote of the need for nature to come together with politics 'In the only alliance by which present day philosophy can become truth.'

In 1837 his moderately liberal father was already warning Marx against becoming 'embittered' and four years later his fiancée Jenny von Westphalen feared he was getting 'involved in politics' - 'indeed the most risky thing of all'. (pp. 684, 707)

continued

# JOHN STONEHOUSE: THE LESSONS FOR LABOUR

The capitalist press recently has been full of the spectacular globe-trottings of John Stonehouse. It is quite a story - the honourable Labour MP for Walsall North who fled from 'incredible pressures' and 'blackmail' in a 'brainstorm' on November 20th last year now looks very much like a shady company director planning to escape with the loot before bankruptcy struck.

Secretary of State for Trade Peter Shore has now ordered an investigation into the Stonehouse company London Capital Group, and the Scotland Yard fraud chief, who was in charge of the Poulson investigations, is to enquire into his disappearance.

The real question, however, is how such a man could exist in the Labour Party, the party founded to defend trade unions and the working class, using it to further his ambitions and private business.

#### POLITICAL LIFE

Stonehouse began his political life in the co-operative movement in which his mother had been a leading light. He went to Uganda in 1952 to run a co-operative farm and wound it up two years later leaving it £360 in debt (a debt not recovered till 1958 under legal threat). A good start.

Continued from previous page

But already he was in conflict with the established authorities, and the suppression of the Rheinische Zeitung, the first paper with which he was involved, showed the direction in which he was going.

It cannot be claimed of course that by the end of the period covered in this first volume of his writings, Marx had in any sense developed his overall world view.

He still saw himself as a philosopher who 'asks what is true'. Yet already he knew that the 'same spirit that constructs the railways with the hands of the workers, constructs philosophical systems in the brains of the philosophers'. (pp. 191, 195)

It was to these very workers that Marx's quest was already driving him, and this is a fact already implicit by the end of this first volume.

Three further verses from his youthful poems can also serve to illustrate the path along which Marx began to move. (pp. 523, 5, 7)

*Like a Telford out there,  
Demon-wise into the far mists driving  
Towards a goal I cannot near.*

*I am caught in endless strife,  
Endless ferment, endless dream:  
I cannot conform to life,  
Will not travel with the stream.*

*Not in brooding introspection  
Bowed beneath a yoke of pain,  
So that yearning, dream and action  
Unfulfilled to us remain.*

If the 18 year old youth who wrote these lines could not foresee where his 'yearning' would lead him, we at least can understand in retrospect that his 'dream and action' already contained the elements that would culminate in the struggle for the emancipation of the working class, and, through that, of the whole of humanity.

We can look forward to the help that we will receive in this struggle from the 49 volumes which are said to be about to follow this one, though in the meantime we will have to rely on less full and comprehensive editions.

**END**

He sold insurance for a while before successfully standing in 1957 as Labour candidate for Wednesbury. Stonehouse always approached politics as a businessman, an employer, using political experience for personal gain - he visited the Central African Federation in 1959 not only as a Labour MP but also as co-founder of the local Commercial Surveys Company. Amazingly he was known as a left-winger for making provocative speeches to the African National Congress and being expelled from the African white supremacist states. The left face was soon to go.

#### THOROUGH CAPITALIST

Stonehouse made his mark when he ran successfully for presidency of the London Co-op in 1962 against the left-wing 1960 Group (loosely based on USDAW, the shopworkers union) and pledged to combat Communist influence in the Co-op and work for right-winger Gaitskell's reforms. Stonehouse was a thorough capitalist who proposed sackings and closure of departments to save money, and a board of full-time paid directors. (The 1960 Group turned this down.)

Such a man had to be noticed by Harold Wilson, himself then engaged in an anti-communist witch-hunt to drive the Young Socialists out of the Labour Party. After the 1964 Election Wilson made him, as one of the managerial, pro-capitalist MPs, Junior minister under Roy Jenkins (a natural pair) at the Ministry of Aviation.

Stonehouse often talked about two ambitions - to be rich and to be Prime Minister and he set about furthering both.

In a government that enthusiastically supported American imperialism in Vietnam, declared a state of emergency against striking seamen, passed a racist Immigration Act, froze wages and tried to pass laws against the unions, Stonehouse was in his element and managed the unprecedented step of becoming Postmaster General and Minister of Posts and Telecommunications at the same time in 1969.

#### FURTHER TO RIGHT

As workers now came into the struggle against both employers and the Government over wages and in defence of trade unions, Stonehouse steadily moving further to the right and being promoted for it, set about his other personal ambition too.

In 1970 he set up a wine import business, Connoisseurs of Claret Ltd., naming as directors Sheila Buckley (his political secretary), Michael Hayes (his solicitor) and Alan Rainbird (a business friend).

As a Minister Stonehouse could not have a personal interest, but all these three said they were directors of companies which Stonehouse subsequently claimed he had set up: Export Promotion and Consultancy Services, and Systems and Consultancy Services.

While he had been at the Ministries of Aviation and, later, of Technology he was continually travelling the world as a salesman for British industry, and he acquired a wealth of personal connections which he could use through these two export firms to chart out a very profitable business career.

In fact Stonehouse's enthusiasm for making the working class pay cost him his political ambition. In 1969 he faced the telegraphists in the Post Office, on strike over a claim which seemed to breach the Government incomes policy, and on his advice the Cabinet decided to fight.

In fact there was no breach of the policy and the claim meant a drop in earnings for many workers. The delayed settlement of the strike was

expensive and destroyed Wilson's confidence in Stonehouse

#### BUSINESS EMPIRE

The 1970 General Election finally finished his political career and he set about creating a business empire. Connoisseurs of Claret was failing and needed loans but in March 1972 he landed the chairmanship of Aeromatitime Ltd. and a £4,800 p.a. salary for occasionally keeping its directors in order. He also recruited Andrew Scott from 'ugly face of capitalism' Lonrho to head a new export firm, Global Imex.

He burst into politics again to support the independence struggle of Bangladesh in Parliament, and was in charge of raising the Bangladesh Fund (to buy arms for Mujib Al Rahman) which was wound up in September 1972.

The source of this energy is not hard to find: in November 1972 he tried to raise £1m for a merchant banking firm, British Bangladesh Trust, intended to capitalise on Bangladeshi good will by financing investment on Bengali deposits.

This ingenious exercise was a flop as the Bangladesh High Commissioner disowned him and many Bengalis refused to be drawn. Instead, Stonehouse plunged in with his own money and that of

Stonehouse was in trouble - he now had an empire of 24 companies, but which was making little money - only £18,652 pre-tax profit on a £3.7m turnover in 1972-73. In 1974 fringe banks were collapsing in the wake of the downfall of London and County Securities and the major banks tightened on personal lending.

Ironically, perhaps, Stonehouse's biggest threat was from his own party when Healey's March Budget stopped businessmen setting their overdraft interest against tax.

Stonehouse was later to comment, sadly "I tried to wear a businessman's hat and a political hat, and in the Labour Party, a socialist party, this is often extremely misunderstood."

If the poor man was embarrassed by the echoes of socialism left in the Labour Party we might suggest that a serious fight on behalf of the working class by the 'left' MPs against him and other 'misunderstood' politicians might save their anguish by forcing them out of the Labour Party into more congenial surroundings.

Such men flourish on the inability of the 'left' to make a break with them and fight them. Roy Jenkins led 68 Labour MPs to break Party

investigation, and another ex-director was suing him for over £10,000.

He had a \$15m cement deal which could have netted Global Imex £190,000 profit on £500,000 worth of cement, and had plans to keep as much of the loot as possible: "I have vehicles for the money to be paid offshore, in Switzerland or Liechtenstein" he told one fellow-director.

But the Nigerian government pulled out of the deal and at the same time, just before he disappeared on 20th November, the First National Bank of Miami turned him down for a loan for the second time.

It was no surprise that Stonehouse had read the warnings and prepared. He phoned round local hospitals to find a dead man of his own age and found two - Joseph Arthur Markham and Donald Clive Mildoon. He visited the widows as their MP and used the former's birth certificate to get a false passport, issued on 2nd August last year.

Before he left, he withdrew £20,000 from Global Imex (two year's salary) leaving it very short of cash, sold the lease on his flat and put his house up for sale. Whatever his faults, he could certainly think clearly in a 'brainstorm'.

... "I tried to wear a businessman's hat and a political hat, and in the Labour Party, a socialist party, this is often extremely misunderstood."

John Stonehouse.



Global Imex and Export Promotion and Consultancy Services.

#### CORRUPTION

Stonehouse was not the first man in the Labour movement to use the personal-connection network, the corrupt and double-dealing methods of capitalism to pay his way. There had been Poulson and Cunningham too. But for Stonehouse the road was downwards from here on.

Several original Trust subscribers balked, and several others were very doubtful: Boston Registrars and Nominees, down for a £50,000 stake had not traded since 1956; Pladd Finance, also in for £50,000, had assets of £1,262 when it last filed accounts in 1971. Stonehouse went further into debt and engaged in complex company dealings to hide the crisis - he with his three co-directors had personally staked £145,000 in the Trust. Some protested - Scott resigned from Global Imex when asked for another £20,000 for the bank in February 1974.

#### COLLAPSE

policy and vote with the Tories on the Common Market in 1971 and thereby kept the Tories in power. Not a single 'left' tabled a demand for the expulsion of this ultra-right group of MPs.

Such a demand would have enormously strengthened the Labour Party and would do so today with Jenkins' refusal to free the Shrewsbury Two.

As it is, it is scarcely any wonder that the demands for a Labour campaign against the Tory "Fair Rents" Act fell on deaf ears when men like Stonehouse rented a farmhouse in Hampshire and a flat in London, and bought a house in the West Country for an estimated £80,000.

#### END NEAR

Everything came to a head for Stonehouse last summer. Several lucrative export connections collapsed, the Global Imex managing director quit in August, the company Accountant resigned in September, director Sir Charles Forte and two others were pressing him for the 1973-74 balance sheets and wanted a Department of Trade in-

#### STILL PAID

Stonehouse is still being paid his £4,500 p.a. MP's salary in Australia and talks of staying an MP. "I think there's a lot of humbug about membership of the House of Commons being discontinued. Many MPs are away for months..."

Of course, this puts him in the illustrious company of men like Labour millionaire Harold Lever, whose absence one night to wine and dine led to vicious Tory amendments being incorporated into Labour's Trade Union and Labour Relations Bill.

The Labour Party, intimately tied to capital, particularly through men like Stonehouse, will always refuse to challenge the employers and their right to make money whatever that means in rising unemployment and falling living standards.

As the employers now mount their toughest offensive, Wilson and Healey are reduced to an echo of the employers, using threats of unemployment against strikers and against the wages movement. These worn-out politicians must be driven out of the Labour movement, and a new leadership built to defend the working class.

# REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS

## WORKERS DIARY

### "THIS WEEK - 1844"

Thames TV Jan 21st

'No class of men have contributed more to the wealth and comfort of society and have partaken less of their own creation'. This thought expressed in Chartist and Miners union papers lay at the centre of the great struggles of 1844 in the coal mines of North-East England.

According to the mine owners, the men, particularly in the North-East, were the best-paid labourers in the land - indeed their average wage was nearly the same as that of workers in the factories!

But the men rarely received the full wage; failure to send up pure coal from the pits (despite the darkness making it difficult to tell coal from black slate) resulted in crippling fines. Opening the books would in itself have revealed this, since the bosses divided their spoils with crooked coal-inspectors. In this way, swindling the men out of 'a fair day's pay for a fair day's work' was rendered invisible.

The 'Bond', a contract signed by all mine workers, tied the labourer to one employer exclusively. Because the miners lived in company cottages with their families, it became possible to maintain a reserve army of workers. Any man redundant could not seek other employment for fear of having his family turfed out onto the streets.

Injury money and widow's benefits were minimal 'so as to create an incentive in the men towards care and responsibility'. It was under these conditions that wages had been driven down by 30% in the years 1840-44.

A recession gripped the capitalist system. During the boom which followed on the introduction of steam power in the factories and

transport, which had particularly affected the coal industry, immense quantities of capital had been accumulated. As demand fell rapidly, to maintain the rate of profit on this immense capital meant speed-up mass redundancy, and the lowering of wages.

But this could not be done without major confrontation. The workers had struggled successfully and often illegally against the Combination Act, (repealed 1826) and Trades

revolutionary offensive of capital, and at the same time a crucial factor in the breaking away of a section of the Chartist movement from a reliance on petitions and Parliamentary bills, and towards revolutionary methods based on an independent policy for the working class.

The main weakness of the Thames TV documentary on the strike, shown late on the night of January 21st, was the complete ab-

sence of any consideration of the strike as a political event. Though it was able to show the solidarity of the capitalist class - the mine owners, the special constabulary, the army, bourgeois sociologists and the medical profession (which at one point asserted that coal dust was good for the lungs because it was a natural product!) - the most vivid scenes of workers were of defeat and degradation.

The expressions on the faces of pickets who had failed to prevent scab labour from lower-paid sections of the industry from crossing the lines seemed those of men

who have lost faith in workers as a class, not of the real men who went forward with their families through victimisation, eviction and near starvation in defence of their Union!

There were strong scenes showing the way the miners attempted to adapt the Christian religion to its requirements in the struggle. Similarly it showed how some leaders of the Chartist movement could not see beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality, and refused to defend militants against eviction 'because it would be impossible to do so in a court of law!'

Well-staged scenes of meetings, eviction struggles and so on, and believably scripted interviews with the major forces in the struggle, could not in the end make up for the lack of an overall political and historical perspective.

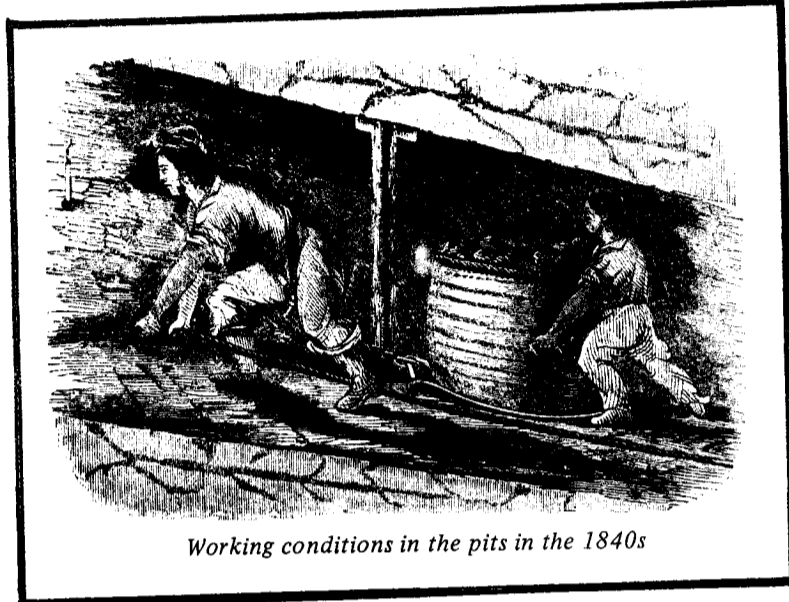
Though showing the limitations imposed by religion, and by the legal methods of the mainstream of Chartism, and of an embryonic union organisation which was, as yet, not industry-wide, it could not go beyond these to grasp the truth of the struggle as a political conflict as full of meaning now as in 1844.

The miners' demands - a guaranteed minimum wage of 15/- a week, security of tenure of their homes, widows' and accident benefits, union recognition and so on - were the forms of a broader struggle whose content was the political birth of the British working class as an independent force. Economic demands reflect this political essence in every period of capitalist crisis.

To understand this is to begin to learn the lessons of that strike. Not to do so is to portray a defeat with a full stop at the end of it, as if it were a thing-in-itself.

Meanwhile, as any miner can tell you, the struggle over conditions and wages continues.

J. VIGO



Working conditions in the pits in the 1840s

Unionism was developing rapidly. The capitalist crisis itself in the 1830's had created the conditions for the Chartist movement to win first the sympathy of, and then the leadership of the working class. Workers were on the move forwards, in a much more organised way than capital had ever had to cope with in the past.

Capitalism had to play on such weaknesses that it could find in the working class, inflict demoralising defeats, and in that way prepare the defeat of Chartism. The defeat of the 1844 miners strike was a major milestone of this counter-

white mineworkers since the early twenties, when they revolted against the attempts to replace them with cheap, black labour. They had fought the Army - as a badly armed militia confronting tanks, artillery and aircraft - until 250 of them were dead.

When the new National Party offered these men protection from redundancy and wage-cuts against the mineowners, they took it: the price was Apartheid.

For a mineowner to be tolerant is one thing - it means he can cut his wage-bill by bringing in cheap labour. For a white worker it means being prepared to lose one's job, go against the racist union and his friends, and to cease fighting to better himself - a fanatic upholding of liberal principles.

Rod Slater is not portrayed as such a fanatic. The only alternative could be that he has understood that the interests of white workers lie not in the protection of the National Party, which cannot be long maintained given the contradictions within South Africa today, and that white workers must join

with black behind a revolutionary leadership and the destruction of apartheid. Roger Moore as Slater gives, not surprisingly, no evidence at all of knowing this.

Equally, why should King, the black worker, die for Slater? In 1969, including all benefits, he would be earning less in real terms than he would have in 1911 in the same job. Today, his minimum is £1 a shift, plus enough food to work and a bunk. Perhaps, being so far from home and family, he would be so grateful for Slater's friendship as to do what he does.

But if he felt the isolation and injustice of his position that strongly, he would be facing the police with stones in his hand, as at Carletonville - a much more likely place and reason for him to die.

The revolutionary movements now developing throughout Southern Africa therefore come in harsh contradiction to the liberal fantasies portrayed in "Gold", and show the real way forward for African miners.

instead of the wicket; since fast bowlers can deliver at up to 100 mph this is no laughing matter.)

Progressive cricketing chaps are seriously worried for the sport's reputation for fair play. A recent letter-writer to The Times argues that peaceful co-existence can no longer be guaranteed by the umpires' discretion. 'What is needed is a drastic law which forbids body-line altogether.' We share his dismay over cricketing hooliganism. But whether the British Commonwealth can 'set an example on the right side in this struggle' we have our doubts. Perhaps a Common Market arbitrator at silly mid-off is the answer?

French prelate, Cardinal Danielou. He passed away in the private apartment of a Paris striptease dancer. There were conflicting press reports as to whether either dignity was wearing his mitre at the time.

### BALLS TO YOU

International capitalist aggression is penetrating even the cricket field's peaceful green, England's defeat in the recent Test series in Australia has provoked a bitter controversy on 'body-line' bowling (i.e. aiming the ball at the batsman in-

shaped by the relentless drive of capitalism to accumulate surplus value.

A film about such people could be dramatic indeed - violent contradictions, violent repressions, the struggles and isolation of the black workers separated from their families..... but 'Gold' is a pathetic failure.

Pretty scenery, "manly" Roger Moore, Susanna York confused by her part, a nebulous international conspiracy complete with Sheikh, are combined with a rough-diamond style mining overlord (whose attempts at decisiveness are so feeble that the ruthless, flamboyant pirates who actually built the mining houses wouldn't have employed him as a clerk).

In the film Rod Slater (Roger Moore) protects black workers from a brutal white colleague: later one of them dies for him. Both things might happen in reality, but what kind of personality would such a man as Slater have to have?

His actions would be in defiance of the racist bonds forged between

at the large episcopal travelling expenses involved in recent negotiations over Christian unity, and at the considerable sums lost by officials in 'unsuccessful speculation' on the Church's behalf.

Simultaneously with this crisis of confidence came news that Cardinal Marty, Archbishop of Paris, has set up another special 'ecclesiastical commission'. Its task? To investigate the circumstances under which Monsignor Tort Bishop of Montauban, was found dead on the doorstep of a 'house of ill-fame' in one of Paris' red light districts on January 17th.

His decease follows hard on the heels (if that is the word) of the

### BANKRUPT?

The Royal Economic Society, collective association of economists faces 'serious financial difficulties' and 'major cash-flow problems'. So grave is the situation that a special committee has been set up - including Sir Donald MacDougall, formerly chief economic adviser to the Treasury - to look for possible remedies.

One major burden, we understand, is the Society's large scale production of the complete works of John Maynard Keynes, author of the theory that intelligent economic management can save capitalism from crisis. To the soaring cost of paper and ink have been added worries about future sales.

Reassurance was forthcoming, though from Professor Chambernowne of Cambridge University, who reported that 'money problems had not, as yet, had any real consequences for the society's intellectual life'. We are relieved to hear it.

Concern among the rank and file has been roused, nonetheless, by the warning (from a representative of the London Graduate School of Business Studies) that learned societies must be run on the same principles as small businesses. Are we to expect a fight against speed-up and redundancies? Or perhaps the solution could lie in a system of payment by results?

### 'OPERATING PROFIT'

A letter to the Guardian on January 25th reflects one way in which the crisis is now hitting sections of the middle class. The premiums on their private insurance schemes, which once eased them to the top of the waiting lists for medical treatment, are now getting outside their reach. The Guardian reader complains: 'BUPA costs have risen so much that I cannot afford any longer to belong to their scheme.'

BUPA is the largest of the private health insurance schemes. The Guardian 'Family Finance' page replies: 'Insurance Companies will not..... take you on for the first time beyond a certain age, and are likely, sooner or later, not to offer renewal even to their existing clients. They don't want to lose money.....'

Private health insurance, in other words, will only insure you if you are unlikely ever to be ill! The answer, even for those determined individualists who tell workers they must 'pay their own way' and 'stand on their own feet', is, according to the Guardian: 'We shall just have to hope the National Health Service survives.'

BUPA, then like all capitalist enterprise only operates if it makes a profit. Work-to-contract consultants would do well to take note!

### CASH AND CARRY HARRY

Harry Lander JP, pillar of the Jewish establishment in London, was the boss of the Israel British Bank of London, which declared itself bankrupt on September 23rd.

It appears that overdraft facilities are unlimited if you're the boss because Harry Lander 'borrowed' £1,120,000.

However poor Harry received no salary in 1973-4 - he just drew a nominal £147,559 which appeared under the heading of 'other' on the balance sheet.

Need there be a stronger argument for 'open the books' and expose the wheelings and dealings of capitalist enterprise?

### MINORITY OF ONE

Spotted recently by our roving correspondent on a tombstone in Maine, New England, USA - the following epitaph: 'I told you I was sick.'

### "GOLD"

The contradictions of capitalism are all present in the South African gold-mines in their most concrete form. 40,000 white and 400,000 black migrant workers labour up to 2 miles underground to produce millions of ounces of gold each year.

To open a mine costs tens of millions, and each ton of ore produces only a few pennyweights of gold. The black migrant workers live in mine compounds for the period of their contracts - the mines feed and clothe them, and teach them its own working language. The gold mines are a complete world, with its own laws - all ultimately determined by the unflinching need of capitalism for a standard of value.

Marx shows how men's material conditions determine their ideas and the way they live. The strange world of the mines moulds people just as strange - people whose hopes, desires and possibilities are

### LAY-OFFS?

Vatican finances are in a state of 'severe deficit'. An announcement in January from Cardinal Villot, the Pope's Secretary of State, revealed that the Church's cash position is even more serious than it was following Leo XIII's jubilee celebrations in 1900.

The council of cardinals has rejected the 1975 draft budget, and set up a special commission to look for savings.

Work study, and possible redundancies, are in the air, but we understand there is also concern

# SHREWSBURY 2

The two building workers Eric Tomlinson and Dennis Warren are still in jail.

After they were refused the right to appeal to the House of Lords, in December, the TUC sent delegations to the House of Commons to see Wilson and then Jenkins, who simply said 'I cannot usurp the function of the court.'

The TUC pressured by the anger of thousands of trade unionists at the treatment of these men, called for the lobby of Parliament on January 14th which was preceded by marches of 8,000 trade unionists through London.

## W.S.L FIGHT

The Workers Socialist League participated in the main march, distributing leaflets calling on the demonstration to take up the call for a general strike and for the removal of Jenkins, and for his replacement with a Home Secretary who will free the men.

The WSL leaflet put the position clear:

'This campaign to release the Shrewsbury Two must be seen as the start of a campaign throughout the workers movement against the range of anti-working class legislation carried forward by the Labour Government.'

'Capitalism in crisis is introducing a series of laws to stop the independent action of the working class. The use of the 1875 Conspiracy Laws has to be seen as linked to the so-called 'Anti-Terrorism' Act the proposed legislation to make the law of trespass into a criminal law - to be used primarily against occupations - and now the use of section 42 of the Immigration Act to deport immigrant workers (without charge, trial or appeal) who become involved in trade union struggles.'

'Franco Caprino, who is currently



Workers Socialist League contingent on Jan 14th Lobby.

under arrest under this law, has recently been involved in picketing as were Warren and Tomlinson.'

'When Roy Jenkins says 'the rule of law must prevail', and Wilson which hunts the British Leyland workers they are speaking the same language as Denis Healey when he says 'It is far better that more people should be at work, even if that means accepting lower wages on average, than that those lucky enough to keep their jobs scoop the pool whilst millions are living on the dole. That is what the social contract is all about.'

'These statements show the right wing of the Labour Party, supporting the employers and the bankers, using the law and the threat of unemployment to take away the jobs and the living standards and basic needs of the workers from the working class.'

'This attack must be fought not by protest but by action. This dem-

onstration today gives the lie to all those in the trade union movement who say that the working class won't fight. What is required is determined and principled leadership.'

The lobby of itself achieved nothing - except a vague promise from Wilson to look into the conspiracy laws.

What it did was to raise the issue to a new level in the workers movement (not the intention of the TUC) and pose the question of the next step.

## THE LEFT MPS

The working class fought to form the Labour Party and send their representatives to Parliament.

The 'left' MPs - Bob Cryer who said 'Shrewsbury represents an injustice and the labour movement has always acted to right injustices' - Frank Allaun, Martin Flannery,

Audrey Wise, Dennis Skinner - we call on these to put their words into practice and act to remove Jenkins now and demand a Home Secretary who will carry out the decisions of the Labour Party Conference and free the Shrewsbury two.

The Tribunes and left talkers have shown no inclination to wage this fight. Like all reformists they are too terrified of breaking the laws set up by the capitalist class to defend itself against those it exploits. They are Parliamentarians who genuinely believe that capitalism can be made acceptable, or even that socialism can be achieved through the 'correct' constitutional procedure in Parliament.

The Communist Party says the left MPs are fighting, and have opposed resolutions calling for a general strike to free the Shrewsbury two and defend trade union rights.

The International Socialists and the International Marxist Group both see the answer in terms of more 'rank and file' movements, thus diverting from the real task confronting the working class, which is to drive out the reactionary leadership of the official trade union and Labour movement which stands aside while trade unionists are jailed.

## MURRAY

Len Murray looks for a solution in parole which would be 'one way of relieving the situation' - and plans no other mass action.

Prentice - a T&GWU sponsored MP - refused even to meet a delegation of trade unionists on the lobby, as 'a matter of principle'.

The opportunism of the Workers Revolutionary Party only served to further confuse the issue.

On December 20th they said in the Workers Press 'The campaign of words has failed, as Workers Press always said it would. Now only the trade union bureaucrats, the CP and the so-called 'left' MPs want to continue this obscene circus of protest!'

Then when it emerged that the working class was planning to turn out and fight, the WRP somersaulted to full support, but still did not call on workers to join the marches before the lobby, and did not fight within its own membership for a high turnout.

(The ATUA delegation was 50, whereas the WRP claims a London membership of 5,000)

## GENERAL STRIKE

This campaign must now be taken forward. The only way to force the release of Warren and Tomlinson and the repeal of the 1875 Conspiracy Acts and their replacement with laws defending trade unionists is by an indefinite general strike.

The strength of the working class which freed the Pentonville dockers and which threw out the Industrial Relations Act must again be mobilised in defence of its rights.

The demand for a general strike must not be an empty demand.

Resolutions must be put down for special meetings of shop stewards and workers to actively fight for a general strike.

## DEMANDS

The policy of the Workers Socialist League is for:

\* A General Strike to force the release of Warren and Tomlinson, for the repeal of the 1875 Conspiracy Acts and their replacement by laws defending the Trade Unions, and for the repeal of the Anti-Terrorism Act, the Immigration Act, and all other anti-working class legislation.

\* For the Left MPs to put down a resolution in the PLP for the removal of Jenkins, and his replacement with someone prepared to release these workers and defend the working class. For a campaign on this throughout the labour movement.

\* End the social contract. Defend jobs and living standards.

# WIGAN MARCH

## QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

On Saturday 1st Feb the Wigan Builders Action Committee began their march which, according to 'Workers Press had the intention of "holding meetings, calling out, sites and inviting workers to join in." It was, apparently "a decisive march to rouse the whole working class."

If this really was the case, then the Workers Socialist League would of course, regardless of the major differences we have with the WRP and irrespective of the non-political leaflet the Wigan Committee issued on the TUC lobby, give the march critical support, as being a protest march intended as part of a genuine fight to mobilise the class for the defence of the pickets.

## "PUBLIC" MEETINGS

Unfortunately this is not the case. The march is dominated completely by the sectarian practices of the WRP, which means it is very selective as to the sections of workers it allows to join in. On the day of the lobby of Parliament a delegation of carworkers form the 5/293 T&GWU Branch and Oxford Trades Council was turned away from a 'public' meeting of the Wigan Committee by leading WRP members, on the basis they were 'anti-party elements'.

Further, two trade unionists travelled from Oxford to St. Helens on the first day of the march to write a full report for 'Socialist Press', only to be physically threatened, called 'police spies', and refused admission to the 'public' meeting. Again the term 'anti-party' was used.

## ANSWERS NEEDED

We would ask - what party does this term refer to? Is there a new Wigan Builders Action Party? If not, then who is running this march, and in whose interests? Why are trade unionists being excluded from its public meetings?

If the answer is that it is because they are members of the WSL, then the question is why CP stalwarts, Maoists, right-wingers, Tories, IS and IMG are not 'anti-party' and are allowed in, if the WSL is, and is barred from entry?

The Labour movement is entitled to full answers from the Wigan Committee which is allowing its name to be used in this way by the WRP

# COWLEY TUNERS STRIKE

By an industrial correspondent

The Tuners, after a month on strike, suspended action on Monday on instruction of the AUEW executive, pending an 'independent enquiry. This apparently ordinary dispute contains far-reaching political and industrial implications.

The capitalist press have recognised this. The City Comment article in the Daily Telegraph of Friday Jan 31st spells it out:

"British Leyland is the test case for the Government in its dealings with the private sector of industry; for the Trades Unions which may make or break a company responsible for a vast number of jobs."

## TEST CASE

In other words if BL is the test case then the Tuner's strike is one of the battle grounds on which this is being fought.

This brings into new perspective the position of the IMG for whom the Tuner's strike is also proving something of a test case, with their attacks on the tuners as a minority who are prejudicing the 'unity' of the majority by their action.

The tuners first lodged their claim as far back as January 1973 and at the end of the procedure decided not to take any strike action despite support from the AUEW District Committee.

They reopened the claim in September 1974 and on December 18th served fourteen days strike notice on Leyland.

## WILSON

On the first day of the strike Leyland closed the plant, this was calculated to whip up hysteria. The same day Wilson speaking at Huyton said that the government would not financially support firms where workers went on strike. The next day the Oxford Mail headlined "WELCOME FOR WILSON STRIKE WARN-ING".

All the issues and techniques

developed during the victimisation struggle of last April were brought into play.

Leaflets from the Company went out and the so-called Wives Action Group began to agitate. The only difference was that instead of an individual being victimised it was now a whole section.

Next the trade union bureaucrats were brought in, and they obtained a return to work for more negotiations. The negotiations ended in deadlock and the mechanics struck again - and this despite a decision of the T&GWU Automotive Committee (who had 77 members involved) to call for the claim to be dropped.

## SCAB LABOUR

This time BL did not close the plant but announced that they would run with scab labour on the Tuner's jobs - and achieved 50% or more production on this basis - the first time for many years that the Cowley plant had run on scab labour.

The basis of this of course was not just the witch-hunt but the installation of Parsons by the T&GWU bureaucracy last April. Parsons now openly condoned black legging.

The issue now was the rights of minorities and the right to strike. The tuners were involved in a legitimate action. But the details of the Tuner's case now became dwarfed by the defence of principle and the fact that a defeat for the Tuner would be a defeat for the whole factory and the trade union movement.

The AUEW Executive were now on the spot. After ducking the issue at the first meeting (hoping it would go away - with a little help) they then made it official, showing that even sections of the AUEW bureaucracy could begin to see the importance of this struggle. The fact that they

now use the official support to order the men back to work will not necessarily get them off the hook.

True to form, Jack Jones (who said in the middle of the Scottish lorry drivers strike that it was no good getting high wages if you bankrupt the firm you work for) called for arbitration, the local T&G official attacked the Tuners, and Parsons moved at a T&G stewards' meeting in the works that the Tuners be advised to withdraw their claim, a proposal which was defeated in a fight led by WSL members.

## IMG

On the 2nd January the IMG issued a leaflet into the factory saying that the Tuners claim "will damage the chances of a united fight to restore the value of our wages in the annual review" This leaflet helped whip up hostility towards the Tuners.

IMG rank and fileism leads them to attack minorities in a period when attacking minorities has been the theme right through the right wing to the employers themselves who know that if minorities can be disciplined the majority will be disciplined.

You cannot choose the conditions or timing of a fight. We can only struggle to understand the forces at work behind. It is clear that the Labour government is backing private industry in order to give it time to make itself profitable.

It can only do this by greater exploitation of the working class in the form of speed up (which is now taking place all over the Cowley complex) and by the preparations for victimisation. All this is clearly behind the managements attempt to beat this strike.

The tuners must be supported. It has always been minorities that have built and defended trade unions, we must fight to stop the blacklegging. The WSL will be at the forefront of this fight.

# WSL: FIRST PUBLIC MEETING

The first public meeting of the Workers Socialist League took place in London on January 24th. Attended by over 100, the meeting centred on establishing the continuity of the struggle for Trotskyism, which now takes place through the building of the WSL.

Alan Thornett, speaking first, began with an analysis of the objective conditions which had forced on the development first of the opposition within the WRP, and then, following the split with the Healy leadership, forced the establishment of the WSL to continue the struggle for Trotsky's Transitional Programme.

He showed how the sharpening of the capitalist crisis posed an enormous crisis within social democracy and the reformist trade union leaderships.

In such a period Trotskyism could make very rapid developments if a break was made from propagandism.

## DEMANDS

Comrade Thornett then brought forward some of the lessons already learned by the League in the fight for the demands of the Transitional Programme.

The demand of "open the Books" and of "end business secrets", for instance, which seemed comparatively mild and easy to win support for, was bitterly fought by the right wing, said comrade Thornett.

The right wing correctly recognised that once business secrets are ended then capitalism itself is unable to continue, since not only is every employer exposed to his competitors, but, far worse, he is exposed to the critical examination of his own workers.

All the behind-the-scenes manipulation would be brought to light, with the most revolutionary of implications.

The right wing also saw that the demand for a programme of public works for nationalised industries meant an end to the free market, and therefore was incompatible with the capitalist system.

These demands were therefore not 'soft options', but called for a hard fight in the unions.

## THEORETICAL HERITAGE

Dealing with the theoretical heritage of the WSL, Comrade

Lister stressed that it was a Trotskyist movement, and would carry forward the struggle against Stalinism, against reformism, and against those who wanted to abandon Marxism and substitute their own surface impressions for scientific analysis.

He said that since the split with the propagandist sectarian politics of the WRP, which had been carried over by its leadership from the past historical isolation of the Trotskyist movement, the WSL leadership had been approached by all manner of "quacks and charlatans" who wanted to abandon Marxism and abandon the struggle for Bolshevism.

"We remain hostile to 'rank and fileism', hostile to state capitalism and hostile to Pabloism," said comrade Lister, who then quoted from the Transitional Programme Trotsky's reply to those other groups who warn us that we are too small to declare ourselves an independent organisation: "... (Sceptics) are good for scarcely anything at all."

## INTERNATIONAL

The forces which produced the WSL were forces of the international working class moving on to the offensive in struggles throughout the world. The WSL declared the unity of the world class struggle and that its objective was to construct a revolutionary party to lead these forces, and thus to strengthen and develop the theoretical heritage of the Trotskyist movement beyond the propagandist limitations of the International Committee.

## "ACID TEST"

In reply to points raised by Bob Pennington (IMG), comrade Thornett stressed that "Our acid test in the WSL will be our ability to build and develop cadres in industry, and a principled revolutionary party. This is how we must be judged."

In closing the meeting, chairman Tony Richardson pointed out that only the WSL had put forward a perspective for the continuation of the campaign to free the Shrewsbury Two, through the demand that the Left MPs force Jenkins out of office. Every other group avoided these questions of leadership.

# DEFEND JOBS AT BLMC



BLMC Cowley complex

The statement reprinted below was distributed in the Cowley plants last week taking up Walden who as MP for Birmingham, All Saints advocated the closure of the British Leyland factories in Oxford and Bathgate.

Since then it has become clear that he was not speaking for himself but for big business. The 'City Comment' article of the Daily Telegraph of Friday January 31st repeats the demand: "Any rational restructuring of British Leyland would involve as a minimum shutting Cowley and Bathgate with all the social consequences involved."

This is the text of the WSL statement:

"It is a disgrace for a Labour MP to go on to a national television network and call for the closure of the Cowley and Bathgate factories, a proposal which would economically devastate these regions.

The question must be asked - who is Walden speaking for? What does he know about the industry? Where does Wilson stand on this as Labour Prime Minister?

Walden was very blunt. He said 'The Cowley and Bathgate factories should be closed.'

We should be equally blunt in saying - WE ARE NOT HAVING IT! If Brian Walden, Donald Stokes Harold Wilson or anyone else tries to close and dismantle this factory it will be resisted.

This Labour Government was put in office by the working class to represent the interests of the working class. The Labour Party exists on money contributed by workers through their unions. Trade union branches should demand that Wilson repudiate Walden's statement and he makes it clear where the Labour Government stands.

On Jan 3rd Wilson attacked Cowley carworkers saying that government money would not be available to save the company if workers were involved in strike action (ie defending their conditions against the attacks of the employers)

On Jan 10th Denis Healey said 'It is far better that more people should be at work, even if that means accepting lower wages on average, than that those lucky enough to keep their jobs scoop the pool whilst millions are living on the dole. That is what the social contract is all about.'

In the same television programme Graham Turner - a self-appointed 'expert' on the motor industry - regurgitated his witch hunt about a 'skiver's paradise' at Cowley.

Each of these statements connects up. Each supports the employers in threatening workers with unemployment and prepares the ground for speed-up and cuts in real wages. These are the primary requirements of the employers.

On Jan 10th Stokes called a meeting of trade union representatives from the corporation.

John Barber, managing director, said 'There can be no hope of security of employment without greater efficiency.....if we can step up our production performance and general efficiency, and if conditions continue to deteriorate, be prepared to use short time working rather redundancies, then we can minimise the impact of the economic recession; but I repeat, because of the prevailing circumstances I can give no guarantee

regarding redundancies.' - directly using the threat of unemployment as the whip to impose 'efficiency'.

Speaking on the tuners' strike John Symonds then said '...we have failed to meet our survival budget at Cowley. A further deterioration will be calamitous with, let me make it clear, the stoniest likelihood of' at best, a major reduction of manufacturing and employment within this factory complex in Oxford.' In other words - the tuners should step in line or face unemployment.

But this crisis cannot be hung around the neck of any group of workers within British Leyland. This is a world crisis of the capitalist system itself.

The car industry is the sharpest point of the capitalist crisis all over the world.

If, as is said, the problems of British Leyland are caused by workers defending their conditions - what about Volkswagen? They are expected to show a £90m loss for last year; are working at 60% capacity with sales down 43% and have shed 10,000 workers - yet they are more 'efficient' and have had no strikes.

This crisis hits individual employees - via inflation - through their unit costs, driving them to impose speed-up, redundancy, and short time as they fight over a shrinking market under ever worsening economic conditions - workers have no control over that.

British Leyland financial director Alex Park speaking on Jan 10th said that the company had to find, at an annual rate of inflation of 20%, £96,000,000 per year just to cover the increased value of stock needed for production.

Add to this current interest repayments of £40m plus the fact that unit costs rise as production falls and you can begin to see the degree of speed-up necessary if the workers are to carry the cost of this crisis.

The reality is that no degree of speed-up could save British Leyland in the end. The problem is far too fundamental, and raises directly the question of whether the industry can continue under private ownership.

Leyland, like all other employers will fight for their survival as a private employer.

In their drive to break the resistance of the working class to the measures they intend to take, the employers are aided by Wilson and Healey.

Jack Jones who says 'we must improve efficiency' shows where the trade union leaders stand on this.

Locally the employers interests are served by those who try to split the tuners who have a legitimate claim and a right to fight for it.

Symonds knows that to break the tuners is to deal a blow to the whole plant at the point of struggle over wages and redundancy.

The best interests of every worker in Cowley are that the tuners win their claim and the resulting strength is turned to improving wages and defending jobs.

The new so-called 'consultative body' (being set up with no consultation with workers in the plants) will be used to spearhead speed-up.

Selective convenors will be sucked in to continuous discussion with top corporate management and their authority used to push

through reorganisation schemes and prepare the ground for corporate wage negotiations and consequently lower wages.

The Company know that we have weak leadership on this plant and they are taking massive advantage of it. The real meaning of the victimisation of last spring and the breaking up of the 5/55 branch is clear.

The 5/55 branch intended to protect jobs. It intended to propose to its members an occupation if the plant were threatened with closure. That resistance had to be broken before the Company could proceed. If workers have no leadership they have nothing.

The serious situation we face demands a programme.

We say that BL should be placed under the control of a properly elected committee of workers. We say that no taxpayers money should be handed over to private management.

The books of BL should be opened in order that the true position can be seen by those whose lives are likely to be affected. All corruption such as private jobs and fiddles by higher management should be exposed throughout each plant and ended.

The Company are saying that they cannot continue without government money.

If opening the books shows this to be true it clearly proves the case for the nationalisation of BL under workers management - with out compensation to the major shareholders.

We should then demand that the Labour government provide state contracts to keep the factories running.

With component companies on short time, with wages slashed and redundancies threatened, the books of these companies should also be opened and they should be nationalised.

We should connect up with other factories in similar circumstances and begin the development towards a national economic plan.

The wage offer of between £3.60 and £4.80 is scandalous and should be rejected.

The company must be forced to concede the claim in full, plus a sliding scale of wages agreement to protect against inflation, with figures checked by trade union committees.

Stokes and Barber have threatened redundancies.

These must be resisted by the occupation of the plant on the demand for a sliding scale of hours agreement without loss of pay.

It is only a comprehensive programme such as this which can meet the requirements of workers to defend their jobs and conditions in this period of severe economic crisis.

Workers must not be made to pay to maintain the employers' system. We therefore ask you to consider carefully the points we have made.

DANGER.....continued from front page

the independence of the working class from those sections of the capitalist class who want to stay out of the Common Market because their interests lie in the old Commonwealth countries.

Such is the case with the 'Daily Express', for instance, which has business interests in Canada. Instead of bringing this out, the 'Star' of Jan 24th says: 'At stake is the whole future of the British people. Those big business firms which support EEC membership do so only to make bigger profits at the expense of the people.' So are we supposed to believe that employers who are against the Market aren't interested in profits?

## CONFUSION

This confusion, stemming from an abandonment of internationalism, has led the Stalinists to march on the same march as the National Front against the Market, and leads to further confusion on the role of Powell and the anti-market Tories, as well as Foot and the lefts of the Labour Party who also speak in nationalist terms about 'British sovereignty'.

Now the Stalinists support the 'Get Britain Out' campaign, whose chairman is Mr Christopher Frere-Smith - an extreme right-wing Tory - and which had as one of the main speakers at its first public meeting in Bristol on 26th Jan Mr. Richard Brody, Tory MP for Holland with Boston. The 'Star' said of this organisation: 'The 'Get Britain Out'

movement's efforts to stop this pernicious interference must be supported.' (Jan 21st)

Here Chater openly identifies himself with the ruling class, using the word "we", and boasting of the "vast potential market" which could flow from further exploitation of colonial workers.

A further problem for the Stalinists is that the French and Italian CPs (together with the Chinese, incidentally, who talk of the 'Second World') support the EEC, and have their elected representatives on its governing bodies, in other words on those bodies which have: 'the aim of creating an economic and political frame-work which would constitute the strongest arsenal of weapons in the hands of the big business monopolies against progressive governments within Western Europe' (!) or which form: 'an effective alliance against the USSR.' (Star Jan 22nd) and more clearly still are part of: 'the cold-war imperialist military and political NATO set-up directed against Socialist countries and the trade union and socialist movement at home in the member states.' ('Star' Jan 27th)

All this constitutes continuing proof that the Stalinists have abandoned the most basic elements of internationalism, and that only the Trotskyist movement can now raise the principled opposition to the Common Market with the slogan of the United Socialist States of Europe.

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