



## COWLEY: WAY FOR CHRYSLER WORKERS PRINCIPLED LEAD DEFEATS RIGHT WING

Only 19 months after being victimised by British Leyland management and removed from office by the T&GWU bureaucracy during a national witch-hunt, Alan Thornett, a leading member of the Workers Socialist League, has been elected Chairman of the 4,000 strong 5/293 T&GWU branch in the British Leyland Cowley Assembly Plant.

His election is a heavy blow at the right wing, who, in the 19 months after setting up the branch as the instrument of their domination, have knifed struggle after struggle in the plant to prevent the exercise of shop floor power. Indeed, since they were installed in the leadership, they have handed almost every hard-won agreement over to the management.

This defeat of the right-wing is also a complete vindication of the long struggle carried out by the Workers Socialist League, with at times only a handful of supporters, for principle and programme in the plant in defence of agreements, and in particular in opposition to speed-up and to the Ryder Report, along with its fraudulent "worker-participation" scheme. It was this struggle alone that laid the basis for mobilising broad layers of support in recent months against management attacks, without which the right-wing could not have been beaten.

### RECORD

It is in this sense, based on this record of struggle, that the Cowley election results point the road forward to workers throughout the car industry, and in particular at Chryslers, where trade union leaders and convenors, having collaborated with 'worker participation' for the past six months, now offer not a single policy in defence of jobs beyond the treacherous demand to "renegotiate" the redundancies.

Varley was quick to snap up this suggestion and turn it into a manoeuvre offering the Linwood plant scraps from the table and attempting to drive a wedge between Linwood and Coventry. Morris and other convenors knew they were opening the door to this when they addressed the mass meetings. Their refusal to confront the Labour government now places the future of Chrysler workers in great danger.

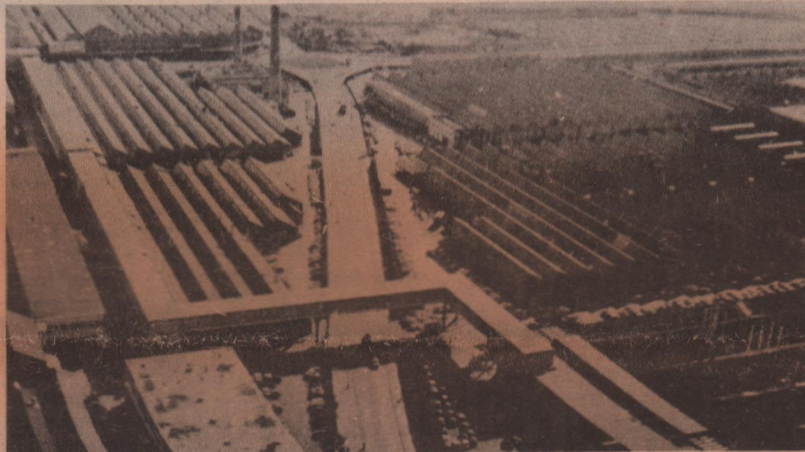
Faced with the world crisis of the capitalist system, which sharply affects the motor industry internationally, the workers in every plant face the choice: accept the argument that the company must be 'viable' or start from a fight for the political and organisational independence of the working class and the right of every worker to a job.

The working class is strong. If the trade union leaders and Chrysler convenors called for occupation of the Chrysler plants with mass supporting action in defence of jobs, backed by the full strength of the trade union movement, there is no doubt that the response from workers would be overwhelming.

### POSSIBLE

The widespread support for a Trotskyist leadership in Cowley, arising out of a struggle in defence of jobs and conditions shows that it is possible to lead workers against management attack.

The details of the Cowley branch voting are therefore important. At the meeting, the biggest since the founding meeting (paid by management) 19 months ago, 77 out of 142 voted for Thornett and 64 for the other nominee, Tom White. White, a leading member of the Workers Revolutionary Party, described as a 'moderate' in the national press, secured the entire block vote organised, in a determined effort



British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant

defeated 81 votes to 54. Frank Corri, a steward from sub-assembly with a record of opposition to Parsons was elected in his place.

These results, together with the militant majority elected onto the branch committee, now challenge the right wing stranglehold over the T&GWU in the town. Five of the six Assembly Plant seats on the important T&GWU District Automotive Committee (which represents the 5 BL plants in Oxford) are now held by militants, reducing the right wing majority to two.

And contrary to the absurd

the works ballot (held on the factory floor during working hours), Bob Fryer (regarded in the plant as a Trotskyist) came close to defeating Parsons, winning nearly 1,000 votes, while Parsons' support slumped from 1,800 at the last election to 1,200.

### MANIPULATION

Indeed Parsons' position was only held in that ballot by a combination of management tactics and bureaucratic manipulation - as a result of which the Marina assembly tracks (predominantly pro-Parsons) was given far longer periods for voting than the North Works (predominantly pro-Fryer).

The massive vote for Fryer in the North Works, which had been the main target for management attacks in the recent period, forced the T&GWU bureaucracy to hold back the elections for deputy convenors, fearing a defeat of the right wingers.

Fryer's vote was the result of the sustained fight by the WSL and other principled shop stewards for leadership in opposition to speed-up. This took on mass support around the demand to force Leyland to open the books.

### COMMITTEE

The fight by the WSL for this demand, which began on the shop stewards committee with the establishment of an open the books committee, was placed at the very heart of the struggle against the management offensive when the drive for speed-up began.

Such a fight stood in stark contrast to the collaboration of the convenors (who swung in complete support of Ryder) and resulted in a mass abstention from the ballot to elect Ryder committee delegates.

This principled lead,

strengthening the growing mood of resistance against company attacks, forced the right wing into deeper isolation.

The rejection of Ryder by the majority of workers emerged most clearly in the North Works when a mass meeting, following a period of disputes and occupation against speed-up, voted down a recommendation from the convenors for a joint management-union (Ryder) committee to investigate conditions on the Princess track. The meeting voted instead for the open the books committee to investigate management allegations of "shoddy work" and "skivers paradise".

### SIT-IN

These important developments culminated shortly before the convenors election in a sit-in in opposition to lay-offs with the demand for work sharing on full pay. After two days the battle was won with full pay conceded by the company and the work having been shared out by the workers themselves.

This action had begun at a mass meeting at which the convenors obtained a total of one vote from the 700 workers present for their resolution accepting management terms. They argued that resistance was "impossible".

Such events confirm the power of the method and demands of Trotsky's Transitional Programme and demonstrate the powerful connection between the all-round programme, aimed to mobilise the working class in the struggle to end capitalism and establish socialism, and the daily fight to organise workers in defence of jobs and conditions. These struggles show how an extremely high level of political consciousness can develop under such conditions.

Chrysler too, though in a negative way, shows the crucial importance of the continuous

continued on back page, col 4



Chrysler Stoke convenors Simpson (AUEW) and Morris (T&GWU)

to beat Thornett, by the plant convenor, extreme right wing witch-hunter Reg Parsons.

The rout of the right wing continued in the election for branch secretary, in which current secretary Jim Barson (whose collaboration with the T&GWU bureaucracy played a key role in their break-up of the powerful 5/55 Branch 19 months ago) was

claims of the local and national press that the results were affected by closure of part of the South Works during the afternoon (when the branch meeting was outside working hours), these election results are an accurate reflection of the sharp swing to the left in the factory, which emerged also in the election for convenor two weeks earlier. In

## INSIDE

Why the right wing all voted WRP . . . . . Page 7

Was Shakespeare in IS? . . . . . Page 5

STC Closure Threat . Page 7

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## ARGENTINA danger of coup

Ever since the general strike in July forced President Isabel Peron's right-wing government to withdraw its plans for massive wage-cuts, a military coup has been a major danger. This danger has in no way receded since the abortive Air Force coup of December 18-23rd.

The armed forces have been divided only about what form the coup should take. The ultra-right has envisaged a coup to impose complete military rule combined with savage general repression of all opposition on the lines of the Chilean junta.

### "MODERATES"

The 'moderates' wanted to overthrow the government of Isabel Peron but to govern jointly with non-military politicians combining some freedom of political organisation in the centre and on the right with an intensified campaign of repression against the left, especially the two major guerrilla groups, the ERP (People's Revolutionary Army) and the Montoneros (part of the left-wing of the Peronist movement), who are now apparently working together.

The conflict in the military led to a crisis in August when the moderates' won control under General Videla, the present Commander in Chief, who is in close alliance with the right-wing opposition Radical party.

The attempted coup on December 18th. was the work of part of the defeated ultra-right group in the Air Force. A small group of officers

calling themselves the Blue Condor Commandos demanded that the military overthrow Peron and take full power.

### RELUCTANT

The rest of the military moved slowly and reluctantly to subdue the revolt, hoping that it would in any case precipitate Peron's resignation. But when her disillusioned supporters in the leadership of the CGT called a general strike, the military leadership took steps to bring the rebels to heel, stressing however, that they should not be regarded as defeated and themselves openly demanding Peron's immediate resignation.

The Peron clique has been forced to agree to advance the presidential elections due in 1977 to October 1976. This is not enough for the President's opponents who hope to unseat her before this.

### BIDING TIME

The military seem to be biding their time a little longer to see if the present Senate investigations into corruption in the Ministry of Social Welfare - previously run by Peron's sinister advisor Lopez Rega and still in the hands of his henchmen - will lead to her impeachment.

Aside from these scandals, Peron faces charges over having signed a cheque for 750,000 dollars made out by a Peronist charity to her own personal account. It was, she says, a 'mistake'.

The stench of corruption of Peron's regime has brought out-

spoken support from leading figures in the church for a "purifying" military coup. The major factor delaying an attempt at a coup is the military's fear of the organised strength of the workers. The Peronist union leaders, however, prostitute that strength through their constant compromises with the corrupt, right-wing regime.

### SPLIT

The enormously powerful metal workers' union (UOM) has recently split down the middle, with Victor Calabro (who is also Governor of Buenos Aires) leading a breakaway faction opposed to Isabel Peron. The Peronist UOM leader has himself been forced to distance himself somewhat from the President.

Similar pressures face the leaders of other unions as the workers find that the general strike victory of July has been hollow since real wages have been slashed by the continuation of rapid inflation (over 300% in 1975). It is estimated that workers living standards have fallen by 15 to 30 per cent in the

last six months (40% for state employees).

The growing splits in the unions follow the major and irrevocable split last year of the Peronist Justicialist Party. The breakaway left wing of the movement has established the Authentic Party with close links with the Montoneros guerrillas.

In the face of the extreme dangers facing the working class of Argentina this left-wing of Peronism offers no way forward. Its political keynote is a demand for a return to the policies of General Peron! Its methods combine the left words and parliamentary and electoral manoeuvres of the Authentic Party (declared illegal by Peron on December 26th) with the provocative and costly military adventures of the Montoneros (even though recently the guerrillas have linked some of their activities to the worker's struggle - for instance, the kidnapping of the Mercedes executive released last week was successfully linked to the concession of the demands of striking workers in the Mercedes plant).

On December 24th the Montoneros and the ERP staged a desperate raid on a military barracks in which about 70 of their members are reported killed.

A second raid, two days later, apparently to recover the bodies, led, it is reported, to the death of well over 100 more guerrillas. This is the way, not to build a revolutionary movement, but to waste and destroy the strength and political power of the working class along with the lives of courageous militants.

### INDEPENDENCE

The struggle must be fought to break the working class from its links with Peronism, and establish its clear political and organisational independence of the employers and the state. In this, the fight for a sliding scale of wages and for armed workers' defence squads based on factory committees to defend the workers' movement against ultra-right attacks must be central points of programme.



Rebel airmen patrolling the streets of the Argentinian capital during their abortive coup attempt.

## PORTUGAL

## repression continues

Further evidence has been building up in recent weeks, since the so-called attempted coup of 25th. November, of the repressive measures being taken against the Portuguese revolution by the Azevedo regime and its military backers.

The aftermath of the 'coup' has been followed by repression of every kind. Many hundreds of leftists, not just from the army, are now in prison, though few of them have been named. In the Azores, Communist Party leaders are claiming that they have to work underground in the same way as under fascism.

At the same time, the Azevedo government has introduced a series

of 'austerity measures' aimed at dealing with the economic crisis by attacking the conditions of the working class.

There are to be public spending cuts and some rationing, while price increases are to be allowed. At the same time efforts are being made to 'boost exports' especially in textiles, but there have been great fears expressed at the possible introduction of import controls in Britain, where 80% of the textiles are bound.

The political changes being introduced are also of considerable importance. The dissolution of the Armed Forces Movement and of COPCON do not indicate an end to military dictatorship. They do show however, an attempt to strengthen the rule of capitalism.

The political parties, especially

the PPD and the Socialist Party, will be given legal powers to go back on the 'platform of constitutional accord' signed in April last, and to form a government with greater pretences at democratic and legal support.

The promised elections, like the EEC referendum in Britain and the General Election in Australia, will be fought on ground chosen and dictated by the capitalist class.

The working class and peasants in Portugal will only guarantee their revolution by building their own organisations, factory and tenant committees, which have remained intact since 25th. November. They must demand that their leaders take the power, and if they will not, they must build a leadership that can push them aside and do so itself.

## VIETNAM CP backs bishops

The Vietnamese Communist Party in the South is seeking the collaboration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the work of "construction of a new revolutionary society".

Nguyen Ho, chief official of the Party machine for the Saigon area, was one of the main invited speakers at the conference of South Vietnamese bishops and clergy on December 17th. "Important changes have taken place within the Catholic church throughout the whole world", he said. "The Vatican

people, to return towards the people".

Underlining the fact that Stalinism in Vietnam intends to have the closest possible 'peaceful coexistence' with religion and superstition, Nguyen Ho claimed that "our countrymen rejoice in the freedom to attend pagodas and churches". Catholicism, imported into Indochina at the point of a bayonet by French imperialism, promises to be - like the Church in Poland - a firm defender of Stalinism within Vietnam.

And, as though to confirm that the local support of church

country', Nguyen Ho continued "before being believers in a religion or revolutionary communists, we are all Vietnamese, springing from one people traditionally united against all foreign invasion and to safeguard the independence and the unity of our motherland".

This Christmas 'turn' by the Vietnamese leadership is one of the most striking confirmations that, far from having broken with Stalinism, they remain tied to it. Despite having thrown imperialism out of their own country, they continue to contract political alliance with the most reactionary

## ANGOLA: CIA'S SETBACK

The struggle of the American ruling class against African national independence received a major setback when on December 19th., the Senate voted to halt CIA expenditure in Angola.

The CIA's latest counterrevolutionary escapade, the funnelling of money and arms to the reactionary FNLA and UNITA through the "friendly" neighbouring government of Zaire, was long an open secret. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger fended off criticism by claiming that American funding was in temperate response to growing Soviet intervention.

Kissinger's claim had two defects. First, the sides in Angola are in no sense on an equal footing. The army of the People's Republic of Angola, the MPLA, is the only force fighting imperialism, and has the broad support of Angolan workers and peasants.

It is on this side that the Moscow Stalinists have intervened, hoping to bring forward a sympathetic government in West Africa and probably in the long term to gain naval facilities in the region.

Second, Kissinger's statement is a lie. 26 million dollars was earmarked for Zaire as early as last January, and the arms it put into the hands of the FNLA were a major factor in stepping up military conflict. Current levels of Soviet aid are largely a response to the CIA's backing of pro-imperialist forces.

the disarray of the American ruling class. While all sections of the bourgeoisie wish to defend America's stake in international capitalist exploitation, some are frightened by the prospect of fighting another Vietnam from an economically weakened position, and with a discontented and militant working class breathing down their necks.

It is this fear which moved the Senate to curb CIA activity. President Ford's public statement about "loss of credibility" and Kissinger's back-room manoeuvres were not enough to keep the Senators from forbidding, by a vote of 59 to 22, the use of Defence Department money for clandestine operations in Angola.

The Chinese Stalinists, supporters of the FNLA until the tide began to change, let out howls of dismay at Washington's "capitulation" to Moscow. And the British Tory press (*The Times*, December 22nd.) made a thinly veiled call for continued American financing of Angolan reactionaries.

Their call will not go unheeded. Kissinger immediately threatened to ask the House of Representatives to overturn the Senate's action next month, meanwhile channelling the remaining money through Zaire. Ford successfully demanded that Gulf Oil suspend operations in oil-rich Cabinda and withhold payment of royalties from the MPLA, which has control over the region.

This is a particularly dangerous move, which seeks to provoke the MPLA to act against American capital in defence of its legitimate

# SPAIN: CP ATTACKS INTERNATIONALISM

Spanish fascism has behaved in the six weeks since Franco's death like a desperate, wounded animal - alternating between apparent quiescence and snarling savagery.

So, on the one hand, Prime Minister Arias Navarro's new government, announced on December 12th., contains the most prominent so-called 'liberals' of the regime; it has hinted at an extension of the 'amnesty' for prisoners; in the vaguest possible words it promises political reforms; and it invites the participation of "all Spaniards" in political life, which is defined to include "responsible criticism".

But, on the other hand, "responsible criticism" does not include strike action by Chrysler workers in Madrid (ejected from the plant on three successive days by heavily armed police); nor a peaceful demonstration of 500 actors and lawyers outside the Ministry of Information on December 16th., (participants savagely beaten up by police); nor a peaceful demonstration of 2000 outside a jail in Bilbao in Euskadi (Basque country) on December 14th (dispersed by police assisted by ultra-right thugs of the Guerrillas of Christ the King using whips, chains and medieval spiked metal balls).

## 'LIBERAL'

All this has happened since the grotesquely-described 'liberal' Fraga Iribarne became Minister of the Interior. Fraga, like the rest of the new cabinet, has spent his whole political life as a servant of Franco's fascism.

From 1962 to 1969 he was Minister of Tourism and Informat-

ion in which post he supervised the phenomenally profitable development of the tourist industry, took charge of government propaganda and designed the present censorship laws under which Spain's newspapers imposed self-censorship and get confiscated if they go too far.

Fraga now claims that for his internal 'democratisation' he needs 'two weeks to decide, two months to plan and two years to implement'.

The decisions, presumably, are made and probably include in the



Fraga

short-term the release of some political prisoners, the legalisation of political parties (but not, it has been clearly hinted, the Communist Party) and perhaps the abandonment of the 1975 Suppression of Terrorism law; and in the longer-term a project for some form of parliamentary elections to bring Spain safely back to the western bourgeois-democratic fold.

Fraga knows that, though the ruling class of the major capitalist

countries has never been the enemy of the Spanish fascist regime, it can be made into a firm and necessary ally through such a plan of 'democratisation'.

This means that the other key ministry in the new government is Foreign Affairs - occupied by another former Franco minister, Jose-Maria de Areilza.

## CONTACTS

Like Fraga, he has cultivated the 'liberal' image, developed contacts with the clandestine parties including the Communist Party, and took his distance from the direct administration of Franco's policies in the late sixties when the days of old-style Francoism seemed numbered.

Areilza became ambassador to the United States, as Fraga was until a few weeks ago ambassador to Britain; between them they have developed close contacts with international capital.

Areilza cleverly used his presence in Paris for the energy conference to conduct a massive public relations exercise by giving numerous interviews promising free elections, a passport on demand for the exiled leaders of the Communist Party, and so on.

## REFORM

For the time being, therefore, the Spanish government is in the hands of a group within the fascist regime which believes that the working class can most effectively be kept from power through the promise of reform.

This project is not merely their own but one in which the ruling classes of western Europe and the USA are intimately involved (one of King Juan Carlos' principal advisors has been French President Giscard d'Estaing).

In the most direct and immediate sense, therefore, the advance of working class interests in Spain is a question for the workers' movement internationally. For the Spanish working class to compromise either with the nationalism of some sections of the Spanish bourgeoisie or with the reactionary "internationalism" of the present government which would like Spain to be reconciled with the Western European democracies through entry into NATO and the EEC, would spell disaster.

This is the context of a statement of the utmost significance made by Santiago Carillo, Secretary General of the Spanish Communist Party, published in the Italian paper *La Stampa* (December 17):

"There can be no common line between the communist parties of

capitalist countries and the party-states of Eastern Europe...You cannot have a global strategy. If one existed it would be a violation of coexistence, of non-interference in the affairs of other countries; in fact it would be not another communist party but another state which one would be giving the opportunity to be mixed up in our affairs, involved in our strategy... [In the Europe of 1975] we cannot base ourselves on what triumphed in Russia in 1917....I believe that the old internationalism is a historical residue, destined to disappear".

Although Carillo speaks for some 'coordination of our action with that of the workers' movement in Western Europe', it is clear from this statement that the independence of the (capitalist) state is more important to Carillo than any international unity of the working class movement.

Of course, internationalism represented by the Stalinist parties has



Areilza

never been more than a deformed caricature of real working class internationalism. But it is not this which Carillo is arguing against but the principle of internationalism itself. No workers' state, he says, must interfere in 'our affairs' (that is, his affairs and those of Spanish fascists).

## STRATEGY

Carillo's statement is a more extreme version of the position of the Italian CP with which the Spanish CP has signed a joint statement on strategy.

The position was carried into practice in a meeting organised by the Italian and Spanish CP's in Rome on December 14th., where a representative of the Portuguese CP who was present was excluded from the platform in favour of Portuguese Socialist Party leader Mario Soares.

The Spanish CP has also issued a joint communique in France with the opposition Gaullists of the so-called Progressive Front.

Meanwhile Socialist Party

(PSOE) leader Gonzalez has declared in an interview on West German radio that he does not exclude the possibility of Spanish entry into NATO 'once the internal problems are sorted out'.

In these ways the Spanish Stalinist and reformist parties are attempting to lead the Spanish working class internationally not into principled alliances with the international working class but into alliances with the bourgeoisie.

And this is a reflection of the class collaborationist position inside Spain, the latest examples of which are the illusions they are creating in the good intentions of Fraga and Areilza's new-look fascism.

## SETBACK

Simon Sanchez Montero, a Communist spokesman in Madrid has said that the complexion of the government is 'in principle a setback for the ultras (ie 'ultra-lefts'); in Paris spokesman of the CP's cross-class alliance, the Democratic Junta, spoke of a 'climate favourable to reforms', while in Spain itself Workers' Commission leader Camacho (once more released from jail) stated that reforms are 'within reach', and blamed violent confrontations between workers and police on 'right-wing forces who he said, wanted to disrupt "the King's efforts at restoring harmony"'.

Of course it is not just the Stalinists who peddle this reactionary line. The Socialist Party reacted to the government not with principled opposition but with 'scepticism' and complained only that its policy was 'vague' and had many omissions; Enrique Tierro Galvan, leader of the Popular Socialist Party, PSP (a small social democratic group of mainly academics and civil servants allied to the CP in the Democratic Junta), after dining with Fraga in Madrid said that 'things go on like this, we shall have to revise some of our judgements'.

But six weeks without Franco proves that no revision at all is needed of the judgement that the beast of Spanish fascism, though wounded, remains as savage and dangerous as ever. Rather it shows that the compromises advocated by the leaders of the Stalinist and reformist parties can do nothing but strengthen it.

The struggle in Spain for a workers united front to call general strike action, and for the organisation of armed defence squads for all-out confrontation with the state in the fight to remove the new fascist junta is therefore a political task which can only be led by a Trotskyist party.

## THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Birmingham March against Cuts

On Saturday, December 13th., 600 demonstrators marched through the centre of Birmingham protesting against the cuts in local government expenditure. The demonstration was supported by contingents from UCATT, ASTMS, NUPE and NUT, as well as several union district committees.

This was the first sign that the attempt of the local trade union bureaucrats to smother protest at the growth of unemployment and deteriorating public services is beginning to break down.

The Tribune group MPs who had promised to turn up to address the rally at the end of the march failed to come. This can be explained by their concern not to upset the local trade union leadership who had opposed the march as an unofficial and a potentially anti-government venture, and by their complete lack of policy to fight the cuts in face of their refusal to fight Wilson.

prevent outbursts of unofficial anger, the Regional Council of the TUC, meeting while the march was in progress, agreed to organise an official demonstration against the cuts in early February.

Yet even now some officials claim that they have heard 'unofficially' from Len Murray that no further cuts in expenditure are to be made, and said we should be careful not to 'embarrass' the Labour government. This nonsense was rejected even by the secretary of the Regional Council, David Parris. As chairman of the regional health authority he said he had already been told that the most severe cuts in the health service would be in 1977.

## Rumour

It is pathetic to see these supposed leaders of the working class scraping around for any rumour or gossip from high places to persuade themselves that their inactivity is justified.

The Regional TUC agreed to support a conference on youth

Birmingham Trades Council. This will be held in February, and it is hoped that both employed and unemployed young people will attend.

## Motions

Two motions from TASS demanding action over unemployment were also passed. Unfortunately both concentrated solely on pressuring the TUC and the Labour government rather than initiating a campaign amongst the present membership of the trade union and fighting to recruit the unemployed into the unions.

It is only if a struggle develops around a programme to prevent sackings which can challenge the control of the employer through a fight to open the books and work sharing on full pay, that the interests of workers can be protected. To think that the 'reasonableness' of argument will deflect the government from its present course and can defend the working class, is

# WRP FRAMES HANSEN

As our recently-published document *Fourth* shows clearly, the political differences between the Workers Revolutionary Party and the Workers Socialist Party. But our differences are in a principled manner, not in the members of the SWP and scurrilous attacks on the Revolutionary Party.

The police raid on the Derbyshire education centre of the Workers Revolutionary Party and the subsequent 'walling' by the Home Office and police authorities, underline the increase in police attention and harassment directed at organisations on the revolutionary left.

The same point was highlighted by a right wing Labour MP in a parliamentary debate on the public spending cuts, congratulating the government on his mutilation of the public services, but pleading that the police forces should be maintained to the full.

And indeed the two go hand in hand. As the Labour leaders are faced by the economic crisis to launch an all-out assault on the interests of the working class movement, the state apparatus mobilises itself up for disruption, assessment and frame-ups of revolutionaries and left wingers. At the same time the economic and political crisis thoroughly tests every 'revolutionary' organisation - its cadre, its programme and policies, its defence principle, and its ability to fight to build within the workers movement. Any 'party' which is unprepared, in which routine has replaced the ferment of revolutionary politics, in which the party has become an everyday element of polemic, must inevitably be thrown into a severe internal crisis.

Thus it is with the Workers Revolutionary Party, which a year ago set the seal to its political degeneration by expelling wholesale opposition tendency (later to be the Workers Socialist League) which was fighting for a return to communist methods and to the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

It is against this background that we must assess the long series of articles published by its General Secretary, Gerry Healy together with the WRP leadership on *Security and the Fourth International* (Workers Press: 7 issues April 19th-26th, 1975, and 4 articles August 14th-September 1st, 1975).

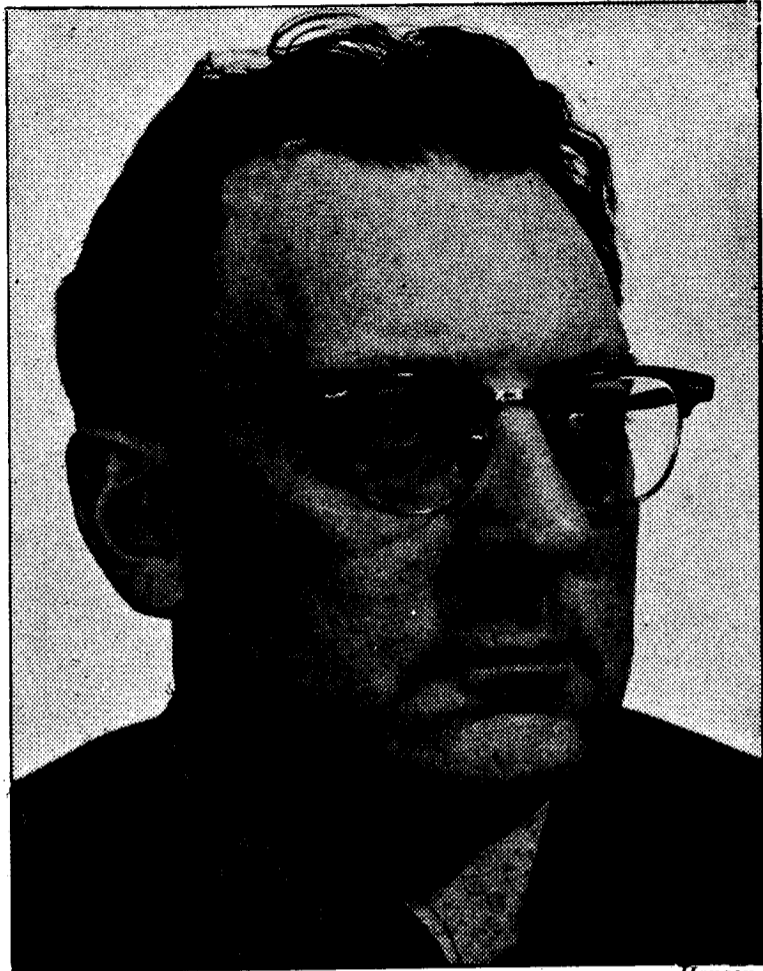
## PURPOSE

The prime purpose of these articles is very simple, as is made clear in the concluding articles. It is to frame Joseph Hansen, along with other members - alive and dead - of the world Trotskyist movement. Hansen, who is now a leading figure of the American Socialist Workers Party (sympathising organisation of the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International') was in charge of the bodyguards at Coyoacan, Mexico, on August 20th, 1940 when Trotsky was murdered by Stalin's agent. The articles in *Workers Press* accuse him (in assertions thinly veiled as questions, or in innuendoes) of being, since before 1940, an agent of the FBI, or of the Stalinist GPU, or both!

The preceding articles - which draw almost entirely on materials that are published and have been known for some time - are all designed to lead up to this conclusion: that for forty years the WRP has had a police spy in its political leadership, and that the struggle, since the split of 1963, between Healy and Hansen has been, in reality, a struggle against police provocateurs.

As the WRP leadership say, their accusations (if true) raise very grave problems for the SWP and the world Trotskyist movement. But it is worth noticing that these accusations also seek to solve some problems for Healy and the WRP leadership - they relieve them of the need to carry out a political struggle!

For what is the point of mobilising and convincing the



Hansen

world Trotskyist movement - if your principal adversaries are not genuine political opponents but police spies?

Evidently, none! And that is why, hand-in-hand with the WRP's political degeneration and paralysis, has come a rich harvest of such accusations.

## RIGGED

But what of the specific charges against Hansen? Hansen himself (*Intercontinental Press*, 24th November) easily demolishes the main points as simple lies and rigging of the evidence. We take just one example from the mountain of circumstantial titbits under which the WRP 'investigators' seek to bury him: a report from Robert G. McGregor, a US diplomatic official in Mexico City, of his conversation with Hansen on Saturday, August 31st, 1940 - ie 11 days after Trotsky's murder.

To this report (in the form of a memorandum forwarded to the State Department by the US Consul) Healy's 'investigators' add evidence or qualification, as 'fact' that McGregor was an FBI agent (at this time the FBI had not been replaced by the CIA on overseas work), and draw the following inferences:

1. That Hansen was familiar with an FBI official and met with him probably 'clandestinely', and certainly out of office hours (ie on a Saturday).
2. That Hansen deliberately attempted to direct the search for the GPU network which planned Trotsky's assassination away from Europe (where it was mainly based) towards the USA.

## TWISTED

In order to steer towards these conclusions Healy's journalists - unfortunately for them - are obliged to twist the facts in the most barefaced way:

1. They deliberately disguise the fact that Hansen was only one of at least four members of the Trotskyist movement - the others being two Americans, Charles Cornell and Walter O'Rourke, and Trotsky himself - who had private discussions with McGregor both before and after Trotsky's death.

These conversations were all, no doubt, reported equally swiftly to the State Department, especially after the failure of the May attempt by the Stalinists on Trotsky's life and the kidnapping (and later murder) of his young American

world Trotskyist movement - if their own main insinuation that Hansen was an FBI agent - that Hansen was both misleading the FBI and, it is implied, the Trotskyist movement by guiding the search for those who planned Trotsky's murder towards the United States, instead of France.

This is then used to bolster the additional accusation that Hansen deliberately covered up the role of the most important Stalinist agent in the Fourth International, Mark Zborovski ('Etienne') who was implicated in the murder of Trotskyists in Paris in the 1930's, and later came to America and spied on the Trotskyist movement there.

In fact (as Hansen's reply makes clear) there were excellent reasons for the Trotskyist movement to try and protect itself by using the resources of the capitalist states and (in particular in this case) to try and persuade the FBI to probe clandestine Stalinist activity in the USA (the country where the FBI was in charge) for clues as to the murder of Trotsky. In August 1940 this required concentrating the attention of the State Department on anti-Trotskyist conspiracies by the GPU inside the USA.

## LOOSE END

The ideas that Hansen could both be an agent of the FBI and deliberately misleading them are one glaring loose end in the WRP frame-up - there are many others. This is the case even though Healy's 'sleuths' include at least one man - Mr Alex Mitchell, editor of *Workers Press* - with detailed knowledge of police and espionage techniques. And what they make no attempt to explain is why - if Hansen was the FBI's agent - he should maintain contact with them (as is implied) by meeting in public with a US official well-known to several other Trotskyists and why a report on this contact should be sent using his real name in the normal correspondence, to later finish up among publically available State Department papers - while Hansen is still a leading SWP member?

Such conduct would contradict every groundrule of clandestine work. It is, of course, logically conceivable that while Hansen's meeting with McGregor was wholly legitimate (and McGregor's report does nothing to suggest otherwise) he was simultaneously in undisclosed contact with the FBI through quite different channels - but the WRP produce not one shred of evidence to support such a

handling facts and evidence carries right through the series *Security and the Fourth International*. For example, they uncritically accept all aspects of the testimony (before American criminal courts and witch-hunting committees of Congress) of a range of ex-Stalinists stool pigeons and exposed Soviet spies, busy 'singing' to save their skins.

One such is Louis F. Budenz, a notorious Judas throughout the US labour movement, a one-time GPU agent, and subsequently managing editor of the American CP's *Daily Worker*. In October 1946 Budenz announced his renunciation of communism and his return to the Roman Catholic Church. A month later he was a star witness before the McCarthyite Home Un-American Activities Committee, slinging mud at every brand of 'communist'.

For years he made a living from slanders and inventions, mainly against the Stalinists. But this is not all - Budenz played (according to testimony before congressional committees) a big role in driving Trotsky to Mexico from Norway in 1936.

It was Budenz, then New York editor of the *Daily Worker*, who supplied the 'confidential evidence' of violent plots by Trotsky which was used by Stalin's ambassador in Oslo to twist the arm of the Norwegian government into placing Trotsky under house arrest at the height of the Moscow purge trials, and then expelling him.

But for *Workers Press* Mr Budenz is all good stuff. They are quite content to use fragments from his writings and testimony to cobble together their 'investigations' of Trotsky's murder, and to help frame Hansen. Budenz opens his autobiography (*This is my Story*, 1957) with a prayer to "the Mother of God, Mary of the Magnificat" and rejoices that "but for her amazing assistance" his story could not have been told. Precisely the same can be said of the story told by the WRP's 'investigations'!

What makes the matter even more serious is that the slanders to which Hansen replies are by no means an isolated instance. In the last two years or so similar

and Stalinist agents who undoubtedly operate in the ranks of the Trotskyist movement.

It serves only to divert from political struggle on the life-and-death issues now facing the international working class - of the struggle for revolutionary programme and for resolving the crisis of leadership within the working class and the Trotskyist movement itself.

Healy's calumnies, therefore, run parallel to one of the main pursuits of the police agencies themselves - the circulation of false and disruptive accusations that revolutionaries involved in internal political battles are themselves police provocateurs.

## PROVOCATION

For example, among the FBI files released as a result of Congressional investigations and legal moves taken by the leadership of Hansen's Socialist Workers Party are documents showing that in January 1962 the New York Office of the FBI attempted an elaborate provocation which involved feeding the SWP leadership forged evidence the Jack Arnold, (a member of the minority tendency supported by Healy within the SWP) was an FBI informant.

The aim was to disrupt the political struggle by having Arnold expelled.

In fact, it appears, the FBI's scheme got nowhere because the SWP leadership refused to act on anonymous 'evidence' which they considered fake.

But Healy and the WRP leadership, as we have seen, readily resort themselves to the faking of evidence. This is all the more criminal since the WRP leadership now includes Alex Mitchell who has studied in some detail the methods of British police and intelligence agencies and who must be aware that such frame-ups are a standard technique.

Mitchell, present editor of *Workers Press*, was previously employed as a journalist on the *Sunday Times*. And in the late 1960's he acted as research assistant in the writing of a book by members of the *Sunday Times*



Healy (in front), behind WRP CC banner with Slaughter (right)

insinuations, in writing or verbally, have been levelled by Healy and the WRP leadership against a number of individuals and tendencies in the labour movement, including:

1. The 'Bulletin' group, sympathising organisation in Britain of the 'Organising Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International'.
2. Members of the 1974 opposition within the WRP which, after its unconstitutional expulsion by Healy, fought on to form the WSL.
3. Tim Wohlforth, former leader of the Workers League, sympathising organisation of Healy's 'International Committee' in the USA.
4. Members of the 'International Spartacist Tendency' in Australia.

This cascade of mud-slinging - neither substantiated nor

staff on the Philby-Burgess-Maclean affair \* and its widespread repercussions in the British intelligence services (*Philby, the Spy Who Betrayed a Generation*, by Page, Leitch and Knightley, 1968).

As the Preface makes clear, research for this book involved not only study of publically available material, but extensive 'off-the-record' contact with those prepared to give an 'inside' account to journalists regarded as reliable.

Presumably Mr Mitchell no longer involves himself in Saturday

\* Philby was the Soviet agent who, after the war, was put in charge of British intelligence operations against the Soviet Union, and, later, liaison with the CIA. His exposure caused, to put it mildly, a major shake-up in the methods and personnel of the British intelligence



# REVIEW

## THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE

FILM SHOWN ON BBC2 ON SUNDAY 21st DECEMBER,

STARRING HUMPHREY BOGART and WALTER HUSTON (1947) reviewed by Bob Sutcliffe.

"The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" is a conscious, materialist account of the nature of poverty, labour, value and money in capitalist society; it is also a riveting adventure story about three Americans' search for gold in Mexico.

To have made such a complete and convincing synthesis of these two things is the great achievement of B. Traven's novel on which Huston's film is based.

Traven, born in Chicago in the 1890s of Swedish immigrant parents, began writing in Germany after the first world war. Wanted by the police for his political activities, he left Germany and eventually 'disappeared' to live as a prospector in rural Mexico, where most of his major novels were written.

### MARXISM

He was deeply influenced by Marxism, though politically he remained an anarchist regarding himself as close to the American radicalist movement, the International Workers of the World (the "Wobblies", about whom he wrote the novel *The Wobblies*). Characteristic of Traven's writing was the sensitive portrayal of the working class or peasant characters, rooted in a real, and



Bars of gold, capitalism's 'universal equivalent'.

sometimes uncannily detailed, understanding of their material situation. Good examples are his two novels about the brutal exploitation of workers in the Mexican mahogany forests in the years before the Mexican revolution (*March to Caobaland* and *Rebellion of the Hanged*) and the intricate accounts of the alienation of

producers through the market in his short stories, *Assembly Line* and *Burro Trading* (published in *The Night Visitor and Other Stories*).

But it is in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* that the consciousness of the characters and their objective being are most perfectly integrated; where the structure and twists of the narrative itself, rather than

didactic commentaries, reveal the nature of reality.

It is the great virtue of Huston's tense and beautifully made film that (apart from the sentimentalism of the spurious introduction of an extra prospector who is killed, leaving behind a tear-jerking letter from his wife in Texas) little of the character of Traven's novel is lost.

### DESTITUTE

In the first part of the film we see Dobbs and Curtin, the two destitute Americans in Mexico, attempting with little success to get money by all the means open to them as 'free' workers: begging, shining shoes, buying lottery tickets and construction work for an employer who is only prevented from cheating them of their wages by physical assault.

They decide to search for gold in spite of the warnings of Howard, the old-time prospector who agrees to go with them. It's not because it is innately valuable, that men work hard to find gold, Howard explains; on the contrary, it is valuable only because men have to work so hard to find it.

The value of gold is established by the labour time not only of those who strike it rich but also of those who never find it. And when they do find it, they begin to turn against and hate each other.

The rest of the film tensely and

graphically shows how these words are borne out. The three find gold, work 'like convicts' to extract it and finally lose it all. In the process their initial relations of comradeship based on poverty turn as they amass wealth to suspicion and violence.

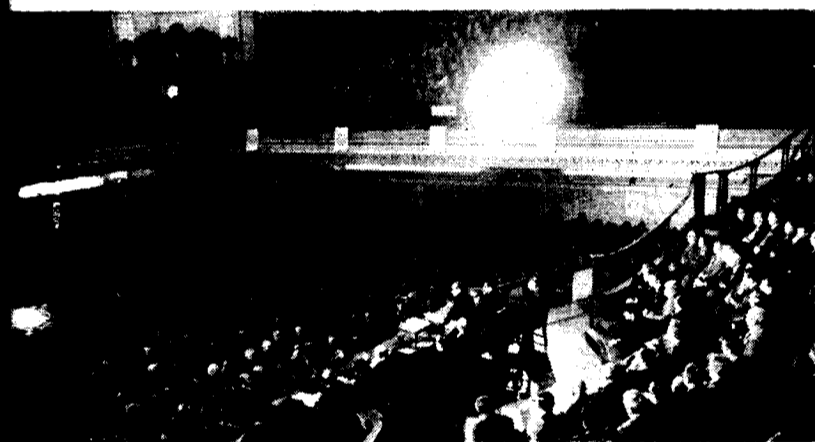
They divide and hide their 'goods' from each other; Dobbs, who put up more than his third of the money to buy the tools, claims a share of the produce according to the size of the 'capital' he advanced; crazed and paranoid he eventually tries to kill Curtin. Morality is dissolved by gold, the universal equivalent.

### MONEY

Money, Marx said, "transforms fidelity into infidelity, love into hate... intelligence into idiocy". Or, as Howard, in Traven's novel puts it, "Gold is the devil, It alters your character".

The film of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* is shown fairly frequently because of the popularity of Humphrey Bogart (whose characteristically abrasive and unsentimental performance as Dobbs is at least equalled by that of Walter Huston as Howard).

It is unfortunate that the other films of Traven's novels (especially *The Rebellion of the Hanged*, 1954, and *The Death Ship*, 1959) have vanished almost without trace. They should be rediscovered.



The mass meeting at Central Halls, December 16th.

## CUTS PUT WEIGHHELL IN SPIN

Railwaymen from all over the country demonstrated through London and joined a mass lobby of Parliament on December 16th, protesting against government plans to slash the rail network by 10%.

The numbers involved in the protest were artificially low, cut by the refusal of the rail union leaders to call strike action against the cuts.

In spite of this it was a crowd of thousands that thronged the Central Halls Westminster, and heard NUR General Secretary, Sid Weighell denounce the government's proposals.

### CARRIED AWAY

Carried away by the occasion and the response, Weighell for a moment overstepped the narrow boundary between his intended verbal protest and actually embarking on action to fight the cuts. He threatened the government that if the cuts went ahead, they would see the loss of support from the NUR-sponsored MPs, telling the

MPs: "We shall not hesitate to say to the ten MPs that you will no longer support the government."

principled statement are obviously far-reaching and dangerous for leaders like Weighell who are committed to simply seeking "reforms" within the capitalist system, because it draws attention to the real social base of the Labour Party - and directs workers towards the question of political leadership in the defence of their interests.

### STRUGGLE

This is why, what for Weighell, in the heat of the moment, was just a turn of phrase to add to a mountain of demagogic statements, found a ready echo amongst the militants in the hall, and could have easily transformed into a real struggle within the workers movement to make workers' elected and paid representatives accountable to the labour movement.

It was clearly this prospect, as much as the instant outrage the statement caused amongst Tory MPs and Labour right-wingers in Parliament, which caused Weighell to make his instant, snivelling retraction next day.

But the question still needs answering: if the NUR cannot demand its sponsored MPs defend the interests of NUR members and the working class as a whole against the attacks of the bankers, then what advantage is there in supporting them? And if they are selecting

MPs who will vote for massive rail closures in the interests of big business, is it not time these people were kicked right out of the labour movement?

There is no doubt that Tory MPs act consistently day in and day out in the interests of their class and their sponsors - yet as soon as a union leader calls for the same from Labour MPs it is portrayed as a scandal.

The record of 'left' and right MPs on the other hand, shows that no faith can be placed in their willingness to fight Wilson in the interests of the working class - they have voted for every policy which has created the 1,200,000 unemployed.

### PREPARATION

But of course even if the Labour MPs were prepared to fight, the rail closures could not simply be fought in Parliament. It is vital that railmen themselves take up the struggle to defend jobs and wages and adopt a programme to do this.

Of course there is much to be gained from taking up Weighell's impromptu cue and putting down demands in the areas and constituencies of NUR-sponsored MPs that they defend rail jobs or forfeit union support. And it is necessary still to demand the 'left' MPs oppose the closures and lead the union sponsored MPs in fighting to remove the Wilson leadership.

But most centrally, railwaymen in every town must prepare to defend jobs and remove the existing state managers.

This fight must begin with the struggle to demand full access to the accounts and secret plans of the British Rail Board for elected trade union committees. These committees must then meet in every area with delegates from other transport unions to begin to assess the services necessary for an integrated state transport system in which all available work would be shared between the whole workforce on full pay under workers' management.

### OCCUPY

Where closures are threatened, key facilities must be occupied by railwaymen and the full support of the trade union movement enlisted in the fight to defend all jobs.

Those union leaders who peddle the illusion that cuts and closures can be ended without acting on these policies are disarming and betraying their members in the face of the biggest ever attack by crisis-ridden capitalism.

## SCOTS CO-OP COLLAPSES

The Scottish Daily News workers' cooperative was two weeks ago finally declared bankrupt. The financial settlement imposed after the liquidation is a glaring proof of why the workers' cooperative provides no solution for workers faced with redundancy as a result of the economic crisis.

### CREDITORS

The courts have divided the assets of the cooperative among its various creditors. There is not enough to go round so the creditors have been divided into three categories: the Inland Revenue will get 100% of the money due to it; Beaverbrook Newspapers and the Department of Trade and Industry will get 50%. The third category gets nothing at all - and that

category comprises only the workers of the Scottish Daily News who put their savings into the scheme less than a year ago!

Not only has the workers' cooperative failed to save jobs; it has also led to the robbery of the workers' own savings.

A workers' cooperative is forced to sell its products in the capitalist market in competition with capitalists; it must obey the ruthless laws of capitalist profitability. It cannot prevent the wage-cutting and sackings which capitalism in crisis demands. The alternative path shown by the transitional demands for no redundancies and no loss of pay offers the only way out of the crisis. It is a path going forwards away from the needs of capital, not backwards towards an illusory "workers' capitalism" which is every bit as exploitative as that it aims to replace.

The crucial fight therefore is for nationalisation if jobs are to be defended.

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# WHY THE RIGHT WING ALL VOTED WRP

The election for chairman of the 5/293 Cowley T&GWU Branch was national news. The day after the election millions of readers of the national press saw reports that Trotskyist Alan Thornett defeated "moderate challenger" Tom White. But for hundreds of Workers Revolutionary Party members this description of White - a leading member of that party - must have come as a shock.

Unfortunately for them, it cannot simply be put down to the normal slanders of the capitalist gutter press against militant workers, because when set against White's practice in the plant, it contains more than a grain of truth. Rather it is a measure of the deep degeneration and mortal crisis now convulsing the WRP.

It was no accident White received the 'moderate' label. Out of 142 members attending the AGM of the 5/293 Branch, 77 voted for Thornett and 64 for White, the only other nominee. A breakdown of this vote shows how White, who is in constant personal contact with WRP General Secretary Gerry Healy, secured the entire right wing vote organised by fanatical anti-communist convenor Reg Parsons.

## WITHDRAWN

Firstly, it was no coincidence that White was the only opposition to Thornett. Originally there were four nominees for the chairman's position - Blake withdrew, leaving Thornett, White and Paintin. But on the afternoon of the election the right wing had a problem - the anti-Thornett vote would be split if Paintin stood. After a hasty discussion the decision was taken by the right wing for Paintin to withdraw, and to throw full support behind White.

The right wing hoped that White would pull some militant votes from Thornett, whereas Paintin could only win the committed right wing.

In the event they overestimated White's credibility among militants. The meeting polarised completely the militants voting en bloc for Thornett, and every single right winger for White.

That this was the case is shown by the election for secretary where Parsons' right hand man Barson was defeated 81 votes to 54 by Frank Corti. The four extra votes for

Corti over Thornett was the result of 3 Stalinists and a supporter, who though they voted with the right wing for White against Thornett, voted with the militants for Corti against Barson.

This is the most complete answer yet to Healy's fraudulent claim reiterated time after time in *Workers Press* that the WSL offers support to the Stalinists and their Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions. Given a clear choice between supporting a leading WRP member (the bitterest enemies of the Stalinists according to Healy), or supporting a WSL candidate (who supposedly supports them 'uncritically'), they unhesitatingly vote for the WRP. No wonder *Workers Press* has only just reported the Branch election!

## NO ANSWER

In our last edition of *Socialist Press* (in an article again taking up the WRP for entering White for the class collaborationist Ryder Committee in Cowley), we asked Healy to explain to his members how White's name appeared on Parsons' recommended list of candidates for deputy convenor. Not only has *Workers Press* not answered this question - it even suppressed all news of the convenor elections, which it still has not reported! And no disclaimer was issued from Parsons' list prior to the elections.

This is not through lack of opportunity. Parsons' list circulated the plant on Monday December 8th. The convenor election was held on Wednesday December 10th. So White and the WRP had two full days to leaflet the plant and separate himself from Parsons - if they had wanted to. Two editions of *Workers Press* were printed and sold on the factory gates - carrying not a word on White's position.

## 'LEFT'

The outcome of this was that Parsons stood for election as convenor with the advantage of having a 'left' on his published slate. The whole factory knew it had not been repudiated.

It was not until a week later, on December 15th, after the *Socialist Press* article reached WRP headquarters in Clapham High Street, that White began limited distribution of a letter dissociating himself from Parsons' list. This letter was not given out on the gate, not carried in *Workers Press*, but given to selected individuals. It contained not a political word or a

single criticism of Parsons. We quote it in full:

With reference to the letter written by Brother R. PARSONS, Senior Steward concerning the Deputy Senior Steward elections. I wish to completely disassociate myself from the list on the letter. I wish to make it clear that I had no part in the drawing up of the said letter. I do not believe that the membership should be insulted by myself or anyone else by telling them who to vote for in the forthcoming Deputy Senior Steward elections, as the membership have the right to choose seven (7) Deputy Stewards of their own choice from the total nominations.  
15th December 1975

We emphasise the anti-political statement about "insulting members" by campaigning for a slate of candidates - because this line is deliberately chosen to attack the panel of militants who were campaigning on an anti-Parsons, anti-Ryder platform. White refuses to attack the right wing - but instead aims a blow at the left. The branch election shows how clearly the right wing got the message.



Ryder - advocate of joint committees.

Of course *Workers Press* has not been totally silent on Cowley. On the contrary, it has provided further ammunition for the right wing by unstintingly supporting the Joint Union/Management investigation committee sent in under the Ryder set-up to head off the struggles of workers on the Princess track.

have decided that enough is enough and that the time has come to stand up and fight for the right to work, by whatever means are found to be necessary.

This feeling of determination was strongly reflected at the first mass meeting of the workers from the factory on 22nd December. Speaker after speaker at this meeting drew attention to the opponents they had to face, fighting the job-cutting policies both of multinational firms like ITT, and of the Labour government.

## NO ATTACK

The talk was militant in favour of the retention of cable making at the North Woolwich works. The workers have said that they have no desire to attack jobs at Newport or anywhere else, but they have the skills and the equipment to produce cables needed for any modern communications system.

A mass meeting had rejected the convenors' recommendation for the setting up of this committee, and called for a report to be prepared instead by the Open the Books Committee. The convenors ignored this decision and sent in the joint committee, which was boycotted on the track by the stewards and members, and was only able to talk to foremen.

But when its report was published, the WRP, which had never given a word of support to the Open the Books Committee, put a leaflet into the plant praising the report and giving complete support to its findings! (The leaflet was a reprint of the article in *Workers Press*, November 26th). This WRP support came after the committees findings had been used by the T&GWU bureaucracy, through a press conference to boost the right wing and launch Parsons' election campaign.

## SUPPORT

The WRP leaflet thus brings together in practice their support for Parsons and for Ryder. It also reveals starkly Healy's bitter hostility to the Open the Books Committee - which is in essence a struggle for elements of workers control and the political independence of the working class. Driven into a corner on this question Healy not only rejects this policy, but supports instead the polar opposite - a joint management committee which directs towards class collaboration.

Headed "COWLEY SPEED-UP FRAUD EXPOSED", the leaflet began:

"Irrefutable evidence of design faults and plant malfunction fills the pages of a special report on working conditions inside British Leyland. The internal report exposes the jungle of management incompetence that surrounds production of the new Princess model at the Cowley, Oxford, car plant.

The document poses a question for Tory tycoon Lord Ryder of the National Enterprise Board (NEB): Will he now sack the management?"

## GOOD MANAGEMENT ?

Thus the WRP leads workers away from the fact that it is a management report, away from the report already published on the question by the Open the Books Committee, and instead towards the sterile ground of "bad management" - almost as if there are good managers!

*Workers Press* also conceals that the two "union representatives" who participated in the investigation were both extreme right wingers, as well as the fact that the report itself contains an attack on workers' alleged absenteeism, which was splashed all over the local and national press. On the contrary, the leaflet claims that "Between the lines of the four page document is a catalogue of how Leyland's investment starved factories have been systematically bled for profit, and how workers are now being made to pay the price". Although the WRP are forced to

acknowledge that workers on the North side refused to cooperate with the inquiry, they quote one of its most collaborationist sections: "There is a common concern amongst all that the quality standards of the ADO 71 (Princess) must be improved in the interest of everyone if the future prosperity of Cowley Assembly Plant is to be preserved".

Healy's only criticism is to claim things are far worse on the plant than the joint inquiry indicates. He follows this by announcing that *Workers Press* "has a copy of a document" which lists serious component faults and how long they have existed.

## 1 MONTH LATE !

Its not surprising Healy has last obtained such a document since, a month earlier, thousands of copies were published and distributed in the plant (causing a stir in the national press) by the Open the Books Committee.

Only Healy's desperate groping for an alternative to the Open the Books Committee could reduce the WRP to this level. Indeed the leaflet even ends up in the absurd fashion calling on "Leyland workers" to demand an "opening of the books". What this must have meant to hundreds of Princess track workers who had rejected the report prepared by Healy and fully supported the Open the Books Committee can only be guessed at. What complete lack of support amongst militants in the plant must be indicated.

## SQUALID

But what set the seal on White's isolation at the branch was the scene of him drinking at the small table as Parsons in the next to the factory immediately following the announcement of Parsons' reelection as convenor. The squalid opportunism of Healy's politics all lead to this conclusion.

We ask all WRP members: you prepared to tolerate this kind of treachery being enacted by your leadership behind your backs while the WRP is made the tool of extreme right wing and Stalinists against the working class on the plant?

## FIGHT

The time has come for WRP members to begin a fight to challenge their leadership, and for demands of the Transitional Programme to be fought for in the working class, not cynically exploited for propaganda purposes.

**WORKERS SOCIALIST  
LEAGUE  
PUBLIC MEETING  
AYLESBURY**

Tuesday, 6th January, 1976, 8.00

'The Plough and Harrow'

Stoke Road, Aylesbury.

# STC CLOSURE THREAT

A new and vicious blow against jobs in the East End of London was struck on 15th December with the sudden announcement that the 1050 jobs at Standard Telephones and Cables (STC) in North Woolwich will be 'phased out' over the next year.

STC is part of the multinational International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT), which, amongst its many activities, has manufactured arms for Hitler, and worked actively with the CIA to overthrow the Allende regime in Chile.

## CLOSED

In recent years it has rationalised its British operations by closing down its factory on the south side of the Thames, and it now says it is moving all cable making in Britain

This new threatened closure is a further step in the destruction of the entire dockland area. Not only have jobs on the docks themselves been gradually eroded over recent years since the Devlin report, many parts of the docks having virtually ceased operations, but there have been large scale redundancies at Tate and Lyle's as well as in most of the other main enterprises in the area.

The once great industrial complex of North Woolwich and Silvertown now echoes with the sounds of demolition, and the disused factory immediately next to STC, owned by speculator Harry Hyams of 'Centre Point' fame, was in the process of being knocked down in the days before Christmas.

Meanwhile, even before the announcement of the record December unemployment figures and the STC closure, there were 5000 unemployed in Newham and the East End of London, and only 500 employed in the area.

STC is the Post Office, which shows the clear case for the firm to be nationalised.

While Nigel Spearing, (the local Labour MP), however, promised in general terms to help the struggle, he made clear he would not fight for immediate public ownership.

Preliminary action to defend jobs at the factory began on 23rd December. Since then, no STC equipment has been allowed to leave the plant. Arrangements are in hand to allow submarine equipment to go to the factory at Greenwich to emphasise again that there is no quarrel with other workers.

## FURTHER ACTION

A meeting of the Action Committee is due on the 2nd January and the first proper discussion with management on the 6th. These meetings will have to be a prelude to further action at the plant.

In the first place, the elected committee of trade unionists must demand the opening of the books of STC and ITT to discover what the employers intend to do about cable making production.

What deals have been entered into about the freehold land on

is built? Why are the property developers so interested in the site? Are they intending to build the big pleasure ground for the rich in dockland that has been so strongly rumoured?

The answers to these questions can only be discovered through the struggle of the workers at North Woolwich, in cooperation with workers in the other factories of the company, and other threatened factories in the area.

## NATIONALISATION

Nationalisation cannot be a "long term aim", as claimed by Spearing at the mass meeting - it is something he and other right wing leaders must fight for and is the only way to end of guaranteeing jobs. At the beginning of the struggle for nationalisation the workers must prepare to take possession of the plant.

At the plant itself, full occupation will be necessary to enforce policy of work sharing on full and to achieve nationalisation. Twelve hour shift working largely ended by trade union action during the last year. Further action will be needed to guarantee

# 'LEFTS' & TUC HELP WILSON PUT 1,211,460 ON DOLE



Workers on the 20,000-strong November lobby against unemployment.

The latest figures show that there is no let up in the intolerable growth of redundancies and unemployment. In December the total number of unemployed workers reached 1,211,464. This is more than one in twenty of the total labour force and double the figure of one year ago.

The increase of 42,000 between November and December shows that there is no shortening at all in the upward trend, which, if continued, would bring the total to nearly 2 million over the next year.

Recent statements about proposed redundancies in steel, the railways and hundreds of other industries show that, unless the strongest resistance is put up by the labour movement, the trend will worsen.

The present figures are already worse than in most of the 1920s; they are heading for the 1½ to 3 million who were unemployed during the worst years of the slump of the 1930s.

## HYPOCRISY

Along with the figures grows the crass hypocrisy of the Labour Party and trade union leaders. The reaction of Michael Foot to the December level of unemployment was to say that it was 'appalling':

"We do not regard it as tolerable. But it will not be easy to bring it down speedily".

In other words it is *intolerable*, but Foot and his cabinet colleagues are going to grit their teeth and tolerate it.

Foot is a good actor, eloquent and passionate; but no one is going to be convinced that his lamentations are anything more than crocodile tears.

The truth is that this 'intolerable' level of unemployment which Foot wants to disguise as a kind of natural disaster has been *deliberately* created by the policies of the Labour government as part of its policy to restore profitability to British capital.

Tax increases, the £6 wage increase limit which has this year cut workers' living standards by

something like a tenth, redundancies in the nationalised industries and savage cuts in government expenditure are all causes of unemployment.

And all these policies are supported to the hilt by Michael Foot. What is really "not so easy" for Foot is finding new forms of words to clothe his hypocrisy.

## CONSCIENCE

Luckily for Michael Foot he only has to tolerate his own conscience. It is the 1¼ million jobless who actually have to tolerate the consequences of unemployment. And as soon as they begin to take some kind of action to change the situation, they find themselves condemned by those who claim to lead the working class. Len Murray attacked the organisers of the November 26th lobby as "cynically exploiting" the question of unemployment for their own political ends. His slanderous implication was that they are glad that unemployment is so high.

We don't have to direct an equivalent slander at Len Murray. We would merely point out that by saying on the one hand that the latest unemployment figures are "a source of great concern", while at the same time discussing with the CBI how to step up productivity and trying to sabotage all action against unemployment on the other, he shows through his own actions the same hypocrisy as the Labour cabinet. He exposes himself as incapable of leading any fight to defend the interests of workers.

Murray's continual nationalistic calls for import controls to solve the unemployment problem, (seeking to throw it instead onto the backs of workers in other countries) has led to the latest barely significant series of government economic measures. These impose some control on the import of textiles and liberalise hire purchase terms.

Not only do they introduce the totally unacceptable principle of nationalistic solutions to the crisis, they are also too quantitatively insignificant on the

government's own admission to make so much as a small dent in the problem of rising unemployment.

Foot used to cultivate the image of a 'left'. Now he acts as Wilson's henchman in every attack on workers. This is just the most open expression of the complete collapse of every one of the Labour 'lefts' in front of Wilson.

The demand must be stepped up in every union branch and CLP - make the 'left' MPs fight Wilson, campaign and vote against his reactionary policies and force him to resign. In this way their betrayal can be most sharply exposed.

The WSL says that the problem of unemployment must be fought by the labour movement through policies which do not divide workers from each other but which unite the workers of different capitalist countries and unite employed and unemployed workers.

- \* No subsidies to private employers - open the books and nationalise!
- \* No spending cuts - public works programmes to create new jobs at trade union rates under workers' management!
- \* Stop cowering to the bankers - open the books and nationalise the banks!
- \* Fight all redundancies - demand work sharing on full pay!
- \* Full trade union rights for the unemployed!
- \* No £6 limit - fight for a sliding scale of wages!

## ACT TO STOP CHRYSLER DEAL

The full treachery of the Labour government's deal with the Chrysler Corporation emerges more clearly with every day.

In a matter of weeks, if the plan is allowed to proceed, the first of the 8,000 workers to be made redundant will be signed on at labour exchanges, while tax payers' money to the tune of £202,000 for each redundancy is to be paid to the Chrysler management.

### JUDGED

Every trade union official and Labour MP must be judged on their attitude to this deal, which flows directly from the Wilson government's determination to preserve British capitalism and bolster the profits of the bankers rather than adopt any kind of socialist solution to the crisis.

Indeed, while the market value of Chrysler is so low that chief executive John Riccardo even offered the government £35 million to take it off his hands, Wilson chose to spend 5 times as much bribing the employer to stay on and help the generalised drive to step up exploitation in the motor industry.

### THREAT

The streamlined Chrysler is designed to act as a constant threat to British Leyland workers, and each firm will be played against the other in the battle to impose speed-up.

The case for the complete nationalisation without compensation of Chrysler, as part of the nationalisation of the whole motor and components industry, is a glaring one - and an investigation by trade union committees into the books of the multi-national would prove beyond doubt how profits extracted from the British operations have been exported and the figures cooked to show a loss.

Yet not one union official

convenor, or 'left' MP has even sought to challenge the spurious basis of the deal.

Every 'left' MP, in line with their refusal ever to fight Wilson, backed the plan in Parliament. And not a word of leadership has come forward at plant level to develop the fight against redundancies.

Instead, last week, the Coventry convenors came forward with the reactionary proposal for 'negotiating' redundancies and for short time working, which of course have been eagerly grasped at by management. They can afford to negotiate such details.

### INFLUENCE

Management know only too well that without the influence of the officials and convenors they would face a tough time imposing the terms of the deal - closing the plant in Maidstone, slashing the Ryton workforce by 60%, Stoke by almost 30% and Linwood by 3,000. The *Financial Times* (29.12.75) points out their reliance on the officials: "If the terms continue not to be negotiable, then factory occupations cannot be excluded, though full-time union officials are likely to damp down any calls for it".

### NO RISK

The full-time officials of course are the only ones who do not risk losing their jobs in the plan! It is not too late to reverse this position and call action to stop the completion of the deal. But to do so means an all out fight to expose and remove those traitors within the labour movement who now jeopardise the future of their members.

There are no other jobs to go to in Coventry or Linwood. Factory occupations must begin to defend all jobs in Chrysler and force in work-sharing on full pay, and those leaders who refuse to lead must be driven out.

## STEEL AGREEMENTS TORN UP

The jobs of over 40,000 steel workers, and the wages and conditions of the remainder are threatened by the pincer movement of the British Steel Corporation, and the Labour government.

Their union leaders, headed by Bill Sirs, Iron and Steel Trades Confederation secretary, are following TUC lines and avoiding any fight to oppose government or employers.

They do this even though BSC has announced unilaterally that it is scrapping the hard-won guaranteed-week agreement - and proceeding to close down what it terms "high cost" plants.

These agreements must be defended. Neither Sirs nor any other union bureaucrat has the right to allow management to tear up long-standing agreements. All BSC's figures and arguments for cuts must be rejected, and industrial action taken to protect all jobs and conditions, and to force an opening of BSC's books to prepare for full workers' management of the corporation.

### PRINCIPLED LEAD

cont from page 1

fight for programme in preparation to defend jobs. Far from the level of consciousness being raised in Ryton and Stoke, massive confusion was fostered by the refusal of the convenors to demand the opening of the books; their acceptance of bogus management figures (designed to justify the redundancies and appeal for government cash); their defence of the Labour government - claiming that Chrysler management are "misrepresenting" government intentions; and their refusal to fight for nationalisation (a demand condemned by Stoke convenor Bob Morris).

### HEAD OFF

In every way the Chrysler leadership has sought to head off the struggle of its members, reducing the fight to a haggle over how much redundancy pay they should receive.

Without this dead weight of reactionary leadership around its neck and given a lead from even a small number of stewards prepared to fight for the opening of the books, for nationalisation of the whole motor vehicle and component industry and for work sharing on full pay and a programme of public works to keep the factories in full production there is no doubt that

the Chrysler work force would fight tenaciously in defence of jobs and working conditions, providing a national focus for the struggle against closures, redundancies and speed-up.

While the pessimists, opportunists and apologists for management will point at Chrysler therefore, and claim "the working class won't fight", the practical lesson of Cowley shows that with a fight for principled leadership and a programme for action, it is possible to change these conditions and defeat the management's main support in the present crisis - the class collaborators within the workers movement itself.

These developments could not have taken place simply on the basis of a principled trade union fight in defence of agreements, wages and working conditions. It was only at the point where these struggles could be waged in the context of a continuous struggle for the demands of the Transitional Programme that the basis of a new stage in the struggle for leadership could be laid.

And with redundancies, speed-up and closures emerging as the constant threat now in every industry, it is only in its struggles for the preparation of the work force to defend itself, and the building of a leadership prepared to stand on principle that a political movement can be judged.

## £500 monthly fund

This and coming editions of *Socialist Press* show the increasing strength of the WSL since we began publication nearly a year ago. Our monthly Fund is to help further expand and improve the paper.

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