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WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

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AS LABOUR LEADERS PREPARE STATE CONTROL

TUC VOTES SAVAGE WAGE CUTS

The Trade Union leaders are collaborating with the right wing of the Labour Government to impose massive wage cuts on the working class in the interest of capitalism. Pushed forward by a severe inflationary crisis the Labour Government is about to introduce harsh statutory controls of wages, involving the creation of mass unemployment.

Healey has made it clear that he is not offering a choice between wage legislation and cuts in public spending which will destroy jobs. Speaking to Labour MPs on Tuesday he said: "We must accept a 10% cut in the standard of living and public expenditure. The alternative is to crawl to the International Monetary Fund and accept the terms they impose upon us."

Wilson and Healey are determined, but they could not hope to impose their policies without the collaboration of the TU leaders. The working class are powerful and prepared to defend their living standards and jobs.

Wilson's problem in imposing state controls is comparable to the problem of Peron in Argentina where a 48-hour general strike has shattered the government's attempts to introduce flat-rate increases and state controls of wages. In Britain the conditions for wage cutting had first to be created by the trade union leaders working closely with Wilson.

JONES PLAN

The first move was made by Jack Jones, General Secretary of the T&GWU. Using the arguments of "social justice" and "equal sacrifice", he raised the concept of flat-rate increases. He then developed a position that the only way to beat inflation was for workers to cut down the size of their wage claims to "break the inflationary spiral" - which is the argument of just about every employer in the country.

The T&GWU conference became a springboard for this policy. No sooner had the conference voted for it - as a means of "avoiding" statutory wage controls - than Healey announced imminent wage legislation.

Capitalist propaganda then focussed on the NUM conference where so-called "Marxist", Arthur Scargill, persuaded the Yorkshire delegation to drop the £100 demand, and the decision taken, splashed all over the capitalist press, strengthened the hand of Jones, Murray and Wilson.

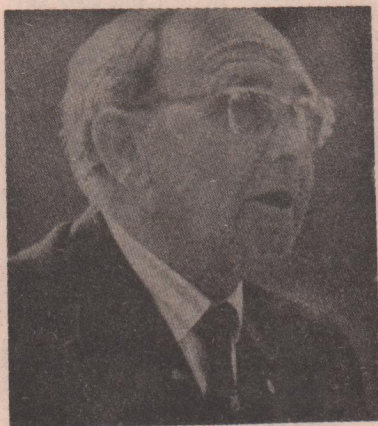
In the forefront of the search for a "compromise" at the NUM

conference were well known members of the Communist Party, including Dai Francis and Jack Collins. It is also interesting to ask - where was Mick McGahey and his Scottish delegation who first put the £100 claim forward?

The Stalinist position was seen to be a conscious policy, when the next day's *Morning Star* headlined uncritically "Neither 10% nor £6.00 has any relevance. MINERS VOTE TO SEEK £100 PER WEEK".

When the General Council of the TUC met, it was not to organise resistance to state control of wages, but, having already accepted the principle of wage cuts, to discuss the implementation of the Jones plan.

The whole position of the TUC leadership is based on the notion that workers' wages are responsible for inflation - otherwise why cut



Jones at T&GWU Conference

them to solve the problem? The term "national interest" has become universally used and not a single trade union leader has spoken of the independent interests of the working class.

The outcome of all this collaboration is clear. The door has been opened, the confusion created, and Wilson will go ahead as he originally planned, with pay laws which would reduce the standard of living in a year by something like 30%. An idea of the price rises in store is given by the increased postal charges just announced.

The decision of the TUC to police wage cuts is unprecedented in the history of the workers' movement.

The general strike of 1926 arose out of a 10% wage cut, imposed - not by the TUC - but by a Tory government. The trade union movement was built to defend and improve the standard of living of the working class. Its leaders are now attempting to use it as a means of cutting the standard of living.

THREATENED

The proposal is that wages be cut in order to "preserve the Labour Government". In reality it is precisely the right-wing policies being carried out by Wilson which threaten the very existence of the Labour Government.

The Woolwich by-election showed this clearly, when the Tories were returned on the basis of a working class abstention, brought about by the betrayals of the Labour leaders.

In February 1974 the miners had to bring down the Tory Government and bring the Labour Government to power in order to break the pay laws and defend their living standards. Today, with the rest of the working class, they are being told that the only way to keep the Labour Government in power is to accept - state pay laws.

If there was an election tomorrow, Wilson would be heavily defeated. The only way to save the Labour Government now is to remove the right wing from office and reverse the policies Wilson has introduced.

'LEFTS'

In the Parliamentary Labour Party the 'lefts' have failed consistently to take the opportunities presented to fight Wilson's policies. Benn and Foot have now swung behind Wilson in a move to the right comparable only to Jones himself.

Some of the remaining 'lefts' have made strong statements against Healey's proposals. They are now called upon to act on their statements and to work to mobilise the labour movement for the removal of Wilson.

Such a campaign must be based on alternative policies and start from the defence of workers' living standards and not from the requirements of capitalism.

The demands must be for the books of the employers to be opened, for a sliding scale of wages to protect workers against inflation, a sliding scale of hours to defend continued on back page, col.5

ARGENTINA STRIKE BREAKS PAY CURB

The 48-hour General Strike called in Argentina by the 3,500,000 strong General Labour Confederation (CGT) ended 10 hours early on Tuesday, after forcing President Isabel Peron to concede wage increases of up to 150%.

The strike had been called because Peron had vetoed these increases (even though they had already been agreed by the employers), and attempted to restrict rises to a 50% "flat rate".

In the stormy period leading up to the stoppage which began on Monday a million workers had been involved in unofficial strike action, and meetings and demonstrations had taken place all over Argentina.

The political impact of this mass movement has been to disrupt the political bloc which had previously existed between the bureaucratic leaders of the powerful trade unions and the Peronist government.

The CGT nominee in Peron's government had been forced to resign, and there was mounting pressure on the President to sack her unofficial "Prime Minister" - Senor Lopez Rega, Minister of Social Welfare. Rega is well known for his connections with the ultra right-wing AAA (Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance) "death squad" which has been carrying out brutal murders of militants and left-wingers. These connections have now even been publicised in a daily paper, *La Opinion*, and further damaged the standing of the Peron government.

100% INFLATION

The economic crisis itself in Argentina is out of all control with 100% annual rate of inflation and a huge balance of payments crisis. The proposal to cut the negotiated wage increases, which brought the confrontation, was part of a government "package" to cure inflation, which also devalued the peso by 50%, increased fuel prices by 170% and allowed other prices to rise by at least 100%. This open attempt to slash workers' living standards was the motive force



Peron

behind the strike wave.

The CGT leadership, until now the main prop of Peronism, attempted throughout to restrict the militant struggles of workers. The 48-hour general strike call was widely seen as an attempt to forestall growing demands for an all-out indefinite general strike, to remain in control of the mass movement, and prevent a full-scale political split developing between the trade unions and the bourgeois apparatus of the Peronist movement.

Peron must now try to pick up the pieces in order to preserve capitalist rule. With her whole cabinet having offered their resignations as the general strike began, her closest confidant the object of universal hostility, and the massive economic crisis confronted by Argentinian capital, her base of support seems increasingly shaky.

But for the workers' movement the problems still are not solved. The undoubted power of the trade unions is still channelled through a reactionary bourgeois leadership. There still is no mass independent workers' party. Inflation will now escalate uncontrollably, snatching away even the 150% rises just achieved.

The demands of Argentinian workers on their unions must be for a break from Peronism; for a sliding scale of wages to maintain their value against inflation; for workers' defence squads to protect militants against the AAA and other reactionary groups, and the building of a revolutionary leadership to mobilise the class in the fight for socialism.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

USA

The desperate cash crisis of New York City was eased this week by yet another scheme to defer payment of its enormous and escalating debts.

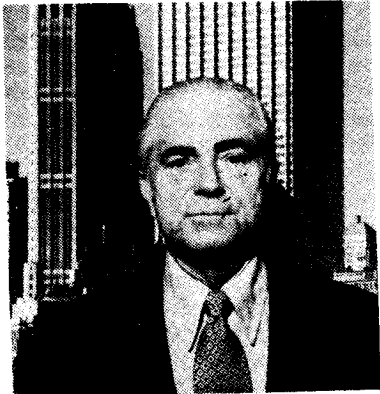
This follows complex financial wheeling and dealing among major US banks over several months by Mayor Abraham Beame, desperately trying to stave off city bankruptcy.

The unusual aspect of the new scheme however is that it comes from one of the major unions, and involves workers accepting increasingly worthless two year city bonds in place of a wage increase of 6% due at the end of the month.

This open union policy of making workers pay for capitalism's crisis follows the proposal of another union bureaucracy to guarantee the wages of workers threatened with redundancy by offering union funds. In other words

subscriptions collected from workers to equip for struggles against the employers are being used to weaken workers resistance to the employers attacks, and pave the way to redundancy.

At the centre of the whole economic crisis of New York City is the need to defend jobs and working conditions. This can only take place through building a new leadership which will expose these reformist plans and challenge the rights of capitalists and municipal employers to create unemployment.



Mayor Beame

LEBANON

Middle East Cauldron

Fears of the revival of the smouldering embers of civil war have continued to stalk the streets of Beirut in the days since the establishment of a new ultra right wing government for Lebanon on July 1st.

After weeks of bitter fighting which left more than 1,000 dead, the new regime can be nothing more than a stopgap in all the feverish meanderings of Middle East politics.

Lebanon is a nation state created artificially by imperialism and bolstered by the fact that it provides the main Arab trading link with the outside world and the only alternative to the settler colonialists of Israel on its southern border. Since 1943 Lebanon has had a constitution based on elaborate compromises between the right-wing leaders of the Christian and Moslem communities.

This arrangement has constantly been threatened by the storms of Middle East politics and not least by the Lebanese Palestinian masses. In 1958 there was an outbreak of civil war when the US sent in the marines to "restore order".

Since then, US imperialists have continued to take an active interest in the maintenance of this state as a buffer between Zionism and its opponents in their current efforts to get Egyptian President Sadat to bring other Arab regimes into line in supporting a 'peace plan' that will sell out the Palestinians. The Americans have moved an individual by the name of McMurtrie Godley from service in Indo-Chinese embassies to 'combat' duties in the Middle East as ambassador to Lebanon.

MURDERED

This is a situation where the extreme right-wing Lebanese Falangists murdered 27 Palestinians in cold blood. The struggle of Palestinians against this provocation led to calls for "strong government" and on 23rd May a military regime was set up. This was answered by the establishment of barricades in all the Palestinian areas and among sections of Lebanese workers. This challenge ended the military regime within 3 days.

The new phase of right-wing provoked terror during June brought about a further political crisis. Once again the Falangists

had acquired a great deal of military hardware which they were using at the edges of refugee camps and working class areas. The Palestinian guerrillas were joined in opposing these attacks by left-wing Lebanese para-military groups.

After 1,000 deaths the ultra-conservative leaders of Moslem and Christian communities decided that they had had enough and on July 1st felt able to sink their differences enough to set up a government.

The new Prime Minister is Raschid Karamid, traditionalist leader of the Sunni Moslem community, and the Minister of the Interior is Kamil Chamoun, Maronite Christian and veteran right-wing politician who is already threatening draconian measures to restore order.

The new government poses great dangers to the Palestinian and Lebanese masses. Despite their exclusion from it, it appears to have at least the acquiescence of the Falangists Kamil Jumblatt, leader of Lebanon's largest Socialist party, together with his Stalinist allies, being prepared to accept the new regime on the tenuous grounds that "the Falange have been excluded".

NATIONALISTS

There are great dangers also in the position of the bourgeois nationalists in the Palestinian resistance movement. Leaders of Fateh the largest group, together with the pro-Syrian Saika and the Iraqi supported Democratic Front have pledged support for the new government and agreed to restore order in the refugee camps. Increasingly in recent weeks their forces have been absent from the struggle against Falangist provocations.

The main fighting has been carried on by members of the "Rejection Front" of Palestinian resistance groups of which the best known is the Popular Front of George Habash.

There could be no clearer illustration of the inseparable link between the struggle to defeat Zionism and the pro-imperialist forces in the Arab world, than the association between those who refuse to accept a sell-out to the Zionists and those who have borne the brunt of the struggles against Falangism in the Lebanon. The need to put forward a programme of socialist demands in the Palestinian movement and Arab masses is now urgently posed.

ANGOLA

The likelihood of the promised October elections allowing Angola to follow Mozambique to full independence and an ending of the present Portuguese/Angolan transitional government grows increasingly remote.

On the surface the problem appears to be the failure of the three main Angolan nationalist movements - the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the National Union for Total Independence of Angola, and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA Marxist, UNITA, and FNLA) - to cease the increasing open warfare between them despite their joint participation in the transitional government, and an agreement last month to find a way of ironing out their differences.

"COLLAPSE"

The Portuguese Minister of the Economy in the transitional government threatened to resign 2 weeks ago, claiming that the country, the richest economically of Portugal's ex-colonies, is on the verge of total collapse.

To the open warfare between the liberation movements is added

a mounting wave of strikes by dockers and port workers.

WEALTH

It is the potential mineral wealth of the country that is fundamentally the source of the conflict. Angola is rich in oil, diamonds, coffee and other raw materials and has been growing at an annual rate of 6% in recent years.

In a situation of general capitalist economic crisis the development of any independent Angolan capitalist class is undermined.

The situation is one where the existing forces both of international capital and the ruling classes of neighbouring African states are supporting particular factions of the liberation movement.

The right wing FNLA for example is generally favoured against the Stalinist influenced MPLA and the indigenous UNITA, whose main strength lies in the North.

At the moment the conflict focusses on the northernmost province of Angola - Cabinda, rich in oil, nearly all of which is being extracted by the US Gulf Oil Corporation.

In military terms, the MLPA appears to be in control of this area, much to the annoyance of Gulf and of President Mobutu of neighbouring Zaire.

Accordingly Mobutu, no doubt prompted by Gulf, is declaring that Cabinda is not really part of Angola at all and should be allowed to settle its own status through a referendum.

Meanwhile Mobutu has provided an open border between Zaire and Angola for ferrying large quantities of arms and recruits to the right wing FNLA, though he has for diplomatic purposes agreed to "seal" the border using his own troops in coordination with the Portuguese army.

STRATEGY

At all costs a repetition must be prevented of the strategy of international capitalism, which set up Katanga in 1960, attempting to declare economically rich areas "independent" states under puppet governments loyal to imperialism.

This must be avoided in Cabinda. The oil wealth must be nationalised along with all other Angolan mineral resources and the ports, being integrated into a socialist economic plan. This can only be done by a regime based firmly on the unity of Angolan workers and peasants.

This must be a first step towards a United Socialist States of Africa to overcome the arbitrary political divisions imposed by imperialism and use the vast economic resources of the continent for the benefit of the African people.

INDIA

Gandhi

Clamps Down

On Wednesday June 25th fifty thousand people at a rally in New Delhi were urged by Jayaprakash Narayan, veteran anti-corruption campaigner, to start a nationwide campaign of civil disobedience to force Mrs Gandhi's resignation as Prime Minister, following her conviction on June 12th for corrupt election practices.

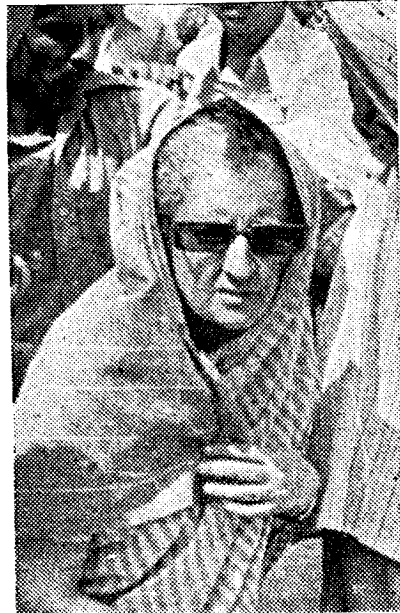
Only hours later a power cut early Thursday morning stopped the Delhi printing presses and by 5 a.m. police had dragged from their beds to jail some 700 people, mostly leaders of political opposition to Mrs Gandhi. She then spoke on radio of the national state of emergency called to defeat what she called "a deep and widespread conspiracy to cause internal disruption".

All the Indian press is now under censorship, but the government claim that around 900 are now in jail, with no right of appeal to the courts, one third of whom are political party officials.

These include 'JP' Narayan himself, and Morarji Desai, a member of the Gandhian old guard whom Mrs Gandhi defeated in 1969. After his victory over the Congress Party in the Gujarat state elections earlier this month he has been a leader of the campaign for Mrs Gandhi's resignation, along with socialists and Maoists.

RIGHT WING

It is clear that the jailed opposition elements were united only by their hatred for Mrs Gandhi. Most were from the right - the extreme Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh party aiming for total Hindu control, the Congress old guard of Desai, and parties of well-off farmers fed up with bureaucracy and



Gandhi

businessmen wanting decisive capitalist policies.

But Mrs Gandhi has imposed a semi-dictatorship of her Congress Party because she fears the explosion of vicious class struggle between these elements and the starving Indian masses who, for want of a socialist leadership, have fallen behind JP Narayan's non-violent reformist Gandhian campaign.

The clouds of this storm have been gathering for at least two years, during which the Congress Party has been steadily losing ground in six state elections, as its promises of an attack on poverty have never been carried out.

DISPOSSESS

This is because living standards jobs and land can only be defended in India through the dispossession of the same businessmen and wealthy farmers who provide the main financial and electoral support of the Congress Party.

Poverty and exploitation are enormous and increasing - per capita income averages £52 a year, and 385m out of a population of 580m live below the poverty line of about 50p per week.

The feudal relations which hold rural villages in a vice-like grip become ever more unbearable - three quarters of households cultivating land have uneconomic holdings of less than 2 acres and these and the half of the rural population

that is landless are under the thumbs of rich farmers, landlords and moneylenders - labourers may work 20 years to repay a debt of £5.

In this situation JP Narayan's campaign in Bihar state, where these contradictions are most acute, drew a following greater than any movement since the fight for independence (no meeting even in remote villages being under 10,000 strong) to a programme of decentralisation of government, electoral reform and "fairer" land ownership.

DEFENCE

But without a programme to connect with defence of jobs and living standards of urban workers, and without setting up independent workers' and peasants' committees to fight for the control of transport, credit and for land nationalisation and collectivisation of agriculture, this movement has joined a motley right-wing crew some of whom Mrs Gandhi has compared to Nazis.

Mrs Gandhi has announced broad measures of "reform" to be introduced in the next few weeks, but the very base of her party will prevent any improvement in the lot of the masses.

What is more, she has followed these promises by actually banning 26 political and religious organisations which oppose her continued rule. These include Maoist as well as right-wing political groups and within hours of the announcement their various headquarters were subject to raids by police.

STALINISTS

It is conspicuous however that throughout the whole of this clampdown the Moscow-line Communist Party has defended Gandhi's actions, continuing their craven support for her corrupt and demagogic regime. This has much delighted both Gandhi and the capitalist class internationally, exposing yet again the treacherous politics stemming from the Stalinist concept of "peaceful coexistence".

It is the bankruptcy of political leadership alone that now holds back the workers and peasants of India. The immediate need is for workers', peasants' and small farmers' committees to be built in the fight for a socialist programme and to unite the struggle against Gandhi's government.

But within that movement the key question is to train a Trotskyist leadership to clarify and direct the masses in their struggle.

MAOISM PROPS UP S.E. ASIA PUPPETS



Mao greets President Marcos in Peking.

Recent moves in Chinese foreign policy spell out the conclusions of the 'socialism in one country' line of the Stalinist leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

A series of leaders of south east Asian regimes have visited Peking in past weeks, cementing their relationships with the Chinese leadership.

Last week Kukrit Pramoj, Prime Minister of Thailand, was formally received by Mao Tse Tung during a trip which culminated in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and a state banquet at which Pramoj declared that the states of south east Asia must oppose foreign subversion 'in all its forms'.

What his words meant was spelt out more bluntly by Malaysian Premier Tun Abdul Razak, following a similar visit to Peking in May, during which diplomatic relations were also established. Interviewed by an American magazine, he was asked "What about China's traditional support for local revolutionary movements? Would that pose a problem?"

Razak replied: "Chairman Mao and Premier Chou assured me categorically that the terrorist problem is our internal affair and that we can deal with the terrorists any way we like. When I came back from China, I announced that as far as the Communist terrorists here are concerned we regard them as bandits. They are not recognised by anybody. The People's Republic of China recognises

my government as the legal and constitutional government of Malaysia so obviously the Communists here are bandits: they are fighting against the government recognised by the countries of the world".

Asked about broadcasts from China in support of the pro-Chinese liberation forces in Malaysia, Razak continued:

"We monitor these things every day, and we have sensed that the broadcasts have been very low key since we have had diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. I think these things have cooled down very much."

Both Razak and Pramoj are anti-communists to the core, bitterly and brutally hostile to the liberation movements in their own countries. Another politician who visited Peking recently - if possible even more reactionary - was the Philippines' dictator Ferdinand Marcos, long-time protege of American imperialism in the western Pacific.

LAVISH

Marcos, too, got an ultra-lavish reception, was met by Mao, and went away with diplomatic recognition and a joint communique calling for "non-interference in each others internal affairs" - publically interpreted as an end to Chinese support for the guerrilla forces which have been struggling against the dictatorship in the Philippines since the Second World War.

Chinese 'diplomacy' also stretched to their making no mention of

the huge US military installation in the Philippines, at Clark Bay and Subic Field. These now serve, in the strategic plans of US Defence Secretary Schlesinger, as essential staging posts for airborne troops involved in future US military actions in Asia or the Pacific.

The Chinese drive towards 'detente' in south east Asia has also meant they have given no support to preparations against the provocations of the Park dictatorship in South Korea, a vassal state of US imperialism since the ending of the Korean war in 1953.

When North Korean Stalinist leader Kim Il Sung launched his diplomatic efforts to gain support from other workers' states in April he got essentially the same response from Peking and Moscow. The Chinese CP leadership received him in a state visit, but gave not a shred of support to his calls for the liberation of South Korea, while the Kremlin bluntly told him a visit would be 'inappropriate' at the moment.

A key figure in Chinese foreign policy now is seventy-one year old deputy Prime Minister Teng Hsiao-Ping, probable successor to veteran Prime Minister Chou En-Lai.

TAKE OVER

With both Chou and Mao ageing and ill - the latter now not part of day-to-day administration - the new leadership in the Party and State apparatuses announced in January is preparing to take over from the old guard. At the same time Chinese policy has reacted to the defeat of the US in Indochina not by any correction of the policy of peaceful 'coexistence' with US imperialism, but on the contrary by reinforcing it.

The reactionary theory that the world is dominated by two capitalist 'superpowers' - the US and the USSR - is spelt out anew, and their policy in Asia openly points to the Soviet Union as the main threat. Banqueting Pramoj in Peking, Teng Hsiao-Ping accused the USSR of 'holding a serious threat over the peace and security of the countries of south east Asia'.

And in June a despatch from the Hsinhua news agency in Peking - not 'officially' from the Communist Party leadership, but certainly put out by its deliberate decision - reiterated the reactionary 'theory' that the Soviet Union is a 'bureaucrat-monopoly' capitalist state with a 'fascist state machine'.

The long statement is based

entirely on a piecemeal description of the privileges enjoyed by the Soviet bureaucracy and the suppression of political rights in the Soviet Union.

It contains not one jot of an historical explanation of how, and when, a new form of capitalist class was supposedly formed, or how it could have achieved the overthrow of the basic social gains of the October revolution without a shot being fired.

CYNICAL

There could not be a clearer example of the cynical use of 'Marxist' phraseology to justify the expediences of policy than the line that the Soviet Union is a fascist state.

This line played an important part in Chinese support for Britain's entry into the Common Market, and is already beginning to play an extremely dangerous role as China seeks anti-Soviet alliances with the western European capitalist states. West German Maoists have taken the position that the 'fascist' Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe is a threat to the national independence of West Germany!

The logic of this position is that the Chinese leadership would at best stand aside in the event of Western military intervention in a political crisis in, say, East Germany. And the essence of the policy is not support for the workers of Eastern Europe against the dictatorship of the bureaucracy but, on the contrary, closer and closer ties with capitalist governments judged 'useful' to China's national interests.

This line, similarly, has been responsible for the isolation, and imprisonment, of Maoists in Portugal by the military regime and their pro-Moscow Stalinist supporters.

STALINIST

It is in foreign policy, most of all, that the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party shows its Stalinist character and its refusal to lead a fight for the united, international interests of working people.

The fact that - especially in the colonial countries - many revolutionaries have embraced the politics of Maoism, now poses sharp crises within these parties. But these crises of leadership will have no resolution outside the struggle to build Trotskyist parties, based on the lessons of the Bolshevik opposition to Stalinism within the Third International.

The political bankruptcy of Maoism also threatens the development of socialism within China itself. It shows the necessity for a political revolution in China to remove the Maoist bureaucracy, and restore the power of the factory committees and soviets.

SPAIN

GENERAL STRIKE

AGAINST TRIAL

Five of the 23 left wing political prisoners on trial in Madrid at the hands of General Franco's regime were freed last week.

Their release followed a general strike in the shipyards of El Ferrol in Galicia, in which most of the accused were workers.

The government reacted immediately to the strike by declaring a state of emergency in the town, but protest stoppages and working-to-rule continued in the shipyards.

However, 18 of the 23 stayed on trial on various charges, some of which were changed to more serious indictments, including 'terrorism', as the proceedings opened in the Madrid public order court.

3 Year Wait

All the accused had been awaiting trial for more than 3 years. They were arrested in March 1972, when police attacked a demonstration of over 4,000 in El Ferrol, marching in support of claims on wages and conditions in the shipyards. Several of those still awaiting sentences in the courts are accused of illegal membership of the Spanish Communist Party.

The fascist regime suffered a significant setback in the elections to the 'Syndicates', (state-controlled "trade unions"), whose results were announced last week.

Despite the fact that there was a split between the Stalinists and the Social Democrats, with the illegal Social Democratic trade union organisation (UGT) calling for a boycott, while the CP ran candidates unofficially, the outcome was a rebuff to the authorities. In a low poll, less than a quarter of the posts were kept by those who formerly held them, and in key plants, such as the SEAT car factory in Barcelona, the votes went solidly behind the representatives of the illegal 'workers commissions'.

LETTERS

The Editorial Board wants to encourage letters on any subject, which should be kept as brief as possible.

Please send them to:
WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill,
London NW5 1HR

WHAT IS THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE MULTI-MILLION CAR PILE-UP

For over 18 months the motor industry has been at the centre of the capitalist crisis. This is not merely the result of the increase in oil prices. Even before this increase the capitalist world's motor companies were plunging rapidly into economic crisis.

The oil crisis through its effects on the sales of cars has sharply accelerated this process. Because of the importance of the industry in total production (around 10% of total industrial output in the major capitalist countries) its impact on the rest of the economy is very marked.

It is in the motor industry that challenges which the workers' movement is coming to face in all industries have shown themselves first and with special sharpness.

It is no exaggeration to say that at present it is the workers of the motor industries who must first fight the attacks resulting from the capitalist crisis, which threatens to erode the gains of decades made by the workers' movement. The question 'for us is to turn this combat into an offensive struggle for socialism.

There was a universal drop in car sales in 1974 of about one quarter compared with 1973. But, confirming that the oil price increase is not the only factor the figures for 1974 have continued the steep decline.

In the United States sales this year have been more than 20% down on 1974; in Britain the present best estimate is that they will fall nearly 25% on last year; in France they are 18½% down on last year and the decline is still accelerating.

The reasons for these continued declines are many. Partly it is the effect of the increase of the oil price on the cost of running cars. But in addition the costs of insurance and repairs are rising faster than general inflation. And the steep rise in interest rates in recent years has made hire purchase (the means by which most private cars are sold) increasingly expensive.

And in some countries, especially the United States, car sales are now being affected by the drop in the real wages of workers which has attended the worldwide capitalist recession, both through cuts in the purchasing power of earnings and through the growing volume of unemployment.

The declining market has predictably led to an outburst of cut-throat competition between companies both nationally and internationally. Late last year the American companies introduced a system of rebates (reductions of £200-400 a car) on new purchases.

Chrysler in its 'Car Clearance Carnival' even offered an extra 100 dollars for all Ford and General Motors cars traded in. The whole scheme was extremely expensive and in the end only reduced stocks by about 8%. The main effect was simply for buyers to get new cars a few weeks earlier than they had planned. The British companies have found similar problems in the special hire purchase deals which they started earlier in the year.

LEYLAND DUMPING

British Leyland is one of the

companies which has tried to solve its market problems by dumping (selling below cost of production) on foreign markets. For instance, sales of the Marina in the United States (where it sells for \$320 less than the British price) rose by 64% in the first three months of this year.

A committee of the US Congress is now trying to initiate a government investigation of this dumping, especially from Leyland, Volkswagen and the Japanese companies. This may reinforce pressures towards protectionism which in other countries has already taken root.

Italy has imposed a quota of 1000 cars a year against Japan. British producers are pressing for similar controls against Japanese dumping. And the same reactionary call has been taken up even by some Labour MPs including Ray Carter (Birmingham Northfield).

In Australia, where British Leyland has already been forced out of business, the government has imposed controls limiting the import of cars to 20% of the market, following threats from the General Motors subsidiary, GM Holden, that it would sack 5000 workers if this was not done.

FALL-OFF

After the oil crisis the fall off in sales was not at first matched by a reduction in production. This is clear from the information available about stock of cars held by the major manufacturers.

By the end of 1974 the US producers had the unprecedented level of over 100 days of sales in stock (Chrysler exceptionally had as much as 132 days). The figure fell to 69 days in February after the rebate scheme but by April was back again to about 80 days and was still rising. US importers had 6 months of stocks. These were ironically concentrated in the low petrol consumption models which the manufacturers had hoped would provide their way out of the crisis.

In Italy Fiat, the major producer, had 300,000 cars in stock in December which is three months sales. In Britain stock figures are normally the most closely guarded secrets for fear that information will strengthen the workers at the expense of the management.

SHORT TIME

As soon as it became clear to the producers that the unacceptable levels of stocks were not likely to be reduced by restoration of demand then almost universally companies introduced programmes of redundancies and short-time working.

In the US General Motors and Ford both partially or completely closed about half of their assembly plants for periods of 2 to 4 weeks at the end of 1974. Between them the American motor corporations had by December indefinitely laid off 205,000 workers. Only 40,000 of these have since been taken back and the rest have come to the end of their lay-off pay.

In Italy in October 1974 Fiat put 70% of its workforce on a 3-day week; this move was replaced in December with an agreement with the unions involving an equivalent cut-back in production by extended shut-downs at Christmas and Easter.

In Germany during 1974 Volks-

wagen laid off 10,000 workers and lost 60 days of production through short-time working. Ford and Opel also had extensive shut-downs, stopped recruitment and encouraged early retirement.

This summer US Ford has made plans to close most of its plants for two weeks in June and Chrysler US is planning to close four of its six US assembly plants for up to six weeks at a time.

British companies, especially British Leyland, have had considerable success with schemes of voluntary redundancies through which they hope to reduce their

Opposition to voluntary redundancy must centre on exposing the way in which it whittles down the numbers of those employed and is then used as a lever to force speed-up and break manning agreements, and must concentrate on bringing the strength of the unions against such schemes. Those who take voluntary redundancy must be made aware that they risk long-term unemployment as the slump develops.

PROFITS DOWN

All the world's major car com-



BLMC Marina track at Cowley; Leyland are dumping Marinas in the US

labour force with the minimum of organised resistance.

In Germany Volkswagen, too, have introduced a voluntary redundancy programme through which they hope to dispense of 10,000 workers out of their proposed total reduction by the end of 1976 of 25,000 of their workforce.

Voluntary redundancy, a new development in the employers' struggle for speed-up is being facilitated by the reformist trade union leaderships who prefer to "avoid confrontation" and who do not challenge the employer's right to reduce his labour force.

panies, except Renault, have in the last year declared huge declines in profit (for example, US Ford and General Motors down 60%; American Motors down 84%). In fact they are virtually all now operating at a loss, that is they have been failing to sustain their elementary function as viable parts of the capitalist system.

Where car companies declare a profit it is merely because company accounts have been compiled without considering the effects of inflation. Inflation makes apparent profits into real losses because companies count as part of their profits the increase in the value of

their necessary stock between one year and another. This is 'profit' which they can never realise.

This also means that companies which have actually declared losses like Volkswagen, Fiat, BLMC, Chrysler US and UK and Toyo Kogyo, have really been making even bigger losses. In order to survive at all the car companies have been forced into radical changes in their financial policy - going into debt on a large scale to the banks; delaying the payment of bills due to their suppliers and demanding rapid payment of debts due to them; and running down their cash balances.

This process is not limitless for in the end an inability to pay debts causes bankruptcy. Nearly all the major companies would by now be bankrupt if it were not for the resort to various desperate measures. And as these run out then one by one they are being forced to turn to the state for financial assistance.

TABLE I
Declared Profit
Real Profit

TABLE II
Money owed to BLMC
Money owed by BLMC
Difference

British Leyland is the best known example of this. But in France the state aided and partly financed a merger with Peugeot which rescued the enormous Citroen company from otherwise certain death. This was combined with another merger between the two lorry producing firms of Berliet and Saviem which involved partial nationalisation. Initially the French government provided £130 million to finance these two mergers.

In Germany the Federal government has refused to bale out Volkswagen (of which it owns 40%) from its last year's £90 million declared loss. The Finance Minister has asserted that "We don't want any British Leylands here". The sheer size of the motor industry in all major countries will however force all kinds of governments to intervene rather than allow the dramatic volumes of unemployment which would otherwise result.

The case of British Leyland is a perfect illustration of this increasingly general problem for capitalist governments. BLMC is the largest private employer in Britain (204,000 workers) and until last year (when it was overtaken by ICI) was the country's largest exporter.

It is a company which until 1974 always declared a profit which, when adjusted for inflation, was always in reality a loss. As the Ryder report made clear it was able to declare a profit only at the cost of a rapid run down of its productive assets.

Leyland declared and real profit figures since 1972 are in Table 1.

The case of Leyland shows that in spite of the increasing difficulties since 1973 its problems long predated the oil crisis. In these circumstances bankruptcy up to now has only been avoided by increased borrowing, the running down of assets and not paying bills, which has made the company notorious.

It only gets away with this because so many of its suppliers depend on it alone for their sales, and perhaps (as a lot of its debts must be to nationalised industries - steel and fuel) because the state has been willing to give Leyland concealed subsidies. The figures in Table 2 illustrate this graphically.

Before finally succumbing to the pressures which led to state intervention and the Ryder report, Leyland tried numerous other methods of ensuring its survival: it launched a major attack on the unions in the company, culminating in the unsuccessful attempt to victimise Alan Thornett in Cowley in April 1974; it tried to negotiate sufficient loans from the banks who refused, fearful for their own profits; it negotiated for a purchase of the company by the governments of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

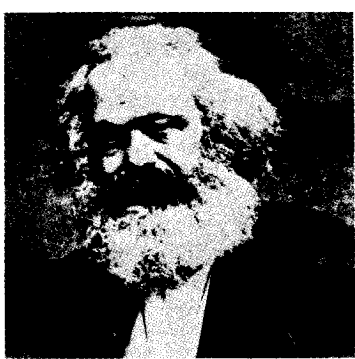
During all this time Leyland had been secretly negotiating with Wedgwood Benn and when the Ryder committee was finally estab-

ORIGINS OF THE BOURGEOIS FAMILY

We have received a letter from a member of the Workers Fight group, who also belongs to the Womens Liberation Movement, taking up some points in our article in Socialist Press 7 on the 'Woman Question'. She says:

"... Firstly, by concentrating on the social relations within the family, which you seem to see as the cause of women's oppression, you fail to examine the family in any historical context or to relate it to the relations of capitalist production. You have therefore failed to answer, or even to raise, many of the problems which the womens movement for the past year has been trying to come to grips with, namely why has capitalism been unable to fully socialise housework and has maintained the family and what is the relationship between woman's work in the home and the production of surplus value on the shop floor? ..."

While we agree with the reader on the importance of tracing back the historical development of the bourgeois family, and as *Socialist Press 7* explained, the article was merely the beginning of the discussion on the question of women's oppression, we will do this in order to explain how the social relations in the bourgeois family developed. We reiterate that it is these relations which must be replaced by overthrowing the economic material base that they exist on - the capitalist system of private ownership of the means of production - and replacing it by a planned socialist society in which no member is oppressed.



Marx: The modern family contains in embryo not only slavery but serfdom also. . .

In order to undertake this historical study we turn of course to Engels' *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Engels developed this study from the research of Lewis Morgan, the findings of which were published in 1877 in a book called *Ancient Society*.

Engels maintained that Morgan rediscovered in his own way the materialist conception of history, that is that in the last resort the production and reproduction of immediate life are the determining factors which condition the social institutions under which men live. Before the development of the productivity of labour, and with it the wealth of society, the social order appeared to be dominated by ties of sex only. As productivity of labour developed and with it private property, the possibility of utilising the labour power of others, and therefore the basis of class antagonisms, arose. So the old society based on sex groups was overthrown, the state based on classes appeared, and with it a new family system entirely dominated by the property system.

Morgan's work traced the development of society through the

stages of savagery and barbarism to civilisation. He defined savagery as the period in which the use of natural products predominated and man only produced things in order to help him in this appropriation.

In the period of barbarism cattle breeding and land cultivation and hence methods of increasing natural productivity through human activity were learnt. Civilisation is of course the period of industry and culture.

The works of Morgan, and Bachofen the Swiss researcher, both supply evidence that the family form in the period of savagery was that of group marriage. Various types of groups are described, all based on the communistic common household but with different rulings on inter-marriage of natural brothers and sisters, etc. The strengthening of the stock seems to have been the motive behind banning certain pairings so that the development was towards more and more restriction and finally into 'pairing marriage'. This was still only a loose arrangement and could be ended immediately by either partner and so did not in any way weaken the communistic household.

DESCENT

In the group marriage it was uncertain of course who the father of a child was and so descent could only be traced on the mother's side - i.e. the female line alone was recognised. Engels here adopts Bachofen's term of 'mother right' although as he says there was no such thing in the legal sense. Also in the pairing family due to the instability of the arrangement the children remained with the mother. In the communistic household the woman was highly respected as Engels describes:

"That woman was the slave of man at the commencement of society is one of the most absurd notions that have come down to us from the period of Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Woman occupied not only a free but also a highly respected position among all savages. . ."

"The division of labour between the sexes is determined by causes entirely different from those that determine the status of woman in society. Peoples whose women have to work much harder than we would consider proper often have far more real respect for women than our Europeans have for theirs."

So as we see it was the process of social selection with the motivation of strengthening the stock that led from group marriage to pairing marriage but in no way was the status of women in the society altered since the communistic household remained. As Engels said "If no new social driving forces had come into operation there would have been no reason why a new form of the family should arise out of the pairing family."

SURPLUS

But these new social forces did begin to operate. We now enter into the period of barbarism and man began to discover ways of increasing the productivity of nature through breeding cattle and field cultivation. Human labour power began to yield a surplus over the cost of its maintenance and hence began to acquire an exchange value, and captives from war began to be used as slaves.

The division of labour then in the family was such that the man was responsible for the procuring of food and consequently the ownership of the means of pro-

viding food - the herds, slaves, land, tools, etc. became his. The woman owned the household goods and in case of separation the children remained with her. Consequently a man could not leave his possessions to his children but they went to his sister's children or the descendants of his mother's sister - following the female line.

WEALTH

Thus we have the new social driving force - the accumulation of wealth. This elevated the status of man in the family and created the stimulus to overthrow tradition in order that a man's children might inherit his wealth. As Engels says, this revolution was "one of the most decisive ever experienced by mankind" and was the "world-historic defeat of the female sex." because the man thus became the master of the house. As Marx said "the modern family contains in embryo not only slavery but serfdom also. . . it contains within itself in miniature all the antagonisms which later develop on a wide scale within society and its state."

Monogamy then was established with its predominant emphasis on fidelity on the part of the wife, because of the necessity of ensuring the undisputed paternity of children in order that wealth could safely be passed on. Monogamy was "the first form of the family based not on natural but on economic conditions, namely, on the victory of private property over original, naturally developed, common ownership".

The question now is - what about the working class who accumulate no wealth and are not concerned about inheritance - why do they conform to the laws of bourgeois marriage and succumb just as much as the ruling class to "a wedded life of leaden boredom, which is described as domestic bliss".

This is of course because it is the ruling class which determines the ideology of the state - as Marx and Engels say in *The German Ideology*:

"The class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force".

The ruling class controls the education system, and the ideas they put across are no more than the ideal expression of dominant material relationships. Consequently working class children are subjected in school to the ideas of the ruling class - that employers have rights to hire and fire workers and that in the home the man is dominant.

KEITH JOSEPH

We now have Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher in their 'Centre for Policy Studies' desperately trying to strengthen the bourgeois ideology. As they say, the Conservative Party is the party of tradition, for conserving the family and the values "developed with the spread of independent property-owning from the late Middle Ages. . ." (Keith Joseph, *Guardian* 27.1.75). They say the family must be the centre of our thinking - "If the family weakens, society fails" (Keith Joseph, *Daily Telegraph*, 28.1.75) and abhor the moves towards comprehensive schooling which "destroys the traditional framework".

Religion also plays its part in the perpetuation of the bourgeois marriage - both for the working class and the middle class - by obscuring the basic fact that marriage is merely an economic arrangement with the mystique of "till death us do part". Advertising of course in the present day reinforces

the role of woman and the family by presenting the ideal family in this consumer society. However even though the influence of the ruling class in these spheres is very great the social relations of production themselves in capitalist society are sufficient to ensure that the oppressed working class accept the dominance of the bourgeoisie. Oppression in the factory, in bad housing conditions, living on inadequate social security when unemployed - these material conditions in themselves, direct products of the established relations of production, are the biggest factor which prevent the working class from developing their own ideology.

Consequently it is impossible for working class family structure to change until the material conditions are gained for that change. Monogamy arose "out of the concentration of considerable wealth in the hands of one person - and that a man - and out of the desire to bequeath this wealth to this man's children and to no one else's". (Engels, *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*). The overthrow of the capitalist system and the building of socialism will provide the material base for a new social driving force to bring about new family structures based not on exploitation but on the freedom of all individuals to freely enter relationships.

SOCIALISED

As outlined in the article in *Socialist Press 7* a socialist economy will involve women as well as men fully in the productive process and will provide a system of social dining rooms, laundries and child care facilities such that the tasks of the household become socialised tasks - undertaken for the community by the community in the most efficient way, and the care and education of children become the responsibility of the whole community and not just the burden of their mothers.

Capitalism therefore has been unable to fully socialise housework because it is not in its interest so to do. It needs to maintain the bourgeois family unit because segregation into individual families prevents the working class from feeling a sense of unity and acting as a class. As Engels said about animals, the collective feeling of the horde can have no greater enemy than the collective feeling of the family.

SEPARATION

So we see that the reader, in separating the social relations within the bourgeois family from the social relations of production under capitalism, is led into separating the question of women's oppression from the oppression of the working class as a whole.

The question of the relationship between women's work in the home and the production of surplus value on the shopfloor seems to be explored in order to prove the necessity for 'wages for housework' which is a thoroughly reactionary demand which would only serve to isolate the housewife even further.

In reply to the remainder of the reader's letter we think that our interventions into the TUC women's rally and the National Abortion Campaign demonstration, which have been reported in *Socialist Press*, and the motions we are bringing up in the unions on maternity leave, creche facilities and abortion rights show that we are not passive in our fight on these issues and that it is not necessary to affiliate to various single issue campaigns in order to win women to the revolutionary movement.

lished its immediate reason was not that Leyland was down to its last penny but because someone inside the management leaked the negotiations.

With Leyland, as in all similar cases, the implementation of the Ryder report will not solve the basic problem of the company in capitalist society - its incapability of generating stable profits. State participation of this kind in no way takes the company outside the laws of capitalism.

For the motor industry the economic outlook is worsening. While the current rate of inflation is ripping into the employers' profits and running riot in his account books, any concerted government attempt to curb that inflation through cuts in the money supply or cuts in public spending can only strike at the financing and the markets of the car companies.

There is no capitalist answer to the question of closures and redundancies - if private ownership

1972	1973	1974
21.1	27.9	-22.4
10.9	-24.6	-112.4

1972	1973	1974
60.1	188.7	180.9
100.0	297.5	373.9
39.9	-119.8	-193.0

and private profit were to be maintained it would mean mass sackings and a much reduced car industry.

Nor can any of the problems be solved by nationalist measures such as import controls and protectionism. These simply shift the crisis from one section of workers onto another, and in any event simply hasten world wide protectionism, in which markets contract further still. The working class is an internationally oppressed class, and its programme of struggle must be one that does not cut across the fight of workers in other countries.

DEMANDS

The fight against redundancies must centre around the demand for work-sharing to be instituted, without loss of pay, administered by trade union committees. The employer's right to cut his labour force in order to increase his profits must be challenged, and the worker's right to employment at the pay-rates won by the unions must be defended.

By demanding that the reduced work available be shared out by trade union committees, the beginning of workers' control over manning and production are brought forward.

If the employers refuse this then factory occupations must be called for, electing committees of trade unionists to organise and protect the occupation, and fighting for maximum local and national support.

The occupation must demand access to the accounts and order books of the employers to examine both the claims of the employers and the real workings of the company. If the employer is shown to be bankrupt, then the case for his immediate nationalisation, without compensation except to small savers is proved.

Such nationalisation must be seen as a part of a regeneration of the industry under a programme of government contracts as part of a developing planned socialist economy. The factory committees must manage the plants carrying out these contracts.

The continued development of inflation and the erosion of the value of the pound must be compensated by the fight for the sliding scale of wages, which under such conditions would maintain the value of take home pay by providing increases to compensate for the increase in the cost of living of working class families, as assessed by trade union committees.

Only on these demands can the ruthless logic of capitalism be answered in the car industry. Only in this way can the enormous productive forces be utilised for social need rather than forcibly classed and scrapped, throwing thousands on the dole and forcing enormous speed up on those still in work.

T & GWU CONFERENCE: JONES LAUNCHES PAY CUTS

A REPORT ON THE
BLACKPOOL CONFERENCE

Jack Jones' role in preparing the ground for the Labour government to introduce state pay laws gave this year's T&GWU conference enormous significance. The proposals on support for the social contract and flat rate pay increases were orchestrated with the statements of Healey and Wilson and designed to create the best conditions for the imposition of massive wage cuts on the working class in the interests of capitalism.

The only consistent opposition at the conference based on an alternative programme, was the Workers Socialist League. The policies of a sliding scale of wages and a sliding scale of hours, were debated in front of a large and important conference for the first time. The votes for these resolutions, though small in number, are very important. For these reasons we have given full coverage to the conference.

SOCIAL CONTRACT DEBATE

The authority of Jack Jones, right wing General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, was shaken at the union's Blackpool conference last week. A few hours after he had swung the vast majority of the 963 delegates behind the social contract and flat rate increases, arguing that this was the only way to avoid statutory wage controls, Labour Chancellor Healey announced imminent state pay laws.

Now, as *Socialist Press* predicted prior to the conference, the Jones plan has quickly become the main lever for ramming the pay laws down the throats of the working class.

By reducing the debate from wage controls or free collective bargaining, to wage control by the unions or the state, Jones opened the door to state laws.

CAREFULLY PREPARED

Jones' conference platform was carefully prepared. Three motions emerged from the battle in the composite committee room on Monday morning.

The conference would debate an Executive composite supporting the social contract, a composite proposed by the Stalinists with giant loopholes for Jones to go through if it were adopted, and a motion from Cowley explicitly rejecting the social contract.

On Tuesday morning the final details of Jones' tactics emerged. An additional motion was to be brought into the debate - on flat rate increases. The other motion on wages, a sliding scale, posing the only alternative to the Jones plan, was left to a later part of the agenda.

JONES' CASE

Speaking in support of the social contract Jones said the T&GWU should give a lead to the nation. This meant accepting a 'temporary' retreat on wages in order to advance again later.

The social contract was presented by Jones as the only alternative to statutory wage control. The conference was told that North Sea Oil will come to our rescue and we will return to free collective bargaining. A vote against the contract would lead to "massive unemployment".

His other main plank was the Labour government, arguing that the only way to protect the Labour government and avoid the return of a right wing Thatcher-Joseph administration was to support the social contract.

Moving the Cowley motion rejecting the social contract Alan Thornett defined the two positions being proposed. The first is that workers should tighten their belts to break the inflationary spiral, the other is that the trade unions should do the job they were built for and protect their members against inflation.

He said that the conference had earlier discussed the history of the trade unions, and the fact that they were built in order to protect and improve the living standards of the working class, not as an instrument to reduce them to solve the problems of capitalism.

Inflation, he said, is not caused by the working class. It derives from capitalism and can only be solved by ending capitalism. To talk about breaking the inflationary spiral today is meaningless. Everyone knows that during the last Tory wage freeze and the previous one imposed by a Labour government, prices rose just the same.

He said that when we talk of the trade union making sacrifices we should look at Chile. In Chile real wages were reduced to something like one third of their previous level, yet the cost of living index rose by 376% last year, and by May this year had risen by a further 125%.

This shows clearly that inflation is a part of capitalism and to deal with it by tightening your belts is an employers' argument.

THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE

Replying to the discussion Alan Thornett put forward the only alternative possible to the Jones plan. The only way trade unions could fight inflation, he said, was to do the job they were built for - defend the living standards of their members.

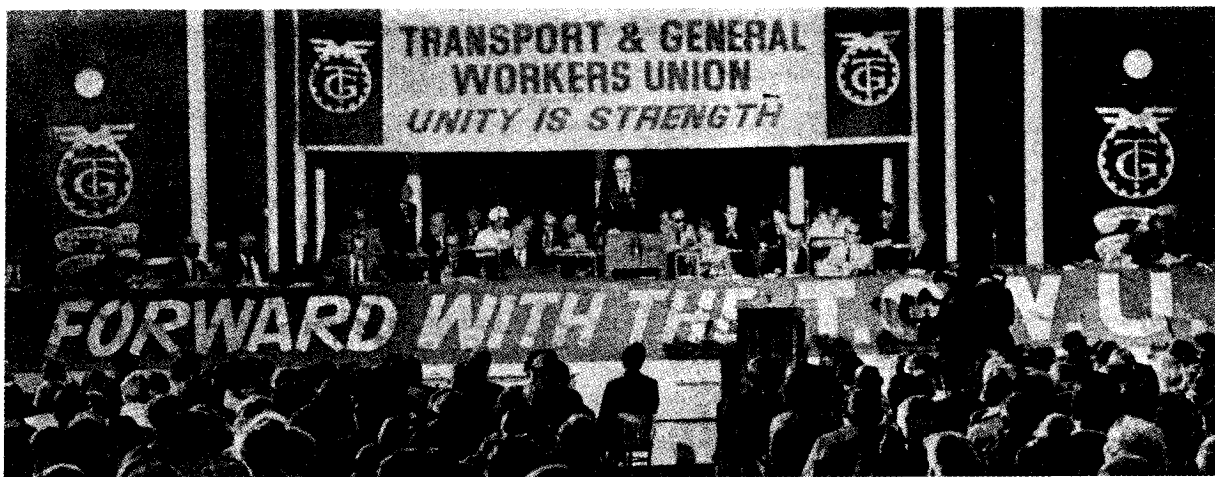
This could only be done with a programme containing the demand for a sliding scale of wages to keep in step with the full amount of the rise in the cost of living.

We should now be talking not simply of threshold payments set against government figures, but pay rises protected by a sliding scale based on a cost of living index worked out by the trade unions. He went on:

"It would be a powerful thing if the trade unions used their resources at all levels to compile accurate figures on cost of living increases and then insist that wages rose by that amount."

Replying to Jones' argument on social justice he said it would take more than a flat rate to achieve this. "They will still be at Ascot and Henley after your flat rate is in" he said.

The debate had posed the alternatives clearly. The conference must either fight for a sliding scale or accept Jones' capitalist "solution" of a wage cut to "break the inflationary spiral".



PROGRAMME TO DEFEND JOBS

On Wednesday morning the conference was shocked by Healey's announcement of state control of wages the previous afternoon.

After voting in favour of the social contract on Tuesday morning delegates found it had been abolished only a few hours later.

This created a dangerous situation for Jones. He wanted to make a statement but there was a lot of opposition from the conference. That Jones should make a statement was put to the vote, and agreed, but with a big abstention.

Jones had to clutch at straws. He said that Murray had rung him and told him that he had been assured by Healey as TUC General Secretary that there would be no state control of wages.

Jones said that the policy of the T&GWU would remain the same - opposition to statutory wage control.

As this was going on the Stalinists, who were trying to move an emergency motion on Healey's statement, were isolated from the conference in the standing orders room.

The first item on the agenda was unemployment. There were two resolutions - one a general one moved by the Stalinists - the other calling for a sliding scale of hours and factory occupations, submitted from Cowley.

It was important that a statement was made on Healey's announcement if opposition was to be effective. Jones knew this and played for time.

In line with these requirements, neither the mover nor the seconder of the first motion even mentioned state control of wages.

TAKE THE HEAT OUT

Harry Urwin, for the Executive, then made an incredibly long statement about almost nothing taking the conference up to 10.30 and the heat out of the situation. Only after this had taken place was Alan Thornett called to move the resolution on a sliding scale of hours.

He said that the day before the conference had been asked to vote for the social contract in order to avoid state control of wages - but only hours later the social contract had gone and what was left was - whatever delegates chose to call it - state control of wages.

This made the discussion on unemployment even more important, he said.

"We were told yesterday that support for the social contract was the only alternative to massive unemployment. But Healey's measures will directly increase unemployment - from a starting point of almost one million. This is not the way to keep the Tories out. What would be the result if there was an election tomorrow?"

It was clear, he went on, that the policies of the Executive had failed. We now have to examine alternative policies if we are to defend jobs.

Such an alternative was contained in the resolution calling for a fight for a sliding scale of hours which was before the conference.

"We are talking essentially about the principle of work-sharing on full pay," he said. "It is time this union began to challenge the 'right' of the employer to put our members on short time or the dole whenever it suits them."

"The only way to fight for such a policy, when faced with redundancy or closure, is to occupy the plant."

Often a strike was not effective in these conditions, because the employer did not want production.

In such cases, he said, the union should give automatic backing to such an action. This policy would be a powerful weapon in the hands of members whose jobs were threatened, and something the employers would have to take account of.

NATIONALISATION

He went on to say that workers faced with losing their jobs should demand that the company books be opened to clearly establish the case for full nationalisation of the firm - not state participation.

Urwin, replying for the Executive, urged the conference to vote against the resolution because it "tied" the Executive to "a specific form of action", and could "land workers in the courts".

Once again therefore the weight of the Executive was thrown behind a pro-capitalist policy - bringing the conference to reject the only programme capable of defending jobs.

SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES

Tuesday afternoon's debate on wages brought the issues out even clearer. The sliding scale of wages resolution, kept out of the social contract debate, emerged as the real alternative.

Having been moved by Alan Thornett on behalf of the Cowley 5/293 branch it had obvious widespread support in the conference, and several speakers gave it strong backing.

As the strength of the policy emerged Jones intervened with an Executive statement. He said that

he could not disagree with the principle of the resolution, even though trade union compiled figures were an innovation, but he would have to urge conference to vote against it because it contradicted the decision taken on the social contract.

Jones got the vote. But the impact of the resolution and discussion on the conference was considerable. The real nature of the social contract could not have been more clearly demonstrated, or the real nature of the Jones proposals.

TROOPS IN GLASGOW

The T&G leadership was heavily attacked for allowing the troops to be sent in to break the dustcart drivers' strike and refusing official support.

Bill Coubraugh, from Glasgow, demanded to know why the leadership had not called for national strike action in support of the drivers.

"If the government can win a victory by bringing in the army against the working class in Glasgow they might get bigger ideas for the use of the army in the future".

These points were raised as questions on the national affairs report. The issue could not be put to the conference because the troops were used in March and resolutions had to be in during January.

SHREWSBURY TWO

The debate on the Shrewsbury pickets, one of whom is a member of the T&GWU, was left until the last day of the conference.

There were two resolutions before the conference. The one supported by the Executive proposed that the 'campaign' be continued. The other called for strike action to obtain their release, and condemned the leadership's 'abject failure' to take adequate action to free the men.

The strike resolution was moved by Ted Gates from London docks. He said that "as far as we are concerned the Executive are not above criticism. The criticism we are levelling is that these men are still in jail".

Seconding the resolution Pat Evans, convenor of BLMC Service Division in Cowley, said the time for talking was over. "We have either got to put up or shut up".

He said the Shrewsbury pickets were not in prison for violence or affray. These charges were dropped. They were put in prison for conspiracy, under an act never before used in an industrial dispute.

He said the problem with the conference was that the Executive would oppose anything which proposed action. He recalled that the previous day a resolution was carried supporting the blacking of South African goods. After the vote Jones had realised that they had been committed to action. He had intervened, the vote was taken

again and the resolution defeated on his recommendation.

REACTIONARY POSITION

During the debate some extremely reactionary position emerged. One speaker, opposing strike action, claimed that the Shrewsbury pickets had been violent. Standing to the right even of the law courts, he listed alleged acts of violence and damage to property.

A big section of the conference emerged in his support. When his three minute speech time came to an end the conference voted for suspension of standing orders to allow him to finish his blistering attack on the pickets.

He was answered by a building section delegate who described the real violence of the building sites carried out by thugs hired by the lump operators to beat up workers organising trade unions.

Replying to the debate on behalf of the Executive, the national officer of the building trades section witch hunted those fighting for strike action. He called the strike motion a "scurrilous attack on the Executive" and went on to say "if certain people keep on telling lies about us we will tell the truth about them".

The no-strike motion, in effect condemning the Shrewsbury 2 to serve their sentences and allowing the state to establish the precedent of the use of conspiracy laws in industrial disputes was carried by a substantial majority.



Warren and Tomlinson-- jailed for picketing.

WRP:NO ACTION

The Workers Revolutionary Party made no detectable intervention at the conference other than Workers Press sales and an open letter to delegates carried in Workers Press.

Not a single motion on the social contract, wages, unemployment or the Shrewsbury Two was moved by any WRP member in any T&G branch in the country.

This is instructive, because in the period when the resolutions had to be submitted, last December and January, the WRP had just carried out a major adaptation, in mid-October, to the criticisms raised by those who later formed the WSL. (See page 3)

Workers Press had suddenly begun carrying demands for a sliding scale of wages and hours and the first Shrewsbury March had been called.

It shows that all this was never more than verbal adaptation. No attempt whatsoever was made to take any of these issues into the

trade union movements, even in places where the WRP has anything left.

The most astounding thing however was the question of the Shrewsbury Two. After marching from north to south, and east to west, and after holding a national conference on Shrewsbury the previous Sunday, anyone could be forgiven the expectation that the WRP would lobby or intervene in the T&GWU conference.

But NO! The WRP totally ignored the one conference which could actually call strike action to get Warren and Tomlinson out. What, then, was the point of voting for a general strike at the ATUA conference if it was never to be taken into the trade union movement? The WRP's Open Letter to T&G delegates, incredibly, did not even mention the Shrewsbury Two.

Again, this shows the WRP 'fight' on Shrewsbury was a sham fight, and was directed more towards the internal problems of the WRP than the release of the Shrewsbury Two.

FOOTNOTE

The nature of the T&GWU conference has to be taken into account when assessing the votes or the impact of policies.

The conferences of the big general unions are in some ways different from industrial unions which deal specifically with the wages and conditions of an industry.

In the AUEW for example Executive Committee and National Committee members can take opp-

osing positions and lead sections of the conference. This could not happen at a T&GWU conference.

There Jones speaks for the Executive Committee (who are not allowed to attend) or he delegates a national officer to speak on his behalf. This means that opposition can only come from individual delegates who are branded as being against the whole leadership.

The conference is therefore more weighted in favour of the platform than is the case in most trade union conferences.

NVT LOSS: Varley permits Sackings

The £7.4m loss registered by the Norton Villiers Triumph motor cycle company, and the plea from NVT directors for £30-£40 million in government aid show the futility of co-operatives as an answer to unemployment.

As *Socialist Press* reported (26.6.75) the Meriden motor cycle cooperative, set up with full support and 'left' rhetoric from the then Industry Secretary, Wedgwood Benn, has embarked upon an intensive speed up and demanning exercise, now employing only 350 out of an original 1,750 workforce - a cut of 80%.

LEFT OUT

But at the same time the government aid given to Meriden left out completely the defence of jobs of the other two NVT plants at Small Heath and Coventry. These are the factories now threatened by the impending collapse of NVT if no government action is taken.

Benn's replacement as Industry

Secretary, Eric Varley, seems determined that the ruthless laws of the capitalist market must now operate at NVT, endangering 3,000 jobs. He has told the firm's chairman, Mr Dennis Poore, that he should not delay "any commercial decisions" that need to be taken.

INSTRUCTION

This is virtually an instruction to Poore to proceed to impose short time and redundancies, which he had offered to delay until government plans were announced. As the *Sunday Telegraph* coldly reports it: "After discussions with NVT directors Mr Varley has come round to the view that a three-factory motor cycles system is not a practical proposition, and that no more government money should be made available".

Under conditions where NVT is already 50.1% government owned, such a position from Varley can only be seen as a part of the government's conscious moves to increase unemployment and hold down public spending in defence of capitalism.

NVT has only sufficient funds for three more weeks of full production. The problem is now urgent. But the solution does not lie in government loans and handouts.

Rather the remaining 49.9% (now owned by Manganese Bronze) must be nationalised without compensation, and a programme of state contracts opened up to guarantee jobs threatened by the shrinking world market for motor cycles.

If less work is available then a programme of work-sharing on full pay, across all factories, administered by trade union committees, must be introduced.

UNITY

At the same time workers must demand full access to the books and to technical resources of NVT for trade union committees which can begin to draw up a planned development of the factories into the future.

Only in this way can the unity and job security of the workers at Meriden, Small Heath and Coventry be established.

DEFEND IMPERIAL OCCUPATION

The 135 day long sit-in of workers at the Imperial Typewriters factory now faces its sharpest challenge.

After prolonged "studies" by the Department of Industry, the Labour government has announced it cannot find a buyer to continue typewriter manufacture, and that two of the Leicester IT factories have been sold to a clothing manufacturer for warehouse facilities.

Immediately after this news came the employers' all out attack on the Hull occupation - taking out High Court writs for possession of the Hedon Road factory, so that they could sell it off.

This position highlights the bankruptcy of the Hull leadership of the T&GWU who have set out from the start to isolate the occupation from the rest of the labour movement in the town. They refused to use the strength of the occupation to demand the only possible answer - the nationalisation of IT without compensation and the production of typewriters for government contracts.

Instead of this pipedream of another capitalist owner taking over the factory which could not make money under the original capitalist owner, was cultivated by local and national T&GWU officials.

Never at any point has the

leadership directed towards exposing the real financial state of IT through opening up the account books of both IT itself and Litton Industries to trade union committees.

The Hull workers now confront the machinery of the state - the law courts and eventually the police - having been kept away from the political development and the national campaign necessary to face up to these forces and win.

Now, before it is too late, the local labour movement must be mobilised in defence of the occupation, and a national struggle focussed on the demand for the nationalisation of Imperial Typewriters.

Food firms cook the books

Two major food companies have warned Labour Prices Secretary Shirley Williams that they are in danger of going out of business - unless profit margins are increased.

These cries, coming from firms that have plundered workers for years with continual price increases, imposed using their monopoly control of food supplies, must be greeted by workers with the greatest scepticism.

It is a cynical move to pressure Williams (an extreme right-winger) into further slackening the already minimal controls on prices and profits brought in by the Labour government last March.

Williams of course needs little pressure to accept the idea of higher food prices. She has only recently been stomping the country on joint referendum platforms with Tory leaders campaigning for the Common Market - an organisation designed to maintain high food prices in the interests of farmers' profits. The effects of EEC entry on British farmers have already appeared in the large scale destruction of milk.

INFLATION

Of course there are financial problems in the food industry - just as there are in all other capitalist industries. While costs of raw materials and maintenance of plant go up rapidly through inflation, sales have been held down by the



Williams - campaigned with Tories.

cut in workers' real wages - also caused by inflation.

The rate of profit in the food industry is therefore falling, while the employers' need for working capital is increasing. But this is true of all industry, not just food manufacture.

But of course the employers maintain a discrete silence on the hundreds of millions of pounds pumped into the food industry by the Labour government in the form of food subsidies.

These subsidies aimed at preserving profit margins, and were financed by taxing the working class in successive Healey budgets, but they only had the most fleeting effect on prices.

The monopolies' "shock" warning of impending collapse is a calculated move therefore. As the *Financial Times* said:

"As with much of manufacturing industry, the food processors took a long time to discover that proof of hardship was needed to sway the government, and that solemn protestations of difficulties were not enough". [25.6.75]

In other words they have learned to "cook the books" to present the worst possible picture and pressure for increased prices and profits.

OPEN THE BOOKS

If manufacturers are in difficulties, the answer is simple for the workers movement - make them prove the position by demanding they open the full accounts (including receipts of government cash) to elected trade union committees. This will clear away the bluff and deception.

All government subsidies must be withdrawn. If the privately-owned food monopolies cannot then continue without raising prices and inflicting speed-up - or if they propose closing down, then clearly they must be nationalised, paying compensation only to small savers.

The nationalised firms must be placed under the management of workers committees, and operated to provide a stable food supply at reasonable prices.

"Moderates" witch-hunt Ford workers

The move to the right of one-time militant Bill Cleary, secretary of the Ford convenors committee and convenor at Ford's tractor plant at Basildon, has resulted in his public support for the call for the witch hunting letter produced from Dagenham.

The letter, directed not at the union but sent direct to the Tory press, calls for an inquiry into so-called "extremist activities" at the Dagenham Body Shop.

"INQUIRY"

The "inquiry" manoeuvre is aimed to witch hunt any Ford worker at Dagenham or elsewhere who fights to defend his job, his wages and his conditions. It is completely in the interests of Ford's management, and opposed to Ford workers.

The press has attached the label of "moderate" to the witch hunters. The use of this term is a further attempt to mask the vicious attacks

on trade unionism now being carried out by the right wing.

The letter seeking the inquiry alleges, for example, that the Dagenham body shop has only 8% of Ford workers but 54% of recent disputes. But only a management stooge would ignore the all-out company drive towards speed up and demanning which has been at the centre of confrontations at Dagenham. No principled trade unionist would advocate acceptance of such attacks.

The question should rather be - what is the management getting away with scot-free in factories under so-called "moderate" leadership? This question goes much wider than just the Ford motor company.

In the BLMC Cowley Assembly Plant, for instance, after the co-ordinated effort of the manage-

ment, the Tory press and TV and the T&GWU bureaucracy last May had removed Bob Fryer as Senior Steward and Alan Thornt from his position as deputy Senior Steward, witch-hunting him as an 'extremist', every plant agreement began to be broken by the company.

PREVENT ACTION

The so-called "moderate", Reg Parsons, who was installed as convenor by the T&GWU bureaucracy with company support, has worked full time ever since attempting to prevent action against speed-up, action to defend wages or action to preserve jobs.

The number employed at the plant has fallen dramatically.

Wages have been held massively below the increased cost of living. Measured Day Work timings have been imposed and the Movement of Labour agreement breached, with the acquiescence of Parsons.

Brought in as convenor on a ticket of "saving" jobs and "full pay packets". Parsons has ensured that less workers are being paid less real money for doing more work in worse conditions. This is what "moderation" is all about.

These attacks on trade unionism of course are politically motivated. The "moderates" all stand on the extreme right wing of the labour movement, many in complete agreement with the employers, acting for them in the unions.

Ford workers must reject any rigged "inquiry" into branches where jobs, wages and conditions are defended. It was under the

"There are, I am sure many moderate and reasonable men there and a small group of extremists can make it difficult for everyone."

Bill Cleary, Secretary of Ford's convenors' committee.

guise of a T&GWU "inquiry", starting with the same technique of a letter of complaint (sent from Parsons to Jack Jones), that the powerful 5/55 Cowley branch was split and the present right wing leadership installed.

LINKS

But it is worthwhile beginning some inquiries into the links between "moderates" and their management, into their easy access to press publicity, into the policies they really advocate, and their links with extreme right wing organisations like the Economic League and Aims of Industry.

Those who are "wrecking" the jobs, wages and conditions of workers are not the "extremists" but the right wing "moderates"!

NUM : REAL ISSUES AVOIDED

From our own correspondent in Scarborough.



Scargill - caved in to right wing.

The conference of the National Union of Mineworkers in Scarborough was dominated by one thing: a complete air of unreality as each delegate and speaker persistently ignored Chancellor Healey's plans for state control of wages.

This atmosphere was deliberately stage-managed by President Joe Gormley and the rest of the platform to give a picture of a 'boom industry' threatened only by excessive pay claims, and of

a socialist Labour Government to be protected and obeyed at all costs.

In fact exactly the reverse is the real case, and this makes clear the depth of the betrayal of miners' living standards by Arthur Scargill, President of the Yorkshire miners. As the recession gathers and demand for electricity drops, so does that for coal.

The Central Electricity Generating Board is running down several coal-fired power stations, and coal's second biggest buyer, the British Steel Corporation, is now producing only three-fifths of normal output.

The Labour Government has long abandoned any defence of workers' living standards and now comes forward, with the TUC, for plans for massive wage cuts at a time of 30% inflation.

EZRA'S THREAT

Only a couple of hours before the discussion on wages, Gormley called on Derek Ezra, chairman of the NCB, to speak. Ezra did not mention wages, but the threat was clear when he said, "Further major price increases would rapidly lose us markets, jeopardise our investment plans

and reduce our employment prospects".

Gormley's intention was clear when he then shook hands with Ezra, declaring, "excellent speech, excellently done at the right time".

So the wages discussion took place in an atmosphere of threats to jobs both from the Labour Government in the shape of Wilson, and from the employer.

After refusing up to the previous evening to change the word "demand" in the call for face-workers to be paid £100 per week (approval 10 to 7 by the Yorkshire delegation), Scargill finally insisted at the last minute that his delegation approve the right-wing NEC recommendation. The word "demand" was deleted, and "seek" used for the sake of "unity" and because the resolution "might fall".

Scargill's collapse is a direct blow to all workers, who will fight the Labour Government to defend living standards. This was emphasised by the coach-loads of Yorkshire miners who lobbied the conference on Monday and called Wilson "Ramsay MacDonald", "traitor", shouting "No ten per cent!"

All Scargill's passionate and completely non-political speech for £100 cannot erase that. It reflects the frantic attempts of

the right wing and Stalinists - (the Stalinist vice-president McGahey was also backing the word "seek") - to hold workers back from any confrontation with the Labour Government.

REACTIONARY ALLIANCE

The real policy of this untidy and reactionary alliance was revealed when right-winger Len Clark of Nottinghamshire said that he believed "in hoping, if not praying that similar confrontations (to the 1972 and 1974 strikes) will not happen again when the nation is going through severe economic difficulties".

The right wing were jubilant in emphasising that the composite resolution meant that £100 would not be the claim this year, that it gave the NEC all the "room to manoeuvre" (and sell out) that it wanted, and that it avoided calling for industrial action.

Scargill now tries to pretend that the Yorkshire claim for £100 is still on. He is wrong. The door is open for Daly to accept Healey's state control of wages and an opportunity for miners again to give leadership to the whole working class has been thrown away.

Bailiffs will go into action in a week to seize property of the 11 Clay Cross former councillors, who have 7 days to pay £7,940 plus £500 costs.

Their "crime" was that they alone out of the hundreds of Labour councils, held a principled line and refused to implement the Tory "Fair Rents" Act. This was in line with Labour Party policy.

Trade unionists and Labour Party members must rally now to the defence of the 11, and hound out the right-wingers who support their victimisation through the Courts.

FUND

The good response we have received each month to our £500 Monthly Development Fund has enabled us rapidly to expand the areas of work of the Workers Socialist League, and opens up possibilities of more on-the-spot reporting as from the NUM and T&GWU Conferences.

There is still a need to develop the technical resources of our paper. We call for your support. Please post all donations to:

WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

W.S.L. Public Meetings

AYLESBURY

Wednesday, 23rd July, 8.00pm.
Bricklayers' Arms
"Reject State Control of Wages"

OXFORD

Thursday, 24th July, 8.00pm.
Cowley Community Centre
"Reject State Control of Wages"

TUC votes ... continued from page 1

jobs and for the nationalisation of firms threatening redundancies.

These policies are fought for consistently by the Workers Socialist League. They were fought for at the T&GWU conference and are covered in detail on pages 6 & 7 of this edition.

RYDER 'IMPROVEMENTS' REJECTED

The British Leyland joint shop stewards committee has received a sharp reply from management on the implementation of the Ryder report.

A meeting of convenors of all unions in Digbeth on June 4th accepted the report in principle but sent a delegation back to Ryder to argue for "improvements" in the "participation" proposals in the report.

They could hardly have been treated with more contempt by top management. Instead of replying to them as representatives, Leyland circulated a statement to all employees individually setting out the way they

intend to implement the "participation" section of the Ryder report.

The statement finally ends any argument on sections of the report being progressive, or "a basis to build on". Leyland spell out their objectives in clear terms. After saying that the proposed "joint management" committees and councils will not deal with wages or conditions of employment, it goes on to explain that they will deal with - investment, new model and facility planning, sales and marketing plans, and financial performance. This is "with the firm objective of developing an agreed course of action."

In other words developing an "agreement" to speed up and rationalisation in order to stay in business.

On management prerogatives they are equally clear:

"For its part, Management will be prepared to present alternative courses of action whenever they are available and to modify them in the light of discussion. Genuine attempts must be made to seek a consensus. With this approach the occasions on which Management has to implement a plan without having obtained a high measure of agreement should be rare. In short the objective is to maximise the areas of agreement."

Whether disagreements are to be "rare" or not, this statement makes it clear that management have the final, over-riding say on all questions.

A further meeting of BLMC convenors will be held shortly to discuss the statement. Ryder should now be completely rejected, and full nationalisation of BLMC fought for.

*At the T&GWU conference, Assistant General Secretary, Harry Urwin, who was on the Ryder team, insisted that the report was actually written by two businessmen and two bankers - he was there "to put the trade union point of view."