

TROTSKYISM TODAY ★

No 11. 19th January, 1977

Price 5p

THEORETICAL SUPPLEMENT TO SOCIALIST PRESS



Mass turn-out at Southall anti-racist demonstration

THE FIGHT FOR REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP

In this edition of Trotskyism Today we continue publication of the Perspectives Document for Britain adopted at the First Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League, held last December. This, the Second Part, follows on from Part One "The Economic Crisis" and completes Part Two "The Labour Government".

The Heath administration, elected in 1970 as the result of a mass abstention by workers disillusioned by six years of Wilson's betrayals, was unable directly to confront the working class.

The series of struggles against the Industrial Relations Act and the three stages of State Pay Laws (every one of these fights taking place *in spite of* and not because of the political line of the TUC leaders, who were forced into protest action by the movement of the working class) brought a near General Strike to force the release of the Pentonville Five pickets, a defeat for Heath by the miners in 1972, and the final removal of his government in 1974 when he found himself without the support needed to press home a confrontation with the miners.

MANOEUVRES

The fall of Heath took place *despite* the frantic backstage manoeuvres and retreats by the TUC (and in particular the NUM) leaders. And when Heath finally sought a mandate to smash the miners in a witch-hunting election and failed to win it, only then was the minority Wilson government (led from the start by people who had done *nothing* to fight the Tories over the previous four years) thrust into office.

The election of a Labour government in this way reflected therefore both the *class strength* of the working class and its political weakness and reformist illusions.

Heath was driven out on the one hand, but on the other hand the Labour Party, built and supported by the mass of the working class but totally committed to a bourgeois leadership, turned at once to attack its own working class base in order to defend capitalism by whatever means

necessary.

Relying from the start on the backing of the trade union bureaucracy which has characterised the present Labour government's every betrayal, Wilson proceeded to attack every principle of socialism and trade unionism.

DEFENDED

The Labour government defended the Tory Pay Laws; only reluctantly repealed the Industrial Relations Act after facing the prospect of a national AUEW strike; they left the Shrewsbury Two pickets (jailed by the Tories) to rot in prison; they defied repeated Labour and TUC decisions in order to join with Tories and Liberals in campaigning for the Common Market; they sent in troops to break a dustcart drivers' strike in Glasgow, stepped up the repression in Northern Ireland, passed the vicious so-called "Prevention of Terrorism Act" giving massively extended police powers for use against militants, and authorised a police raid on the school of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

And now, alongside their retention of the reactionary anti-immigration legislation, the Callaghan government, by creating the social conditions of mass unemployment, falling living standards, inadequate housing and slashed social services, is opening wide the door to racialism and fascism.

WOMEN

In particular the cuts in social services push women further back into the isolation of the home and thus increasingly they become prey to reactionary propaganda.

This is further worsened by the 'left' policy of import controls which seeks to persuade British workers to ally with their

'own' employer against "foreign" competitors rather than to fight for socialist policies.

In this climate the TUC's efforts to block any class action on jobs or wages stoke up frustration and confusion in the working class and open up the ranks of the proletariat to the poisonous propaganda of the racialists.

There must be no artificial separation of the roles of the 'left' and the right-wing within the Labour government. Both in their own way act in defence of capitalism, appealing to different bases of support.

While in 1974 the right wing within the Wilson cabinet got straight down to the preparation of long term attacks and deals with the employers, the 'lefts' were at once given prominent positions to carry through a new level of class-collaboration.

Foot in the Employment Ministry led the preparation of the "social contract", the £6 pay laws and the moves towards the 4½% deal, while Benn's task in the Industry Department was to lay the groundwork for the Industry Bill and its National Enterprise Board, bristling with a battery of props and subsidies for private industry.

The operation of this wing of Labour strategy is typified by the plan for British Leyland drawn up by NEB chief Ryder. Whole layers of the trade union bureaucracy, down to convenor and leading steward level, have been sucked into management through the Ryder "participation" scheme. They now see it as their job to assist the employers impose huge speed-up and rationalisation.

The supposed "nationalisation" of Lyeland emerges as an elaborate disguise for running a joint-stock company with a 95% government holding — in the interests of the wholly private car components industry.

Similarly in Chrysler, £160 million is handed over to the private employers with *no* steps taken towards nationalisation, while 8,000 sackings are forced through. Elsewhere the role of the NEB can be seen as a provider of emergency cash transfusions for bankrupt private employers, or sometimes a stop-gap donor of small sums for face-saving but doomed 'co-operatives'.

The NEB of course, has always been the centrepiece of reformist strategy of the 'lefts'. Its real task — attacking the working class and diverting away from the fight to force nationalisation of bankrupt industries — exposes the sometimes veiled support by the 'lefts' for the continuation of capitalism.

Their whole focus is not on socialist policies but on utopian demands for 'reflation' of the capitalist economy, combined with import controls.

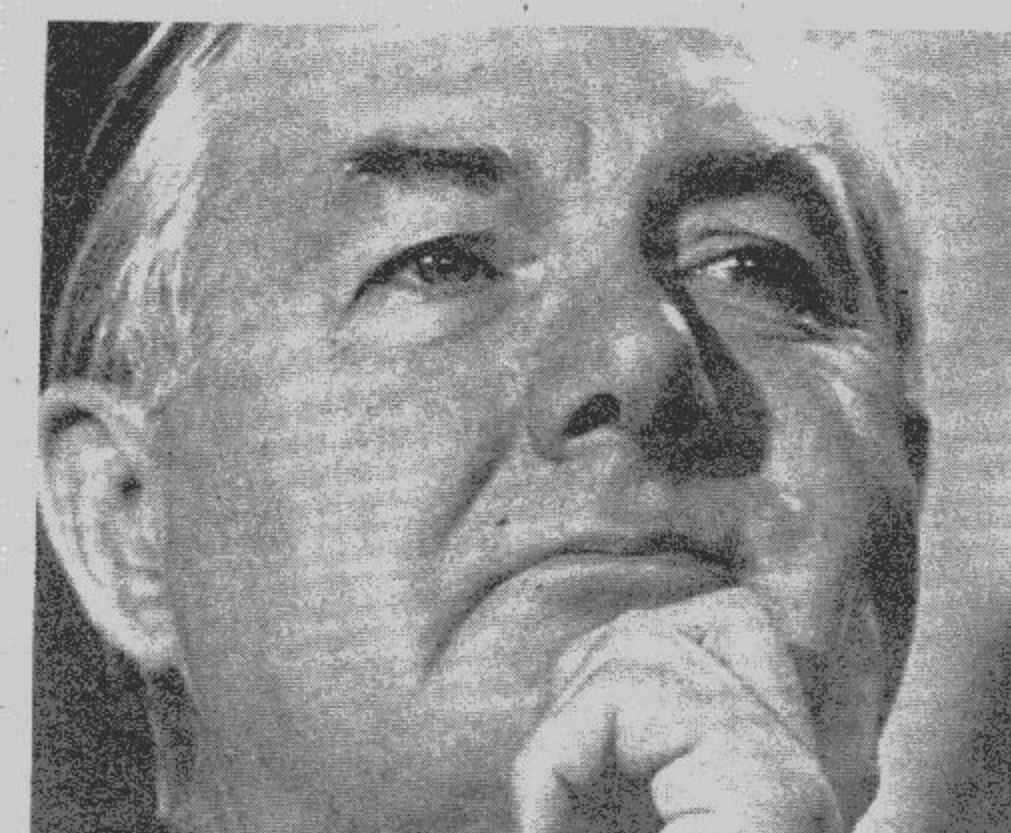
ARROGANT

The only difference between the 'lefts' and the right wing on such questions is that while the right wing openly and arrogantly advance pro-capitalist arguments and speak the line of management, the 'lefts' feel forced from time to time to preach a sermon on socialist policies, and always attempt to dress up the wolf of capitalist policies in the clothing of left wing sheep.

But every one of the 'lefts' gestures in this direction, starting from their complete dedication to parliamentary methods and legislated 'socialism' serves purely to divert the struggles of the working class into impotent attempts to "transform" capitalism without mobilising their class strength against the capitalist state.

As soon as a determined struggle against the bourgeoisie is on the cards, the 'lefts' melt away, compromising with the right wing to avoid a conflict.

For the 'lefts', under constant pressure from the working class, political action is restricted to manoeuvres in Parliament and demonstrative speeches, which have the effect of turning the political struggle of workers into the dead end of reformism.



For every revolutionary demand they seek a toothless parliamentary substitute. Expropriation of the capitalists and the development of workers' management is turned into state shareholdings and "plan-

ning agreements”.

Workers' control is interpreted to mean workers' "participation" — which of course amalgamates stewards into management just as the 'lefts' themselves have been sucked into the state apparatus. Defence of the social services is turned into an occasion for pontification and mock opposition in Parliament.

Nevertheless the 'lefts' claim they have a programme which they believe can solve the capitalist crisis. It must be our task to demonstrate to workers who might support this so-called alternative that not only are their demands mainly reactionary (import controls) but they seek only to solve the crisis within the confines of capitalism.



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Benn

Indeed the collapse of the 37 MPs, who for one rare moment went so far as to abstain on a vote for Healey's proposed cuts (not daring to vote against), but who next day obediently trooped into the lobby to endorse the government's economic policies showed clearly the subservience of the 'left' to the right wing.

This was then confirmed by the failure of any of those 37 to stand in opposition to the platform of right wingers and former 'lefts' in the Labour leadership elections. They allowed Benn and Foot — who have grovelled before Wilson — to carry the 'left' vote.

By refusing to give a lead to the workers' movement at that point, and by allowing the whole leadership election to be confined to the cloistered ranks of the Parliamentary Labour Party by Wilson rather than fight for *Conference* to decide, the 'lefts' carried out a major betrayal.

Since the day of the famous 37 abstentions which actually brought a temporary defeat for the government, every Labour right winger and union bureaucrat has beaten the drum for the need to "unite" against the danger of Parliamentary defeat, General Election and a possible Tory government.

FORCED ELECTION

But if Callaghan were forced to an election by the 'lefts' taking up a fight against the cuts and a clear-cut vote *against* them, then even the election of a Tory government would not necessarily change the political conditions in favour of capitalism.

The whole explosive issue of working class leadership would be opened up, and those 'lefts' who had stood out in opposition to attacks on the working class would be called upon by advanced layers of workers to proceed with the fight to replace the existing Labour leadership.

Programme and policy would be newly debated throughout the Labour and trade union movement with, for the first time, the emergence of what workers would see as an "alternative".

At the same time a stand by any section of the reformist leadership against cuts and sackings would strengthen every section of workers in struggle to defend jobs and wages.

And such a forward movement running through the working class would remain, even if a Tory government were elected — creating the smouldering possibility of, at any point, the outbreak of an all-out fight against the employers' attacks and the government leading them.

It is a deception, therefore, to say — as chorus Callaghan, Jones, Scanlon and some centrists — that the preservation of the Labour government at any price is a *principle*.

WRONG DEMAND

But it is clearly wrong also to demand abstractly, as do the Workers Revolutionary Party, for workers to 'Bring down the Labour Government!' The issue for us is to focus attention on the *refusal* of the 'lefts' to give a lead in fighting the right wing Labour and trade union leaders — on their grovelling and spinelessness in the face of every right wing policy.

We must direct the most advanced layers of workers towards exposing the 'lefts' in *practice* by demanding they break from their present policies — and by demonstrating their inability to do so. This is the importance of our slogan 'Make the 'Lefts' Fight!'

Our direction in short must be towards



The platform of the First Conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.

the issue of *leadership* — and not towards votes in Parliament. The 'lefts' have a duty to the Labour movement they *cannot fulfil*, and we must expose this. Their capitulations in Parliament are therefore to be taken up in *this* context and not as 'Parliamentary' questions.

Our demand that the 'lefts' fight to remove the Callaghan-Healey leadership, and themselves take responsibility for forming a leadership answerable to the working class must therefore be understood as part of the bridge we must build between the consciousness of the masses (who still retain illusions in the 'lefts') and grasping the necessity to fight for state power and the socialist revolution.

It is in this way that we develop the culminating demand of the Transitional Programme 'for a workers' government' — that the parties and leaders of the working class break from the bourgeoisie and develop a government responsible to the working class.

Focusing the demand on the 'lefts' who have the allegiance of important sections of workers, to remove the right wing leadership can lead to their exposure in practice, and demonstrate both the treachery of the 'lefts' and the impossibility of the working class ruling through the institutions of the bourgeois state.

At the same time our call on the 'lefts' to fight the right wing is facilitated by our giving firm but *critical* support at each stage to any correct stand, call to action or statement that might be made by them.

In this way we will speak directly to those layers of workers who retain confidence in these leaders — but in a way that will strengthen our hand in attacking every subsequent betrayal and retreat the 'lefts' carry out.

Part Three The Unions

The sharp rightward turn of the union bureaucracy over the past period has been the necessary result of reformist leaders accommodating to the unprecedented crisis of capitalism.

Accepting at every point the logic and the very arguments of the employers — that 'viability' and profits are crucial for jobs and wages; that the pound can and must be "saved" by wage cuts; that public spending

must be slashed to direct "investment" to (private) manufacturing industry — the union officials and their hangers-on within the stewards' committees and regional and district bodies now stand in the front line of action to *prevent* struggles by workers in defence of jobs and living standards.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL

If the most open *national* face of these moves took the form of the bureaucratic imposition by TUC leaders of the 4½% pay policy — using a series of manoeuvres outlined in detail in the resolution to the 'Wage Control and Democracy' Conference — at local level the most spectacular straight-jacketing of the shop floor strength of the unions has been in the Longbridge events, with the 'participation' machinery mobilised to the full to enforce acceptance of management dictatorship over manning levels on the new mini — on plant that has not yet even been built!

These reactionary moves at Longbridge have rested throughout on the complete collaboration of the Stalinists with the Ryder Participation set-up, and the slavish advocacy by Stalinist convenor Robinson of management positions.

But elsewhere the right wing are increasingly unable to win the support of the working class to their collaborationist policies, and this results in a sharper lurch towards tightening the stranglehold of the local and national full-time officials over the stewards movement and the rank and file.

DEAL WITH CP

The union which has most rapidly and openly adopted this course has been the T&GWU, where the right wing has for a long period had a deal which has neutralised the Stalinists completely, and where, in any event, no officials are subject to re-election once appointed, or in any way answerable to the membership.

To further strengthen the hand of the officials in the T&GWU, elections have where necessary been blatantly manipulated to ensure that hand-picked right wingers were elected.

At the same time the attacks on the stewards movement have come both through the imposition of 'participation' and attempts to force in corporate bargaining on the Ford's model, and where necessary, by the blatant assertion of bureaucratic control by Regional Office — as in Hull, with the withdrawal of credentials of 16 docks stewards and their replacement by appointed officials in negotiations.

In the AUEW the strategy to impose such a line had to be different, since there was initially a left wing majority, and a system of elected officials still operates.

There the move to the right had to be carefully prepared through the orchestrated campaign to introduce the postal ballot system, combined with the witch-hunting of left-wing candidates, and the advertising of 'moderate' slates of extreme right wingers through the media.

This tactic of using the press to reach ill-informed and less active layers of the working class, attempting to whip them into voting for right wing candidates is now being applied more and more widely by the employers and the right wing.

In the Trades Councils as we have repeatedly pointed out, the assertion of bureaucratic control revolves around the introduction and application of the new "gag" Model Rule 15 — which carries threats of disaffiliation for Trades Councils which support campaigns (for example, against the cuts) which run counter to TUC policy.

The collaboration of the Stalinists with the right wing has again been essential to forcing this rule into the Trades Councils.

A clear example of how far they are prepared to go has been the disaffiliation and 'reconstitution' of the Oxford Trades Council — steps masterminded and covered by the Stalinists in order to oust the principled majority within the Trades Council leadership who were clearly prepared to lead struggles in defence of the social services while the Stalinists were up to their ears in collaboration with management.

While the WSL might have been slow to recognise the importance of the fight for trade union democracy, we have very decisively changed that position and launched major initiatives around the issue locally and nationally and through the pages of our press.

We have exposed ballot abuses, the bureaucratic dictatorship of union officials, and attacks on the stewards' movement.

We have clearly seen in practice that without the fight for democratic rights within the unions our fight for programme can only be blocked by the bureaucracy at each successive stage.

But perhaps more important, our throwing attention in the unions onto the bureaucratic abuses and corruption within the unions is a powerful political lever, which, as we have shown in our work in Cowley in



NUPE contingent on the November 17th demonstration.

particular, can mobilise mass support.

Our strength as a movement is our ability to combine this fight for democracy within the unions with a fight for *programme* which itself also poses the need for new leadership, and marks out a clear alternative road ahead towards the struggle for workers' control and socialist revolution.

We have also fully supported the initiative of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, whose initiative on Wage Control and Union Democracy has opened up a discussion among broader layers of workers, linking programme to defend living standards with a political analysis of the role of the bureaucracy.

INITIATIVE

This initiative must be followed through in the coming period as part of our overall struggle against wage control and on the central political questions of working class leadership, in which the strength of our principled fight in the working class will be decisive.

It is this strength, combined with the unbroken strength of the working class (which continues to break out in isolated but extremely militant struggles, as with the wave of Leyland strikes, the seamen's ballot result, the Ford's riot, and continuing struggles throughout the health and social services) which makes it possible to look towards defeats for the bureaucracy in certain areas, and important political gains from our trade union work.

At the forefront of our fight in many industries will be our principled opposition to all forms of "workers' participation" as enshrined in the Ryder report and now (in various forms) supported by all shades of reformists, the Communist Party and the Tory Party.



Scanlon

In opposition to 'participation' in speed-up we must fight for workers' control of manning levels, for the opening of company books to elected *trade union* committees to reveal to the trade union movement the workings of the industry, and, where work schedules are cut, we must lead the fight for work sharing on full pay.

In these struggles we have already as a movement established an outstanding record of principled struggle to draw upon, and important experience in building opposition to 'participation'.

Another common move by employers to defuse struggle over jobs is the device of "voluntary redundancy" — which sheds labour while avoiding any crunch confrontation through compulsory sackings. Such manoeuvres (though hard to fight effectively) must be firmly opposed, pointing to the speed-up and unemployment they create and pointing the finger at the refusal of the union leaders to defend jobs and conditions.

COMPREHENSIVE

We cannot predict in what order or on precisely what initial issues struggles in the unions will emerge most powerfully in the next period. So comprehensive is the attack of the Labour government and the employers, and so craven the betrayal of the union bureaucracy, any resistance to wage cuts, sackings or social service cuts immediately takes on a major importance.

Any sector could be the first to break into spontaneous action in defiance of their official leaders. But we must certainly expect eruptions of sharp struggle in the next period, in which rich political lessons can be learned by advanced layers of workers and gains made by the Workers Socialist League.

But here the break from propagandism is most decisive for our movement. Some comrades who have been unable to grasp some of the lessons of our struggle initially within the WRP or our subsequent struggle to break from WRP methods within the WSL may for a period feel themselves isolated from the mass movement.

There must be the most detailed and thorough attention to the struggle within the unions in each area, to the defence *on every* (even partial) *issue* of trade union and political principle, and to the development in this fight of a periphery of active trade unionists in dialogue with our comrades with a view to recruitment.

Fresh forces must be brought into these struggles to add their strength to the fight against bureaucracy. And we must maintain a consistent intervention into the daily struggles of the working class in each locality in order to root the WSL deeper into its leading ranks.



"The demands of the Transitional Programme . . . crystallise in a popular, fighting form, what is necessary if workers are to defend themselves but cannot be achieved under capitalism." As the basis for these demands, Trotsky took both the experiences of the Bolsheviks and the early Communist International and also the practical struggles of the American Trotskyists, who led militant struggles for unionisation in the mid-1930s. (Above) Minneapolis Teamsters battle with scabs and police in their fight for union recognition.

Part Four: Programme

When Trotsky declared that "The significance of the programme is the significance of the party", he thereby expressed the fact that the revolutionary programme cannot be reduced to any simple formula.

What he also meant is that those who abandon the programme of the party, either explicitly or by turning it into an icon reserved for occasional adulation, abandon at the same time the essential step in the revolutionary party's struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

The political strength of the WSL is accurately expressed by the fact that, as the opposition within the WRP, it took its stand on the ground of the defence of the Transitional Programme, seeking to grasp its method and its strategy, which are expressed in certain key tactics.

The WRP opposition was thus forced to pit itself against the revision of Marxism by which the WRP leadership abandon the programme in the name of maximum formulations, sectarian when advanced in the present pre-revolutionary situation.

The opposition rightly insisted that the tasks set for the leadership of the working class by the programme meant a struggle to actually forge the instruments of workers' control and the germs of workers' state power within the day-to-day struggles

of the working class. This is the importance of the fight to make the Transitional Programme the programme of struggle for the mass movement of the trade unions.

Thus the struggle with the WRP centred not simply on demands and slogans but on *method*, which is decisive if the small forces of Trotskyism are to relate to the mass movement of the working class and successfully mobilise that class in the struggle for state power.

For seeking a bridge between *our* clearly understood aim of socialism and the spontaneous consciousness developed by the working class in daily trade union struggles we were slandered as "reformists" by the Healy WRP leadership.

Today's crisis means that the operation of the law of value throws the whole of society into the most savage and anarchic convulsions as the forces of production collide with the social relations within which they have come into being.

UNCONTROLLED

The entire social order — not merely the visible productive process — is thrown into crisis, a crisis which the bourgeoisie itself is unable to control.

With this crisis comes the prospect not only of sharpening class struggle and attempts by the ruling class to shift massively the distribution of wealth in their favour, but at the same time the threat of destruction of the accumulated productive forces themselves — such is the nature of the death agony of capitalism.

With this prospect facing modern society, the working class is the only class

capable of revolutionary leadership. This is both because capitalism can only survive by throwing the full burden of the crisis onto the working class, and because only the working class, the living instrument of the process of production, can replace the chaos and misery of capitalist crisis by continuously controlled and planned production of use values.

The demands of the Transitional Programme are thus transitional not merely because they crystallise in a popular, fighting form what is necessary if workers are to defend themselves but cannot be achieved under capitalism.

They are *also* transitional in the sense that they point to the practical political course along which the working class can test its strength in *action*, educate itself politically and organisationally, and select the leadership it needs for its historic task of governing society.

The Second and Third Congresses of the Communist International laid stress on the struggle for organs of workers' control, propaganda and agitation aimed at puncturing all pretence that imperialism could guarantee economic stability. For the same reason, the Transitional Programme insists that only through the struggle for workers' control, and the establishment of workers' management in the state and the economy can the forces of production and culture as a whole be preserved and developed.

CONCRETE FORMS

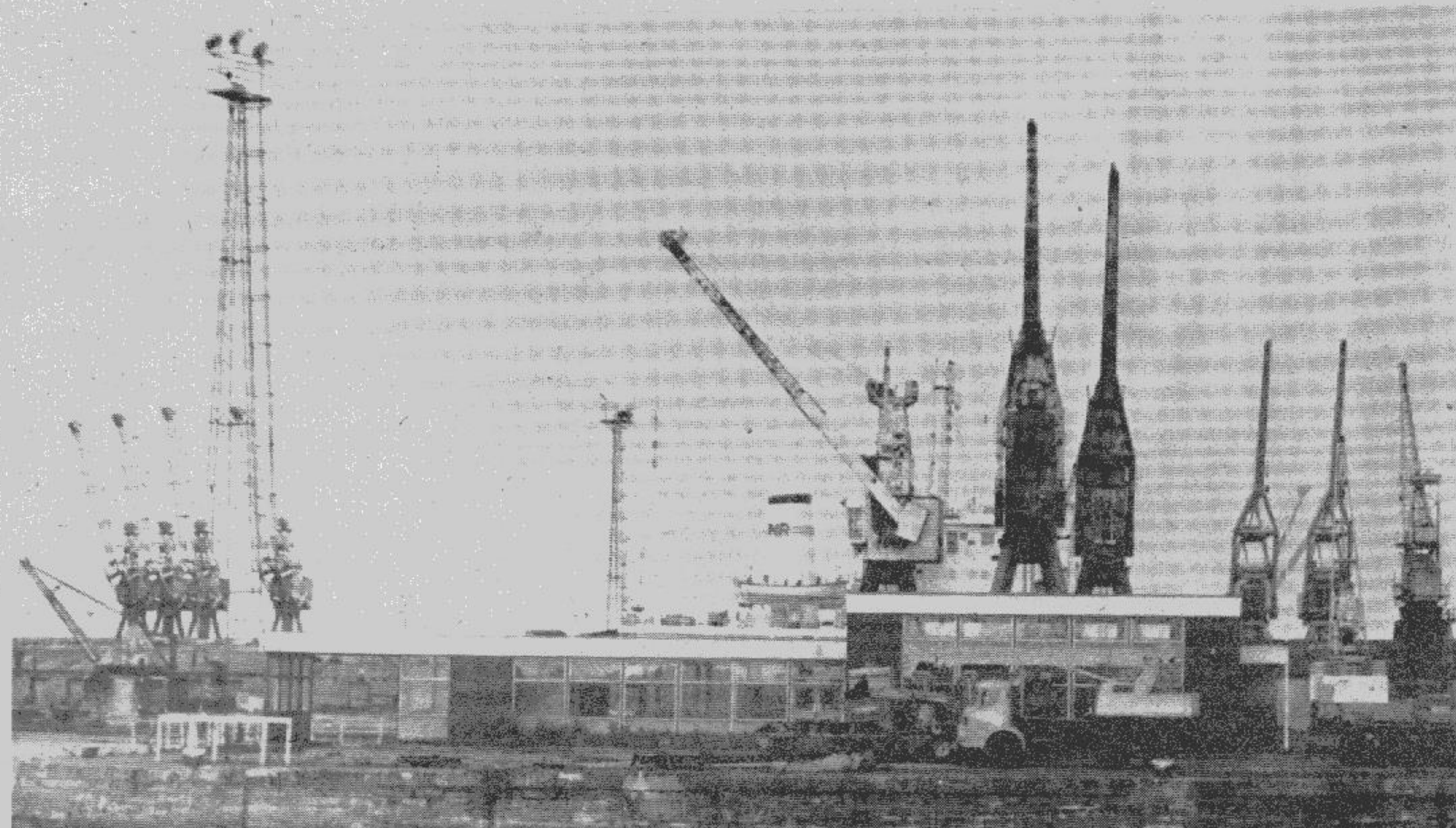
The present social crisis presents itself as an attack on the political rights and living standards of the working class in a number of concrete forms.

State control of wages in combined with wage cuts, the reduction of state spending goes hand in hand with unemployment and inflation affects everything.

The fight against unemployment takes as its starting point the demand for *work sharing on full pay*, in other words the total amount of work available to be divided amongst the total work force with no loss of earnings. The jobs of part-time workers must, in a similar way, be defended.

This demand brings the working class immediately into conflict with the measure that capital must take in order to restore the rate of profit: the rationalisation of productive forces, to enable them to function again as capital. The work-sharing-on-full-pay demand, fought for by factory occupations, thus encapsulates the contradiction between the capitalist relations of production and the further development of the productive forces.

Of course this demand is inseparable from the struggle for the subordination of the entire economy to planned production



Hull docks



Trotsky

for use. The revolutionary organisation fights to demonstrate this practically to the working class through the call for *opening the books* to elected trade union committees and an end to business secrets.

In those struggles where we have been able to place the demand for the opening of the books in front of the mass movement of the working class, we have been able to show how this demand represents a perspective of offensive struggle against the employers, powerfully raising the elements of workers' control.

When directed outwards from an individual struggle towards subsidiaries, suppliers and the banks, the open the books demand becomes an important vehicle for both mobilising struggle and raising the consciousness of the working class, while directing towards control on an ever wider basis.

The struggle for this demand involves the construction by the working class of organs of dual power — workers' committees — at the factory and at industry level.

At the same time the demand must be directed towards the nationalisation of the industry without compensation for the major shareholders. Opening the books both establishes the case for nationalisation and mobilises workers for that fight.

MANAGEMENT

At the same time the next stage of the struggle is also contained in the demand. Workers must demand not capitalist nationalisation, but *nationalisation under workers' management*. And the basis for workers' management must be the committees of workers' control set up to examine the books, the inner workings of the company or industry. In this way the one key demand prepares the ground both for nationalisation and for workers' management.

The fight against unemployment must not remain at the level of preserving existing jobs, but must also take up the question of resuming the employment of those workers who have *already* been deprived of their livelihoods.

All the time we must emphasise in our propaganda the tragic absurdity of idle productive forces coexisting with idle hands in a situation of falling living standards.

We must show how capitalist profit is the sole barrier to workers setting the productive forces in motion once again for the benefit of themselves and society as a whole.

Against unemployment, therefore, and on the basis of the *nationalisation* of key industries obstructed by capital, we demand a *programme of public works*, whose content should be decided by the working class itself.

YOUTH

We should fight actively as we have *already* begun in some areas to involve the unemployed and youth in these plans to be worked out by trade union committees. And at the same time we must insist that all jobs created in this way are paid at full trade union rates, and the workers fully organised in unions.

The defence of the social services, together with the general demand for a *programme of public works* (like the struggle for workers' control in the private sector) moves out into other parts of the economy.

To defend the health service against inflation the opening of the books and the *nationalisation* of the supply industries must

be called for. A programme of public works also raises the question of component supply.

Such a programme conflicts directly with the capitalists' demand for *cuts* in public spending, since social services and public works, to the extent that the resources for them are going to be purchased from the capitalist sector, require massive *increases* in spending.



Sheffield steel works: nationalised industries pose question of fight for workers' management.

Reformists argue that such a programme is 'impractical', that it will push up the rate of inflation, etc. Our programme however does not start from the problems of capitalism but from the requirements of the working class.

Our answer is twofold: firstly, the working class must defend itself against inflation through the fight for a *sliding scale of wages*. And secondly, if keeping open unprofitable sections of capitalist industry through state credit can only be done by massively increasing the rate of inflation, then we say that these private industries must be taken over by the working class through nationalisation under workers' management.

INFLATION

The defence of the working class against inflation *cannot* be done by the state but only by the fight for the sliding scale of wages in accordance with a cost-of-living index established by the workers through committees of trade unionists, housewives and claimants. Only this demand can be counterposed to the imposition of state wage control and massive spending cuts on the working class today as the reformists' "solution" to the inflationary crisis.

In fighting for such a programme workers will come into irreconcilable conflict with the operation of the law of value, which now works itself out through inflation, unemployment, and the consequent capitalist policies of redundancies, wage cuts and reductions in state spending.

In this way the programme brings together the battles of the working class to defend and preserve its position under capitalism with the tasks of the socialist revolution. It neither capitulates nor adapts to the opportunism of the trade union struggle spontaneously responding to the capitalist crisis, nor does it idealistically erect the struggle for revolutionary leadership and state power as an abstraction standing above

and beyond the problems faced by the mass of workers.

The slogan — or set of slogans — directed at building workers' control of production are a main starting point of the "bridge" to the socialist revolution. Their full significance must be seen against an overall Marxist understanding of the crisis of capitalism. The demand that the working class defend itself not merely by struggling

for concessions, but also by trying to establish its own control over the process of production, over distribution, and over the spheres of state spending, is the hallmark of concrete revolutionary politics.

The struggle for the programme poses the question of state power in a number of ways. Economically it does so because its implementation requires the working class to establish society-wide organs of power to prevent the state from carrying out capitalist economic policies, and to force planned production under the control of the workers.

Politically it does so because the struggle for the programme will drive the ruling class to seek more and more the use of state power to weaken the working class — through the courts, the police, the military, as well as giving their tacit consent to attacks by fascist thugs.

Against such actions, the working class must see to its own defence by creating groups of workers ready to deal with them.

This is the starting point for the demand for a workers' militia, and the disbanding of the police force and standing army.

In our presentation of the Transitional Programme to the working class we must avoid two complementary errors. On the one hand we must recognise that the transitional demands provide a concrete, but revolutionary perspective for the day to day struggles of workers.

We must absolutely oppose any concept that the demands of the programme in the least absolve WSL members from fighting on *every* question arising in the daily struggles of the working class. Our task on the contrary consists in *spearheading*, wherever the opportunity arises, struggles for trade union organisation for defending and improving working conditions, for equal rights, pay and opportunity for working women — and a whole host of demands which in themselves are not actually specified in detail in the Transitional Programme, but are key to winning a firm base

in the working class.

As Trotsky writes:

"The Bolshevik-Leninist stands in the front-line trenches of all kinds of struggles, even when they involve only the most modest material interests or democratic rights of the working class. He takes active part in mass trade unions for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy."

However, in the propagandistic presentation of our programme we must indicate the fact that the struggles of the working class can ultimately only be successful through the creation of a socialist society.

NATIONALISATION

To make this goal clear means advancing the slogan of nationalisation of the economy as a whole in connection with our calls upon the 'lefts' to fight for socialist policies. In this way the essential foundation of a workers' state is put consistently before the working class in a clear form.

The break from the WRP was a break from the sectarian *abstention* from workers' daily struggles which characterises both Healy's ultra-leftism and his opportunism. Thus with the developments in the situation since 1938, new issues have come forward which demand the intervention of revolutionaries.

The development of the social services, free education and the NHS are examples of such developments. Though the Transitional Programme contains no formulated demand on such questions, the extension of the *method* of the Programme leads to our demand for a sliding scale of NHS and education spending to defend these gains against inflation, in conflict with the aims of capital.

POST-WAR

Similarly, Trotsky puts forward no demands in the 1938 Programme for 'nationalised' industries as found in today's state sector in Britain. These were a post-war development. But the method of approach in the sections on workers' control in the Programme furnishes a key to the way forward, and from this we derive our demands for trade union committees to have

access to the books and knowledge of the inner workings and links between 'nationalised' industries and the private sector; for the sliding scale of hours to be administered in 'nationalised' industries as in private industries by trade union committees; and for programmes of public works.

These demands are preparatory to the fight for full workers' management of these state-run monopolies, given the fact that in each of these industries nationalisation was imposed from *above* under management selected by the capitalist state thus denying workers the development of knowledge necessary to manage the industry.

DAILY STRUGGLES

The transitional demands begin therefore with the daily struggles over wages and jobs, and end with the call for the setting up of Soviets. In the struggle for the programme the *party* must be built which, *within* these Soviets when they are established, can lead the actual struggle from dual power to the taking of state power, the smashing of the machinery of the bourgeois state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

For the small numbers of the WSL, therefore, the most decisive question is how we follow through each intervention, each fight on programme, with recruitment and party building.

The essential pre-requisites for revolution are both a revolutionary situation and a revolutionary party. Our struggle for the demands and the method of the Programme is crucial in preparing *both* these factors.

Concluded next edition.