

TROTSKYISM TODAY ★

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THEORETICAL SUPPLEMENT
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Engineers join miners in a mass picket at Saltley Coke Depot in 1972: new Tory government could pose more dangers than Heath if workers' struggles suppressed by bureaucracy.

THE FIGHT FOR REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP

In this edition of 'Trotskyism Today' we publish the final section of the Perspectives Document for Britain adopted at the First Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League last December. The opening sections were:- Part One, 'The Economic Crisis'; Part Two 'The Labour Government'; Part Three 'The Trade Unions'; and Part Four 'Programme'. Back issues of these sections are available in 'Trotskyism Today' Numbers 10 and 11.

Part Five

The Ruling Class Prepares

The hysterical witch-hunting which drew the biggest cheers at the last Tory Party Conference is further confirmation of the warning we have made since the foundation of our movement that the Tory leadership is preparing the basis of the most draconian attacks on living standards and democratic rights since the 19th century.

From the so-called 'moderation' of Heath with his 'end of the road' speech, through to the rabid reaction of Heseltine and Thatcher, the Tory Conference echoed all week with demands for still more savage and sweeping spending cuts, an end to price controls, and a battery of anti-working class policies at present too extreme even for the Callaghan leadership to impose, even while sparing some time to praise Callaghan for his efforts on behalf of capitalism.

ALIENATION

The extreme right wing Thatcher leadership has cashed in on the alienation of Labour voters, and set out consciously to build a movement on the basis of small businessmen, middle and professional classes using the openings provided by reactionary campaigns to reach new sections.

Thus they have consistently lent their backing to anti-abortion campaigns, private medicine, private and grammar school education, ratepayers campaigns, and the so-called 'unions' of the self-employed.

This is a conscious move to strengthen and extend the Tory power base, with a view to a return to office in the event of the Callaghan government facing a showdown and splitting or resigning.

The vague talk of possible 'coalition' wafted about by various Tories is merely to cover over the fact that they have not yet selected the time to launch the all-out offensive against the Labour government.

SUPPRESSED

Such a Tory government if elected under conditions where the working class struggle was still suppressed by the bureaucracy would represent a far more serious threat than that of Heath.

Indeed it is possible to envisage such a Tory government coming to power in spite of the unbroken strength of the working class only because of the utterly bankrupt leadership put forward by the Labourites both right and 'left'.

It would draw its majority from the abstentions of millions of Labour voters alienated by the attacks of Wilson and Callaghan. While it, too, could be a government of crisis, it would be one setting out from a conscious plan of action to defend class rule and restore profitability.

On the extreme right of the Tory ranks stands Powell with his racist campaign once more avidly supported and boosted by the press and mass media.

And revelling in the heat of this racist press campaign, gaining in self-confidence and obviously attracting considerable

support from sections of business are the forces of the fascist National Front and National Party.

The fascists' poisonous propaganda campaigns are today increasingly backed up by violent attacks on immigrant workers, youth and gays while labour movement meetings have been openly attacked.

The call for labour movement action to defend immigrant workers against such attack is a class call. It is not a call that can be limited to simply "support black self-defence" as the IMG and others see it.

It is vital to stress that the defence of these sections of the working class is the responsibility of the whole labour movement. We fight now in affected areas for trade union mobilisation on this issue raising the question in every branch where we have members or contacts and struggling to involve the broadest possible support.

UNIFY

Wherever possible we will attend meetings of those defence organisations already formed, urging them to unify with trade union bodies - particularly trades councils.

But the political struggle on the questions of working class leadership remains central. If racialism is being kindled now amongst some backward layers of workers as well as its traditional petty bourgeois spawning ground it is because the fuel has been provided by the trade union bureaucracy's solidarity with the national capitalist class, enforcing acceptance of mass

unemployment, further redundancies, wage cuts, and inadequate housing.

The frustration created by these conditions is the vital starting point of the racists. Our programme on jobs, wages, and public works programmes is therefore an essential part of the fight against racialism and fascism.

Part Six The CP Moves Right

While any attempt to catalogue in full the recent betrayals of the Stalinists of the Communist Party must be futile, the clearest recent example is of course the blatant collaboration of BLMC Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson - one of the CP's leading industrial figures - with the Jones-Scanlon call for "continuous production" at all costs, and with the company ultimatum for advanced acceptance of their assigned manning levels on the new mini.

In every aspect of the class struggle it is the Stalinists, in harness with right and left wing reformists who take upon themselves the responsibility of defusing and derailing the growth of class consciousness and militant resistance.

But this is not surprising. As the trade union bureaucracy as a whole moves dramatically to the right, so too must their opportunist hangers-on in the CP if they are to hope to retain the bureaucratic positions they achieved during the boom period.

INDISTINGUISHABLE

The result is a Stalinist movement which in many areas is completely indistinguishable from the right wing, and which is crucial to the right wing moves to block union democracy.

At national level also the Stalinists act to take the heat out of awkward confrontations and prepare escape routes for the right wing and for 'left' talkers.

At the AUEW National Conference it was Stalinist James Airlie who sabotaged the fight against the 4½% pay deal, by moving an amendment to delete a call for official support to any section of workers fighting the limit from the main opposition resolution - leaving it toothless before the vote.

In the NUM, Stalinist Mick McGahey consciously suppressed the news of the massive cash hand-outs voted to Daly and Gormley by the NUM Executive throughout the campaign period of the ballot on the deal.



McGahey

Instead he made the notorious statement that the miners "should not fight alone" - which of course was calculated to demoralise those about to vote 'no' to the 4½% by suggesting that their vote would in any event be overruled by a stage-managed vote for acceptance at the Special TUC.

And only after the deal had been accepted by a wafer thin majority did McGahey attempt to cash in on the hard core of

However, such approaches must not be allowed to obscure the essential task of recruitment of fresh forces to the banner of Trotskyism, hand in hand with a rounded struggle to build a cadre within the trade unions, to turn to the problems of youth, women and minorities, and to develop as part of an international movement – only in

this way will it be possible to resolve the crisis of leadership.

Trade Unions

The Transitional Programme makes it clear that:

"In the struggle for partial and transitional demands the workers now more than ever before need class organisations, principally the trade unions".

At the same time it is only the Transitional Programme that can defend the trade unions' independence against ruling class attempts at collaboration and disciplining the working class through police methods. The independence of the mass organisations of the working class is a vital precondition for taking up revolutionary tasks.

This involves the development of a programme to drive out the reformist leadership. *Democratisation* of the mass organisations of the class necessitates the defeat of the methods of the routine functionaries and the bureaucratic cliques.

It demands putting to the forefront in key struggles the demand for the regular election and right to recall all union officials and for them only to be paid the average wage of the workers they represent.

This campaign of course cannot in any way be separated from the political questions of the programme, nor from the development of a revolutionary party that

Unemployment remains the central problem facing working class youth, hitting particularly black youth and thousands of school leavers who cannot find work because capitalism no longer has the capacity to employ them.

The trade union bureaucracy offers no way forward to the working class youth in dealing with this question — all they can offer is the acceptance of more closures, more cuts in spending and less prospect of decent education.

READY TO FIGHT

But the youth themselves, not having experienced the betrayals of previous periods of crisis, have not participated in forming the opportunist trade union leadership of the boom period. They come forward instead today with a readiness to fight, while capitalism offers the young worker only long-term enforced financial and social dependence on the family by depriving him of work.

A programme for youth must begin from the fact that youth unemployment demands not simply the defence of existing jobs but the *creation of new ones*.

So while we must fight the cuts imposed by the Labour government with a demand for the extension of education and the opening of higher education to all youth ready to study, we must also involve youth in the fight for a full programme of useful public works under workers' control, paid at union rates.

The extension of education of course calls for both a sliding scale of spending to protect against inflation, and a substantial

campaign to reassert the traditional values of the family.

Every attack on the working class — unemployment, wage cuts, inflation, public spending and social service cuts, and youth unemployment — all increase the strain on and within the family as a social unit.

In this way the crisis of leadership in the working class and upheaval in the family are linked. The bourgeoisie defends and ideologically bolsters the family in order to cut across moves by workers to resolve these problems by serving their class interests.

In order to break down the isolation, fragmentation of the working class within the family, women must be drawn from the home into the direct organisations of the working class — prices committees, factory committees, etc.

Only through a struggle for workers' control will the subordinate position of women in the family be undermined.

At the same time we must develop a socialist analysis of the ways in which capitalism has adopted and perpetuated sexual oppression. This will inevitably involve an analysis of sexuality but this is not an abstract theoretical task.

Such work must be closely related to our daily political activity with women, and it will enable us to direct our interventions in such campaigns as the NAC and the gay liberation movement.

It is vital to extend the method of the Transitional Programme to all general democratic demands which capitalism cannot satisfy, so that we can transform such movements into a strengthening of, rather than a diversion from the revolutionary struggles of the working class.

OPPOSED

The WSL must develop a programme to defend working women as part of the working class. Such a programme will necessarily be in opposition to the "all-class alliance" of women represented by the petty-bourgeois women's liberation movement. The questions facing all women can only be answered by the *working class*.

The building of communal catering facilities requires a development of the productive forces now only possible under socialism, as does the drawing of women into the labour force with conditions and opportunities equal to men.

The provision of completely free and safe contraception and abortion on demand both pose workers' control of the Health Service, massive increases in public spending and the nationalisation of the NHS suppliers.

Likewise the provision of adequate nursery facilities demands a huge increase in the education budget.

In fighting for such demands these implications must be drawn out and the fight directed towards enlisting the active mobilisation of the mass organisations of the working class in the fight to win them.

Immigrant Workers

Immigrant workers in the coming period face the prospect of increasing racist and police harassment added to the special problems they already face as a section of the working class.

Drawn into the capitalist economy during the 'boom' to expand the labour force and prevent wage rises in service industries in a general situation of full employment, immigrants now face a massive attack on elementary democratic rights enshrined in the Tory Immigration Act of 1971.

As the crisis develops further the maintenance of immigrants as a pool of unorganised low-wage labour becomes vital to industries on the verge of collapse — for example catering and the public sector

where the bourgeoisie is carrying through massive spending cuts.

The task of the Immigration Act is to erect a barrier between immigrant workers and the remainder of the working class, enabling the authorities and the employers to harass any attempt at trade union organisation among immigrant workers, and through this, in conjunction with orchestrated racist propaganda, to deflect the fight of all workers against wage cuts, unemployment and housing shortages, away from attacking the bourgeoisie towards the immigrant worker, set up as a ready scapegoat.

It is essential that we campaign for the repeal of the Immigration Act, and for the principle of the right of all workers to live and work in the country of their choice. We must demand the trade union leaders act on this question by fighting to organise immigrant workers into the unions where none as yet exist, and ensuring that immigrant workers receive the necessary representation on trades councils and all local trade union committees.

Only this will break the working class immigrant from the elaborate state campaign to establish "community relations councils" under the domination of the immigrant workers and separate them from the rest of



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report.

Powell

the working class.

The question of defence of immigrant workers from racist and fascist attack is dealt with in Section 5 of this document but two points need to be stressed here.

The first is that whereas combatting racist propaganda is important work particularly when the fight is carried right into the mass movement, that no amount of pure propaganda will in itself be enough to avert the dangers of racist division.

In the last analysis it is the fight to mobilise the *working class as a class in action* which alone can lastingly break down racist divisions.

It is therefore crucial that our fight against racism is *at no point* separated from our programme of fighting demands on jobs and wages, or from our fight against the Labour and trade union bureaucracy whose efforts to prevent the resistance of the working class to capitalist attack provide the frustrated breeding ground of confusion essential for the racists and the fascists.

The second point is that where black self-defence groups begin to emerge in some areas we must resist any temptation to see the young workers in them either as ready-made revolutionaries, or, even worse, as some kind of blank sheet of political paper on which we can simply write our programme.

There are a whole range of political tendencies active among immigrant workers — many of them extremely hostile to Trotskyism. In particular Maoists, Stalinists



ternational (Comintern) was able to draw on the strength of the revolutionary gains of October 1917 to unite workers internationally. But the degeneration of the Comintern was fought against only by Trotsky. When the Fourth International was established its most priceless asset was the fruit of this on the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism and the need for revolutionary leadership. This is why different tendencies claiming to be Trotskyist without first establishing what common ground and even them. Yet "for our insistence on programmatic agreement and common practice as a basis for

struggles against the limitations of immediate trade union consciousness.

As Trotsky writes:

"The more oppressed majority of the working class is drawn only episodically into the struggle, during a period of exceptional upsurges in the labour movement. During such moments it is necessary to create organisations ad hoc embracing the whole fighting mass, strike committees, factory committees, and finally, soviets."

The struggle for the programme is inseparable from the building of new, more flexible workers' organisations which are open, for example, to women, youth and unemployed. We must learn the lessons of our intervention in the "Fight the Cuts" committees in London and elsewhere, and deepen our understanding of the relationship between these committees and our struggle inside the various unions themselves.

Already in many unions we have laid a solid basis for intervention as a result of a determined but patient struggle for principle and programme. We must strengthen all these roots, and recruit from our fight in the unions.

Youth

The development of a serious group of cadres amongst the youth is an essential requirement for the growth and vitality of our movement. While more detailed attention is given to this in our Youth Perspectives [See *The Way Forward For Youth* SP49] an outline of the work can be given here.

injection of additional finance into education.

For youth at work we demand the extension of training schemes and release schemes, paid for initially by the capitalists but under trade union control.

The trade unions must turn towards the youth, and establish youth commissions to recruit and educate young workers. Young workers' delegates must be brought on to trades councils, to unite their struggles with those of the local labour movement as a whole.

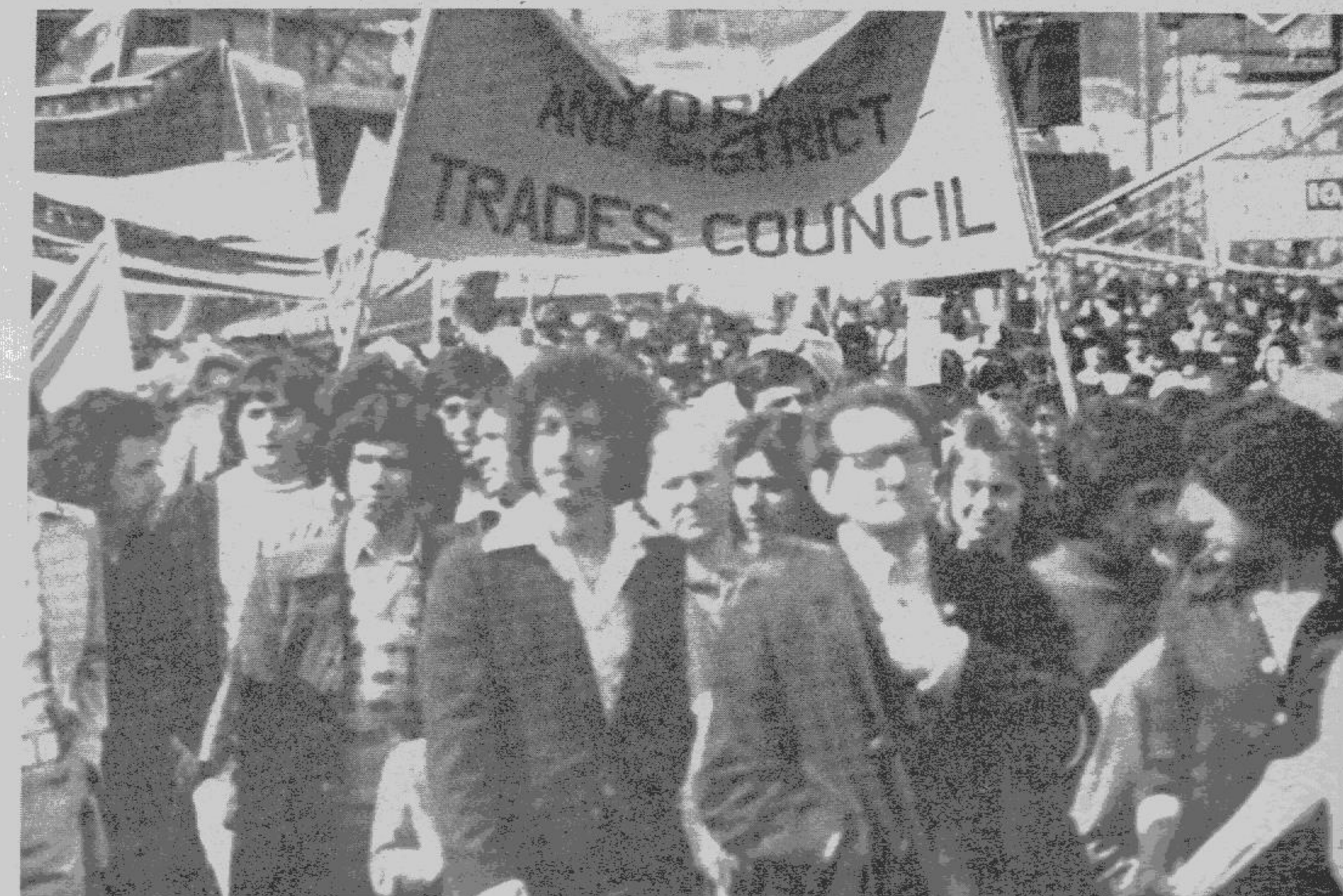
Women

Our perspectives for work among women are more fully set out in a special document [to be published shortly in *Trotskyism Today*]. But again an outline of our approach is useful in this more general context.

The capitalist crisis and its consequent attacks on the working class particularly affect working class women. They are most directly affected through all the cuts in the state sector, and by redundancies where many of them work.

The depth of the crisis will drive women, as well as other previously little organised sections of the working class, into class struggle and political activity for the first time. However they will not automatically move towards socialist policies.

The bourgeoisie actively attempts to appeal to women against men workers, and at the same time now initiates an ideological



Anti-racist demonstration in Bradford last year: mass support showed base for workers' defence.

and Black Nationalists are to be found.

It is only through detailed and patient political struggle that a firm political relationship can be expected with these groups of militant youth.

We must begin this struggle by indicating both our support for their right to self defence and the direction we as Trotskyists feel that self-defence ought to take in order to connect up with the struggles of the working class as a whole.

In this way the strength of their resistance can be brought into the broader labour movement as part of the fight against the bureaucracy, and the power of the organised working class as a whole can be mobilised in the fight against racism and fascism.

The Unemployed

The fight against unemployment which the WSL has continued on a number of fronts is a vital fight. It involves both the defence of the living standards of the working class and to prevent the fragmentation of the class through a division between employed and unemployed which threatens to sap the strength of the working class.

The defence of existing jobs and the fight to create new ones must therefore be combined in our struggle. We have consistently advocated the demand of *work sharing on full pay*, a demand which summarises the Transitional Programme:

"Against unemployment . . . the time is ripe to advance, along with the programme of public works, the slogan of a sliding scale of working hours. Trade unions and other mass organisations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility.

On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined.

The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week."

PUBLIC WORKS

In other words the defence of existing jobs through work sharing on full pay cannot be separated from the demand to extend jobs by a programme of public works.

Trotsky makes clear the work is to be shared on full pay among the whole workforce — employed and unemployed. As Section 4 on programme shows, we fight for such a project of public works to be administered by trade union committees.

On such committees must be representatives of the unemployed workers. To facilitate this, and in the meantime to strengthen the links between the unemployed and the employed sections of the working class we are fighting in every area for the unions to recruit the unemployed, and guarantee them full rights as union members.

The recruitment of such new layers can be crucial in our fight in each area against the bureaucracy, its acceptance of cuts and closures, and for new leadership.



Fourth International

We regard the building of an international revolutionary leadership as an essential prerequisite for the development of the Workers Socialist League.

We do not consider this document therefore as in any way separable from the problems and conclusions set out in our international document "Fourth International: Problems and Tasks" adopted at our first conference.

EXPANDED

Our understanding of essential questions of post-war Stalinism, capitalist boom and crisis, and the history of the Fourth International must be expanded by the further work of our movement.

We must press further in the coming period with our initiatives towards an international discussion on the problems of the

international, and take further steps to establish agreement and political relationships with those groups that have already stated they hold considerable common ground with us.

PRINCIPLED

It is even more important for us now to be part of a principled movement with members in Lisbon or New York than simply to expand our national base to Bristol or Edinburgh.

For the further development of our international perspectives, we have a particular responsibility as a British movement to develop our programme and practice on the question of the age-old Irish national question.

We have only really begun this in the pages of *Socialist Press*, and further development is essential in at least two ways. We must on the one hand develop a programme for an Irish section of the Fourth International which can link Irish and British workers in the common struggle against British imperialism.

And on the other hand we must become part of a fight in the British workers' movement for a campaign to force the removal of

the British army from Northern Ireland.

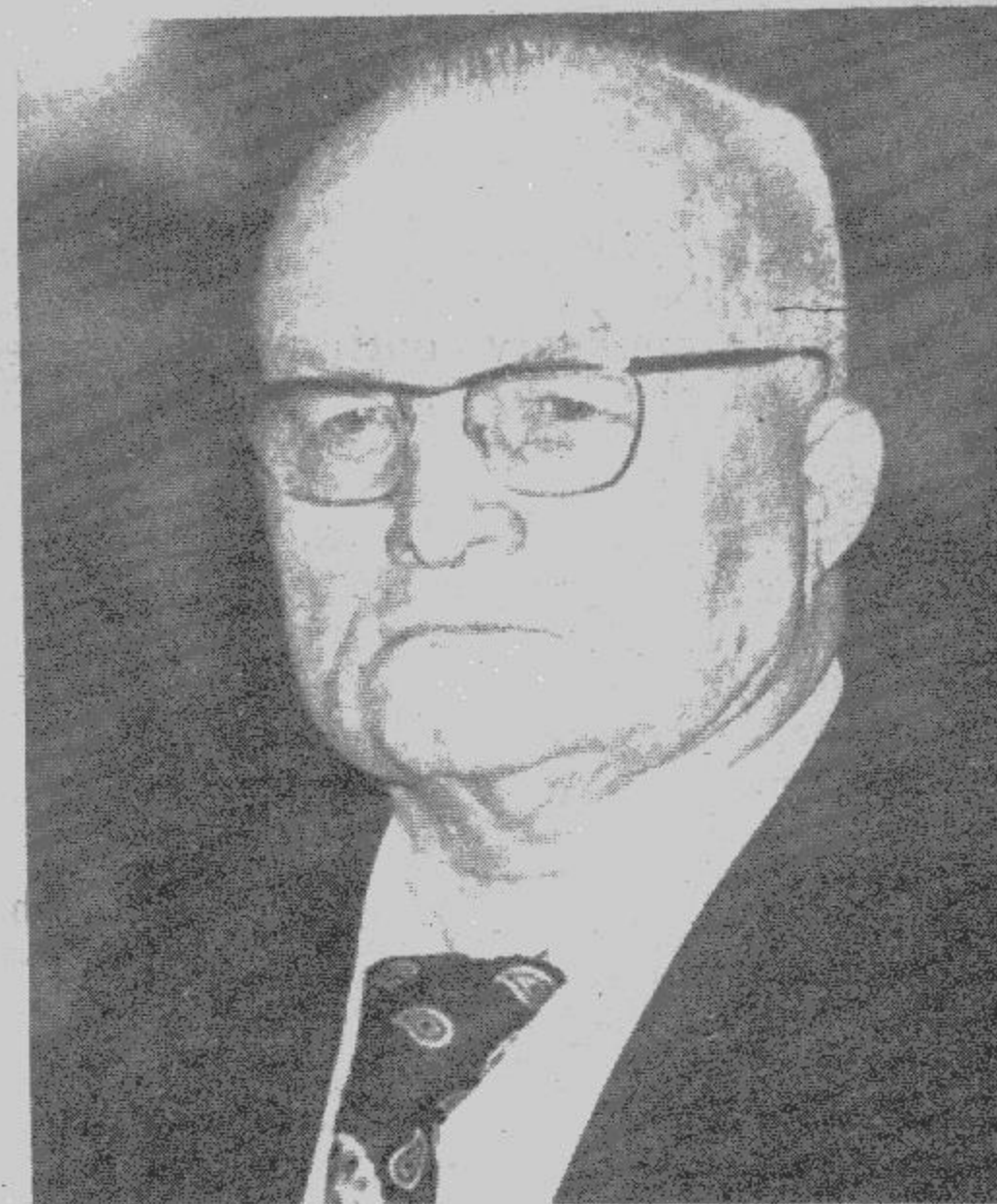
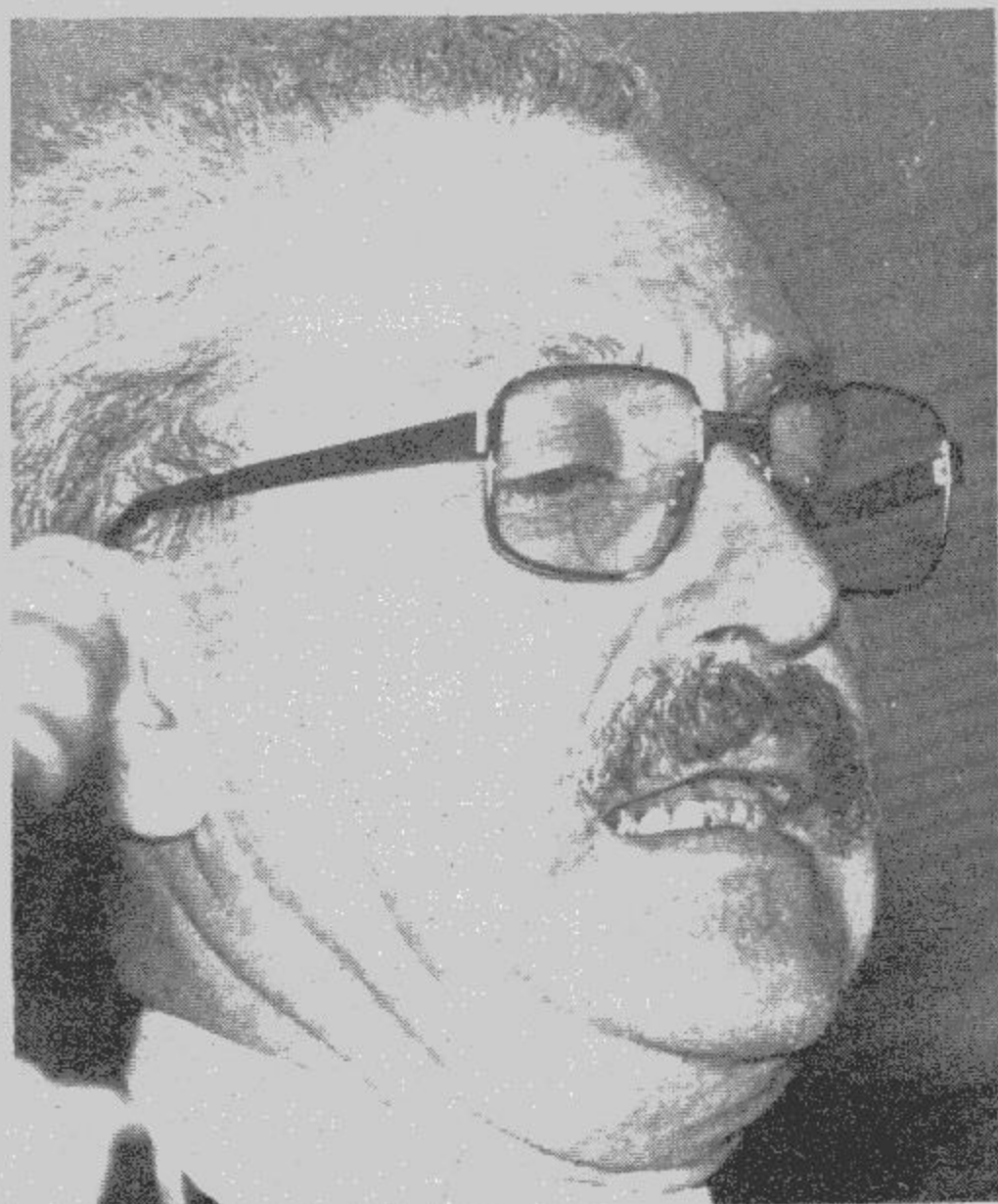
With the collapse of the attempts at "power-sharing" by British imperialism, the inseparability of these two questions becomes even clearer. The WSL must now take up as a crucial question the fight in the working class movement, for the removal of troops.

And having correctly rejected the petty bourgeois revisionist politics of the Troops Out Movement, we have the responsibility of developing a clear alternative.

It is the principled record of our movement and the many successful interventions we have already carried through that give us the confidence that these and many other problems which remain for the development of our movement can and will be solved.

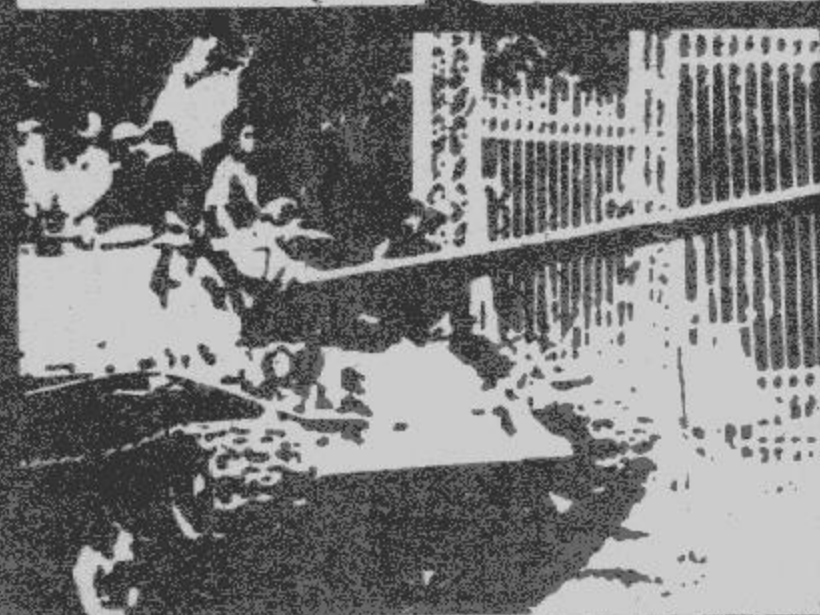
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NEXT ISSUE
Perspectives for Work
Among Women
Part One.



Lambert (OCRFI), Mandel (USFI) and Healy (IC): none will discuss history of FI with a view to its reconstruction.

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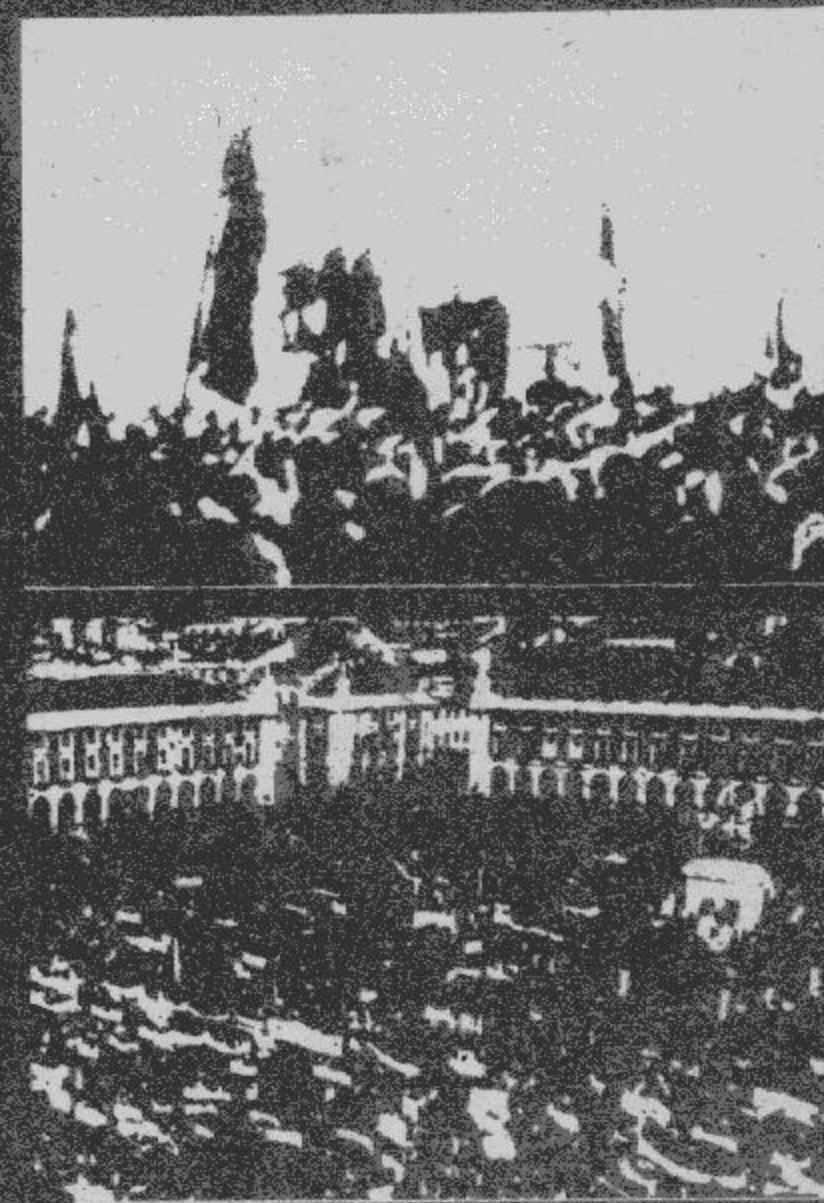
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