

15675  
D

# BORES UNDER THE FLOOR

A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE WAVE OF 'LEFT' GROUPS AND  
NEWSPAPERS CURRENTLY INVADING THE PIT VILLAGES

David Douglass, NUM, E.C., YORKS.  
Co-ordinator Doncaster NUM  
Strike Committee.

## BORES UNDER THE FLOORS

A brief introduction to the 'left' groups currently visiting the coal-fields.

---

Such is the Will O The Wisp nature of many of these groups that few if any will ever have been seen in and around the coalfields before; if the strike finishes it is more or less certain that the vast majority of them will vanish as quickly as they came away to pastures anew, an occupation here, a demo there, a womens camp in some far off distant field or a factory strike in Manchester. Almost without exception they see themselves as 'Marxist' prophets, dispensing their tablets of gold, to the untutored masses, who, to their minds anyway, will flounder without their 'expert' advice and guidance.

They see the masses in general (and the miners as no exception) as a gullible inexperienced morass, organised in trade unions destined to sap their energies, led by fat self interested bureaucrats, and totally unable to see the road ahead without their clear sighted vision and light. They are political self appointed messiahs.

To be fair not all are as bad as each other, not all are as counter productive or destructive, some are well intentioned, some are reasonably helpful whilst others are deliberately hell bent on destroying our efforts in the vague hope of gaining some kind of capital from it.

There follows a description of some of the groups and their political backgrounds.

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (formally the International Socialists)  
NEWSPAPER : SOCIALIST WORKER.

Politics, usually described by other people as a 'Trot' organisation although actually their political viewpoint is an anti-Trotskyist stance. Shachtman the founder of their ideas was kicked out of the Fourth International by Trotsky himself. They are nicknamed 'State-Caps' because they believe the entire world is still capitalist, there have been successful revolutions in NO country of the world. They believe it is not possible to achieve

any advance in one country at a time, that only a world wide revolution happening ON THE SAME DAY or as soon as ever afterwards, can win. This had led them to end up on the other side of the class war in country after country, since the Soviet Union, China or Cuba are not worthy of defence against U.S. imperialism, it follows that a 'left' labour government anywhere isn't due to any support or defence either. They supported the N.L.F. in Vietnam UP UNTILL THE DAY THEY TOOK POWER, then they deemed that the N.L.F. and the Peoples Government had become State Capitalist AND AT ONCE CALLED FOR ITS OVERTHROW. By any other name this set of ideas is called COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

During the strike

This Groups has been among THE most destructive. They have quite literally called upon miners to abandon the leadership, not just at national level, but at area and branch level. They have told the men to IGNORE all instructions from the strike committees and do whatever seems right at the time. They have set up their own 'Miners Picket Fund' which now stands above £12,000 and with which they intend to deploy our pickets and provide money. They have led men off picketing targets and redirected them elsewhere. They have at times posed as 'rank and file' miners to collect money from unsuspecting people to fill their own 'strike' fund. At other times they have posed as union officials to redirect pickets away from the plans worked out by the Area Co-ordinating Committees. They have picked up any rumble of discontent from the men and exploited it against the leadership with a view to destroying any confidence in it.  
AS AN ORGANISATION THEIR TACTICS, WHATEVER THEIR DECLARED AIMS COULD SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE THE EFFORTS OF THIS UNION TO WIN.

2) REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY (R.C.P.)

PAPER: THE NEXT STEP.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND: They are an offshoot of the above, and another ANTI Trotskyist 'State Cap' group coming from the same SHACTMANITE set of ideas.

Their penetration into the coalfield has taken place over a long period and met with some success owing to reasonable sounding ideas about the war in Ireland. However other than this one saving grace right from the begining they were at odds with most

opinion militants. Their hopeless failure to understand the nature of the Labour Party led them to endless attacks upon it and calling for its utter destruction. Like their failure to understand why defence of the Soviet Union against U.S. Imperialism is vital they similarly see no need to defend the Labour Party from attacks by the Tory forces outside and the right wingers inside.

Another point which set them against the main tide of NUM militants (and earned them the nickname 'THE C.E.G.B.') was their belief in NUCLEAR ENERGY, which they advance as a saviour of human kind !

DURING THE STRIKE they got some success because they are friendly people and can mix (which is rare on the left) because they raised large sums of money and because they got stuck into the picket lines along with the miners.

HOWEVER... THEIR POLITICAL LINE STARTED TO EMERGE, THEY ARE AGAINST THE CLOSED SHOP, DO NOT BELIEVE EVERYONE SHOULD BE IN A TRADE UNION. WORSE THEY HAVE ADVOCATED THE CALLING OF A NATIONAL BILLET AND CLAIM THE NOTTS SCAES ARE SIMPLY MISUNDERSTOOD.

Putting forward such anti strike calls has already got them kicked out of many Welfares in Dincaster and has led them to be attacked on demonstrations.

#### WORKERS POWER

Newspaper, WORKERS POWER.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND; A long and winding road from an anti-Trot Shachtmanite position coming from the same political cradle as above to a position today where they are trying to assimilate themselves into a more conventional Trotskyist camp. They are struggling to get a correct position on the Labour Party and at present are working within it. It is true to say that this is an organisation which is still learning and developing and as such is less dogmatic in its outlook, it is not a Party but a group.

DURING THE STRIKE They have been helpful on the support front, Womens Groups have been impressed by the real help and assistance offered by women supporters of Workers Power. They have come with cooking equipment and willing hands rather than tablets of gold and dogma.

CONTI...OVER...

HOWEVER overall their political line in their newspaper is still HIGHLY CRITICAL of the NUM leadership and still tries to imply that we dont know whats going on but they do. They are very mis-informed about the actual state of play and usually are about a month out of date with their suggestions for tactics.

THEY ARE FLIRTING WITH THE IDEA OF A NATIONAL BALLOT but mask it by saying that it ought to be a national branch vote on a show of hands. Refusing to recognise THAT WE ALREADY HAVE a national strike.

Workers Power can be handled so long as you establish from the begining who is the teacher and who is the pupil, and that the NUM was inexistance before they arrived and will still be here in the leadership of the workers movement after they have reformed into something else or gone completely.

#### 4) SOCIALIST ACTION

NEWSPAPER: SOCIALIST ACTION.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND. Formed from other Trotskyist groupings and trying now to develop its own line has links with one of the international groups which came from Trotskys Fourth International. Is now working hard within the Labour Party to develop revolutionary politics within it. Has come in for heavy criticism from more a thodox Trotskyist groups for its heavy support for Polish solidarity.

DURING THE STRIKE. Has been largely supportive and up to press has helped us.

#### 5) WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (W.R.P.)

NEWSPAPER: WORKERS PRESS.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND. Formally the Socialist Labour League, an old survivor of the British Section of The Fourth International, Broke with the world leadership after Trotskys death and formed The International Committee of the IVth International with another group in France, then broke with them and went on to establish sections of itself around the world.

Is quite a big party for the left and has a daily newspaper.

Is highly mechanical and demands a terrific degree of comitment from its members.

#### DURING THE STRIKE

Everything written by the WRP both before and since the strike would leave you to believe that he was a bigger enemy of the miners

scargill

than the National Coal Board. They are locked into a 'doom' perspective, that the working class cannot win without it is led by a revolutionary party, and of course THE only revolutionary party is the WRP. So if you offer ANY lead take on ANY struggle and you do not believe in the WRP's road then you automatically are going to betray the class and the struggle.

In terms of the strike they criticise mass picketing, and see it as 'a dead end' instead they offer us the solution that we must call on the TUC General Council to lead a general strike! The fact that the TUC General Council has betrayed all sections of the working class movement who has went for aid makes this call very suspicious. They KNOW the TUC will not organise a nationwide all out general strike and if they did it would only be to sell it out in less time than they did in 1926. So why call for it? Because we dumb clucks it seems need to be shown that the existing trade union structure is no-good for this sort of fight and only the WRP and The All Trades Union Alliance can lead one. A'h so now we see, urge us into a defeat, get us smashed, and then pick up the pieces to build your own outfit by blaming it all on the leaders of ours. Nice.

The WRP is extremely hostile to the NUM and its national and area leadership, it doesn't believe we can win and seems certain to keep suggestions of ideas which if implemented would skittle us from square one.

## 6) THE INTERNATIONAL SPARTICIST TENDENCY

NEWSPAPER. THE SPARTICIST.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND... A super orthodox split from the American Socialist Workers Party (nowt to do with the current British group of that name) which up till recent times existed solely in the States. Its traditional Trotskyist defence of the USSR which is a rarity these days makes it stand apart from other Trotskyist groups on most issues.

Being an American transplant the members we meet have the air (and accents) of Mormon missionaries. Being convinced of the absolute correctness of their position they <sup>WILL</sup> accept the slightest suggestion that THEY and not YOU might be wrong about some trifile or another. Their manner is overbearing and to many courts a smack on the nos. even before they explain their political views.

Political attitude their approach seems to have more in common with the American business school technique of the 'foot in the door' once you listen; by Christ your gonna listen some more, attitude. They tend to 'hound' people, once they get your phone number, you WILL be consulted, and asked questions as to your views, be it ever so persuasively, you should be doing this, or that, and if not why not? Give an inch and they will take a mile. Anyone who has innocently attended one of their meetings, or went to one of their 'socials' will find quite remarkably that a person from the Sparts has been allocated to YOU. They will make sure that they follow you and talk...and talk ..and talk. Their task that night will be to win you over. The whole deal is a high pressure operation which quite honestly can give even the most committed militant the wish that he was in the company of Liberals.

THE DAFT THING is that on paper and in their papers, much of the theory and reporting is fine, it is the nature of the individuals who peddle the stuff that is so offensive, and since it is common to most of them ; it must be something in the nature of the organisation which is at odds somewhere.

#### DURING THE STRIKE.

They have not done us any harm, neither have they went out of their way to help in terms of money or bodies on picket lines. Their coverage of the strike has been sound enough, with few of the kind of attacks and disruptive tactics used by some of the others mentioned.

#### 7) THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE

##### PAPER. THE MILITANT

POLITICAL BACKGROUND. The RSL (its existence is hotly denied by supporters of 'The Militant') along with the S.L.L. mentioned earlier came from the very earliest sections of Trotskys British Section of the IVth International. After 'The Old Mans' death RSL supporters argued that the British Labour Party WAS (and IS) THE party of the British working class. That what ever programme for revolution was elaborated, it must be aimed at and within the Labour Party. The RSL went out of the

consensus. Trotskyist thought in doing so. It brought it up against the S.L.L. and much of the European Trotskyist thought of the time which held that building an independant Trot party IN COMPETITION with the Labour Party was the way forward. In order to follow this line through the RSL dissolved itself into the Labour Party and now denies that it as an individual body ever existed.

Following a long trail of political compromise in order to facilitate this major perspective The Militant still stands on a limb, even though the bulk of the Trotskyist Left now believes that the Labour Party is the central question for socialists, most have joined it. At present it cannot by anyones view be called 'A Revolutionary Tendency' if what is meant by that is the belief in the violent overthrow of the capitalist state. Its position now is the same as the C.P.G.B. (The Communist Party) that Socialism is achievable through the ballot box.

#### DURING THE STRIKE

The Militant as it prefers to be known IS trying to build itself...nobody is doing nowt for nowt. BUT it is not campaigning against this union or its leadership and in fact is raising money having rallies etc using mostly OUR propaganda. There is little doubt now (although there was some at first) but that every penny collected by Militant comes to the NUM. What they get out of it, is trying to show that they showed the most solidarity, and that they command the most respect in our ranks...and therefore of course you should join them.

#### 8) THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITIAN.

PAPER: THE MORNING STAR.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND. The CPGB came out of the Russian revolution (as did all of the Trotskyist groups) and was founded on the Instruction of Lenin. It has been through a great many paths and turns in its political direction from outright revolutionary to its present social democratic situation. It supports at the moment the 'Euro-Communist' view, hot on parliaments, ballots and in Britain the Labour Party. It attempts (like many of the Trot groups) to influence Labour Party policy via the Trade Unions and direct appeals.

the differences between the CPGB and many Tribune supporters of the Labour Party are so slight, that the reason for its political existance seem dim.

#### DURING THE STRIKE.

'The Party' as old timers like to see it, has been less than critical of the critics of this union, it is trying hard to stay reasonable, and not offend anyone. As a paper and a party trying to be all things to all men, it has probably lost the hard core support it once had. It will not be doing any damage to this union or this strike, what good it is doing is judged by its criticism of those who talk of violence on picket lines and mean us us (there has been little or none).

#### 9) THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

##### PAPER: THE NEW WORKER

POLITICAL BACKGROUND: This party came out of the CPGB because it did not like the Euro-road, and liked the earlier traditions of the old C.P. It still stands full square with the Soviet Union and tends to believe it is yet a workers garden of eden. It has readopted the Revolutionary Road of the old party and does not believe capitalism can be balloted out of existance. In this it is to the left of the so called 'Trotskyist' Militant tendency and in line with the bulk of the Trotskyist Left; although it takes its leanings not from Trotsky but from Stalin. It believes Stalin was a great revolutionary who didnt put a foot wrong .

#### DURING THE STRIKE.

Like the Militant and Socialist Action this team will not be confronting us, their politics are such that they will do whatever we think is right to win the strike and support us, giving out our own litreture rather than their own...but with the same aim of gaining credibility among our members and the working class at large to build their perty and spread their ideas. (nowt wrong with that of course)

## 10) OTHER MARXISTS

all of the above are of course Marxist organisations some so small and situated outside the coalfields have not been reviewed, certain of these have been giving good support to us but it is doubtful that any NUM people will have to sue' out who they are etc and they have been left outside this report.

Some others, International Marxist Group (they keep changing their name but its the same people) and BIG FLAME have not yet showed up..though they doubtless will, and they have not been put on this report untill such times as they do.

## 11) ANARCHISTS

Numerous papers etc

It will come as a surprise to many but the Anarchist have in fact been far more helpful than many of the self proclaimed saviours of the working class. Since they are against people telling other people what to do, they have in fact spent what time and energy they have to actually helping us, in the ways we ask to be helped.

Printing is often their strong point and they have often done this for free, they have also helped in food collections etc and when WE have asked they have showed up on picket lines, without the newspapers the others on the left usually carry.

You will have no problems with Anarchists moving in to try and take over, or sell you a line, the only problem will be that many of them lock funny. You might find that quite acceptable if the choice is the company of some of the groups mentioned above, in addition you will find that when push comes to 'shove' in dangerous situations on the picket lines, the 'left' are way back with an arm full of papers, whilst the Anarchist is stood to the end with you.

## CONCLUSION

Although the firey image is of Reds Under The Bed, by and large most of the groups are more akin to Bores Under The Floors, their revolution is confined to selling newspapers and talking for five hours without a break. Most would faint at the sight of a gun and far from the stories in the press of demonstrations being 'infiltrated by violent revolutionaries' they are highly but highly unlikely to follow breaks or take on the cops.

Theory and Practice are two arms of the same struggle. You can't really have one without the other and expect to make a success of the situation. Whereas the miners have bags of practice, and plenty of experience their theoretical understanding of the whole situation tends to be limited. Political theory is a must for any serious socialist and for that reason we ought not to be afraid of debate and discussion or to look at the analysis put forward by the left and compare it to our living reality to see if any of it makes sense or can help our situation.

The political left in Britain has boat loads of theory and little or no practice and experience, it could learn greatly from the miners and the current struggle. Those that are prepared to listen and learn might well develop through this dispute and it is just possible some of their theory might guide our direction for the future. However those who barge in tablets of gold in hand and try telling this union after nearly 200 years of struggle how to go on must invariably be shown the door.

Those so called left groups who are aimed to wreck this strike disrupt this union and sow disarray are playing the role of our enemies and must be treated in the same fashion.

D.Douglass.June '84  
Yorks Area Exec (IN A PERSONAL CAPACITY)